

'Gifts of the World'?: Creating and Contextualising
the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust's International
Collection

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Abstract

This study represents the first time that the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust's international collection has been discretely identified and discussed. It raises cultural, political, and historical questions through a consideration of the objects gifted, donated, or deposited in the SBT's collections since the charity's earliest days through today. It reveals how donors – private, public, or officially diplomatic – wished to see their nation represented in the SBT's collections, and therefore in Stratford-upon-Avon.

The study surveys the collection items at the SBT and presents collection narratives for Germany, the US, India/Pakistan/Bangladesh, and China. Each narrative presents an overview of all the objects connected to each place, guided and structured by the objects themselves. The chapters highlight the relevant items that exist in the collection before identifying such key issues as their provenance, history, significance, and position within the collection.

By analysing and critiquing the SBT's own responses to its international collection, through its cataloguing and curatorial practice, the study exposes and historicises the Trust's own critical blind spots, assumptions, and assertions around Shakespeare's 'universality'. The application of gift theory highlights political and cultural rationale of the items; post/decolonial and critical race theories problematise the idea of universality and identify the workings of Anglo-centrism, cultural imperialism, and white supremacy; and object/collection theory establishes the potential of the SBT's collections to address the vital aim of detaching Shakespeare from the imperialist narratives.

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General Introduction

Introduction

This project is the first scholarly assessment of items that can be classed as international responses to Shakespeare in the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust's (SBT) collections. As a collaborative project devised between the SBT and Birmingham City University (BCU) in order for the SBT to discover more about their international collection items, this thesis aims to disclose not only what dwells in the collections but how an international Shakespeare collection can be used to intervene in discourses of inclusion and representation in heritage, literary studies, and society. Such discourses are prevalent and in fact vital in the current context – not least as 2021 demonstrated – following several years of intensified Black Lives Matter protests; a pandemic that highlighted the role of ethnicity in medical and epistemic poverty around the world; and debates about which aspects of British history and which figures within it should be commemorated, and how. Through this thesis, I take on the role of an academic curator by deciding what constitutes an international response to Shakespeare, how and why, as well as theorising how such collections can be useful in Shakespeare studies and society today. Although the project was 'commissioned' by the SBT and BCU, in the sense that it was funded by monies from UK Research and Innovation (a non-departmental governmental body) to which this thesis' supervisors applied, I have nonetheless been under no obligation to shape this thesis to the SBT's priorities. Through impartial critical approaches to the objects, I have adhered to my aims of helping the SBT learn more about itself, its collections, its collection policies, and its

curatorship. The recommendation section in the thesis conclusion is thus intended to go beyond the academic exercise of the project and be of strategic use to the Trust.

The SBT's collections are a vital aspect of its key role as a principal maintainer of Shakespeare's legacy, which is to say the global inheritance, mythology, tradition, and afterlife of Shakespeare and his works. The SBT's museum, archive, and library collections not only supply its five physical properties with objects that tell the story of Shakespeare's life in Stratford-upon-Avon, but also hold centuries of international responses to Shakespeare through gifts, communications, and records of visits. This project defines 'international items/objects' as those that represent in any way a nation that is not British. This formulation is unavoidably Anglo-centric: it centres Britain as the point of understanding, as the 'Self' of the thesis, and establishes all 'other' nations as its 'Others' and thus peripheral to a constructed hegemonic norm.¹ However, using 'international' in this way also emphasises the meeting point between cultures that is engendered through the item's belonging to the SBT's collections, as well as the *national* intentions that are often the impetus for international gifts to the Trust.

Until this project, most international collection items were understood by the SBT as ephemera that could only be interpreted as evidence of Shakespeare's 'universality' – as symbols of international donors' admiration of Shakespeare. By endowing the status of a discrete international collection to items that relate to Germany, the United States, India,

¹ Other (with a capital O) should be understood throughout this thesis to conform to the postcolonial configuration in which it references those who have been subject to imperialist discourses that operate under the presupposition of a hegemony of white European superiority. Othered communities have thus been pressed into a dichotomous dialogic relationship to the hegemonic 'norm' in which they are essentialised into a stereotype that maintains white supremacy through its predominantly negative associations. Rather than perpetuating such associations, this thesis aims to recognise processes of Othering where it finds them in order to deconstruct them. See: Oscar Thomas-Olalde and Astride Velho, 'Othering and Its Effects – Exploring the Concept', in *Writing Postcolonial Histories of Intercultural Education*, ed. by Heike Niedrig and Christian Ydesen (Vienna: Peter Lang, 2011), pp. 27–50.

Pakistan, and Bangladesh, and China, this study reveals the limits of the SBT view that international items can be interpreted so simply and elevates the significance of the objects in their own right. Through its preoccupation with what is contained in the SBT's strongrooms, reading room, and museum, this study explores the affective power of the SBT's collections as the framing device for interpretation of the objects. In categorising an object as part of the US collection, for example, its potential meanings are expanded by its companionship with the rest of that collection as well as by the associations with Shakespeare that are formed by its belonging in the SBT's collections. Engagement with this affective power invites particularly illuminating enquiries: how is this item connected to Shakespeare? What does it tell us about Shakespeare's cultural or political significance in the culture from which it derives? What else can it tell us about Shakespeare and/or that culture if we look at it from an anticolonial perspective?

Shakespeare's broader affective power has often revolved around the perceived 'universality' of his plays and poems, as a result of the ways in which cultural commentators have used Shakespeare's words to generate meanings that are useful to their present. Although this thesis problematises the concept of Shakespearean 'universality' throughout, its title uses a line from *As You Like It* – but with an added question mark – to highlight that affective power as well as question its uses. In the scene from which the line is taken, Rosalind and Celia debate the relative powers of fortune and nature. Rosalind's line in full – 'Fortune reigns in gifts of the world, not in the lineaments of Nature' – argues, in accordance with her own situation, that despite the beauty and wit with which Nature has endowed her, Fortune has stripped her of rank, security, and wealth through her uncle's

usurpation of her father's crown.² This line is germane to this thesis in several ways. First, contemplation of 'fortune' reflects on the *treasure* of the collections and the operation of *luck* and *fate* in bringing them to the SBT, thus emphasising the SBT's reactive collecting practices. Second, 'reigns in' suggests the curatorial power exercised by me in this project, in choosing, delineating, and contextualising the collections. Third, 'gifts' highlights the importance of international donations to this thesis. Fourth, the whole thesis essentially asks what 'the world' means to the SBT and what Shakespeare means to 'the world', while also querying what 'the world' means as a concept that is in flux according to the position of the speaker. In querying what 'fortune' it is that historically and presently 'reigns in gifts of the world' to the SBT, this thesis traces the oscillations of cultural power that are in evidence through the appropriation of Shakespeare's cultural capital by international visitors and by the Trust.

Shakespeare's cultural capital is the principal source of the SBT's collections' affective power and can be understood as the value placed in Shakespeare, both in Britain and internationally, as an icon through which an actor (a nation, corporation, or individual) can signal a form of cultural competence that benefits them in terms of attractiveness (as/or soft power) which can also generate some kind of revenue. As such, this project necessarily explores the impact and utility of Shakespeare's cultural capital as that which brings visitors to Stratford-upon-Avon while bearing in mind the structures of power that established Shakespeare as the generator of that capital. As many of the most revealing object narratives in this thesis come from objects that were gifts, given with the diplomatic

² William Shakespeare, 'As You Like It', in *The New Oxford Shakespeare: The Complete Works*, ed. by Gary Taylor and others (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 1.2.32. All quotations from Shakespeare are from this collected works.

purpose of representing a nation within the SBT's collections, this thesis examines the role of gifts in cultural diplomacy and explores Shakespeare's use as a form of soft power in nations outside of Britain.

Given the diplomatic aspect that is thus appended to the SBT's cultural role, this thesis explores the ethical implications of the SBT's acceptance and subsequent interpretation of its international items by asking: what does it mean for a British institution – that is explicitly invested in promoting Shakespeare's appeal at home and abroad – to interpret and curate items related to people and places that have been 'Othered' through Western- or Anglo-centric ideological processes, and that have complex cultural roles and specificities of their own? How do the SBT's prerogatives manifest themselves through their interpretation of international objects? This thesis demonstrates and challenges the ways in which the SBT uses international collection objects to promulgate the ideal of a 'universal' Shakespeare while also maintaining its authority and a clear sense of Stratfordian 'ownership'. Finally, by maintaining an open-minded object- and collection-led approach, this thesis asks how the objects discussed offer the opportunity to understand Shakespeare in ways that may countermand the pervasive iconography of a timeless and universal genius, something that works to exclude many communities through its reliance on hegemonic structures of power and knowledge.

The remainder of this general introduction positions this Shakespeare-orientated object study in its field and provides background information about the SBT and the aims of the project. It then details the method, rationale, and limitations of the study. The first chapter then provides a theoretical overview of the project, outlining in more detail its approach to the objects as material culture, museum, and archival objects. It qualifies the

study's preoccupation with Shakespeare's cultural capital as a product of Shakespeare's establishment as the first national poet. It explores Shakespeare's cultural capital as the stimulus for Stratford-upon-Avon's establishment as a 'world stage' on which international cultures can 'perform' their cultural worth by associating themselves with Shakespeare's cultural capital. It defines the function of Shakespeare in cultural diplomacy and describes how diplomacy shifts into soft power on the Shakespearean 'world stage' through a specific mode of appropriation. Finally, the first chapter outlines the ways in which the thesis uses post-colonial theory alongside critical race theory to identify and overhaul instances of imperialist thought practices in the collections. This theoretical paradigm is referred to as an anticolonial approach henceforth. Attending to the ways in which the SBT replicates such practices is vital to the project's aims of exploring the potential for the SBT's collections to contribute to discourses of inclusion and representation. That is, firstly, how the collections might work with and in society to overturn imperialist and white supremacist logic that maintains the marginalisation of ethnic minority communities, and secondly how the SBT might re-set the 'world stage' to make it a more welcoming and generative space for the 'performance' of all cultures.

Use of Terms

For the purposes of clarity, throughout this thesis, the terms 'item', 'object', and 'artefact' are interchangeable, as are 'donor' and 'gift-giver'. 'Collection' (singular) denotes a defined section from the broader collections of the SBT that is syntactically or contextually indicated. 'Collections' (plural) designates the entirety of the SBT's holdings, incorporating museum, library, archive, early modern, local history, archaeological, fine art, early printed books, and all international items. 'International collections' indicates those that have been

designated as such by this thesis, which include all relevant items related to Germany, the US, India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh, and China. 'International collection items/objects' indicates items from the SBT's entire holdings that are international. SBT catalogue references are provided in as close to MHRA style as possible, but also adhere to the title as given in the catalogue in order to make items easier to find. References for SBT books combine the SBT item titles with MHRA style. In consequence, referencing inconsistencies exist as per the SBT catalogue.

Contribution to knowledge

This project is distinct from previous work carried out on Shakespeare collections, at the British Museum and the SBT, in its intentional digression from Shakespeare's life and times, and even from the plays themselves. The items featured are mined for revelations about what Shakespeare means to the cultures discussed, and what those cultures tell us about Shakespeare. This project not only locates and contextualises the international objects in question, but creates and contextualises the SBT's German, US, Indian, Pakistani, and Bangladeshi, and Chinese collections for the first time. This project seeks connections within and beyond the individual collections as it queries Shakespeare's role in today's global cultural community through its discussions of cultural capital and cultural diplomacy. This study, then, has different objectives to Jonathan Bate and Dora Thornton's *Shakespeare: Staging the World*. That volume was published in 2012 to accompany the British Museum exhibition of the same name that was then created in honour of the World Shakespeare Festival, part of the Cultural Olympiad. Part of a 'series of events to showcase the nation's art and culture to the rest of the world', the book indicates the exhibition's centring of the

artefacts it discusses as demonstrations of Shakespeare's response to the world.³

Tara Hamling and Delia Garrett's *Shakespeare and the Stuff of Life* (2016) mines the SBT's early modern collections for objects that reveal insights into Shakespeare's environment to enrich our understanding of the man and the ways in which the material world influenced his plays.⁴ Another British Museum-originated project, by Neil MacGregor, delimits the objects in his study *Shakespeare's Restless World: An Unexpected History in Twenty Objects* (2014) as 'a physical starting point for a three-way conversation between the objects themselves, the people who used or looked at them, and the words of the playwright which have become such an embedded part of our language and our lives'.⁵

While the notion of the three-way conversation with the object at the centre is enticing, MacGregor's inward-looking approach would be entirely inappropriate for this project, which seeks to extirpate exclusionary practices: to place authority of interpretation so squarely in the text and British culture in a project that is concerned with *international* responses to Shakespeare would amount to a type of cultural imperialism as it privileges Shakespeare over the international source. Although an occasional reference to Shakespeare's plays contributes to the interpretation of specific objects, the authority of the object remains in its own cultural context and provenance, and any tendency to resort to Shakespeare as a form of interpretative authority is treated as a point for critique in accordance with the project's anticolonial aims.

³ Neil MacGregor, 'Director's Foreword', in *Shakespeare: Staging the World*, ed. by Jonathan Bate and Dora Thornton (The British Museum Press, 2012) p. 8.

⁴ Delia Garratt and Tara Hamling, *Shakespeare and the Stuff of Life* (London: Bloomsbury Arden Shakespeare, 2016).

⁵ Neil MacGregor, *Shakespeare's Restless World: An Unexpected History in Twenty Objects* (London: Penguin Books, 2014) p. viii.

Beyond object-orientated studies, Andrew Dickson's *Worlds Elsewhere: Journeys Around Shakespeare's Globe* (2015) informs this project through Dickson's journeying through the places here discussed and asking '[w]hy was Shakespeare, a writer who barely travelled, so popular globally? And why had he been not only adapted, but also adopted, in so many countries worldwide?'.⁶ Dickson's travel narrative offered a useful knowledgebase for my understanding of Shakespeare's general reception in Germany, the US, Subcontinental India, and China, although I have tried to rely on native secondary sources wherever possible in order to guard against Anglocentrism.

The Shakespeare Birthplace Trust

The SBT was established at the time of the purchase of the Birthplace as a national memorial to Shakespeare in 1847. As an independent charitable trust, the SBT is reliant on ticket sales and sees its principal work as promoting 'the enjoyment and understanding of [Shakespeare's] works, life and times all over the world'.⁷ These aims echo the terms of the Shakespeare Birthplace Act of Parliament of 1961 that incorporates today's Trustees and outlines the Trust's role: to maintain the Shakespeare-connected properties and collections for the people of Britain and the world.⁸ The Act, which first incorporated the SBT's Trustees in 1891, indicates the national importance of the maintenance and promulgation of

⁶ Andrew Dickson, *Worlds Elsewhere: Journeys Around Shakespeare's Globe* (London: Vintage, 2015), p. xxiii.

⁷ SBT, 'What We Do', *Shakespeare Birthplace Trust*, 2021 <<https://www.shakespeare.org.uk/about-us/what-we-do/>> [accessed 23 May 2021].

⁸ The extant terms of the 1961 Act are given as: 'To promote in every part of the world the appreciation and study of the plays and other works of William Shakespeare and the general advancement of Shakespearian knowledge; To maintain and preserve the Shakespeare properties for the benefit of the nation; To provide and maintain for the benefit of the nation a museum and a library of books, manuscripts, records of historic interest, pictures, photographs and objects of antiquity with particular but not exclusive reference to William Shakespeare, his life, works and times'. The Act was also updated in 2016 to re-define the governing body of Trustees. SBT, 'Who We Are', *Shakespeare Birthplace Trust*, 2021 <<https://www.shakespeare.org.uk/about-us/who-we-are/>> [accessed 11 June 2021]. See also <https://www.parliament.uk/about/living-heritage/transformingsociety/towncountry/towns/collections/collections-shakespeare/shakespeare-birthplace-trust/>.

Shakespeare's legacy and the state's interest in ensuring it is undertaken with appropriate care. As well as five Stratford-upon-Avon properties, including the Birthplace, the SBT cares for extensive library, archive, and museum collections that contain over one million documents, fifty thousand books and pamphlets (including three thousand rare and early printed books), and just over seven thousand museum objects. The cultural significance of the SBT's collections is indicated by its designation as a Collection of National Importance (jointly with the Royal Shakespeare Company) in 2005, the National Portfolio Funding it receives from Arts Council England, and the addition of the 'Shakespeare documents' (those that relate to his lifetime) to the UNESCO Memory of the World Register in 2018. The Register aims to facilitate preservation of, access to, and awareness of significant documentary heritage from around the world. Thirty-one out of the ninety Shakespeare documents are SBT holdings, the rest are comprised of documents from the National Archives, Worcestershire Archives and Archaeology Service, the British Library, College of Arms, London Metropolitan Archives, and the Folger Shakespeare Library. UNESCO's acknowledgement of the Shakespeare documents signals the ways in which Shakespeare's legacy and cultural significance have been woven into world heritage and the SBT's significant role in maintaining them.

Along with objects, artwork, printed books, and ephemera that speak to Shakespeare's life, epoch, and legacy, the SBT also cares for the RSC's theatre archive and Stratford-upon-Avon's local history archives, including those of local government, manors, private estates, businesses, and individuals dating from the 1100s. In consequence, among the SBT's collections are many items that bear intriguing connections to Shakespeare's international legacy in unexpected ways, as well as documents that record international communications and visits; books that respond to Shakespeare's works through translation,

illustration, music, and commentary in over eighty languages; and objects that constitute diplomatic gifts from nations and individuals all over the world. Such items come to constitute the SBT's international collection through this study.

Until this project commenced, only a few key international items had been subjected to any interpretation, suggesting a historic lack of interest in knowing anything about international collection items other than how it might affirm Shakespeare's 'universality' as a representation of Shakespeare's global appeal. International items that have been interpreted include the German Goethe wreath, some of the US items housed in the Harvard House collection, the Tagore tablet and bust, and the statue of Chinese poet Tang Xianzu and Shakespeare. The significance of these objects will become apparent, as they helped me to decide which regions I would explore through this project. The SBT's desire to understand these and the many other unexplored international responses to Shakespeare within its collections led to its collaboration with Birmingham City University to advertise this project. In acknowledgement of the prevailing 'whiteness' of the SBT and of Shakespeare Studies and calls for greater representation of minority and marginalised community members in all areas of heritage and culture, the project was formed with the further aim of querying if and how the SBT's international collection might contribute to those calls.

International gifts make up many of the richest responses to Shakespeare that are discussed in this thesis, often due to the clear diplomatic and/or nationalistic intent attached to them. In museological terms, these gifts are distinct from the gifts that museums regularly receive, of items that adhere to collecting policy as part of common collecting practice. These are 'ceremonial' gifts in the sense that they are presented to the

SBT, rather than specifically to the collections, and that the presentation of the item to the SBT, as Shakespeare's shrine, is of as much significance as the item itself. The Birthplace was thoroughly established as a shrine to Shakespeare in part through David Garrick's Shakespeare Jubilee of 1769 and the pursuant tradition of celebrating Shakespeare's birthday every year. International diplomatic gifts to the SBT date from the nineteenth century and are especially linked to the Tercentenary of 1864 and Quatercentenary of 1964. But the sense of the Birthplace as a place of pilgrimage, a destination to pay homage and present gifts to the shrine of Shakespeare, gained a properly diplomatic resonance in 1896. Clara Calvo explains that in that year the 'prominent presence in the celebrations of both the U.S. Ambassador to the court of Saint James and the U.S. Consul in Birmingham turned Shakespeare's annual birthday ritual into a diplomatic occasion' which was instrumental to the flourishing diplomatic and military alliance between the UK and the US.⁹ With the expansion of the birthday traditions to include the ceremonial unfurling of international flags in 1907, the diplomatic aspect of the annual festivities was properly ritualised. It is in this sense that the Birthplace and Stratford-upon-Avon can be figured as a 'world stage' on which nations can perform their reverence of Shakespeare and thus establish their congruence with the hegemonically established 'best' of world culture. This occurs not only through presence at the birthday celebrations, but also through the presence of representative objects in the SBT's collections.

Because of the open-access digital catalogue for the SBT's collections ('Discover Shakespeare'), and the limited occasions on which many of the items discussed in this thesis appear in the physical museum, this study necessarily considers how each of the four

⁹ Clara Calvo, 'Shakespeare's Church and the Pilgrim Fathers: Commemorating Plymouth Rock in Stratford', *Critical Survey*, 24.2 (2012), 54–70 (p. 55).

collections work as a representation of each place, and the story of Shakespeare in that place, should a person wish to search the catalogue for everything related to it. Moreover, this thesis asks how each collection might answer the needs of Shakespeare studies, cultural tourism, and society in terms of inclusion and representation. Answering this involves critiquing the SBT's catalogue descriptions with awareness of the ways in which Shakespeare's cultural capital endows significance or significations through each object.

The SBT's collections staff are a team of two archivists, one museum curator, one librarian, and three reader services assistants, who maintain the catalogue, care for the collections, advise researchers, and conduct research for exhibitions and smaller projects. Detailed interpretation of collection items is driven by exhibitions, events, or blog posts, so many objects only have basic accession information attached. Historic international gifts are subject to particularly haphazard accession record-keeping due to the haphazard mode of their arrival in the collection: unasked for and with tenuous adherence to the SBT's collecting policy (discussed below). As 'ceremonial' items, rather than items destined for formal accessioning into the collections under the collecting policy, many gifts have been divorced from their provenance, thus their context, with time and changes of staff, as no record was kept at the time of their acceptance into the collections.¹⁰ Furthermore, without the teams of subject-specific experts that might be found at the British Museum, the National Archives, or the British Library, the SBT does not have the resources to provide detailed contextualisation for much of its international collection items. Due to these

¹⁰ Gifts are a common mode of accession into museum when they are donated in accordance with the collecting policy of the institution. The gifts under discussion in this thesis are given in a unique context that is brought about by Shakespeare's cultural role and capital. In the ways that are outlined in this and the next chapter, the gifts under discussion throughout this thesis should be understood to be 'ceremonial' as they have significance *as* gifts as well as in their materiality.

limitations, my reliance on catalogue records for many objects has been challenged both by lack of information and SBT spelling and interpretative mistakes. Part of this project has been an attempt to correct the descriptions that appear on the digital, public facing collections catalogue. The open-access digital catalogue, 'Discover Shakespeare', is accessible via Shakespeare.org.uk and is brilliantly useful for researchers or anyone curious about the SBT's collections. However, the online catalogue also makes such mistakes more significant and the need for further research into international items more pressing. Due to limited funds and personnel, the SBT has little facility to outsource expertise, although the ways in which volunteers and temporary staff are occasionally able to offer valuable expertise is demonstrated in this thesis, especially in chapter five, in which my interpretation of several Chinese items is greatly enhanced by the work of volunteer Lingling Xie and Ivy Dai, who was with the SBT on a LUMeN placement from Leicester University.

In addition to the limitation presented to this study by the lack of time and resources available to SBT staff to provide full records and undertake detailed research into collection items, a significant reason why many international items do not have much or any interpretation attached to them is because so many of them are 'ceremonial' gifts that do not adhere to the SBT's collecting policy. The SBT's Collections Development Policy document (2014-2019) indicates the mainly reactive nature of its collecting practices at the commencement of this project, noting that 'only in the area of newly printed books do we proactively add to the collections'.¹¹ Aside from new printed books in English, purchases from the past decade include the papers of prominent agents in the Shakespeare industry (such as composers and directors), an early modern cloak pin, and many images of

¹¹ SBT, 'The Shakespeare Birthplace Trust Collections Development Policy 2014 – 2019', p. 6.

Shakespeare and Stratford-upon-Avon. All were accessioned in accordance with the strategy outlined in the policy document: to collect items relating to Shakespeare's Stratford-upon-Avon, William Shakespeare ('the man'), Shakespeare's legacy, and Shakespeare in the world. The final category is most relevant to this project and is defined by items that indicate or relate to '[h]ow Shakespeare has influenced us, artistic & critical responses to Shakespeare and his works, how he is celebrated internationally'.¹² As such, the filigree dish that was presented to the SBT by the President of the People's Republic of Bangladesh in 2015 (described in chapter four) barely fits into the collecting policy at all, as it relates to Shakespeare only in that it was gifted to the SBT. For this reason, the dish is unaccessioned but is kept in the strongroom with the museum objects. Although it does not seem to fit with the SBT's collecting policy, for this project the dish constitutes an expression of cultural diplomacy that justifies its inclusion in the Indian, Pakistani, and Bangladeshi chapter. The SBT's Collections Development Policy document (2014-2019) reflects on such items by stating that all gifts should be considered potential acquisitions for the collections, but only those that fit within the collection policy should be accessioned. All unaccessioned gifts are kept by the department that received them or are passed on to the Collections department to store them. As an accredited museum, the SBT must act in accordance with the Museum Association's code of ethics regarding disposals, so accessioned items must go through a detailed review process to establish that the Trust is free to dispose of them. Thus, the benefit of not accessioning such items is that they can be disposed of with ease should the Trust need to do so.

¹² The Shakespeare Birthplace Trust Collections Development Policy 2014 – 2019, p. 5.

The collection narratives that form the four main chapters in this thesis all discuss some items that do not adhere to the collecting policy. Some are accessioned, some are not – indicating the flexibility of the SBT’s vague policy towards gifts – but many contribute to their respective collection narrative in intriguing ways that suggest that the Trust might benefit from the development of a specific policy for accepting international gifts. A targeted gift policy would also be useful to allow reflection on how the SBT might respond to diplomatic gifts offered in controversial circumstances. For example, following revelations in 2020 about China’s human rights abuses in Hong Kong and Xinjiang, a specific gift policy that is driven by understanding of the role Shakespeare plays in international diplomacy (discussed below) might consider whether the Trust would, could, or should ever refuse an international gift. Furthermore, would the Trust be so keen, in the current circumstances, to give its formal authorisation for the replica Shakespeare Birthplace and New Place in China’s San Weng (‘Three Masters’) development – which it signed off in 2018? International gifts are usually received through official visits, so it would be very strange to invite the visit only to refuse the gift. Those welcome to unfurl their national flag at the annual Shakespeare birthday celebrations are decided on by the town council, who base that decision on who is currently enjoying ambassadorial representation in the UK according to the Court of St. James. Thus, it is likely that a nation would have to be refused embassy status in order for a visit and/or gift to be refused by the Trust.

Nevertheless, there are tensions between the Trust’s apparently non-political, ‘neutral’ stance and its propagation of the idea of Shakespeare as ‘universal’. This thesis demonstrates how the SBT’s international items negotiate the concept of Shakespeare’s ‘universality’ and their own cultural specificity in fascinating ways that are illuminated further by the SBT’s responses to them. Attention to the SBT’s responses to international

items discloses the curatorial tension created by nations seeking narrative control of their representation on the SBT's 'world stage', while signs of the SBT's reliance on ticket sales highlights the ethical tension between art and commerce that has an impact on the SBT's interpretative voice. This thesis particularly notices such tensions in situations in which the SBT avoids engaging with contentious political issues: for example, not naming the Amritsar massacre of 1919, and thus, the British Raj's role in it, in a blog post about the bust of Rabindranath Tagore in the garden of the Birthplace that is discussed in chapter four.

What I understand to be the interpretative decision to avoid mentioning the bloodshed at Amritsar also highlights the Trust's role as a museum and not just the keeper of its collections, which accords with the demands of the Act of Parliament to not only maintain but *promote* enjoyment and understanding of Shakespeare. In 2007, the International Council of Museums defined the museum thus:

A museum is a non-profit, permanent institution in the service of society and its development, open to the public, which acquires, conserves, researches, communicates and exhibits the tangible and intangible heritage of humanity and its environment for the purposes of education, study and enjoyment.¹³

Each of the Trust's properties display exhibitions that adhere to the aim of recreating and/or representing aspects of Shakespeare's life. The exhibitions in the Shakespeare Centre (which one must travel through on the way to the Birthplace house) demonstrate Shakespeare's

¹³ Anon., 'Museum Definition', *ICOM* <<https://icom.museum/en/resources/standards-guidelines/museum-definition/>> [accessed 14 June 2021].

impact on the world today through contemporary artistic and literary responses from around the world. For example, the Tagore tablet, also mentioned in chapter four, has featured in these exhibitions to indicate the ways in which Shakespeare influenced the Bengali polymath. The SBT's commercial interest in maintaining a particular narrative about Shakespeare and itself is evident through its interpretation of such items when its responses place greater emphasis on the idea of Shakespeare's 'universality' than on any aspect of the international cultural figure the item represents.

Because the SBT sees its cultural and societal role as politically neutral, it shies away from the criticism of the Raj that would be implicit in naming the Amritsar Massacre as the motivation for Tagore's subsequent rejection of his knighthood. However, British museums have been deeply implicated in colonialism and colonial thought, as they were first established to display the spoils of Empire and bolster the imperial narrative of white European superiority.¹⁴ Since then, British museums have played a key role in associating the ideology of Empire with British national identity, thus promulgating exclusionary notions of not only whose history matters, but who can call themselves British at all. Hence, the notion of any British museum claiming a neutral stance is fraught, and this project queries whether the Trust's circumvention of controversial issues is due to ignorance, ineptness, or a deliberate stance. Although the latter is unlikely, claims of political neutrality are in any case betrayed by the resultant maintenance of the status quo that ultimately benefits the

¹⁴ See: Subhadra Das, 'We Need to Decolonise Museums', *Red Pepper*, 2019 <<https://www.redpepper.org.uk/we-need-to-decolonise-museums/>> [accessed 16 July 2019].; Sumaya Kassim, 'The Museum Will Not Be Decolonised', *Media Diversified*, 2017; <<https://mediadiversified.org/2017/11/15/the-museum-will-not-be-decolonised/>> [accessed 14 June 2021]; James Delbourgo, *Collecting the World: The Life and Curiosity of Hans Sloane* (Milton Keynes: Penguin Random House, 2017), pp. 315, 329, 335, 341-2; Subhadra Das and Miranda Lowe, 'Nature Read in Black and White: Decolonial Approaches to Interpreting Natural History Collections', *Journal of Natural Science Collections*, 6 (2018), 4–14.

ideology of white European supremacy. The fallacy of the SBT's 'neutrality' is compounded by its reliance on the idea of Shakespeare's 'universality' as the principal feature of its branding. The notion of universality is deeply intertwined with imperial logic, having been designed to establish what was valued, achieved, and known in European culture as 'the' standard for world culture. Thus, the institution of Shakespeare's 'universality' served to exclude from global social life those that valued different achievements and knowledges. Furthermore, it belies the fact that Shakespeare's worldwide fame resulted largely from colonial inculcation and the perpetuation of Shakespeare as a symbol of British cultural superiority, often at the cost of native traditions and pride in native culture.

The cultural authority invested in the SBT by the Act of Parliament is bolstered by the combined authority of the museum and Shakespeare's cultural capital. Thus, it is vital that the SBT understands the recommendations made in this thesis not as an iconoclastic 'take down' of Shakespeare, or even a criticism of the idea of his enduring greatness – which, in accord with the explanation given above, should not be conflated with his 'universality'. The recommendations of this thesis should be understood rather as a call to address the ways in which some of the discourses of Shakespeare's greatness – including that of his 'universality' – reiterate imperial logic that privileges white Anglo-centric, Eurocentric, and increasingly 'West-centric' world views that continue to do harm in the world today.¹⁵

Method, Rationale, Limitations

Due to the scale of the SBT's collections, decisions had to be made in the early stages of this project about which global regions it should cover, what sorts of objects it should include or

¹⁵ For an example see Edward Said's 2003 preface, an update from his 1978 and 1994 editions, to explain how the West-centric, Orientalising perspectives discussed in his earlier work, and relating largely to the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century constructions of imperial epistemologies, shaped Western public perceptions of the 'War on Terror' that followed the World Trade Centre attacks in 2001: Said, p. xi-xxiii.

preclude, and on what basis. After spending some time familiarising myself with the broader collection and beginning to appreciate which were the most striking international engagements, I decided to begin my study with Germany. Outside of the UK, Germany is arguably the nation with the longest engagement with Shakespeare, and potentially the most intense. The ways in which Shakespeare was used to bolster German national cultural identity drew intriguing comparisons with the ways in which Shakespeare was also used to establish a national cultural identity in the US. I decided on the US for my second collection narrative partly on this basis and partly because the Trust's largest number of international visitors year on year are from the US (second only to visitors from the UK), with forty-three thousand registered in 2017.

My third collection narrative was decided by one of the most imposing items in the Birthplace Garden, the bronze bust of Bengali poet Rabindranath Tagore, and its connection to the ivory tablet of Tagore's poem for Shakespeare's 1916 Tercentenary, which was presented at Shakespeare's Quatercentenary in 1964. Furthermore, the bust's situation in relation to the marble plaque with Pakistani national poet Muhammad Iqbal's poem for Shakespeare, also from the 1916 Tercentenary (on the wall in the Marble Hall, which overlooks the garden) suggested that a chapter on India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh would provide an opportunity to think about those items as gifts in a postcolonial and post-partition context. The large population of South Asian people and those with South Asian heritage in the Midlands and Birmingham (where the UK Iqbal Academy are based) made this choice more pertinent to the project's aims of gauging how the SBT's collections might work to enhance the representation and inclusion of ethnic minorities in British culture and society.

After the US, Chinese visitors register in the next greatest numbers, with almost eighteen thousand entering the Birthplace in 2017. This fact, as well as the statue of Shakespeare and the Chinese poet, Tang Xianzu, that stands a few metres away from the Tagore bust; the proliferation of Chinese gifts that were to be found in the SBT's stacks and dotted around the Shakespeare Centre; and the impending opening of the replica Birthplace and New Place in Fuzhou City, Jiangxi Province, led me to decide on China for my final chapter. The replica buildings in Fuzhou will stand in the 'Stratford-upon-Avon quarter' of the San Weng ('Three Masters') culture and tourism complex that will also have a Spanish Alcalá quarter to celebrate Miguel de Cervantes and an ancient Fuzhou village to celebrate Tang Xianzu. All three playwrights died in 1616, and the 220-acre park, which is due to open in 2022, is intended to promote tourism through the authenticity and variety of the recreated seventeenth-century quarters. The SBT authorised the reconstruction formally in 2018, the first time they have ever done such a thing, in acknowledgement of the popularity of the Birthplace with Chinese visitors.¹⁶ The decision to finish the thesis with China also brought the trajectory of the thesis to the present day, as China is the nation that has had the most frequent and high-profile engagements with Shakespeare in the last decade.

Each of the selected nations offered a broad range of objects for discussion and the chapters speak to one another in terms of nationalism, engagement with the global cultural marketplace, diplomacy and gift-giving, and how Shakespeare's cultural capital functions in the world. I hoped to be able to include a chapter on South Africa, which might have centred on the 2006 loan of the 'Robben Island Bible' to the SBT. The so-called 'Bible' is the

¹⁶ SBT, 'Shakespeare's Family Homes to Be Re-Created in China', *The Shakespeare Birthplace Trust*, 2018 <<https://www.shakespeare.org.uk/about-us/news-media/press-releases/shakespeares-family-homes-be-re-created-china/>> [accessed 21 June 2021].

Complete Works of Shakespeare that was passed around the prison on Robben Island whilst Nelson Mandela (1918-2013) was being held there, and in which many of the prisoners marked and signed their names against passages that were meaningful to them. The volume gained its moniker when its owner, Sonny Venkatrathnam (1935-2019) covered it with images of Hindu gods, disguising it as a religious text so the guards would not confiscate it. Despite the potential afforded by a discussion of the 'Bible' and its time in Stratford-upon-Avon, the fact that there was only one object (other than books) actually in the collections from South Africa indicated that there was not enough data (objects) to justify the dedication of a whole chapter. As well as Africa, the Australian and South American continents are missing from this thesis due to limitations on time (to gather the collections, analyse, and contextualise them) and the potential quality and quantity of items available to produce a compelling chapter for this thesis. A separate study on any or all of these areas, with a more accommodating structure, would surely generate an important contribution to understanding of Shakespeare in the world, so the missing continents are acknowledged once more in the Recommendations section of this thesis.

The selection of Germany, the US, India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh, and China, in that order created a sense of chronology as the thesis works from the oldest international engagement with Shakespeare to the most recent. Combined with the necessary particularisation of the nations discussed, such an approach requires circumspection in accord with the project's aims to identify and correct exclusionary practices in the SBT's approaches. In his introduction to *Shakespeare and National Culture* (1997), John Joughin acknowledges that the arrangement of that volume's sections 'no doubt reinforces restrictions and assumptions which [...] are indirectly complicit with the forms of identity thinking that they would otherwise oppose': that is to say, the arrangement of the sections

replicates cultural hierarchies and ‘reinscribe[s] something of the logics of differentiation which so often secures nationalism’s ongoing claim to validity’.¹⁷ By effectively working ‘outward’ from a European ‘core’, does the structure of this thesis reproduce imperially established hierarchies, assert fundamental Anglo-nationalist ownership of Shakespeare, and assume a Western readership – what Jacqueline Lo and Helen Gilbert have referred to as ‘a Western vision of exchange’ that ‘replicates the “West and the rest” binary paradigm’?¹⁸ Furthermore, does the implied chronology of the thesis imply an investment in social Darwinist ideas of linear progression of civilisations, through which Europe always privileges itself with superiority? It is my hope that my critique of imperialist practices and the emphasis that I have placed in both the India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh chapter and the China chapter on their ancient cultural histories – as extant long before Shakespeare was born – assuage any reader concerns about implied readership or implicit imperialism in the structure of this thesis.¹⁹

In order to guard against Anglo-centric perspectives in my interpretation of the collections, I decided to engage expert scholars, native to the places I was studying, to read my collection narratives before submission. Access to suitable people to read and respond to my chapters was made possible through my supervisors’ broad networks of colleagues as well as through my own networking at events like the Shakespeare Association of America annual meeting, which I attended in 2018 and 2019 thanks to the Midlands4Cities student development fund. The feedback received from my German readers, in particular,

¹⁷ John J. Joughin, ‘Introduction’, in *Shakespeare and National Culture*, ed. by John J. Joughin (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1997), pp. 1–16 (p. 2).

¹⁸ Jacqueline Lo and Helen Gilbert, ‘Toward a Topography of Cross-Cultural Theatre Praxis’, *TDR (1988-)*2, 46.3 (2002), 31–53 (p. 37).

¹⁹ Similar concerns about structure and imperial and Eurocentric hierarchies and essentialism have been expressed by Alexa Alice Joubin, *Shakespeare and East Asia* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021), p. 9.

highlighted one of the key personal limitations of this study: my monolingualism. Being unable to read or speak any of the languages of the nations I had chosen to study in relation to the SBT's collections meant that I had to rely on English-language secondary material, while also trying to use the work of native critics – wherever it was possible to ascertain a critic's nationality through internet searches. This meant I had no access to original texts and had to rely on interpretations that were occasionally disputed among native speakers. My intention to ask expert native scholars to read and respond to each chapter before submission gained an additional benefit: to guard against faulty English-language scholarship, as well as against Anglo-centric perspectives. In such a situation, for instance, regarding the interpretation of a German novel, my German readers agreed that the interpretation on which I had relied was incorrect, so I was able to correct it.

The four main chapters of this thesis provide an overview of all the items that relate to Germany, the US, India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh, and China as respective 'collection narratives': that is, narratives that have been formed by and around the objects and not by any pre-conceived idea of the reception of Shakespeare in each place. Thus, the narratives do not offer a comprehensive history of Shakespeare in that place, nor will the history of Shakespeare scholarship in each place be congruous with what is represented in each narrative. First, the chapters present a narrative outline of the items in the SBT's collections that contribute to the understanding of Shakespeare in that place. Second, the chapters ask what that place and its collection can add to the broader narrative of Shakespeare's legacy. This twofold approach informs the aims that shape each narrative and provides the rationale for the inclusion of each item.

A rationale for inclusion is essential given the vastness of the SBT's collections and the number of items that might mention or relate to Germany, for example, while not offering any reflection on Shakespeare and Germany. Such items include the Public Record Office documents that mention India and China but offer nothing in terms of the relationship with Shakespeare in those places. Also, Jane Tonge Thompson's diary of 1839-1840 relates her experience as an English immigrant in Washington DC in those years but does not mention Shakespeare. Such documents are incidental to the SBT's collections by virtue of its local record office holdings and thus indicate another major limitation of this study: to discuss only items that contribute in meaningful ways to the objectives of understanding Shakespeare in that place and understanding that place 'in Shakespeare'.

Indeed, in deciding which items to include in each collection narrative, the archive and library lists required the most filtering due to the quantities of documents that had varying degrees of relevance in the former and the many translations and critical works in the latter. The decision to exclude translations was taken early on. First, the sheer number of translations available in the SBT's library vault means that a separate doctoral thesis could be produced for each nation in this study. Second, specialist knowledge of the nuances and emphases of translation and book theory would be required, not to mention fluency in all languages in which Shakespeare has been published in the regions being discussed. For an example of the scale of the task, the SBT library contains translations in at least six languages for the Indian Subcontinent. In consequence, where translations or critical works are mentioned, it is to contextualise when and where they were being produced in view of how that information interacts with the collection narrative. The books or pamphlets that have been included are therefore approached as *objects* that generate meaning through their materiality rather than their textuality. The same logic applies to the

ephemera of international performances of Shakespeare (playbills, photographs, reviews, and recordings, for example). Such items may be included if the circumstances of their production *as an object* are relevant to the collection narrative, but not otherwise, and not in terms of the broad field of performance studies. The focus on *objects* is a vital limitation of the selection process for this study.

In addition, items that prompt some reflection on a specific moment or event of relevance to the collection narrative but do not relate to Shakespeare are glossed without any deep analysis: the Raeran and Bartmannkrug jugs mentioned in the Germany chapter, for example. These items indicate the movement of goods and fashions in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Europe and reflect on the movement of ideas that inspired Shakespeare and later European readers of his work, but do not add anything further to the narrative of Shakespeare in Germany. This approach was not untested, however. Some items seemed to be incidental, like the German jugs, but actually offered much more in the scheme of the collection narrative once it was collated. For example, the US collection begins with a map made by Flemish cartographer Gerhard Mercator, and the Indian collection begins with a trinket box made from a tortoise shell. Neither item could speak to the relationship between Shakespeare and that nation on its own, but because they illuminate the early development of narratives of 'discovery', they inform the interpretation of more closely related items in their respective collection narratives. Likewise, I might have decided to place a blanket exclusion on the local history collections as they do not adhere to the SBT's current collecting policy, but I quickly found that some of the items in those collections enrich the collection narratives through the introduction of a wider context. For example, in the China chapter, letters from the missionary Elizabeth Rice highlight the British presence in China in the 1920s, which reflects on the role that missionaries played in

introducing Shakespeare in China through that period. As Rice's letters were sent from Wanhsien, they also prompt remembrance of the 'Wanhsien Incident' of 1926, a conflict between a Chinese War Lord and the British Navy that resulted in the Navy firing indiscriminately on the town. Thus, the letters reflect not only on the missionaries in China but on the operation – the violence – of the Imperial institutions that simultaneously used Shakespeare to authorise their claims of advanced civility and legitimise their power over 'other' nations. Although the connection between such items and Shakespeare is incidental, letters like the one described above enrich the collection narratives through the introduction of a wider context that more often than not can be brought back to Shakespeare due to his cultural prominence. Exploration of the affective power that forges such connections, where they exist, makes the items worthy additions to the collection.

Locating relevant items required a process of searching the SBT's electronic combined catalogue and forming individual datasheets (in the form of Excel spreadsheets) for museum, library, and archive items relating to each of the places. I searched by the country, by native languages, key cities or towns, and by the names of key persons from that place. Individual museum, library, and archive sheets were necessary as the database does not integrate the separate collections. I then went through each list to ascertain which items revealed something for the purposes of the thesis, which items should be included but glossed, and which could be left out of the collection narrative. All items will be available to the Trust on my annotated spreadsheet database for future use. Organising the datasheets by date and noting thematic or topical repetitions allowed the observation of patterns and helped with the ordering of the collection narratives. As a result, the German and Chinese narratives are organised chronologically. The Indian, Pakistani, and Bangladeshi narrative is semi-chronological due to the divergence indicated by the partitions of the Subcontinent in

1947 and 1971; the chapter begins with the complete Indian collection to the present day, then gives the complete Pakistani collection from 1947 to today, then gives the complete Bangladeshi collection from 1971 to today. The US datasheets indicated the greatest number of distinct themes of all the collections but revealed them to recur chaotically throughout the time period covered by the collection. As such, the US chapter begins chronologically with early responses to the Americas and Shakespeare's arrival there with English immigrants, but is thereafter organised by theme, with a chronological approach in each section where possible.

In summary of this sub-section, the limitations for the study include the following: that the thesis comprises four chapters, presenting collection narratives for six designated nations; that the thesis is a study of objects (rather than texts or performances); that the collection narratives are framed by the objects themselves and focused on what is in the SBT's collections rather than a preconceived notion of what an account of Shakespeare in that place should cover; that the objects are included on the basis of their ability to contribute something to the narrative of Shakespeare in the place they relate to, through their own properties or generated by the nexus of the collection of which they are part; the study uses English language sources only, mitigating the potential for Anglo-centric interpretation by using the work of native critics and through expert native readers' responses; the thesis is largely dependent on the often limited information about the objects that is provided in the SBT's catalogue and concentrates on accessioned items, or items that are unaccessioned but available. This latter limitation is key as only half of the archive collections are currently available on the electronic catalogue, and the project did not afford enough time to manually search through the handwritten archive accession register of over a million documents. Similarly, the SBT's collection of prints and drawings

are largely unaccessioned and provided with scarce provenance and artist biography, making a full account of them too time consuming for this project. A final major logistical limitation is that the entire fourth chapter, on China, the conclusion, and this introduction were written without access to the SBT's collections due to the extended closure of the Shakespeare Centre under Covid-19 restrictions. It was fortunate that I had already gathered the data for the China chapter, but I have been unable to return to items I had hoped to check once more from all four chapters, and there are many secondary sources I had hoped to consult from the SBT's library. I have made footnotes to acknowledge information that is missing for this reason. For the same reason, not all of the photographs featured in this thesis are of professional quality.

The most salient limitation is that the collection narratives are so called because they are limited by what is in the SBT's collections. As such, this thesis asks how far the collections can be understood as an indication of the ways that nation wishes to see itself represented on the SBT's 'world stage'. It also asks what is missing from each collection narrative. What is more, are there any 'skeletons' in the SBT's 'closet', that the nation or the SBT might prefer to hide or avoid?

Chapter One: Theoretical Approaches

Objects

Each object discussed in this thesis contributes to its collection narrative through meanings that are *intrinsic*, based on what they are; *semantic*, based on what they say they are; and *symbolic*, by what they come to mean through their context in the SBT's collections. In this sense, my approach to object theory accords with Susan M. Pearce's formulation for 'organizing the properties of an object for the purposes of artefact study'.²⁰ Through this three-tier system of interpretation, gifts, souvenirs, records, and relics are found to possess complex, layered meanings. This project makes clear the ways in which objects create meaning in historical and immediate terms: that is, how objects can engender rich interpretations of historical moments or processes and can continue to do so in new ways through the present, as encounters between those connected to an object – by nationality or shared interest, for example – engender new responses.

This project is, therefore, a study of material culture, which is to say the study of objects as the 'physical manifestation of some aspect of human society' the meaning/s of which can be determined 'by the very unique circumstances that surround it'.²¹ The study attends to each object's provenance, the implicit acknowledgment of materialism which arises in consideration of the conditions of the object's production, the circumstances of its

²⁰ Susan M. Pearce, 'Thinking About Things', in *Interpreting Objects and Collections*, ed. by Susan M. Pearce (London: Routledge, 1994), pp. 125–32 (p. 126).

²¹ Marianne Hulsbosch, Elizabeth Bedford, and Martha Chaiklin, 'Asian Material Culture in Context', in *Asian Material Culture*, ed. by Marianne Hulsbosch, Elizabeth Bedford, and Martha Chaiklin (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2009), pp. 9–16 (p. 12).

acquisition, any implied social or political uses, and, most importantly, the means of arrival at the SBT. In this sense, my approach can be informed by Object Theory only partially, as this thesis is as much a study of the gesture of which the object is a part as of the object itself. The sections on cultural performance and gifts, later in this chapter, expand on this further.

Through this thesis, the objects discussed have been defined as part of a discrete collection within the SBT's collections. Acknowledging an object as part of a collection is to 'ritually transform it into a personally and socially significant object. The sacralised item becomes a vehicle of transcendent experience which exceeds its utilitarian and aesthetic endowment'.²² The fact that this transformation is described in the religious terms of 'ritual' and 'sacralization' not only affirms the invisible power of objects in/and collections to make meanings and connections, but, for the purposes of this thesis, accords with the religious connotations that have been present in approaches to Shakespeare since his rise to become the English national and the 'world's greatest' poet in the eighteenth century. The bringing together of the collection is the first stage of the transformation, in which 'the sacrality of each item is enhanced' by 'metonymic association'; through the second stage, the 'container (whether it be envelope, box or room) chosen to house the collection defines a sacred space'.²³ That the container for the international and broader collections is the Shakespeare Birthplace itself, imbued with the significance of a shrine and Shakespeare's cultural capital (discussed below) enhances the significations and significance of the objects in its collections even further. The pseudo-religious metaphors of curation offered here

²² Russell W. Belk, 'Collectors and Collecting', in *Interpreting Objects and Collections*, ed. by Susan M. Pearce (London: Routledge, 1994), pp. 317–26 (p. 320).

²³ *Ibid* (p. 320).

assist in understanding the motive for nations to give gifts to the SBT, and hint at the significance a discrete collection relating to Shakespeare in one place, be it Germany, Pakistan, or China, might have for those who wish for recognition of their nation's contribution to Shakespeare's afterlife from the museum of his birthplace.

However, collection theory presumes active collecting practices in which the objects have been selected for inclusion with the deliberate aim of possessing a complete set or a clear narrative account of a particular topic.²⁴ Many of the objects that form the SBT's international collection through this project are passively received 'ceremonial' gifts, and many of the connections to the place in question and/or Shakespeare are incidental (the archival material in particular). Thus, the international collection begins as an assemblage of material culture that arrived in the SBT's larger collection in the most part through accumulation rather than because of a deliberate collecting policy for the purposes of a specific collection. However, this passive accumulation means that the SBT's international items are not as subjugated to the SBT's narrative power as the early modern museum objects, for example, which have often been acquired to tell particular stories in particular ways. Thus, the accumulated international items retain some agency in their potential to divulge information that is extraneous to the narrative of Shakespeare's cultural significance. Although the meaning of international items can always be appropriated by the SBT to enhance Shakespeare's cultural significance, as it is in the case of the Tagore items in chapter four, this thesis asks how that subversive agency can in turn appropriate Shakespeare's cultural capital.

²⁴ Susan M. Pearce, 'The Urge To Collect', in *Interpreting Objects and Collections*, ed. by Susan M. Pearce (London: Routledge, 1994), pp. 157–59 (p. 159).

As noted in the 'Method' section in the General Introduction, the collection objects are the driving force for this thesis and provide their own framework for interpretation through the context of their belonging to a specific SBT collection. Thus, not all aspects of their provenance and properties are relevant, as they might be in a different context. To use the Tagore bust as an example, while a straightforward object study would certainly aim to discover more about its bronze construction and perhaps the process of making the sculpture, such enquires are not conducive to answering the questions of this thesis. As a study of responses to Shakespeare by a particular place, the fact that the bust is bronze is not a relevant aspect for interpretation as it is a standard material for such an item, is in no way unique to India, and offers no insight into significances for the relationship between the SBT and India. However, as the discussion and conclusions of the same chapter show, the enquiry into the ivory construction of the Tagore plaque provides a highly relevant contextualisation of the object as it draws forth the rich and ancient history of artwork in ivory in the Indian Subcontinent. This history, in turn, queries British assumptions of cultural supremacy and ideas about Shakespeare's authority that are anchored in the longevity of his work and fame (indicated by historic SBT responses to the item). By ensuring that each national collection defines its own terms of enquiry, this study maintains its anticolonial, anti-Anglo-centric aims, and draws attention to areas for critique in terms of the SBT's interpretative approaches.

In acknowledgement of the fact that the meanings that are generated by the objects in this project are not only socially assigned but created in the human realm of language, I have been cautious about Object Oriented Ontologies (OOO), Thing Theory, and New Materialisms due to their preoccupation with agency and forces being exerted by objects

without human design (for example, gases that are released from rotting waste).²⁵ However, some SBT collection objects, like the aforementioned map of the Americas, manifest meanings that appear to have been unanticipated by both the giver and the SBT until this project recontextualised them as part of a specific collection. Such objects conjure thing theory, a close relation to OOO that also ‘decenter[s] the human in favour of the material world’. Indeed, the phenomenologist Martin Heidegger ‘distinguished between *objects*, as artefacts defined by their sensible properties, and *things*, matter that has entered into a relational dynamic, and thus exceeds its own physical characteristics’.²⁶ Thus, interpretations are still socially assigned, historically contingent, and subject to human perception, but the agency of language is demoted in favour of the agency of the object. In this configuration, language is not so much constructing meanings as simply communicating them, functioning as the medium for the object or thing’s articulation of meanings that exist outside of its original humanly assigned properties. Certainly, Mercator’s map of the Americas was never intended to contextualise colonialist practices in a study of Shakespeare and in consequence has thoroughly exceeded its physical characteristics.

Valerie Fazel and Louise Geddes’s most recent volume on Shakespeare and appropriation would argue that such articulations, the unintended and previously unexpressed meanings of a ‘Shakespeare object’, are realised and/or released due to the affective power of Shakespeare *as* an object. By thinking of ‘Shakespeare’ as an assemblage

²⁵ Edwina Taborsky, ‘The Discursive Object’, in *Objects of Knowledge*, ed. by Susan Pearce (London: Athlone Press, 1990), pp. 50–78 (pp. 52, 53). Regarding OOO, New Materialism, and Thing Theory See: Peter Schwenger, ‘Words and the Murder of the Thing’, *Critical Inquiry*, 28.1 (2001), 99–113; Jonathan Lamb, *The Things Things Say* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011); Bill Brown, ‘Thing Theory’, *Critical Inquiry*, 28.1 (2001), 1–22; Diana Coole and Samantha Frost, *New Materialisms: Ontology, Agency, and Politics*, ed. by Diana Coole and Samantha Frost (Durham & London: Duke University Press, 2010); Jane Bennett, *Vibrant Matter: A Political Ecology of Things* (Durham & London: Duke University Press, 2010).

²⁶ Sarah Wasserman, *The Death of Things: Ephemera and the American Novel* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2020), p. 6.

of the plays and poems, the folios, the cultural capital, and I would add, the SBT and its collections, Shakespeare can be recognised ‘as a speculative object that sits outside hegemonic cultural orders and intersects, as an equal participant, with the acts of creative, critical use that manifest as Shakespeare appropriation’.²⁷ This framework, which relies on the principles of OOO, works to disentangle Shakespeare from what has been done *to* him through appropriation (and the ways in which he has been implicated in imperial oppression) for deeper recognition of the ‘peculiar unpredictability within Shakespeare that cannot always account for consequences or the effects of others’ (human or thingly) interventions with it’.²⁸ Thus, the Shakespeare assemblage drives the interpretations in this thesis and is implicated in those interpretations that constitute interruptions to the hegemonic narrative of Shakespeare’s legacy: that which is usually appropriated by donors and presented by the Trust. This study was brought about through Shakespeare’s cultural capital and Shakespeare’s potential usefulness to both social justice projects and the maintenance of white Western hegemony: as such, Shakespeare’s affective power, which derives from the Shakespearean assemblage, makes it possible to present the varied narratives offered by these objects.

Relics, Souvenirs, Ephemera

All museums, and most collections (which can be private as well as part of a cultural institution) contain objects that can be classed as relics or souvenirs, and most also contain ephemera. All three categories of objects have gained their significance to a collection through their ability to connect past and present. ‘Ephemera’ includes items that were

²⁷ Valerie M. Fazel and Louise Geddes, ‘Introduction: Bound in a Nutshell: Shakespeare’s Vibrant Matter’, in *Variable Objects: Shakespeare and Speculative Appropriation*, ed. by Valerie M. Fazel and Louise Geddes (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2021), pp. 1–20 (p. 2).

²⁸ Fazel and Geddes (p. 2).

intended for transient purposes, such as letters, printed advertisements, tickets, or stamps, that have for any reason been saved for posterity: '[t]he transient objects that remain with us (whether collected intentionally, folded in with other items, or encountered randomly)' that 'work to stabilize history'.²⁹ Certainly the letters and newspaper clippings mentioned in this thesis stabilise our sense of the world in the moment they represent, as well as illuminating an aspect of the collection of which they are part. In chapter three, the telegram that explains Jacqueline Kennedy's decision not to attend the opening of the new Shakespeare Centre, in 1964, while she was mourning her husband, is a striking example of the power of ephemera in such a collection. The telegram explains the substitution of Kennedy's name on the plaque outside the Shakespeare Centre for that of Eugene R. Black, Chairman of the American 1964 Shakespeare Committee, who took her place. The telegram also brings the momentous event of John F. Kennedy's untimely death into the narrative of Shakespeare in the US through the SBT's collections, demonstrating aptly the ways in which ephemeral objects 'are often keyed to specific occasions that they outlast'.³⁰ Indeed, of all the categories of object presented in this thesis, the ephemera most often straddle the line between primary and secondary source as the objects contextualise one another within their collection narratives.

While ephemera tend to link the present to an event from the past, the connection to the past that is formed by relics is one centred on a specific historical person. Such objects are 'supposed to have been in contact with a god or hero or to constitute the remains of some great event in the mythical or far-distant past'.³¹ In the SBT's collections,

²⁹ Wasserman, p. 3.

³⁰ Wasserman, p. 6.

³¹ Krzysztof Pomian, 'The Collection: Between the Visible and the Invisible', in *Interpreting Objects and Collections*, ed. by Susan M. Pearce (London: Routledge, 1994), pp. 160–74 (p. 167).

relic items are often also souvenirs as they simultaneously connected their original possessor to Shakespeare and to the individual's experience at the Birthplace or in Stratford-upon-Avon. Pearce explains:

Souvenirs are intrinsic parts of a past experience, but because they, like the human actors in the experience, possess the survival power of materiality not shared by words, actions, sights and the other elements of experience, they alone have the power to carry the past into the present. Souvenirs are samples of events which can be remembered, but not relived.³²

Items that cross the boundary between relic and souvenir include the fragment of wood that was allegedly taken from the Birthplace circa. 1887 and was donated to the Trust by the Connecticut Historical Society in 1982. Other relics include the 'Shakespeare' death mask mentioned in the Germany chapter and the cedar plaque (made from a tree from the Birthplace Garden) that is one of a series that were presented to US Shakespeare festivals during the 'Shakespeare on the Road' tour in 2014 (for Shakespeare's 450th birthday) and is now on display in the Birthplace Museum. All the relics and souvenirs discussed indicate the desire for connection, and the capacity of objects to connect to Shakespeare, as well as the importance of the Birthplace as a quasi-religious locus of connection.

The quasi-religious status of Shakespeariana, which for the purposes of this thesis encompasses all the assemblages of Shakespeare – the man, the text, the folios, the cultural

³² Susan M. Pearce, 'Collecting Reconsidered', in *Interpreting Objects and Collections*, ed. by Susan M. Pearce (London: Routledge, 1994), pp. 193–204 (p. 195).

capital, the legacy, the appropriations, and certainly the SBT and its properties – was essentially established through the combined efforts of the ‘Garrick Jubilee’ of 1769 and the marketing tactics of the Shakespeare Birthplace Committee’s fundraiser for the nation’s purchase of the Birthplace in 1847.³³ The introduction of religious language around the time of the Birthplace’s sale was to declare its importance as a site of cultural heritage: as ‘shrine’, ‘hallowed’, ‘monument’, ‘place of pilgrimage’, and ‘relic’. This deepened the sense of its ‘right’ to be understood as an authentic space of cultural heritage through the creation of an ‘intimate, even supernatural, connection with Shakespeare’.³⁴ As Barbara Hodgdon explains, ‘authenticity is not about factuality or reality, it is about authority, which is produced by and through cultural assemblages that gesture beyond the realm of particular objects or artefacts toward myths of contact and presence’.³⁵ Such myths, of a genuine mode of connection to Shakespeare, transform the Birthplace and its collections into ‘signifiers within an artificially constructed frame, gaining symbolic content as they figure a line of descent or situatedness of time and place’.³⁶ Thus, the Birthplace functions as a space in which connection to Shakespeare can be imagined in varying and creative ways, according to the needs of the individual or nation engaging with it and its cultural authority.

In consequence of the evident strength of the connection to Shakespeare that is forged through the locale of the Birthplace, it might be argued that all items that belong to ‘the Shakespeare collections’ can be interpreted as a type of relic. Certainly, the wooden souvenir items have this kind of significance, as through the mythology of the mulberry tree

³³ Julia Thomas, *Shakespeare’s Shrine* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012), p. 43.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 44.

³⁵ Barbara Hodgdon, *The Shakespeare Trade: Performances and Appropriations* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1998), p. 203.

³⁶ *Ibid.*

supposed to have been planted by Shakespeare himself in the New Place Garden, ‘trees and wood have become the medium through which Shakespeare’s connection to his hometown can be expressed, understood, and experienced’.³⁷ Furthermore,

The early descriptions of items connected to Shakespeare as “relics” and “memorials” (usually referring to salvaged fabric and newly crafted items, respectively) suggest that we are bound to consider these objects within a framework that acknowledges both the “religious terminology” and culture of commemoration that became attached to Shakespeare sites.³⁸

Thus, objects can be connected to Shakespeare simply by belonging to the ‘sacred’ collections of the SBT. This thesis suggests that in many cases, the international gifts were given with the purpose – national or personal – of forging such a connection between Shakespeare and the giver. Consequently, this thesis queries the implications of the initial desire for connection as well as the hierarchies of cultural power that operate through the exchange.

The Museum

The SBT as a museum is the most vital aspect of its work and is reflected in the availability of its collections through the online digital catalogue, ‘Discover Shakespeare’. Like forms of travel writing and early maps, both of which have parts to play in the

³⁷ Cathryn Enis and Tara Hamling, ‘Shakespeare’s Lost Domesticity: Material Responses to Absence in Stratford-upon-Avon’, *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 70.1 (2019), 52–83 (p. 59).

³⁸ *Ibid* (p. 64).

collections discussed in this thesis, museums function as pedagogical institutions that work under the remit of 'a will to truth' based upon 'the discursive authority of the texts we have to hand at present'.³⁹ For the purposes of this study, our texts are the objects themselves, materially and contextually, but are predominantly also the body of European and US history and criticism that most often accord value and legitimacy to their own perspectives. The anticolonial, anti-racist, non-Anglo/Eurocentric approach to which this project aims requires the disruption of this discursive authority, which will 'involve an awareness of the politics of discourse and the power structures in which it is embedded. This requires consideration of what kind of past we want in the present and why we produce the past in one manner rather than another'.⁴⁰

Thus, in order to address the museological aspect of this study, it is important to contextualise the societal role of museums through their history. The immediate prerogative of the first European museums in the eighteenth century was '[t]he ordering of artefacts as symbols of societies to signify the progression of civilisation and thus chart the position of Others in the Eurocentrically-conceived hierarchy of humanity'.⁴¹ Hodgdon connects the broader legacy of the early museological imperatives to the Shakespeare museum by describing the SBT's collecting policy (per 1998) as deriving from 'a moment in the history of Western possessive individualism in which identity itself is a kind of wealth and collecting a strategy for proving its authenticity'.⁴² Hodgdon thus illustrates how the SBT's museum and collections echo the ideological purposes of the imperial British

³⁹ Christopher Tilley, 'Interpreting Material Culture', in *Interpreting Objects and Collections*, ed. by Susan M. Pearce (London: Routledge, 1994), pp. 67–75 (p. 73).

⁴⁰ Tilley (p. 74).

⁴¹ Daniel Miller, 'Things Ain't What They Used To Be', in *Interpreting Objects and Collections*, ed. by Susan M. Pearce (London: Routledge, 1994), pp. 13–18 (pp. 13-15).

⁴² Hodgdon, p. 203.

museums and collectors: concerned with establishing its own authenticity, asserting its own authority, and ultimately accumulating and commanding the power to determine the narrative of Shakespeare's legacy. The authority of the Trust was shored up by the fact of its being understood to be the birthplace of Shakespeare, the house functioning as an 'umbilical' connection that 'proves' Stratford-upon-Avon's ownership of Shakespeare and his legacy.

Adrienne L. Kaeppler's contribution to Pearce's influential volume, *Museum Studies in Material Culture* (1991) indicates (albeit inadvertently) how the combined museum and Shakespeare authority described by Hodgdon actually operates. In her opening, Kaeppler appropriates one of Shakespeare's most famous lines to begin a discussion about the importance of museum objects and the stories they can tell. Kaeppler adapts the famous lines from the second Act of *As You Like It* to 'All museums are stages, and all the artefacts merely players'. In doing so, she demonstrates the ways in which information held in archives and storerooms is 'synthesized from a particular point of view into scripts' and that museums not only house the proscenium arches for the exits and entrances of the artefact players, but hold much of the material for piecing together the drama of ethnohistory.⁴³ Kaeppler uses Shakespeare's words to illustrate her point about cultural performance and the creative work that goes into cultural narratives to oppose any assumption that museums present neutral narratives based on 'fact'. In doing so, Kaeppler draws on Shakespeare's cultural capital to provide intellectual legitimacy to her analogy. Having evoked Shakespeare to establish what Marjorie Garber terms 'cultural literacy', the essay closes with an invocation against Western ethnographic museums' curatorial habit of privileging

⁴³ Adrienne L. Kaeppler, 'Museums of the World: Stages for the Study of Ethnohistory', in *Museum Studies in Material Culture*, ed. by Susan M. Pearce (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1991), pp. 83–96 (pp. 83, 85).

information about certain hegemonic groups over Others. The curatorial process is thus exposed as an act of cultural and racial supremacy that reinforces Eurocentric Darwinian-informed ideas about the relative progress of distinct factions of humanity through displays of cultural artefacts from the global south and east. However, the evocation of Shakespeare's language in this piece betrays a lack of awareness that, as Katherine Gillen and Lisa Jennings explain, 'Shakespeare occupies a privileged place both in the white male canon and in the history of colonialism. His works were marshalled in the interests of empire, often celebrated as evidence of Anglo cultural supremacy, and used as part of "civilizing" colonial projects'.⁴⁴ As such, not only does Kaeppler's edited Shakespeare quotation assume this authority, but the choice to use it plays a part in the establishment and maintenance of the cultural and social inequities against which she is advocating.

The irony of Kaeppler's use of Shakespeare's problematic authority in the opening of her essay, which contrasts with and undermines the intent of the article, works as a cautionary tale for this project (which problematises its own use of a Shakespeare quotation in the General Introduction). The power of the museum to present limited and potentially biased narratives as 'truth' under the auspices of its assumed authority is amplified by the cultural authority that has been placed in Shakespeare. As such, attention to the SBT's collections as museological collections vitalises this project's enquiry into the ethical

⁴⁴ Katherine Gillen and Lisa Jennings, 'Decolonizing Shakespeare? Toward an Antiracist, Culturally Sustaining Praxis', *The Sundial (ACMRS) | Medium*, 2019 <<https://medium.com/the-sundial-acmrs/decolonizing-shakespeare-toward-an-antiracist-culturally-sustaining-praxis-904cb9ff8a96>> [accessed 15 August 2020]. See also: Jyotsna G. Singh, *Shakespeare and Postcolonial Theory* (London: The Arden Shakespeare, 2019); Miles Grier, 'Are Shakespeare's Plays Racially Progressive? The Answer Is in Our Hands', in *The Cambridge Companion to Shakespeare and Race*, ed. by Ayanna Thompson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021), pp. 237–53; Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin, *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-Colonial Literatures*, 2nd edn (London: Routledge, 2002).

implications of the SBT's interpretation of its international items and troubles the notion of any cultural institution as ideologically neutral.

The Establishment of Shakespeare's Cultural Capital as National Poet

The concept of cultural capital is defined in Pierre Bourdieu's terms as 'the social esteem accrued by those members of society who possess "the cultural competence" to interpret and understand works of art, such as literature'. Hence, there is social value in 'using and understanding Shakespeare' as that capital is conferred onto the user.⁴⁵ Shakespeare's cultural capital is the driving force for the Shakespeare industry that encompasses not only the work of the SBT but the continued engagement with the plays in both theatrical and scholarly contexts around the world over four hundred years after the playwright's epoch.

Although Samuel Johnson's 1765 edition of Shakespeare's works did much to canonise Shakespeare by 'presenting him as an original genius on a par with Homer' and thus establishing him as 'someone whose fame and canonicity are beyond the vicissitudes of passing fashions', it was arguably at the 1769 Jubilee that Shakespeare's cultural capital was definitively established.⁴⁶ Indeed, the enaction of Shakespeare's 'transcendent originality' at this event 'prefigures the subsequent spread of his cult eastwards through Europe, and its spread westwards is equally determined by the particular phase of nationalist ideology which Garrick's festival registers'.⁴⁷ Thus began the sense that engagement with Shakespeare could be used to project a desirable self or national identity.

⁴⁵ Siobhan Keenan and Dominic Shellard, 'Introduction', in *Shakespeare's Cultural Capital: His Economic Impact from the Sixteenth to the Twenty-First Century*, ed. by Dominic Shellard and Siobhan Keenan (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), pp. 1–12 (p. 2).

⁴⁶ Ann Rigney and Joep Leerson, 'Introduction', in *Commemorating Writers in Nineteenth-Century Europe: Nation-Building and Centenary Fever*, ed. by Joep Leerson and Ann Rigney (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), pp. 1–23 (p. 1); Keenan and Shellard (p. 4.)

⁴⁷ Michael Dobson, *The Making of the National Poet: Shakespeare, Adaptation and Authorship, 1660-1769* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), p. 227.

The initial establishment of Shakespeare's cultural capital occurred in the midst of an emerging sense of British nationalism that was responding to centuries of European discord. Against the backdrop of the eighteenth-century series of Anglo-French wars, Voltaire's 1768 critique of Shakespeare's 'failure to anticipate and adhere to French neoclassical ideals and notions of decorum' fed into the ongoing rivalries and hostilities to become 'an important factor in the development of modern English nationalism'.⁴⁸ The Jubilee became a significant part of this process of rediscovery, establishing Shakespeare as a national figure to be worshipped as 'completely beyond the reach of rational criticism'.⁴⁹ The timely celebration established in Shakespeare a point of reverence through which English national culture – as distinct from that of the continent – could be formulated and expressed. As demonstrated in chapter two of this thesis, the specific use of Shakespeare to repel neo-classical strictures was echoed in the following century in Germany, as that nation sought to become through the reification of a national culture and the rejection of oppressive French cultural modes. Evidence of the use of England's establishment of Shakespeare as national poet and a profoundly successful agent of national unity is also present in chapter three, in which the US collection outlines the ways in which Shakespeare was retained as national poet for citizens of the brand-new United States after the ejection of British rulers. Again, in chapter five, the potency of Shakespeare's establishment as the ultimate national symbol is indicated in the Chinese collection narrative as it highlights the upheavals of early twentieth-century China and the ways in which Shakespeare's national and international status became a model for a revitalised national culture.

⁴⁸ Kathryn Prince, 'Shakespeare and English Nationalism', in *Shakespeare in the Eighteenth Century*, ed. by Fiona Ritchie and Peter Sabor (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), pp. 277–98 (p. 277).

⁴⁹ Christian Deelman, *The Great Shakespeare Jubilee* (London: Michael Joseph Ltd, 1964), p. 261.

In acknowledgement of the generative uses to which Shakespeare's cultural capital has been put in places such as Germany, the US, and China, this thesis asks how far that cultural capital relies on hegemonic notions of Anglo-centric cultural supremacy. It asks whether Shakespeare's affective power can be reconfigured to make Stratford-upon-Avon's 'world stage' a space of allyship: a platform on which marginalised cultural forms can be represented without being effaced by Shakespeare's 'superiority' and the imperial logic that suggests that there is an inherent inferiority in those forms.

As such, in light of the ways in which Shakespeare's role in British national culture became a model to international agents, it is vital to acknowledge that the eighteenth-century British drive towards a national literary culture was founded on insecurity and enmeshed in colonial ideology. Eighteenth-century British literary culture 'emphasiz[ed] a desire for domestic or internal "freedom" but couple[ed] this with an ambition for foreign or external conquest and glory' to the extent that a cultural climate was created 'in which imperial ambitions and longings were "naturalized" as the only or obvious way to move out of provincial standing'.⁵⁰ Given these circumstances, as the founding principles of the literary culture of which Shakespeare is at the centre, Alok Yadav's warning note that '[i]ssues of cultural *power*, not just of cultural identity, ought to be central to any discussion of nationalism and literary culture' (my emphasis) provides a grounding principle for the interpretation of the collection narratives in this thesis. If the British cultural events of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries are the basis for Shakespeare's annexation in Germany, the US, Subcontinental India, and China, then it is essential to keep in mind that

⁵⁰ Yadav (p. 7).

Shakespeare's status as the 'benchmark for canonicity itself' was originally conferred as an effective agent of imperialism.⁵¹

Cultural performance on the 'world stage'

Since this study bridges Shakespeare studies and museum studies, it is useful to think about the SBT's collections and international engagements with them as *performed* on the 'world stage' of the Shakespeare Birthplace Museum and the SBT's online catalogue. Shakespeare's cultural capital is an important driver for such engagements. An intangible object of value, cultural capital does not move through the world in the same way as material commodities and currency, although it can also move through the acquisition of culturally significant items – such as art or a First Folio, for example. Primarily, cultural capital moves from individual to individual, institution to institution, and culture to culture through the performance of cultural literacy. Indeed, Bourdieu's fundamental explanation of the ways in which cultural capital operates through social subjects explains that cultural capital is established through taste, which 'classifies, and it classifies the classifier'. Thus, as 'social subjects' make distinctions that legitimise art as such, they 'distinguish themselves by the distinctions they make'.⁵² This explains how cultural capital endows value on social subjects, and what is occurring when social subjects perform their appreciation of Shakespeare. The giving of an international gift and the presence of an international item in the SBT's collections are both observable acts, made so by media interest in diplomatic exchanges involving Shakespeare and the accessibility of the collections through the open-access

⁵¹ Rigney and Leerson (p. 2).

⁵² Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*, trans. by Richard Nice (Abingdon: Routledge, 2010), p. xxix.

digital catalogue. Such acts can be understood, therefore, as ‘investments’ with guaranteed ‘returns’ of conferred cultural capital.

Referring to the SBT and Stratford-upon-Avon as a ‘world stage’ not only reminds us of Shakespeare’s theatrical tradition and acknowledges the performed nature of cultural capital, but also responds to the ways in which Shakespeare’s establishment as the ‘world’s greatest poet’ was tied to his place of birth by the 1769 Jubilee. Through the development of the Shakespeare birthday celebrations in the years succeeding the Jubilee into a procession ‘from cradle to grave’ (i.e., from the Birthplace to Holy Trinity Church, where Shakespeare’s remains lie), the Birthplace was established as a shrine and reliquary, and Stratford-upon-Avon as a place of pilgrimage. Indeed, the significance of Stratford-upon-Avon and the Birthplace’s engendering of ‘site-specific epistemologies’ is indicated in the plans for the San Weng development in Fuzhou, China: the construction of the replica Birthplace and New Place represent a ‘paradigm shift from seeking to claiming authenticity’, which suggests that the ultimate authentic connection to Shakespeare is to be found in the buildings he (is supposed to have) occupied in Stratford-upon-Avon.⁵³

The suggestive power of the Shakespeare properties was certainly utilised in the ‘Garrick Jubilee’. Moreover, that event was the starting point for a specifically *performed* mode of nationalism, initiating a series of commemorations in the century following the event that ‘helped to establish and continuously amplify Shakespeare’s position as a key figure in the canon of English literature and a recognisable part of public life’.⁵⁴ The Shakespeare Gallery in Pall Mall in 1789, the bust at Crystal Palace in 1864 (Shakespeare’s

⁵³ Joubin, p. 105.

⁵⁴ Rigney and Leerson (p. 2).

Tercentenary), and the great monument in Stratford-upon-Avon in 1871 created opportunities for 'social performative activity of commemoration' for visitors while the 'solid materiality' of the monuments themselves indicated 'the historicization of Europe's urban spaces by means of an epidemic 'statue mania'.⁵⁵ Thus, spaces of commemoration – including the Shakespeare Birthplace – create the identities not only of the object of commemoration, but of the visitors to it, when association with the revered icon confers cultural status. On the 'world stage' of the Shakespeare Birthplace, the desire for that conferred status – and indeed cultural identity – by international visitors is in evidence largely through desire for representation at the flag-unfurling ceremony at the annual birthday celebrations and through international diplomatic visits. Through international gifts to the SBT it is possible to discern the desire for representation in the SBT's collections, for conferred cultural status, and also the desire for that representation to gain posterity through the gift as material object. Material objects have thus played a crucial role in creating historical narratives, and commemorative objects are often commissioned with posterity in mind; they are made to project those narratives into the future and ensure they endure.

Thus, as a site of commemoration, the Birthplace has been configured as a stage on which international visitors can perform cohesion with the global community of 'culturally literate' devotees of Shakespeare, while the unifying and patriotism-inducing models created by Shakespeare as national poet in England were transported and translated as his cultural capital was recognised abroad.

⁵⁵ Rigney and Leerson (p. 5).

Soft Power and Cultural diplomacy

Soft power is a mode of diplomatic assertion that works by foregrounding attractive aspects of a nation's identity, often cultural, to engender friendly attitudes towards it that result in greater influence on the international stage.⁵⁶ In this thesis, soft power is discernible in international gestures that foreground an aspect of the donor nation's own culture with the aim of presenting a quality that would be deemed attractive to British people and/or agents (the SBT). A pertinent example would be any collection item that foregrounds the cultural significance of a national poet or an art-form, such as the illuminated presentation of Pakistani national poet Muhammad Iqbal's poem 'The Birth of Adam' described in chapter four. Meanwhile, cultural diplomacy denotes friendly acts between nations that emphasise cultural community through shared values and interests. A pertinent example would be the presentation of a gift to the SBT or Stratford-upon-Avon that signals a nation's enjoyment of Shakespeare, such as the aforementioned filigree bowl from Bangladesh.

In accordance with the ways in which Shakespeare has been implicated in British cultural capital and nationalism, Shakespeare's use as a tool of British cultural diplomacy and soft power is almost self-evident. Indeed, the annual birthday celebrations and the fact that Shakespeare is always a part of national events – the 2012 London Olympic opening ceremony, for example – should all be considered forms of British soft power that rely on Shakespeare's cultural capital to establish the attractiveness of Britain and British culture to the rest of the world. Furthermore, British Council research related to the use of Shakespeare in the UK Government's GREAT Britain campaign found Shakespeare to be 'the person most frequently associated with the UK's contemporary arts and culture, well ahead

⁵⁶ See JS Nye Jr, 'Soft Power', *Foreign Policy*, 80 (1990), 153–71.

of Queen Elizabeth, David Beckham, the Beatles and the UK's strongest contemporary author, J.K. Rowling'.⁵⁷ The GREAT campaign was established in 2011 in recognition of the way that soft power attributes, like Shakespeare, can be used to 'deliver direct economic benefits through increased tourism and high-quality international students, while enhancing the UK's reputation with influential stakeholders, businesses and diplomatic networks'.⁵⁸ Emphasising the importance of cultural familiarity to build the trust required to achieve such rewards, it has been noted that, for Britain's soft power project, "'national ownership" of cultural icons already shared by the world, such as Shakespeare, is particularly valuable'.⁵⁹

The use of Shakespeare for diplomatic purposes was particularly effective in the late nineteenth century when international relationships between Britain and the US were tested by post-colonial fractures: '[w]here political union was no longer on the cards, cultural diplomacy took on a new importance in forging common bonds and common benchmarking across the Atlantic'.⁶⁰ The commemoration of literature was particularly useful at this time, as it built 'on the shared appreciation of certain authors and offer[ed] a broad pleasure-based platform that could contain and articulate many social and national differences'.⁶¹ Shakespeare's usefulness to transatlantic diplomacy certainly explains the relative proliferation of American contributions to the Stratford-upon-Avon landscape around the turn of the twentieth century, including the American Fountain (1887), the two American windows in Holy Trinity Church (1890 and 1896), the Carnegie library (1905), and

⁵⁷ Conrad Bird, Jason Eliadis, and Harvey Scriven, 'Shakespeare Is "GREAT"', in *Shakespeare's Cultural Capital: His Economic Impact from the Sixteenth to the Twenty-First Century*, ed. by Dominic Shellard and Siobhan Keenan (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), pp. 148–62 (p. 152).

⁵⁸ *Ibid.* (p. 153).

⁵⁹ *Ibid.* (p. 149).

⁶⁰ Ann Rigney, 'Scott 1871: Celebration as Cultural Diplomacy', in *Commemorating Writers in Nineteenth-Century Europe: Nation-Building and Centenary Fever*, ed. by Joep Leerson and Ann Rigney (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), pp. 65–87 (p. 81).

⁶¹ *Ibid.* (p. 83).

Harvard House Museum (1909). These US donations to the town are discussed in chapter three as gifts made in honour of Shakespeare as a symbol of shared heritage between England and the US. Such monuments illustrate how ‘the commemoration of literature could operate *between* communities’, functioning as a powerful instrument ‘in nation-building and on the forging of transnational alliances in the late 19th century’.⁶²

The distinction between soft power and cultural diplomacy becomes difficult to separate when donor nations present gifts that centre simultaneously Shakespeare’s cultural significance and the significance of their own culture. For example, in chapter five, the portrait of Shakespeare in front of the Birthplace that is rendered in traditional Chinese cut-out artistry; or in chapter four, the ivory plaque that presents a poem in honour of Shakespeare that was handwritten by prominent Bengali poet Rabindranath Tagore. Such items indicate the crossing of the boundary between diplomacy as an ostensibly disinterested gesture and soft power as a gesture with more or less evident beneficial aims for the donor nation. This thesis explores the crossing of that boundary to better understand the motivations for international gift-giving and engagement with the SBT on the ‘world stage’.

Gifts and Appropriation

The ways in which engagement with Shakespeare’s cultural capital enhances a nation’s soft power should be explored as a form of appropriation that is particularly concerned with the function and implications of international gift giving. Although cultural appropriation is often associated with the idea of theft and the abuses of a powerful agent over a less

⁶² Rigney (p. 83). N.B. Harvard House was initially a gift to the town but is currently leased to the Trust by Harvard University.

powerful one, the appropriation of Shakespeare tends to enhance the appropriated cultural artefact – Shakespeare – rather than diminishing it in any sense. Indeed, Shakespeare’s cultural capital can be categorised as a ‘non-rival’ commodity of which the asset value and availability increases rather than diminishes with consumption.⁶³ Established through a ‘circular, self-reinforcing process’ the broad range of uses of Shakespeare, as ‘the plurality of forms in which Shakespeare exists’, increases the value of the Shakespeare-commodity. This is the case because the commodity (which is distinct from the historical Shakespeare) comprises ‘only those ethical and aesthetic concepts that can be used as eloquent analogies for contemporary social preoccupations, as guarantor of their universality and their connection to the past’.⁶⁴ In this formulation, which may be aligned with Fazel and Geddes’s formulation of the Shakespeare object or assemblage, appropriations of Shakespeare ‘objects’ are key to the maintenance and augmentation of Shakespeare’s cultural capital. This self-reinforcing process indicates the ways in which Shakespeare’s cultural value is especially enhanced by international appropriations that can be used to exemplify his ‘universality’ through the SBT’s appropriation of them and their meanings in turn. As such, throughout this thesis, ‘appropriation’ should be understood to indicate either the use of Shakespeare’s cultural capital or text by the culture in question for specific purposes, or the use of a culture’s gesture or gift by the SBT as evidence of Shakespeare’s cultural significance or ‘universality’.

The implications of the oscillating appropriations that occur in the international collection created through this project can be usefully interrogated through engagement

⁶³ Kathleen McLuskie, ‘The Commercial Bard: Business Models for the Twenty-First Century’, *Shakespeare Survey*, 64 (2011), 1–14 (p. 5).

⁶⁴ *Ibid* (p. 6).

with the objects as either ‘accidental’ appropriations or as gifts. The SBT’s collections showcase many objects that are accidentally Shakespearean through context rather than content. Accidental appropriation, Christy Desmet explains, can be understood as a fortuitous network ‘of signs and contexts [that] make possible a mutual, if not perfectly homologous, recognition of Shakespeare’s cultural capital’.⁶⁵ The ceramic bowl discussed in chapter three is an excellent example of this. The bowl has no obvious relation to Shakespeare, but by belonging to the SBT’s US collection invites us to build unexpected connections between it and Shakespearean history. Study of this obliquely Shakespeare-related item discloses the range of significations that can be attributed to it, in turn demonstrating how its serendipitous provenance as part of the SBT’s collection can be profitably mined for intriguing layers of meaning. Such an approach exposes Shakespeare’s role as a key constituent within a broader network of appropriations of Britishness, while also signifying the very process of *recognising* the connection points within that network. Thus, Shakespeare’s affective power becomes the focus once more as it urges consideration of the curatorial drive – my own, and the SBT’s – to *find* Shakespeare in such objects. In consequence this thesis queries the ethical implications of a British individual and/or a British institution actively seeking connection to Shakespeare in international objects, especially given the problematic construction and use of Shakespeare’s ‘universality’.

While accidental appropriations must be mined for connection to Shakespeare, the ceremonial international gifts to the SBT communicate their message more readily.

Although layered significations with subtle implications can be found in many gifts, as in the

⁶⁵ Christy Desmet, ‘Recognizing Shakespeare, Rethinking Fidelity: A Rhetoric and Ethics of Appropriation’, in *Shakespeare and the Ethics of Appropriation*, ed. by Alexa Huang and Elizabeth Rivlin (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), pp. 41–59 (p. 54).

Tagore plaque in chapter four, what is consistently evident in the SBT's international gifts is the desire for representation in the SBT's collections and/or the conferral of Shakespeare's cultural capital. As such, the gifts discussed in this thesis conform to the configuration of Marcel Mauss's inaugurating theory of the gift in inter-societal practice as determined by Volker M. Heins, Christine Unrau, and Kristine Avram:

We define gift-giving, in the spirit of Mauss, as the generous transfer of socially valued objects without any (legal or contractual) guarantee of reciprocation.

Reciprocity in gift exchange is *asynchronous* (there is a time interval between giving and reciprocating) and *in kind* (the transaction is not measured in monetary terms).

This allows gift exchanges to be framed as expressing the social bond rather than as deferred payback for benefits received earlier.⁶⁶

Accordingly, although the gifts are given without the obligation of material reciprocity, a form of social reciprocity is built into the gesture; this is what causes the giving of gifts to be understood as an exchange even if only one party presents a gift-object. Mauss designated two types of gift exchange in his 1925 study: the 'potlatch', which was agonistic, competitive, and ultimately aimed at the destruction of the wealth of the receiver, and 'kula', by which '[t]he objects exchanged [...] serve to forge social relationships and enhance trust among separate tribes', a process that is 'based on a constant process of giving and

⁶⁶ Volker M. Heins, Christine Unrau, and Kristine Avram, 'Gift-Giving and Reciprocity in Global Society: Introducing Marcel Mauss in International Studies', *Journal of International Political Theory*, 14.2 (2018), 126–44 (p. 127).

taking, which creates a permanent connection'.⁶⁷ There are several instances of kula-type gifts in the collection narratives that follow, most notably the German Goethe wreath that was given to the Trust in 1864 and began a tradition of exchanging wreaths between the house of Goethe and Shakespeare's Birthplace every year on the date of each poet's birthday. Through Mauss's association of gifts with forming relationships, and the emphasis on trust, it is possible to perceive the ways in which gifts work as a form of cultural diplomacy. Furthermore, as all the gifts discussed in this thesis conform to the kula-type, the SBT's obligation to reciprocate in some way prompts the question of how this reciprocation manifests through the collection narratives.

Anticolonial Theoretical Approaches

In my General Introduction, I referred to the problematic concept of Shakespeare's 'universality' as the ideology behind Shakespeare's cultural capital. This section reflects on the construction of Shakespeare's 'universality' through the lens of postcolonial and critical race theory to illuminate the ways in which it works to reinforce imperialist – that is to say, exclusionary – ideas, before introducing my working definition of decolonisation as a process to be understood in terms of the SBT's collections and interpretation policies. First, to contextualise the processes and effects of the colonialist project itself, Edward Said describes a 'cultural process' that should be seen

as a vital, informing, and invigorating counterpoint to the economic and political machinery at the material centre of imperialism. This Eurocentric culture relentlessly

⁶⁷ Ibid. (p. 128).

codified and observed everything about the non-European or peripheral world, and so thoroughly and in so detailed a manner as to leave few items untouched, few cultures unstudied, few peoples and spots of land unclaimed.⁶⁸

Said's outline of the cultural aspect of imperialism reveals its encompassing domination of all aspects of life, including both European and native thought and history. This was achieved through Orientalism as a branch of academic enquiry that, in reality, *enquired* less than it *determined*: as Orientalism categorised the cultures it encountered in the global East, it became 'a Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient'.⁶⁹ The ideas about 'the East' as a homogenous Other that were predominantly established through the Orientalists of the seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries were thus vital to European colonialism and have endured as a mode of justification for the exploitation and violence inflicted on colonised nations and peoples since. Indeed, in the 'postcolonial' world, Said's comments on the 2003 war on Iraq note that the war would not have had civilian support in the US without the 'well-organised sense that these people over there were not like "us" and didn't appreciate "our" values – the very core of traditional Orientalist dogma'.⁷⁰ Said's formulation of the colonialist processes offers a useful postcolonial framework for this study's consideration of imperialist approaches to Subcontinental Indian, African American and Chinese people and cultures too.

⁶⁸ Edward W. Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (London: Vintage, 1994), p. 284.

⁶⁹ Said, *Orientalism*, p. 3.

⁷⁰ *Ibid*, p. xv.

Said's study of the method and maintenance of Orientalist ideas is a key element of postcolonial theory as it works to deconstruct the binary oppositions that were 'crucial to sustaining Europe's image of itself': European/Other, Christian/Other, civilised/Other, and the most basic and best hidden of the binaries at the core of Orientalism, and indeed imperialism, white/Other.⁷¹ The binaries reified a dominant discourse in which the terms that describe the European aspect of the binary are positive and those of the 'Other' are negative. The 'positive' binaries are related and interchangeable as they all ultimately invoke the image of the 'superior' white European even if they do not openly invoke whiteness. Any reference to 'white supremacy' in this thesis should be understood in these terms, and as indicative of evidence of a discourse that invokes them.

As Ania Loomba and Martin Orkin explain, 'Shakespeare lived and wrote at a time when English mercantile and colonial enterprises were just germinating'.⁷² Thus, he also lived and wrote at a time in which colonial binaries were germinating. Due to the ways in which Shakespeare became synonymous with English national identity and pride at this time, the image of the superior white Englishman came to incorporate Shakespeare. Indeed, Loomba and Orkin qualify the depth of Shakespeare's association with this colonial construction through eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Anglo-American literary scholarship, which

offered a Shakespeare who celebrated the superiority of the "civilised races", and, further, [...] colonial educationists and administrators used this Shakespeare to

⁷¹ Ania Loomba, *Shakespeare, Race, and Colonialism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), p. 9.

⁷² Ania Loomba and Martin Orkin, 'Introduction: Shakespeare and the Post-Colonial Question', in *Post-Colonial Shakespeares*, ed. by Ania Loomba and Martin Orkin (London: Routledge, 1998), pp. 1–22 (p. 1).

reinforce cultural and racial hierarchies. Shakespeare was made to perform such ideological work both by interpreting his plays in highly conservative ways (so that they were seen as endorsing existing racial, gender and other hierarchies, never as questioning or destabilizing them) and by constructing him as one of the best, if not “the best”, writer in the whole world.⁷³

The idea of Shakespeare’s ‘universality’ grew out of his canonisation (as ‘the best’) at a time in which homogeneity was under threat from colonial expansion. As Kim F. Hall explains, ‘Shakespeare preserves “culture” (read as homogeneity and Englishness) from a threatening tide of difference’.⁷⁴ Furthermore, the notion of universality

effaces the fact that the promotion of achievement is not and never has been universal, but has worked [...] to promote certain racial or gendered agendas. Just as “human” has traditionally meant “man”, in actuality “universal” human achievement has often focused on the achievements of great white males such as Shakespeare.⁷⁵

While the idea of Shakespeare’s ‘universalism’ was propounded to bolster his, and consequently, England’s, cultural significance, it remained anchored in Shakespeare’s association with whiteness – although the conflation of ‘universal’ with whiteness conceals

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Kim F. Hall, ‘Uses for a Dead White Male: Shakespeare, Feminism, and Diversity’, *New Theatre Quarterly*, 11.41 (1995), 55–61 (p. 57). N.B. Hall is referring to the US context at the moment of the inauguration of the Folger Shakespeare Library, but the point she makes is applicable.

⁷⁵ Hall, ‘Uses for a Dead White Male: Shakespeare, Feminism, and Diversity’ (p. 58).

itself. This concealment works in aid of white supremacy because '[b]elieving in [Shakespeare's] universality makes it unnecessary to consider race [in his work] seriously'.⁷⁶ This study is not directly concerned with representation of race in the text of the plays or poems, but such warnings about perpetuating race-based exclusion by refusing to acknowledge racist or imperialist constructions in or of Shakespeare's legacy or present-day cultural significance are vital in order to adhere to the study's aims of determining how the SBT's collections can contribute to discourses of inclusion and representation.

The combination of postcolonial and critical race theories outlined in this section indicate the framework I use to present an actively decolonial approach to the SBT's international collection items. Through postcolonialism's identification of imperialist thought and critical race theory's identification of the construction of race and its operation from the early modern period through today, it is clear that Shakespeare was categorised as 'the universal best' under particular circumstances and with particular agendas. Given the ideological impulses of the construction of Shakespeare's 'universality', this thesis asks several key questions. What is the value of the cultural capital invested in Shakespeare as one of the most significant literary figures across the world markets, and what do the SBT's shares in this kind of investment mean? Are the expressions of admiration that so often accompany international gifts really about Shakespeare's work, or about the status connected to it? Are inequities perpetuated by such gifts, or by the SBT's interpretation of them?

⁷⁶ Peter Erickson and Kim F. Hall, "'A New Scholarly Song": Rereading Early Modern Race', *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 67.1 (2016), 1–13 (p. 5). Some of the ways in which Shakespeare's works indicate a white supremacist approach to Others are discussed in *Post-Colonial Shakespeares*, ed. by Ania Loomba and Martin Orkin (London: Routledge, 1998), pp. 64–83; Kim F. Hall, *Things of Darkness: Economies of Race and Gender in Early Modern England* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1995); *Shakespeare and Race*, ed. by Ayanna Thompson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021).

Chapter Two: German Collection Narrative

Introduction

The first arrival of Shakespeare in Germany is tricky to determine. Although the earliest records of travelling players have troupes arriving in Germany from 1586 who performed versions of Shakespeare's plays, the connection with the name of Shakespeare does not seem to have been made any earlier than 1682 when it is mentioned in Daniel Georg Morhof's published survey of European literature.⁷⁷ Nonetheless, Germany is home to the earliest suggestions that Shakespeare's work can be adapted and utilised by nations outside of Britain. Indeed, German was among the first languages into which Shakespeare's works were translated, in the mid-eighteenth century. The collection narrative that follows explores the significance of these early translations as indications of German agents utilising Shakespeare as an expedient cultural weapon when the states and principalities that made up Germany had been divided and overwhelmed by French cultural imperatives.

Indeed, the SBT's German collection illustrates Shakespeare's role in the establishment of a German national culture at this time, as well as the significance of the relationship between the literary cultural institutions of Germany and England from the establishment of the German Shakespeare Society in 1864 through the World Wars to the present day. This chapter argues that the space occupied by the SBT as the official place of

⁷⁷ Roger Paulin, *The Critical Reception of Shakespeare in Germany 1682-1914: Native Literature and Foreign Genius* (Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlag, 2003), p. 12. Paulin references Daniel Georg Morhof, *Unterricht von der deutschen Sprache und Poesie*. ed. by Henning Boetius, *Ars poetica. Texte*, 1 (the author, 1682; repr. Bad Homburg: Gehlen, 1969).

Shakespeare's birth meant that friendly communications between the Societies, and especially German presence within the SBT's collections, operated as legitimising agents for the German co-option of Shakespeare. Furthermore, post-war communications (from 1918 and 1945) expose the ways in which the SBT's narrative power over Shakespeare's legacy can be exploited to assert British 'ownership' of Shakespeare at such key moments, therefore undermining pretensions to Shakespeare's 'universality' or the SBT's political neutrality. Thus, as a starting point for the thesis, this chapter illustrates the role that Shakespeare can play in the creation of a national cultural identity outside of Britain, the significance of the Birthplace in the process of international appropriation, and the power of that significance in times of international conflict. As in all four thesis chapters, the collection narrative discusses the entire range of items that relate to Germany in the SBT's collections but reserves detailed description and analysis for items that can illuminate an aspect of the broader narrative of Shakespeare in Germany.

Early Interactions: Monastery Tokens, Rapier, Ceramics, Medicine Chest

The earliest German collection items indicate the flow of culture, style, and goods through Renaissance Europe, thus demonstrating the intimacy of early modern European societies. German monastery and reckoning tokens, an ornate rapier, Raeren and Bartmannkrug jugs, and an oak medicine chest have all been acquired by the SBT to represent the period in which Shakespeare lived and wrote.⁷⁸ They illustrate the circulation of small currency,

⁷⁸ SBT 2000-20/1, Reckoning counter with Rechenmeister (counting master) seated at his counting table, date unknown; SBT 2000-20/11, SBT 2000-20/14, SBT 2000-20/16, SBT 2000-20/17, SBT 2000-20/18, SBT 2000-20/19, SBT 2000-20/20, SBT 2000-20/21, monastery tokens originating in Nuremberg c. 1600; SBT 1868-3/10, Seventeenth century German rapier blade c.1700; SBT 1910-37, Raeren pot c. 1590; SBT 1992-35, Raeren Cavalier Panel Jug c.1576 - 1600; SBT 1993-31/253, Jug c. 1576; SBT 1993-31/283, Raeren jug, 1603. Raeren has been part of Belgium since 1918, but it produced and exported a large number of the glazed stoneware as a municipality of Germany in the fifteenth to seventeenth- centuries. The SBT has eleven Bartmannkrug jugs, including: SBT 1991-85, Bartmannkrug, 1500-1600; SBT 1993-31/126, Bartmannkrug, 1601-1700; SBT 2004-

fashions in craftsmanship, conspicuous consumption in items that are both wearable and displayable in the home, and the domestic requirement to store medical supplies in the home in the early modern period. These items reflect on the early circulations of ideas in Europe that coincided with Shakespeare's introduction in Germany, but they offer nothing further in specific relation to Shakespeare and Germany in terms of their construction, provenance, or acquisition.

Rejecting French Cultural Imperialism: Eschenburg's Complete Works

The chronological collection narrative proper begins with a translation that serves as an early sign of German appreciation of Shakespeare and also, by the likelihood of its being a pirate copy, emphasises the popularity of his plays during the mid to late eighteenth century. The octavo-sized volume by Johann Joachim Eschenburg (1743-1820) is the SBT's earliest translated complete works and was published in 1778 in Strassburg (see figure 1). Eschenburg's collected translations included and built on those published by Christoph Martin Wieland (1733-1813) from 1762-66, which comprised twenty-one plays in prose and one, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, in iambic pentameter.⁷⁹

Shakespeare's increasing popularity in Germany throughout the eighteenth century was in a large part the result of a backlash against the French neo-classical literary modes that were then prevailing in the region. Hans Rothe (1894-1977), who translated Shakespeare in Germany from the 1920s and into the Third Reich, describes the cultural context to which Eschenburg was responding thus:

50/1 Bartmannkrug, 1601-1625; SBT 2001-5, Anglo-German oak box c.1550-1625. The Medicine chest is thought to have been made by a German immigrant in London, to be used by a physician or an apothecary.
⁷⁹ John A. McCarthy, 'The "Great Shakesphere." An Introduction', in *Shakespeare as a German Author: Reception, Translation Theory, and Cultural Transfer*, ed. by John A. McCarthy (Leiden: Brill Rodopi, 2018), pp. 1-74 (p. 4).

In the first half of the eighteenth century the rigorous rules of French classical drama shared with the rude jests of Harlequin the mastery of the German stage. Learned persons, in whose veins the life-blood flowed sluggishly, wrote involved and ponderous tragedies in the French manner. We may consider Johann Christoph Gottsched as the exponent of this tendency.⁸⁰

Rothe explains that in this ambivalent and contradictory cultural atmosphere, the revivification of Shakespeare's works in England as a result of 'Garrick's Jubilee' caused a 'wave of enthusiasm for Shakespeare which swept Germany' and led to two imitating jubilees there soon after.⁸¹ The corresponding desire to curtail the dominance of French cultural modes in Germany, as it had been curtailed in England, met with what Rothe describes as a 'delight in opposition' that is 'ingrained' in Germans and led to the recognition 'that here was something which would play havoc with the ponderous rules of Gottsched's followers'.⁸²

Johann Gottsched (1700-1766) was a literary theorist who argued that French neo-classical ideals promoted harmony and unity in dramatic theme and structure. He believed that restraint and rationality should be demonstrated through the characters, order and clarity through the plots, and plays should adhere to the unities of time and place.

⁸⁰ Hans Rothe, 'Shakespeare in German', trans. by C.P. Magill, *German Life and Letters*, 1.4 (1937), p. 256.

⁸¹ Deelman, p. 271.

⁸² Rothe, p. 256.

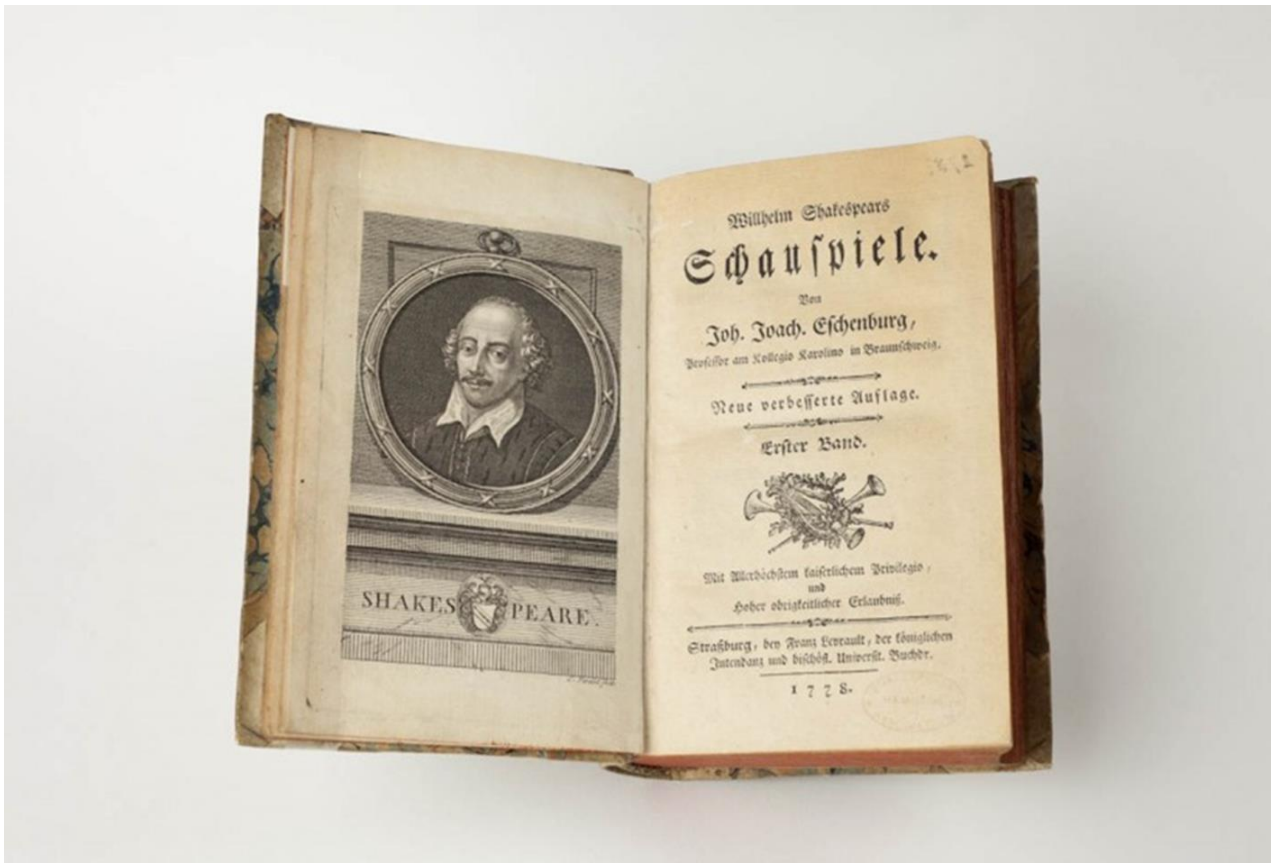


Figure 1: SBT SR 47/German/1778-83. Johan Joachim Eschenburg, *William Shakespears Schauspiele* (*William Shakespeare's Drama*), (Strassburg: Mannheim, Franz Levault, 1778).

Insistence on rules and order were considered a sign of civilised modernity in opposition to the disordered 'barbarism' of the past. Gottsched's cultural precepts first found resistance in Gotthold Ephraim Lessing (1729-1781), however. Before Shakespeare's works were popularised by the aftermath of the Jubilee, Lessing had already identified the 'kindred emotions' of the Germanic soul in Shakespeare. Lessing contended that Shakespeare could be an escape for German writers from the prevalent neo-classical ideals of the dominant French literary scene represented by Voltaire, Racine, and Corneille.⁸³ Although French

⁸³Dickson, p. 25; Andreas Höfele, *No Hamlets: German Shakespeare from Nietzsche to Carl Schmitt* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), p. 3. Höfele references Lessing's 'Denn ein Genie kann nur von einem Genie entzündet werden' [A genius can only be kindled by a genius] (published in 1759) which was written with the intent to debunk Gottsched's idea that '[t]o be good, plays in the mid-eighteenth century had to observe the French neo-classical rules laid down for German emulation'. Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, '17. Literaturbrief', in

cultural imperialism had actually done much to introduce Shakespeare's works to Germany, the prescriptive rules of adaptation that insisted on adherence to the three unities of neo-classicism had become an irritation that fed 'implicit anti-French attitudes'.⁸⁴

While the earliest translations adapted Shakespeare to conform to the unities, Eschenburg was among the first to adopt a 'source-focused', rather than 'target-driven' approach to translating Shakespeare. As Ton Hoenselaars explains, this means that rather than attempting to adhere to audience expectations – of neo-classically organised texts – Eschenburg and Wieland began to adhere instead to the source texts. In the Romantic tradition, these translations aimed to 'capture the playwright's exclusive genius by focusing, for his starting point, either on the word or on the spirit of the word'.⁸⁵ Although much altered from the source – as a prose rendering – this edition by Eschenburg was at the forefront of the development of what later thinkers would call *Unser Shakespeare* ('Our Shakespeare), through which source-orientated translation recreated Shakespeare as 'the champion of anti-classicism, first in Germany, but later also in France and other European countries'.⁸⁶ That the SBT version in question is an unauthorised pirated edition (according to McCarthy's list of pirated editions) attests 'emphatically to Shakespeare's status as a popular figure in German literature' by indicating that demand for his texts exceeded the rate of production of authorised volumes.⁸⁷

Lessing, *Werke und Briefe in zwölf Bänden*, ed. by Wilfried Barner, vol. 4: *Werke, 1758-1759*, ed. by Gunter E. Grimm (Frankfurt: Deutscher Klassiker-Verlag, 1997), 499-501.

⁸⁴ Werner Habicht, 'Shakespeare and the German Imagination: Cult, Controversy, and Performance', in *Shakespeare: World Views*, ed. by Heather Kerr, Robin Eaden, and Madge Mitton (London: Associated University Presses, 1996), pp. 87-101 (p. 88).

⁸⁵ Ton Hoenselaars, *Shakespeare and the Language of Translation*, ed. by Ton Hoenselaars (London: Bloomsbury, 2004), pp. 1-30 (p. 9).

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

⁸⁷ McCarthy (p. 6).

The evident popularity of the Eschenburg translations was to be surpassed by the later Schlegel-Tieck versions, however.⁸⁸ August Wilhelm Schlegel's (1767-1845) and Johann Ludwig Tieck's (1773-1853) translations embraced to a greater degree the Romantic 'cult of individual expression, of strong emotion and free imagination' and have been considered the definitive German Shakespeare translation from 1797 through today. The SBT library holds multiple versions of the Schlegel and Tieck translations of Shakespeare, in first editions and reprints from throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Tieck's signature can also be found in the Birthplace's VIP Visitors' Book, from when he visited on July 3 1817 with his daughter Dorothea, who also translated several Shakespeare plays.⁸⁹

The success of the anti-classicist and Romantic Schlegel-Tieck editions can be accounted for by the domination of French modes in Germany, Germany's quest for a national cultural identity of its own, and the continued efforts towards its unification as a single nation. In the 1770s, writer-philosophers such as Johann Gottfried von Herder (1744-1803) recognised the need for a national cultural identity that would bind the hitherto separate and self-governing German states. Thus, the historic Teutonic cultural forms that the neo-classicist writers and critics had rejected as barbaric gradually began to be recognised as the foundation of German cultural identity. Indeed, Roger Paulin explains that it had become fundamental to 'define a national literature, telling what fits with what, what springs from what, what leads to what'.⁹⁰ Moreover, S.E. Wilmer takes note of the crucial question Herder posed in *Sämmtliche Werke*: 'How much further we would be [...] if we had

⁸⁸Dirk Delabastita, 'Notes on Shakespeare in Dutch Translation: Historical Persp[ectives]', in *Translating Shakespeare for the Twenty-First Century*, ed. by R M G de Carvalho Homem and T. Hoenselaars, DQR Studies in Literature (New York: Rodopi, 2004), pp. 99–116 (p. 110).

⁸⁹ SBT DR185/1 Shakespeare's Birthplace Visitors' Books, Stratford-upon-Avon 07/1812 – 08/1819. 3 July, 1817.

⁹⁰ Paulin, p. 24.

used these folk ideas and folk tales like the British and had built our entire poetry upon them as Chaucer, Spenser, and Shakespeare built upon them, took from them, and created on the basis of them'.⁹¹ At this moment, the stages on which Shakespeare was being performed were an important part of the process. In theatres, 'assertions of a shared mythic "national" identity [could be] negotiated with the local audience and critics' because '[u]nlike the solitary reader of a novel or a newspaper who reacts in isolation, the theatre-goer is part of a community of spectators who can express their approval or disapproval to the performers and to each other'.⁹² In this way, the importance of *Volk* and what is *völkisch* first came to the fore in Germany, many years before Hitler and the Nazis tainted its signification by associating it with the fascist cause. Given the emphasis on the people as the spirit and backbone of German identity, the collaborative nature of the myth-making process was essential, and the dramatic medium added weight to the conviction that Shakespeare's works could and should be used as a tool for cultural unification. Through the rich context and aftermath here described, the significance of Eschenburg's *Complete Works* is apparent, and supports McCarthy's assertion that the Eschenburg/Wieland translations deserve credit as a popular series that 'introduced so many readers to the Bard during the critical naturalisation phase of his evolution as a *German* poet in an electrifying new idiom'.⁹³

⁹¹ Johann Gottfried Herder, *Sämmtliche Werke*, trans. by Anna Lohse (Berlin: Weidmann, 1877), p. 525. in S. E. Wilmer, 'Herder and European Theatre', in *Staging Nationalism: Essays on Theatre and National Identity*, ed. by Kiki Gounaridou (Jefferson, N. C. and London: McFarland, 2005) (no pagination).

⁹² Wilmer (no pagination).

⁹³ McCarthy (p. 67).

Goethe: Translations, *Goethe on Shakespeare*

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1739-1832) was instrumental to the annexation of Shakespeare as an aspect of German culture. The significance of Goethe's influence on the German reception of Shakespeare is indicated by several items in the SBT's collections that relate to Goethe and appear to have been purposely acquired in acknowledgement of his role. Along with items that will be discussed later in the collection narrative, the SBT's picture collection contains postcard images of Goethe's mausoleum and houses in Frankfurt and Weimar.⁹⁴ The library holds editions of Goethe's translation of *Romeo and Juliet* (1860), and a volume of lyrics for the choir also written by Goethe (1873).⁹⁵ However, it was Goethe's appropriation of *Hamlet* in 1744 that established the Danish prince as the focal point of the somewhat dramatic advancement of Shakespeare from English playwright to honorary German. Andreas Höfele explains that Goethe's immensely popular 1774 adaptation, *Die Leiden des jungen Werthers* 'turned Shakespeare's melancholy prince into a contemporary man of feeling [...] straining against the whips and scorns of a time too narrowly conventional to accommodate his ideals and aspirations'.⁹⁶ Although the SBT does not hold a copy of *Werthers*, the Goethe items in the collections reference the ways in which German national identity was mythologised in terms of Shakespeare through Goethe's novel, at a time in which German artists and writers 'strained' against the constraints of neo-classicism. Indeed, in the following century another poet, Ferdinand Freiligrath (1810-1876), would declare that '*Deutschland ist Hamlet*' to express his

⁹⁴ SBT PC 93.2 Goethe: Goethe's and Schiller's Mausoleum; SBT PC 93.2 Goethe: Postcard views of Goethe's house in Weimar and Frankfurt.

⁹⁵ SBT OSP – 50.29 adaptations German/1860 *Romeo und Julia: Ein Trauerspiel (Romeo and Juliet in German: very free adaptation from Shakespeare)* Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (Berlin: Verlag von Heinrich Schindler, 1860); SBT OSP – 50.29 adaptations German/1873 *Chor zu Shakespeare's Romeo und Julia (Choir to Romeo and Juliet)*, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (place of publication unknown: publisher not identified, 1873).

⁹⁶ Höfele, *No Hamlets*, p. 1.

frustration as the nation hesitated and debated over whether to bring unification into being or not.⁹⁷

In accordance with Herder's call for a unifying culture, the drive towards national identity was a dual-faceted movement that invested in the mythology of the *Volk* and wielded Shakespeare as a weapon against neo-classicism. In the 1770s and 1780s this drive evolved into a literary movement known as *Sturm und Drang* ('Storm and Stress'). In this moment, Shakespeare was the 'inflammation' that 'was crucial in releasing the creative energies that propelled German letters from parochial obscurity to European fame within a mere generation'. It was in this way that Shakespeare was 'annexed' to the German classical canon as a 'third classic'

alongside Schiller and Goethe.⁹⁸

Although *Werthers* is missing, the SBT does hold a pamphlet made up of translated extracts from Goethe's later novel, *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre* (1795-6) in *Goethe on Shakespeare: Being Selections from Carlyle's Translation of Wilhelm Meister* (1865) (figure 2). The pamphlet records the

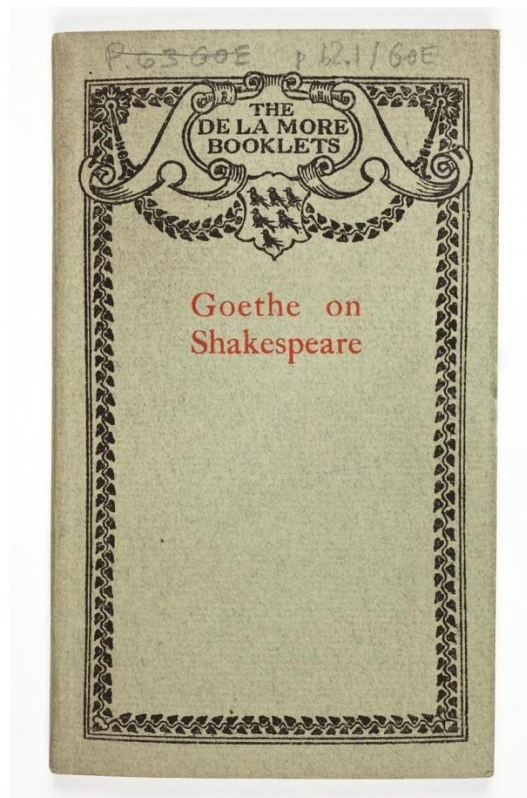


Figure 2: SBT Pamphlet 62.1/Goe. Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *Goethe on Shakespeare: Being Selections From Carlyle's Translation of Wilhelm Meister*, (London: De La More Press, 1904).

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ Paulin, p. 4.

ecstatic veneration of Shakespeare's plays that was offered in the novel, and thus illuminates the importance of Goethe's role in bringing Shakespeare forward as the solution to a unified German national culture. The revival in 1865 of these particular extracts of Goethe's novel in English translation illuminates the processes that were then underway to secure Shakespeare's position in German culture: processes that will be discussed further in relation to the German contribution to the 1864 Shakespeare Tercentenary.

Annexation and Alignment: Retzsch's *Galerie*

The annexation of Shakespeare in Germany not only required the appropriation of Shakespeare into German culture but also the alignment of English and German cultural forms and figures – like Goethe – as part of the mythologising process that Wilmer associates with the theatres. Illustrator and engraver Moritz Retzsch (1779-1857) contributed to the process with his series of volumes on Shakespeare, which were produced between 1828 and 1845. The SBT holds eight editions of Retzsch's *Galerie zu Shakspeare's dramatischen Werken*, which present images of selected scenes from Shakespeare with extracts from the script and synopses in German, French, and English. The SBT has three *Hamlet* volumes, one *Macbeth* volume, one *Othello* volume, and two collections with *Hamlet, Macbeth, Romeo and Juliet, King Lear, The Tempest, Othello, The Merry Wives of Windsor*, and *1 and 2 Henry IV*.⁹⁹ Retzsch had become well known in Germany and Britain

⁹⁹ SBT OS 56/RET, *Galerie zu Shakspeare's dramatischen Werken*. 1. Lieferung, *Hamlet* (Retzsch's outlines to Shakespeare. 1st series, *Hamlet*), (Leipzig; London: Ernst Fleischer, 1838); SBT OS 56/RET, *Galerie zu Shakspeare's dramatischen Werken*. 6. Lieferung, *Othello* (Retzsch's outlines to Shakespeare. 6th series, *Othello*), Leipzig; London: Ernst Fleischer, 1842); Folio 56/RET, *Retzsch's outlines to Shakspeare: Second series, Macbeth*, thirteen plates. (Leipzig; London: Ernest Fleischer; Bach & Comp., 1833); SBT Folio 56/RET, *Erlaeuterungen der Umrissse von Moritz Retzsch zu Shakspeare's dramatischen Werken* (Explanations of the outlines of Moritz Retzsch to Shakspeare's dramatic works), von C.A. Boettiger zu *Hamlet und Macbeth*; von Carl Borromaeus von Miltitz zu *Romeo und Julia, und König Lear*; von Hermann Ulrici zu *dem Sturm, Othello, den Lustigen Weibern von Windsor, und König Heinrich IV., I. und II. Theil* (by C.A. Boettiger to *Hamlet* and *Macbeth*; from Carl Borromaeus von Miltitz to *Romeo and Juliet, and King Lear*; by Hermann Ulrici on *The*

for his illustrations for Goethe's *Faust* (1819), but it was his *Gallerie* series that 'brought Retzsch a degree of prosperity' and 'were immensely successful, especially in England'.¹⁰⁰

In the *Hamlet* edition, the editor's introduction first aligns German and English appreciation of the arts, then aligns German and English artists themselves, with Retzsch and Flaxman claimed to be 'alike unrivalled in their individual excellence'.¹⁰¹ The artist's explanatory foreword goes further, aligning the art of Retzsch with the English memorialisation of Shakespeare: 'Should the English ever erect a temple to the greatest of their Poets, as temples to Homer were built of old in Chios and Smyrna, this Apotheosis, drawn by the inspired pencil of Moritz Retzsch might serve for the design of the allegorical sculpture of the pediment' (see figure 3). Thus, the foreword echoes the depicted elevation of Shakespeare to divine status among Homer, Aeschylus, and Ossian, who are also

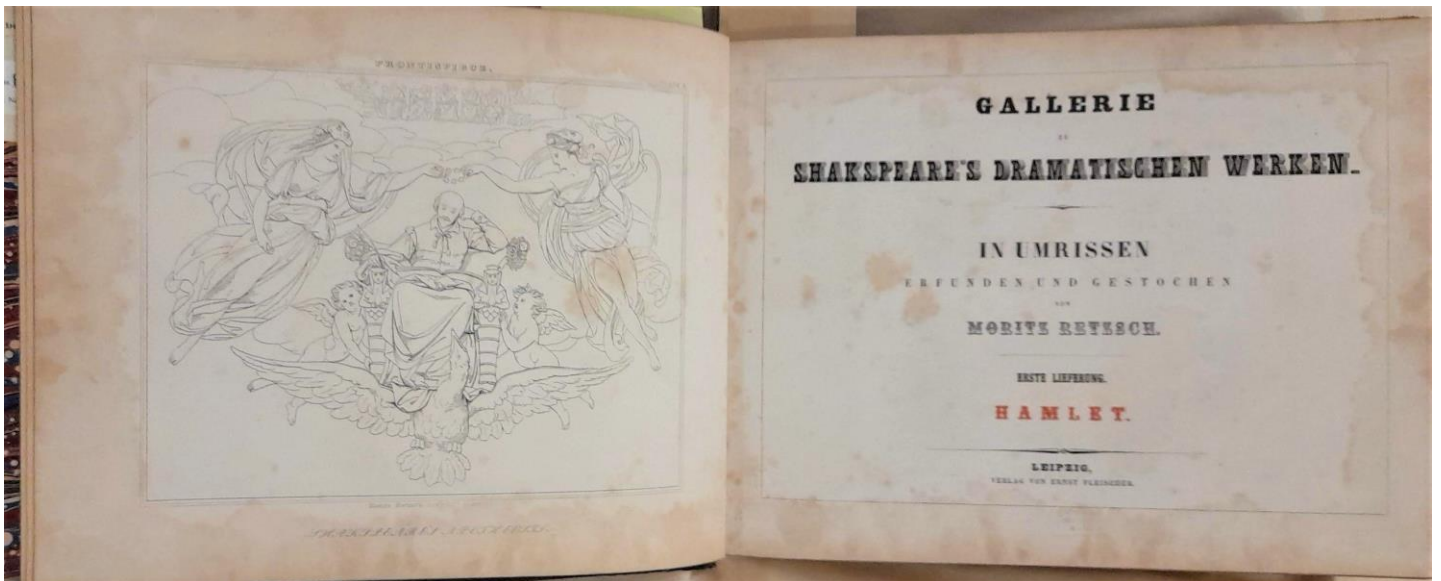


Figure 3: SBT OS 56/Ret. Moritz Retzsch, *Gallerie zu Shakspeare's Dramatischen Werken*. Leipzig and London: Ernst Fleischer, 1938).

Tempest, Othello, The Merry Wives of Windsor, and King Henry IV, Part I and II., (Leipzig: Verlag von Ernst Fleischer, 1847).

¹⁰⁰ Clemence Schultze, 'More Than Meets the Eye: Moritz Retzsch and The Chess-Players', *Journal (Charlotte M. Yonge Fellowship)*, 10 (2011), 102–12 (pp. 102-03).

¹⁰¹ 'Flaxman' is likely to be John, (1755-1826), see <https://www.tate.org.uk/art/artists/john-flaxman-186>.

pictured. Crucially, through the pictorial references to the classical mythology of Zeus's eagles, and Hebe and Ganymede's offerings, England and Germany are united as Ancient Greek worshippers in the imaginary design and building of the temple, working together as one people, celebrating their shared deity. This volume thus demonstrates that the mythologisation of the connection between English and German cultures was being brought about outside as well as inside the theatres, and intriguingly, in neo-classical terms.¹⁰²

The Deutsche Shakespeare-Gesellschaft and the Tercentenary: Ernst Rommel's

Poem, *Hamlet* Playbill

A poem in German sent to London on the eve of the 1864 Tercentenary celebrations represents another alignment of Shakespeare with German artistry.¹⁰³ Dated 14th April 1864, the letter accompanying the poem from Hanoverian library secretary Ernst Rommel expresses a hope that the verses might be considered 'worthy' for inclusion 'at the patriotic celebration of the greatest poet of mankind', but they seemingly only got as far as the collected papers of Stratford-upon-Avon's town clerk, William Oakes Hunt. The poem embraces Romantic ideals and modes as its soaring language brings together images of England's 'rock girded land' with notions of freedom and Shakespeare's 'magical song' of 'love and suffering' as a vehicle to 'the wonder realm of the spirits' as well as to the classical and medieval eras of rising and falling heroes. It addresses the 'free people' of Britain as 'people of power, more related to the German'. It invites the reader to witness love, pain,

¹⁰² The SBT library holds three copies of this illustrated and illustrative book, and I hoped to investigate the mode of accession further to ascertain whether they were deliberately collected or donated, and if the latter, by whom and when, but the closure of the Shakespeare Centre during the Covid-19 crisis has prevented my access to the hard-copy accession register in which such information is kept.

¹⁰³ SBT ER1/46 Correspondence: Hunt papers 1861-1871. 28 June 1862 (folio. 177) viii) Ernst Rommel, enclosing a Tercentenary poem. Transcribed by Prof. Christa Jansohn and part translated by the SBT's librarian, Mareike Doleschal, with thanks.

and the fall of great rulers through Shakespeare's plays, then mentions '*Sturm und Drang*' while drawing attention to the 'times anew' that follow those falls. Rommel introduces the idea of Shakespeare as a saviour through Christian imagery, invoking the quest for truth and instructing the reader to 'Go to Him so that His Word may consecrate you'. Once Shakespeare's authority is established in this way, Rommel takes examples from the tragedies, *Coriolanus* and *Julius Caesar*, and the Wars of the Roses history plays to express the hopes of pre-unification Germany: for the fall of the ruling system and a new – unified – era. The 'truths' perceived in these plays thus cast Shakespeare as the prophet set to guide Germany to its goal. Finally, Shakespeare is deified as 'a fighter of mankind,/ Where [Germany] struggles for light and truth,/ Immortally great in poetry and teaching/ Honouring him – means increasing humanity's greatness!'. The religiosity of the verse reflects the quasi-religious status of the Birthplace, and the ways in which Shakespeare's sonnets, in particular, equate poetry – and poets – with immortality.

The evocation of the Wars of the Roses plays in Rommel's poem may also reference the coinciding events that were taking place in Weimar to celebrate Shakespeare's Tercentenary and the founding of the first Shakespeare society in the world, the *Deutsche Shakespeare-Gesellschaft* (DSG) in the same city. The goals of the society were laid out in the statement made by the DSG's first president, Herrmann Ulrici:

we are de-Anglicising the Englishman Shakespeare; we want to make him German, German in the broadest sense of the word, i.e. we want to make every effort that he become what he always has been – a German poet in the truest and fullest sense of the word [...] This intention is, I believe, authentically patriotic, for it is consistent not

just with the true welfare, with the true greatness, but also with the true spirit of the German people.¹⁰⁴

The somewhat defensive assertion that the appropriation of ‘the Englishman Shakespeare’ is a patriotic act was perhaps responding to an ongoing debate about the appropriateness of bestowing ‘national veneration upon a foreign poet’.¹⁰⁵ It also suggests awareness of England’s successful marshalling of English patriotism through Shakespeare and the desire to emulate those successes. Meanwhile, the emphasis on Shakespeare’s spiritual affinity with the German people was necessary because of ‘the absence of material historical memorials such as the Birthplace’, but also accords with the mythology of shared Anglo-German roots that was increasingly being used to legitimise the appropriation.¹⁰⁶

Indeed, in response to Ulrici’s manifesto, the extended Weimar celebrations included a production by Franz von Dingelstedt (1814-1881) of the complete history plays performed chronologically as a series. Tobias Döring explains that:

The Weimar celebrators, then, found themselves in a dilemma. As German Shakespeareans, they had to hail England as the country which had (to quote the prologue) ‘sent us Master William’ while at the same time, as German patriots, they had to condemn it. England was both model and devil. Dingelstedt’s prologue tries

¹⁰⁴ Herrmann Ulrici, ‘Vorwort’, *Shakespeare Jahrbuch*, 2 (1867), p.3. Given in Christa Jansohn, ‘Celebrating and Commemorating Shakespeare in Germany’, in *Shakespeare Jubilees: 1769-2014*, ed. by Christa Jansohn and Dieter Mehl (Münster: LIT Verlag, 2015), pp. 147–205 (p. 188).

¹⁰⁵ Werner Habicht, ‘Shakespeare and the Founders’, in *German Shakespeare Studies at the Turn of the Twenty-First Century*, ed. by Christa Jansohn (Newark: Delaware Press, 2006), pp. 239–54 (p. 243).

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid* (p. 242).

to address this quandary by constructing the notion of a shared Germanic mother country, comprising both Anglo-Saxons and Germans.¹⁰⁷

Dinglestedt's prologue used the imagery of red and white roses to evoke the history plays' key themes of 'reconciliation and reunification', fashioning both the content and the serialised form of the performances into a 'a model for Germany's future politics', in which the 'single dramatic unity' of Shakespeare's history plays also stood 'for the aspired political unity'.¹⁰⁸ Thus, Shakespeare's role in the German unification effort was escalated through a new branch of mythologised identification. Furthermore, as Habicht explains, the particular fascination with Shakespeare as the creator of 'true' historical drama 'suggested what the growing national consciousness of the Germans was in need of: universalizing dramatizations of the national past'.¹⁰⁹ Thus, both Dinglestedt in Weimar and Rommel in Hanover were using the plays to re-read Germany's past while reinscribing them with meaning for Germany's future.

The invocation of patriotism in both Rommel's letter and Ulrici's statement acknowledges Shakespeare's Britishness, but also shows how entangled Shakespeare was with German nationalism. It indicates that the need for national culture was expressed by and treated through the annexation of Shakespeare to Germany's literary canon. This was all projected onto the 1864 celebration of Shakespeare in England by Rommel, who was

¹⁰⁷ Tobias Döring, 'Shakespeare's German Place: Weimar and the Jubilees, 1864/2014', in *New Places: Shakespeare and Civic Creativity*, ed. by Paul Edmondson and Ewan Fernie (London: The Arden Shakespeare, 2018), pp. 129–44 (p. 136).

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid* (p. 136).

¹⁰⁹ Habicht, 'Shakespeare and the German Imagination: Cult, Controversy, and Performance'. (p. 92).

evidently unable to imagine the separation of Shakespeare from nation – whether German or British.

Although Dinglestedt and Rommel’s contributions to the body of inculcating dramatic and creative outputs in this period shift the focus from *Hamlet* to the history plays, the coinciding Shakespeare birthday celebrations in Leipzig made sure to incorporate the symbolically indecisive Prince into their festivities, as indicated by the playbill (figure 4). The performance of *Hamlet, Prinz von Dänemark*, on Friday April 22, 1864, used the Schlegel translation and was, no doubt, reflected upon in the speeches made on the following day.

Indeed, Habicht’s account of the speeches given in Leipzig on April 23, 1864, includes several that resolved the ‘shared roots’ mythology into deeper metaphor. One such example compares Shakespeare with a tree, ‘which only after being transplanted into German soil “had struck firm roots and yielded glorious blossoms, whose scent has given sweet delight to the German nation”’, while another transfigured Shakespeare’s ‘genius’ into a ‘seed’ which had been ‘richly

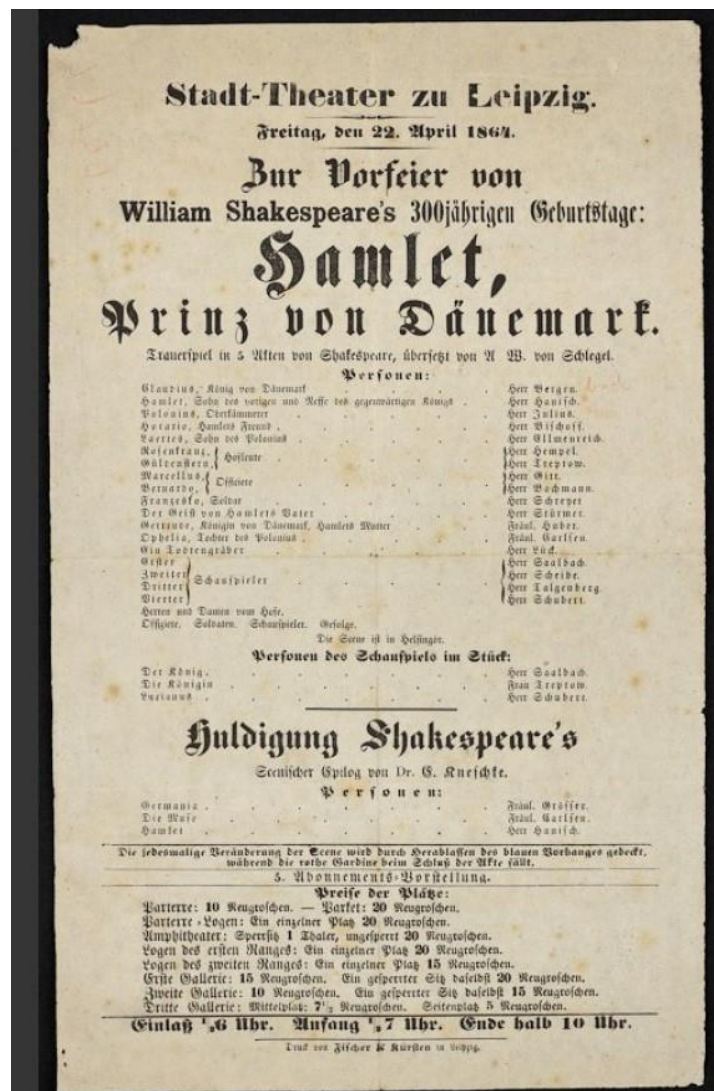


Figure 4: SBT ML1/7/101 Playbill: *Hamlet*; Stadt-Theater, Leipzig, 22/04/1864

watered with the sweat of German intellectual endeavours and warmed by the breath of a newly awakened German self-awareness'.¹¹⁰ Such repetitions as those indicated in this section expose the perceived necessity of justifying the German annexation of Shakespeare. Justification took the form of the idea of 'common Germanic stock' that was fortified by the 'superior weapons' of 'German aesthetic competence and the Schlegel-Tieck translation'.¹¹¹

The Goethe Wreath and Scroll, Schideck's Letter

The inculcation of a common historic culture between Britain and Germany was also reinforced by the symbolic locations used to promulgate the idea of the 'shared roots'. Tobias Döring explains that nineteenth-century Germany 'could form a common fatherland only on an imaginary level, staked out in symbolic ways, resorting to Shakespearean plots and figures as the main means to do so'.¹¹² As the home of Goethe, Schiller, Herder, and Wieland in their lifetimes, the use of Weimar for the DSG expands on the symbolic use of Shakespeare (in the Tercentenary performances) to invoke the cultural cachet of the German canon also. Essentially, the establishment of the DSG in Weimar drew on the canonicity of the established German literary icons to signal, first, Shakespeare's inclusion in that canon, and second, the specifically German tradition of which he would now be part.

In addition, Goethe's birth-home in Frankfurt had been bought in 1863 by the *Freie Deutsche Hochstift*, which swiftly began to promote and run the property in a similar way to the Shakespeare Birthplace: it was reconstructed as it would have been during Goethe's childhood, it had a strong focus on historical documentation, and it was dedicated to

¹¹⁰ Möbius, and Lemcke, quoted in Habicht, 'Shakespeare and the Founders' (p. 243-4).

¹¹¹ Habicht, 'Shakespeare and the Founders' (p. 244).

¹¹² Döring (p. 133).

celebrating Goethe's life, epoch, and legacy.¹¹³ The *Hochstift* aspired to education for everybody and was committed to 'keeping alive the idea of German unity in view of a common cultural identity'.¹¹⁴ Evidently, these aims were at the heart of the strategic move to capitalise on the Shakespeare Tercentenary and the establishment of the German Shakespeare Society in 1864.

To that end, on April 25, 1864, the SBT Visitors' Book shows an entry from 'G.W. Leitner of Kings Coll., London & of the Hochstift, Frankfurt (GOETHE'S HOUSE), on the occasion of their presentation of "the address from the nation of Goethe to that of shakespeare [*sic*]"'. Leitner's (1840-1899) mission, assisted by Professor Max Müller (1823-1900) of Oxford University, was to deliver the address not verbally, but on a beautifully illuminated scroll, decorated with painted images of both Shakespeare's and Goethe's birthplaces and an inset profile image of Shakespeare in embossed gold, within a circle of laurel leaves (see figure 5). The address (in the translation provided by the *Hochstift*) reads:

Once our country sent to Britain's shores that heroic youth which came as deliverers and successfully established a new Saxon nationality against the invasion of Latin races and influence. Shakespeare's poems, in return, restored to us the mothers' travail of Germania, at a time when, in a century of civil revolution, they were almost forgotten in their own country. Old Teutonic virtues gained their footing as emancipators and expellers of Latin corruption, and establishing themselves

¹¹³ Bodo Plachta, 'Remembrance and Revision: Goethe's Houses in Weimar and Frankfurt', in *Writers' Houses and the Making of Memory*, ed. by Harald Hendrix, trans. by Dieter Neiteler (New York: Routledge, 2008), pp. 45–60 (p.55).

¹¹⁴ *Ibid* (p. 55).

victoriously, gave birth to a new heroic youth: but this time one of the intellects which forced its way through storm and oppression into light, and grouped the brilliant host of our writers round the bold forms of Schiller and Goethe.



Figure 5: Unaccessioned, Tercentenary scroll from the Freie Deutsche Hochstift and Goethe-Haus, 1864.

Leitner's words locate in Shakespeare's works 'old Teutonic virtues', not only to explain the appeal of the plays in Germany but also to establish the two nations, formed from one Germanic 'heroic youth', as joint vanquishers of the 'Latin corruption' of Roman military and then French literary invasions. The message is, therefore, one more attempt to concretise the now well-established mythologies of the past century of German/British cultural identity.

Echoing the tree-themed metaphors that were also being used in the Leipzig celebration speeches, the address grounds its mythology in the analogy of an ancient tree of humanity: 'Sprung from one stem, two separate branches have developed into a separate and perfect growth' – the English language on one and the German language on the other, Shakespeare and Goethe springing from each respectively. The tree imagery is emphasised through the figurative chorus of acorns that adorn the border and the seal. The acorns suggest the might and longevity of the oak tree, are complete with roots and shoots that firmly denote the growth of great things from small beginnings, as well as the mythologised ancient tree that bears the cousin-branches of Shakespeare and Goethe.

Although both Goethe's and Shakespeare's birthplaces are represented on the scroll, only Shakespeare's portrait is featured. The oval shape evokes the portrait miniatures of the famous limner Nicholas Hilliard (1547-1619) and consequently suggests an imagined 'true' image of Shakespeare, as if Hilliard had been commissioned to create one. The laurel leaves that encircle the portrait reference the traditional crowning wreath for a famed poet in the Roman tradition (hence, 'Laureate'). This reference makes intriguing the fact that when the English Circle of Frankfurt followed up the *Hochstift's* presentation of this scroll with the presentation of a wreath to the mayor of Stratford-upon-Avon some ten days later, it was

made of oak leaves, dotted with acorns, and adorned with a ribbon in the black, red, and gold that was then associated with the German Republic (figure 6). Thus, rather than a *corona laurea*, as featured on the scroll, the Frankfurtian society of English language and literature decided to present a *corona civica* – the traditional crown awarded to a civilian who saves the life of a fellow citizen in battle.

The illuminated scroll offered by Leitner offers a narrative of the relationship between Britain and Germany that encapsulates the concerns and aims of the philosophers of the preceding century. However, this emphasis on rejecting what is French/Latinate and honouring what is British/Teutonic is compromised somewhat by the wreath's oak leaf composition. This detail renders it irrevocably an iteration of the *Roman* tradition of the *corona civica*: a crown of oak leaves awarded to one who saves the life of a fellow citizen in battle then holds the ground on which the act occurred for the remainder of the day. The



Figure 6: SBT 1868-3/1054 German Commemorative Wreath, 1864.

wreath is itself, therefore, an indication of symbolic ground held by Latinate influences, as it is an example of an ancient Roman tradition surfacing a thousand years after its time. However, the implications of the choice of *corona civica* in this instance go beyond a straightforward indication of the extent of Latin influence on the world, as the history of the *corona civica* suggests a deeper range of meaning relating to the regulations that governed the bestowal of the award. Valerie A. Maxfield explains that the crown had to be presented by the person saved to their saviour, and once bestowed, that person was to treat their saviour with the same reverence and respect they would their father. This would apply regardless of the rank or status of either party, leading to potentially monumental power shifts.¹¹⁵ The saviour narrative presented by Leitner – that the Anglo-Saxons saved Britain from the Roman invasion, and Shakespeare saved Germany from French neo-classicism – thus compliments and is complemented by the English Circle’s choice of a *corona civica* as a gift. Whether the act of giving the wreath and declaring Shakespeare the saviour of ‘Germania’ was intended to humble Germany to Britain, or perhaps Goethe to Shakespeare, is less clear. It may relate to Shakespeare’s influence on Goethe’s literary development, but it is more likely, perhaps, that the invocation of the initial Anglo-Saxon ‘saving’ of Britain from the Romans not only serves to establish a shared history, but also to level any implied hierarchical distinctions.

The symbolic notion of ‘holding ground’ is apparent even without the extant Latinate influences that are iterated by the choice of an oak-leaf wreath as a gift. In one of the configurations offered by the wreath, letter, and address, ‘Shakespeare-the-saviour’ was the foundation for a literary and cultural movement which ousted French literary influences in

¹¹⁵ Valerie A. Maxfield, *The Military Decorations of the Roman Army* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1981), p. 71.

Germany. The ground of that victory has been held ever since through German appreciation of Shakespeare. A second configuration, of ‘Germany-the-saviour’, is suggested through Leitner’s reference to the Anglo-Saxon invasion, which he frames as a rescue. In this instance, the victor’s ‘held ground’ is symbolised by the placing of this particular wreath – with the colours of Germany and the name of Goethe attached to it – within Shakespeare’s Birthplace. In this configuration, the Birthplace comes to represent Britain as a whole in an intriguing echo of Ernst Rommel’s inability to imagine Shakespeare’s separation from his nation. Thus, the symbolism of the wreath expands in manifold ways. Due to the function of the collections, namely, to preserve and make available the material history of Shakespeariana, the wreath becomes an ever-present marker of several key moments in time and a constant acknowledgement of Germany’s place in the story of Shakespeare.

The material construction of a *corona civica* is of no monetary worth, and it is an important aspect of its tradition that its entire value resides in its symbolism.¹¹⁶ Its symbolic value lies in its historical context, its detail, and its place, time, and function. The oak leaves are the signifier for the specific type of wreath, which directs one to the historical context of the *corona civica*. However, the oak tree has a particular significance in Germany that adds nationalistic nuance to the potential meanings of the choice of oak over laurel leaves for this wreath. The association of German forests with the German soul had been firmly established in the Romantic movement of the preceding century. In consequence, forests are the setting and framework for much of the folklore that was then used to revive a cultural identity.¹¹⁷ By 1864, the oak was understood as ‘the tree symbolizing the national character of the Germans: sturdy, reliable and strong. Like an oak the German nation had its

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁷ Neil MacGregor, *Germany: Memories of a Nation* (United Kingdom: Penguin Random House, 2014), p. 114.

roots and it grew; it germinated, matured, and came to fruition'.¹¹⁸ When the Weimar monument to Goethe and Schiller was erected in 1857, the sculptor, Ernst Rietschel (1804-1861), added an oaken tree stump behind the two poets as a 'widely recognised' symbol of Germany to emphasise their national importance.¹¹⁹ Furthermore, an oak tree in Ettersberg, Germany, was associated with Goethe through the legend that he wrote his poetry while sitting beneath it. Goethe believed that '[w]hoever walked every day under oak trees would become a different kind of person from somebody who walked under airy birch trees', and, after the poet's death, 'Goethe's Oak' became a site for literary tourism and a symbol of German endurance. The association with the oak was such that 'people believed that as long as the oak survived, Germany would flourish', a notion that gained portentous significance when Buchenwald Concentration Camp was built around the tree in 1937, and when it was incinerated by an Allied bomb in 1944.¹²⁰

In this way, the placement of the German oak leaves within the Birthplace potentially offers an even more powerful nationalist statement even than the black-red-gold ribbon at the base of the wreath, which in 1864 would have been more symbolic of republican ideology than the nation itself. However, the ribbon conveys its particular purpose and meaning in terms that are striking in their urgency when compared to the ambiguity of the wreath's other constituent parts. The ribbon is a clear signifier of the undecided state of Germany in the moment of the wreath's presentation, adding a nationalistic concern to an object that might otherwise have symbolised only the literary link between Goethe and Shakespeare. The ribbon reinforces the nationalist connotations of

¹¹⁸ Stefan Berger, *Inventing the Nation: Germany* (London: Hodder Arnold, 2004), p. 65.

¹¹⁹ Erica Quinn, *Franz Liszt: A Story of Central European Subjectivity* (Leiden: Brill, 2014), p. 143.

¹²⁰ Peter Young, *Oak* (London: Reaktion Books, 2013), p. 128.

the oak leaves and assures that the wreath is received as a gift from the (as yet wished-for) state of Germany as much as from the *Hochstift*.

Thus, the presentation of the wreath, and the scroll which must be inseparable from its interpretation, places a piece of Germany within the shrine of Shakespeare: the ratified space of the Birthplace in which all items are promised a part in the future of the story of Shakespeare in the world. Likewise, Leitner's choice to present his address on a scroll, rather than verbally, confirms the desire for permanence and displays an investment in the written word that will be saved in the archive, rather than the spoken, which can be lost in an instant. These sentiments echo a chief concern of Shakespeare's Sonnets – that of endurance and immortality – and, therefore, the placement of this beribboned wreath and illuminated scroll in the Shakespeare Birthplace ensures that the ideas, mythologisations, and connections invoked both symbolically and literally will endure as part of Shakespeare's cultural significance. The objects' inclusion in the properties of the Birthplace functions as a symbolic flag in the sand, a German 'colonisation' of the SBT's collections that chimes with the sense of ownership of Shakespeare that was asserted in the range of gestures, speeches, and targeted festivities that took place in 1864 Germany. In this way, the gifts work to legitimise the German annexation of Shakespeare through the material connection to his place of birth.

This section of the collection narrative shows that while the curious use of oak instead of laurel in the 'Goethe wreath' prompts a range of responses and possible interpretations, the desire to establish Germany as a part of the celebrations and the continuing afterlife of Shakespeare is clear. It is especially clear in the letter and the illuminated scroll-address. The letter from the Secretary of the English Circle of Frankfurt to

the mayor of Stratford-upon Avon (which is kept in the centre of the framed wreath) reads as follows:

In the name and on behalf of the English Circle of Frankfurt (a society of Germans having for their object the study of the English language and English literature) I beg to transmit to you a wreath and inscription which was placed on a bust of Shakespeare at the Festival held here to his honour by the English Circle and their friends, on the occasion of the Tercentenary Commemoration, and respectfully request, that, the same may be deposited in the house of Shakespeare and there remain as a memorial – small indeed in itself but presented with loving admiration and grateful homage of the sentiments entertained by a Society of Germans to the most illustrious Englishman.

This request makes explicit the necessity of the wreath as an *object*. The wreath's materiality is crucial as it demands notice beyond what is demanded by the address and letter that precede and accompany it. This object is not designed to be shelved, boxed, or stored, as those documents might be, but displayed – specifically in Shakespeare's Birthplace. By giving to a museum this design is amplified, as the very purpose of the place is to exhibit and maintain objects, thus fitting with the request that it *remain* in Shakespeare's house 'as a memorial'. The materiality of the wreath and the request for its permanent placement in Shakespeare's Birthplace accords with the collective awareness of the absence of material historical memorials for Shakespeare in Germany – noted by Habicht – and provides a solution. This request is crucial to understanding the relevance and importance

of international gifts in the SBT's collections as it suggests the intentions – or rather hopes – of many who give to the Shakespeare Birthplace: to access the Birthplace's material connection to Shakespeare through material additions to its 'sacred' space.

Indeed, the *Hochstift's* awareness of the significance of having German Shakespearean items in the SBT's collections is confirmed by a letter sent the following year, 1865, by Thomas Schideck of the Board of the *Hochstift*, which details a list of articles and commemorations of the 1864 celebrations in Germany and requests that they be added to the SBT library.¹²¹ Although I have been unable to locate any of these listed items in the library collection (which include programme items from the celebration of Shakespeare's 300th anniversary in Dessau and reports from the Goethe-haus in Frankfurt am Main), the sentiments of 1864 have been maintained not only through the artefacts of that date, but through the tradition that resulted from them and the occasion that they commemorate. Indeed, wreaths have been exchanged between the houses of Shakespeare and Goethe on the writers' birthdays every year since, excluding the World War years.

The Turn of the Century: Wreaths, A Death Mask, Operas, Visitors, Souvenirs

Further collection items have necessarily resulted from the continued wreath exchanges between the *Hochstift* and the SBT, including the wreath notices (figure 7) that accompanied the wreaths sent for the years 1897, 1898, 1899, and 1901. The archive holds notices for these years only, and it is unclear whether the practice of sending them was inconsistent, or whether other items from this series were lost or just not saved.

Irrespective of this, assurances of the continuance of the tradition up to the First World War

¹²¹ SBT ER1/46 Correspondence: Hunt Papers, Thomas Schideck on behalf of 'Das Freie Deutsche Hochstift in Goethe's Vaterhaus', Frankfurt, 2 March 1865 (German, f. 211).

appear in the minute book entry for Thursday 7th May 1914, which simply notes that ‘a wreath was received from Goethe’s House on April 25th’.¹²²

German fascination with all things Shakespearean, including material connections to the man himself, is demonstrated through a collection of articles relating to the provenance – and German ownership – of a death mask said to be of Shakespeare, that had been in the possession of Count Francis von Kesselstadt of Mainz (1753-1841). Archival documents – pamphlets, clippings, and articles regarding the plaster cast recur in intervals; in 1880, 1916, 1964, 1995, 1996, 1998, and 2007.¹²³ The articles reflect on the likelihood of the mask’s authenticity and the recurrences indicate what Cathryn Enis and Tara Hamling describe as a



Figure 7: SBT DR406/116 Printed Notices.

¹²² SBT TR 2/1/3 SBT Minute Book 1914-1937. Page 2.

¹²³ SBT P26. Documents related to ‘the Shakespeare Death-mask’.

reaction to archival absences in relation to Shakespeare the man, where ‘the things generated as response to loss, provide an “alternative” material record and vision of Shakespeare’s homelife’.¹²⁴ We may consider the many varying portraits of Shakespeare as part of this response, as well as this death mask and the reconstructions of his homelife that were the focus of Enis and Hamling’s study.

Deposits relating to Germany in the late 1800s and early 1900s were mainly into the library collection and comprise musical and literary responses such as Hermann Mendel’s text for Gioachimo Rossini’s *Othello, der Mohr von Venedig : Tragische Oper in 3 Akten* (*Othello, The Moor of Venice : Tragic Opera in 3 Acts*) (Berlin, 1868), and a homage entitled *Der Schwan vom Avon: Culturbilder aus Alt-England* (*Dear Swan of the Avon: Impressions of Old England*) by Albert Lindner (1881).¹²⁵ The tradition of translating Shakespeare’s plays into opera is generally thought to date back to mid-eighteenth-century Italy, though ‘[i]t is possible to view these operatic and symphonic usages in terms of a broader European obsession in the nineteenth century for Shakespearean appropriation of varying kinds’.¹²⁶ Thus, these items point to the more general internationalisation of Shakespeare that resulted from advancing networks of influence through the increasing ease and popularity of overseas travel. They also testify to the continuation of the idea of Shakespeare as an inspiration for, as well as in alignment with, German artists, thus demonstrating the ripple

¹²⁴ Enis and Hamling (p. 54).

¹²⁵ SBT OSP-50.25 opera/1868, *Othello, der Mohr von Venedig: Tragische Oper in 3 Akten* Musik von Gioachimo Rossini, geb. 29. Febr. 1792 zu Pesaro, gest. Novbr. 1865 zu Paris. Neu revidirter deutscher Text der Gesaenge mit Angabe des Inhalts der Oper und einer Einfuehrung in dieselbe von Hermann Mendel (Berlin: S. Mode’s Verlag, 1868); SBT P-67/LIN *Dear Schwan vom Avon: Culturbilder aus Alt-England*, Von Albert Lindner, (Berlin: Verlag von Richard Hanow, 1881).

¹²⁶ Irena Cholij and Stanley Wells, ‘Opera’, in *The Oxford Companion to Shakespeare*, ed. by Michael Dobson et al, Second Edition (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), p. 420.; Adrian Streete, ‘Shakespeare and Opera’, in *The Edinburgh Companion to Shakespeare and the Arts*, ed. by Mark Thornton Burnett, Adrian Streete, and Ramona Wray (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2011), pp. 142–68, (p.142).

effect of the series of alignments that have been described from Retzsch's *Galerie* through the Goethe scroll to this series of adaptations and appropriations. The responses from the last few decades of the nineteenth century certainly seem to corroborate Habicht's verdict that Shakespeare was fully 'unser' in Germany by 1901. Indeed, Habicht states that the canonisation of the German Shakespeare myth 'had reached its most dogmatic stage' at the turn of the century.¹²⁷ Perhaps this is reflected in the high-profile entries in the Visitors' Book in October 1900, June 1906, and July 1911, when the Birthplace received respectively the composer Julius Buths; Augusta, Princess of Schleswig-Holstein; and Prince Henry of Prussia.¹²⁸ Such visits also confirm the significance of the Birthplace to Germany's annexation of Shakespeare: Germany's claim to Shakespeare as one of her own is confirmed by the strong connections to the Birthplace as well as representation in the SBT and its collections.

While the Visitors' Book entries divulge the extent and reach of Shakespeare's popularity in Germany through such illustrious names, further collection items from this period indicate a more commonplace aspect of Shakespeare's popularity through a series of German-made souvenir ceramics with uncertain provenances. A cup, a teapot, and a mug with images of Shakespeare's Birthplace or the Stratford-upon-Avon borough arms, along with ceramic models of Shakespeare's Birthplace and Anne Hathaway's Cottage, are all marked as 'Made in Germany' but are accompanied by no further information about their place of manufacture, manufacturer name, or mode of acquisition.¹²⁹ A jug with an image of

¹²⁷ Habicht (pp. 96-99).

¹²⁸ SBT TR/35/1/21, Shakespeare Birthplace Trust Visitors' Books 1900-1901; SBT TR/35/1/25, Shakespeare Birthplace Trust Visitors' Books 1905-1906; SBT TR/35/1/30, Shakespeare Birthplace Trust Visitors' Books 1905-1906.

¹²⁹ SBT 1973-1 China Moustache cup with painted Arms of the Borough of Stratford-upon-Avon c.1900; SBT 1990-3 Miniature souvenir teapot with picture of Shakespeare's birthplace, c.1880-1900; SBT 1991-28

the Birthplace bears a slightly more revealing stamp on its base, stating ‘Manufactured in Germany for Fred Willis Birmingham’, suggesting that German manufacturers were producing ceramics for the English souvenir industry.¹³⁰ Literary heritage tourism had become ‘a widespread fashion’ by the late eighteenth century and through visiting writers’ houses tourists’ reading could be materialised and individualised ‘as remembered experience of place’.¹³¹ To complement and commercialise this fashion, manufacturers began to produce cheap souvenirs that meant that literary tourists could ‘take away memories and a portion of the prestige of the writer’.¹³² Souvenirs depicting writers’ houses were, therefore, a ‘materialization’ of the experience that could also be taken away and used as a form of conspicuous consumption. Thus, Shakespearean souvenirs confer cultural capital on the receiver/purchaser and consequently indicate the generative potential in that capital. The lack of information in the SBT’s object history files about the acquisition of the German ceramics suggests they were purposefully collected by the SBT as examples of the Shakespeare souvenir industry in accord with the sense of the Trust as a repository for items of all kinds that reference Shakespeare. Such items not only record Shakespeare’s cultural significance but perpetuate it through the SBT catalogue.

However, without any further information about the manufacturer or place of manufacture aside from the ‘made in Germany’ stamp, the items have little to offer the collection narrative aside from the observations made above. Likewise, letters written to the founder of the New Shakspere [*sic*] Society, Frederick James Furnivall (1825-1910) from Karl

Souvenir mug with print of Shakespeare’s Birthplace, c.1901; SBT 1977-6/1 Ceramic model of Shakespeare’s Birthplace, c.1900; SBT 1977-6/2 Ceramic model of Anne Hathaway’s Cottage, c. 1900.

¹³⁰ SBT 1997-11/4 Souvenir miniature jug with picture of Shakespeare’s birthplace, c.1901.

¹³¹ Nicola J. Watson, *The Author’s Effects: On Writer’s House Museums* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020), p. 2.

¹³² Pauline Mackay and Murray Pittock, ‘Beyond Text: Burns, Byron and Their Material Cultural Afterlife’, *Byron Journal*, 39.2 (2011), 149–62 (p. 151).

Marx (discussing Stuart Glennie) and F. Max Müller (who presented the Tercentenary wreath to the SBT in 1864, writing about Furnivall's *New English Dictionary*) deserve mention as German items, but do not relate to Shakespeare or divulge anything pertinent to this thesis.¹³³

Pre-war: The Anglo-German Courier

Irrespective of the general goodwill that is indicated through the high-profile visitors to the Birthplace during the *fin de siècle* period, tensions were rising in Europe and there was increasing concern that the international discord would lead to war. Such concerns are reflected in an archived newspaper clipping from *The Anglo-German Courier*.¹³⁴ Established by Lord Avebury and Lord Courtney in 1905, the Anglo-German Friendship Committee was one of several societies that enacted the 'strenuous efforts [...] made on both sides of the North Sea to maintain friendly communications' as the prospect of war with Germany – in particular – increased in the first few years of the twentieth century.¹³⁵ In July 1906, the Committee's newspaper, *The Anglo-German Courier*, issued an article that recounted the visit of a group of fifty German newspaper editors to England, including a tour of Stratford-upon-Avon. Although the itinerary lists visits to Trinity College Cambridge, Westminster Abbey, St Paul's Cathedral, the House of Commons, and Windsor Castle, where the visitors were hosted by King Edward VII, it is the visit to Stratford-upon-Avon that is afforded a full-page write-up and is (somewhat ironically, given the meeting with the King) described as 'the crowning point of the visit' by one of the guests. The tour of the town encompasses the

¹³³ SBT DR1136/8/2 Autograph Collection, Maslin Collection, 1863-1881.

The letter from Karl Marx (dated 1879) is a complaint about the conduct of Stuart Glennie. The letter from F. Max Müller (dated 1878) commiserates with Furnivall about a delay with the Dictionary project.

¹³⁴ SBT RRP 87.3 *The Anglo-German Courier Souvenir Edition*, 'The German Press Visit to London' ed. by Leo Weinthal and Hartley Knight, 6 July, 1906.

¹³⁵ G. R. Searle, *A New England? Peace and War 1886-1918* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), p. 518.

Birthplace, where flowers were picked from the garden to be taken home as souvenirs, Shakespeare's grave at Holy Trinity Church, where a 'huge wreath of laurel, tied with the German colours' was laid, as well as New Place, the Grammar School, the Memorial Theatre, and Anne Hathaway's Cottage. With meals hosted by the Mayor and the Chairman of the SBT, Sidney Lee, and tea on Avonbank by Mrs Flower, 'whose name is a household word in Stratford', it is clear that the visit was taken extremely seriously by all concerned. What is particularly striking about this visit, which was so clearly steered by the Germans' well-understood interest and admiration of Shakespeare, is its part in the series of activities G. R. Searle describes as 'manifestations of Anglo-German solidarity' that 'could be interpreted as a defensive response to the deteriorating relationship between the two countries'. These activities, Searle asserts, are 'remarkable' in their vitality, especially as 'nothing quite like it had sprung into existence to offset Anglo-French estrangement in the late 1890s'.¹³⁶ The sense of kinship that has been brought forward in this chapter through the ideas represented in the wreath and scroll presented at Shakespeare's Tercentenary can be understood as having a broader historical context through this article, as it demonstrates the relative importance of the Anglo-German relationship compared to the Anglo-French one. This was, Searle explains, to do with redoubled efforts in England at the turn of the century,

to discover the essence of true 'Englishness' – through myth, folklore, and history.

One expression of this was an insistence on the centrality of the country's Anglo-Saxon heritage. In 1896 there were widespread celebrations of the millennial

¹³⁶ Ibid.

anniversary of the death of King Alfred the Great, in whose memory a statue was erected five years later in Winchester, the former seat of the Anglo-Saxon kingdom. Scholars were also working to retrieve Anglo-Saxon (*aka* "Old English") texts. And schoolchildren were encouraged by their primers to think of themselves as belonging to a blue-eyed, fair-haired people, and told that the Queen was 'the descendant of the Saxon chiefs who settled in Wessex more than 14 centuries ago.'¹³⁷

Thus, the mythologised, shared roots that were used to create the bridge between Shakespeare and Goethe in 1864, when Germany sought a unified national identity, were reused in fin-de-siècle England to redefine English identity before being drawn on to resist the increasing threat of war in Europe.

Although this item is more a British response than a German one, it adds to the collection narrative, nevertheless. First, it demonstrates the ways in which Shakespeare can be used as a form of cultural diplomacy and how Britain can 'offer' him up to visiting nations as a salve to international discord. Shakespearean diplomacy is understood thus to have the simultaneous function of sharing Shakespeare's cultural capital with the world, while also staking the irrefutability of British ownership: a detail that will become significant during and in the aftermath of the coming wars. Second, the article highlights the concurrence with and return of the Anglo-German shared roots mythmaking brought by the German delegation to Stratford-upon-Avon in 1864. Third, through the repurposed mythology, it draws attention to the entanglement of Shakespeare and 'Anglo-Saxonism' in this process, which also suggests the ways in which Shakespeare has been implicated in racial

¹³⁷ Ibid, p. 11.

mythmaking.¹³⁸ Specifically, it illuminates the inculcation of Shakespeare as an icon of a specifically *white* culture, the effect of which is the marginalisation of those whom the same discourse classifies as Others.¹³⁹ The clipping from *The Anglo-German Courier* was no doubt saved by SBT archivists simply because of the coverage of the visit to Stratford-upon-Avon, but through the lens of this study and its objectives – especially to suggest how the SBT might ‘decolonise’ Shakespeare through its collections – it illuminates a key narrative in the mythologisation of Shakespeare that should be problematised with urgency.

World War: Minutes, War Trophies, Flags

While political and cultural efforts to maintain goodwill between Britain and Germany continued, the SBT minute book demonstrates the relatively close relationship between the DSG (the German Shakespeare Society) and the SBT through most of 1914.¹⁴⁰ In a transcript of a letter from the SBT’s Chairman of the Trustees, Sidney Lee, to Alois Brandt of the DSG, Lee takes pains to express the ‘high advantage to the civilised world’ that has been brought by the DSG’s ‘valuable service’ to ‘Shakespearean learning and criticism’. This letter was sent around the same time that the SBT loaned a selection of books and ‘other articles’ to an exhibition of ‘Shakespeariana’ in Leipzig. It is suggestive of an effort by the cultural institutions to maintain the international relationships that were gradually being torn apart by the political ones. The minute book later tells of the outbreak of war by noting that the board of trade had advised that the reported burning of the British pavilion at the exhibition

¹³⁸ Regarding the white-supremacist implications of the term ‘Anglo-Saxon’ see Mary Rambaran-Olm, ‘Misnaming the Medieval: Rejecting “Anglo-Saxon” Studies’, *History Workshop*, 2019 <https://www.historyworkshop.org.uk/misnaming-the-medieval-rejecting-anglo-saxon-studies/?fbclid=IwAR1EndSzaJOhf8mTirqWBx434G-_Ehu9OYO3eKBUhJOiLBqKCDNifD8p44> [accessed 29 April 2021].

¹³⁹ See: Grier; Ambereen Dadabhoy, ‘The Unbearable Whiteness of Being (in) Shakespeare’, *Postmedieval*, 11 (2020), 228–35; Ian Smith, ‘We Are Othello: Speaking of Race in Early Modern Studies’, *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 67.1 (2016), 104–24.

¹⁴⁰ SBT TR 2/1/3 SBT Minute Book 1914-1937.

was without foundation, and that items had been removed to a place of safety prior to the departure of the British Commissioner.

Unsurprisingly, collection items from the First World War period are limited to British responses to Germany, rather than gifts or communications coming from Germany. However, there are several such responses that indicate the ways in which Shakespeare was wielded as a 'cultural weapon' aimed at Germany: that is to say, British 'rights' to claim ownership of Shakespeare through the Birthplace were asserted in pointed ways that were designed to wound Germany by destabilising the kinship claim. This is useful as an indication not only of the cultural power of Shakespeare, and the SBT, but of the increasing threat of the total appropriation of Shakespeare into German culture that was expounded as 'theft' in aggressive and war-like terms by writers such as Henry Arthur James. Specifically, James's *Shakespeare and Germany (Written During the Battle of Verdun)* in 1916, asserts the 'constant evidence' that through 'lust of plunder' the Germans would add to the 'hideous roll of her thieveries and rapes' by imminently announcing 'the final and complete annexation by Germany of William Shakespeare'.¹⁴¹ One way this threat was symbolised in the SBT's minute books was through the continued German custody in 1919 of the books and objects the SBT had sent to Leipzig in 1914.

The War Trophies Committee that was established in 1916 was at that time receiving an influx of guns and other items, and the minute book shows that in January 1919 the SBT applied to the Committee for 'a collection of War Souvenirs for New Place Museum'.¹⁴² The exhibition items were not returned from Leipzig until October 1919.¹⁴³ The urgency of the

¹⁴¹ Henry Arthur Jones, *Shakespeare in Germany (Written during the Battle of Verdun)* (London: Chiswick Press, 1916), p. 3.

¹⁴² SBT TR 2/1/3, SBT Minute Books, 1914-1937 2 January 1919, p. 100.

¹⁴³ SBT TR 2/1/3, SBT Minute Books, 1914-1937 2 October 1919, p. 115.

application for war trophies seems, therefore, to acknowledge and act upon the concern that if the Germans had been victorious, Shakespeare would have become a trophy of that victory. The request for war trophies expresses the desire to send a clear message about ownership and authority over Shakespeare's legacy. The SBT's response combines flaunting the Allied victory and proclaiming Shakespeare's belonging to Britain by placing material symbols of the defeat of Germany within the museum of Shakespeare.

However, it is unclear how coherent this proclamation would actually have been, as the only records of any war trophies received by the SBT are incomplete. A minute book entry for August 7 1919 reports that a small drinking cup, a spoon, and a fork from the War Trophies Committee had been stolen by visitors to New Place, but there is no record of the accessioning of these items.¹⁴⁴ An accession record exists for a German machine gun, two ammunition belts, and an Austrian trenching tool in 1919, but there is no record of their ever being displayed in any of the SBT's properties.¹⁴⁵

However successful, the intention to wound, or at the least goad, Germany through Shakespeare is further underscored by the subsequent delay in allowing Germany to participate in the annual birthday celebration and flag-unfurling ceremony. The decision to exclude 'enemy' flags was based on the list produced annually by the Court of St James to detail which nations were then 'enjoying ambassadorial representation' in the UK.¹⁴⁶ Although the SBT were not responsible for the erasure of Germany from the 'world stage' of the birthday flag-unfurling, the gesture no doubt served to remind Germany, if not the

¹⁴⁴ SBT TR 2/1/3, SBT Minute Books, 1914-1937 7th August 1919, p. 113.

¹⁴⁵ SBT Museum Accession Register (date range unavailable due to lack of access to Shakespeare Centre during the Covid-19 crisis)

¹⁴⁶ SBT DR281/59, Shakespeare Birthday Celebrations Committee, correspondence between Dr Stroedel of the Deutsche Shakespeare-Gesellschaft and Dr Levi Fox of the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust, September, 1951.

world, of Britain's 'ownership' of Shakespeare. When the German delegation to the 1864 Tercentenary requested specifically that the Goethe wreath become part of the SBT properties, they signalled the extent of the Birthplace's significance within Shakespeare's iconography, and the power of its role as the record-keeper for Shakespeare's legacy. As such, the fourteen-year absence of Germany from the collections' records of the Shakespeare birthday celebrations becomes all the more significant. The effective exclusion of Germany from the story of Shakespeare from 1914 until 1928 is performed within the collections every time the events of that period are uncovered. The international nature of the annual festivities means that, in the context of the international history of representation at the Shakespeare birthday celebrations, at least, this exclusion has the effect of erasing the existence of Germany entirely from this period of history. The power of the SBT as a cultural repository is highlighted through the strikingly partial narrative that is consequently available to the German collection.

Rebuilding the World: Moritz's Travels

A volume entitled *Travels of Carl Philipp Moritz in England in 1782/a reprint of the English translation of 1795 with an introduction by P.E. Matheson*, which was revived and published in 1924, reveals a separate interest in German responses to Shakespeare in the post-war period that was not solely concerned with gloating and goading Germany.¹⁴⁷ The editor, P. E. Matheson's 1930 study, *German Visitors to England, 1770-1795*, suggests a reason for it:

¹⁴⁷ SBT 87.1 *Travels of Carl Philipp Moritz in England in 1782: A reprint of the English translation of 1795 with an introduction by P.E. Matheson* (London: Humphrey Milford, 1924).

To-day, as in the age of Rousseau and the French Revolution, internationalism is in the air. There is much vague aspiration after a European mind and a cosmopolitan spirit. The problem before us is to combine nationalism in its best sense, the development of the best characteristics and capacities in each people, with the larger view of a common interest beyond the clamour of competition and conflict. Such a larger view can only be acquired by mutual knowledge among nations, and to this there can be no short cut. It can only be acquired by serious study and by personal intercourse. It is because the writings of the men I have been describing illustrate the value of such intercourse, that I have called your attention to them today.¹⁴⁸

Matheson uses Moritz's eighteenth-century musings on his visit to England to recall to Matheson's twentieth-century readers the beginnings of a sense of European literature and identity. Thus, Matheson places the kinship between Germany and England at the forefront of his discussion of nationalism in 1930s Europe. The SBT most likely collected this book because it contains a brief passage on Moritz's visit to Stratford-upon-Avon in which he indulges in predictable Bardolatry.¹⁴⁹ But within the framework of the SBT's German collection narrative, the volume has something much more relevant to contribute, as it highlights a meeting point between international politics and culture at a critical point in

¹⁴⁸ P. E. Matheson, *German Visitors to England, 1770-1795: And Their Impressions* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1930), p. 31, in HathiTrust Digital Library <<http://hdl.handle.net/2027/mdp.39015008231329>> [accessed 27 August 2018].

¹⁴⁹ Moritz describes his joy at 'setting [his] feet on classic ground' where 'the greatest genius nature ever produced, was born' etc. Moritz, p. 161. Accordingly, 'Bardolatry' should be understood as unproblematised articulations of Shakespeare's greatness that have been influenced by the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century rise of Shakespeare's stature 'to near-godhood and his works to gospel-like authority', Celestine Woo, *Romantic Actors and Bardolatry: Performing Shakespeare from Garrick to Kean* (New York: Peter Lang, 2008), p. 6.

European history. *Travels of Carl Philipp Moritz* was published four years before Germany was once again invited to fly its flag at the Shakespeare birthday celebration of 1928: an event that offered the perfect opportunity for a European, and indeed, a *worldwide* 'common interest beyond the clamour of competition and conflict'.

The National-Socialist Party: Hans Rothe's Translations

Unfortunately, the specific, hopeful strain of nationalism in Matheson's writings, which value international cooperation, communication, and appreciation of 'other' national individualities, could not flourish under the circumstances of inter-war Europe in the 1930s. E. J. Hobsbawm explains that the aims of the peace treaties that followed the First World War were 'to create a continent neatly divided into coherent territorial states each inhabited by a separate ethnically and linguistically homogenous population' and that 'the logical implication' of this 'was the mass expulsion or extermination of minorities. Such was and is the murderous *reductio ad absurdum* of nationalism in its territorial version, although this was not fully demonstrated until the 1940s'.¹⁵⁰

Adolf Hitler's National-Socialist party took aim at expressions of individuality in art, science, and religion within German borders, which can be understood as an indictment of Nazi intentions towards the rest of the world. It is also a sign of the distance between this nationalism and Matheson's. The SBT's copy of Hans Rothe's *Shakespeare – Komödien* (*Shakespeare's Comedies*) from 1934 provides an example of such policies in action (see

¹⁵⁰ E. J. Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism Since 1780* (Cambridge: Canto, 1990), p. 133.

figure 8). Rothe began translating Shakespeare in the early 1920s and immediately upset traditionalists by doing so in modern German. A clipping from the *Observer* dated August 23 1931 details an interview Rothe gave at Malvern Festival in that year.¹⁵¹ He makes clear the need for updated German translations since those taken from the 'standard' Schlegel version were now 'old

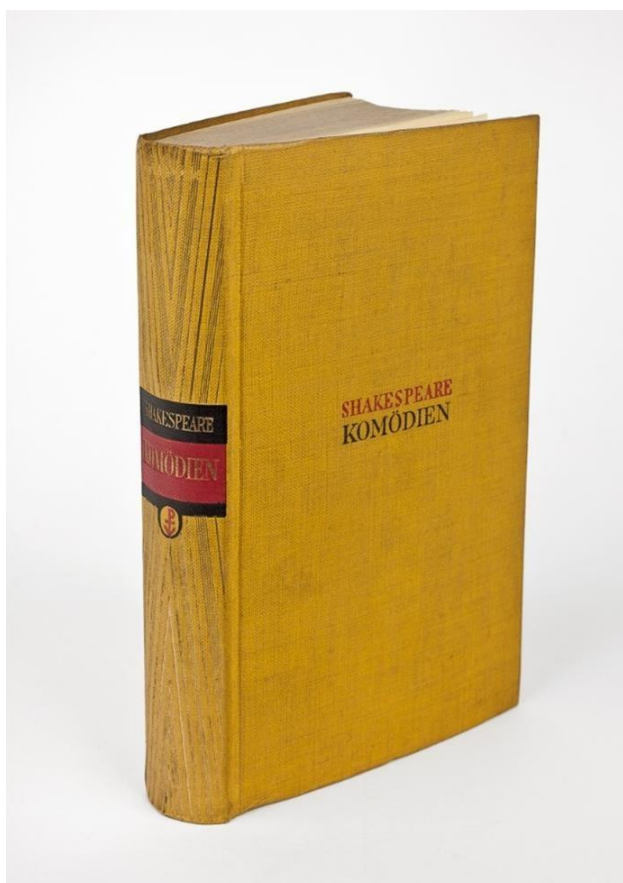


Figure 8: SBT 47 German/1934 (Rothe). Hans Rothe, *Shakespeare – Komödien (Shakespeare's Comedies)*, (Leipzig: P. List, 1934).

fashioned' and the audience were 'not enjoying the jokes'. Rothe's great aim was 'to bring out the drama and the comedy' by copying the original Shakespearian form 'even to the extent of breaking the blank verse as it is broken in the facsimile folio which I use'.

Although the initial outrage was over Rothe's language, this outrage was replaced in the 1930s by Nazi accusations that Rothe was '*antivölkisch* [...]' and a typical exponent of Weimar decadence'.¹⁵² To be *völkisch* in Nazi terms was to be of the people, where the

¹⁵¹ SBT P63.2 Germany, 'Shakespeare in Translation', *Observer*, August 23, 1931.

¹⁵² Anselm Heinrich, *Entertainment, Propaganda, Education: Regional Theatre in Germany and Britain between 1918 and 1945* (Hatfield, Herts: University of Hertfordshire Press, 2007), p. 219. Heinrich references a letter from Schlösser to Goebbels, February 1936 at BArch R55/20218 and articles by Werner Kurz, Karl Künkler and Wolf Braumüller in a special issue of *Bausteine zum deutschen Nationaltheatre* from February 1936 (p. 43).

people all conformed to the Nazi mindset, where 'the German should no longer experience himself as private person and isolated individual, but as part of the public and of the people's community (*Volksgemeinschaft*)'.¹⁵³ Drama was to model this by being 'a serious cultural experience for the people as a whole'; it must prove itself to be relevant to all citizens, directly or indirectly; and 'the fate and character of the German people had to be visible in any dramatic representation'.¹⁵⁴ Consequently, the theatre would be

a forum [...] where the individual was submerged in the collective and readied for battle. The effect was to be a little like the Party rallies: carefully controlled and orchestrated emotion that would provide ideological motivation from the masses, hence Nazi efforts to encourage theatre-going through subsidised tickets and organised outings at office or factory level.¹⁵⁵

Thus, mid-nineteenth-century ideas about a German cultural identity being created in the theatres through the shared experiences of the audience-as-community were utilised in the 1930s with the carefully distorted concept of *Volk* for Nazi purpose: to streamline the possible interpretations of the performance in accordance with Nazi priorities.

In this period, all subversive forms of art and literature (categorised as 'degenerate') were to be driven out in order to bring German culture into (the Nazi) line. For example, five

¹⁵³ Wilhelm von Schramm, *Neubau Des Deutschen Theatres: Ergebnisse Und Forderungen* (Berlin: Schlieffen, 1934), p. 39. Given in William Niven, 'The Birth of Nazi Drama?: *Thing Plays*', in *Theatre Under the Nazis*, ed. by John London (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), p. 57.

¹⁵⁴ Niven, p. 57.

¹⁵⁵ Gerwin Strobl, 'Shakespeare and the Nazis', *History Today*, 47.5 (1997), 16–22 (p. 18).

thousand and eighty-five books which allegedly contained Marxist or pacifist ideas, moral corruption, or had Jewish authors were banned during Nazi rule.¹⁵⁶ Thus, the ambiguities of Shakespeare's works, what Emma Smith describes as their 'sheer and permissive gappiness', that which perhaps makes Shakespeare seem 'universal' (for some), was problematic for the Nazi authorities, for whom singularity of message or doctrine was crucial.¹⁵⁷ This led to concern about the 'legitimacy' of the Shakespearean texts being performed in venues. Gerwin Strobl explains that 'Shakespeare's place on the stage and in the classrooms of the Reich preoccupied Germany's masters in a way few other cultural issues did', due to the fine balance of the problem inherent in Shakespeare:

Against Shakespeare's inconvenient nationality, and often doubtful politics, had to be weighed a whole host of issues. First and foremost, the twin Nazi obsessions with high *Kultur* and Great Men: a party that claimed to restore the classics to their rightful place could ill afford to ban the greatest classic of them all. Ideology aside, Shakespeare's peculiar importance for the German theatre was itself a factor: ever since the eighteenth century and Schlegel and Tieck's brilliant translation he had been an 'honorary German', and the young men who, in 1939, set out to fight for the fatherland were as likely to carry *Hamlet* as *Faust* in their knapsacks.¹⁵⁸

¹⁵⁶ Guenter Lewy, *Harmful and Undesirable: Book Censorship in Nazi Germany* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), p. x.

¹⁵⁷ Emma Smith, *This Is Shakespeare* (Milton Keynes: Pelican Books, 2019), p. 2.

¹⁵⁸ Strobl (p.16).

The need to ensure that all performances of Shakespeare adhered to the Nazi aims of supporting (if not forcing) *völkisch*-ness upon German society was part of the *Gleichschaltung* (streamlining): the police-led intervention in all areas of German life that enabled the Nazis to establish total control in Germany.¹⁵⁹

Thus, the very flexibility of Shakespeare's works that permits liberal and fascist interpretations of the same text in the same moment became a threat to the rigid conformity required by the Nazi state, and an example of why expressions of free and independent thought – that which might be prompted by a free and independent production in a theatre – had to be legally repressed. In 1933 demands were issued that all foreign works and influences be removed from German life, even from the museums.¹⁶⁰ Despite this, Shakespeare's value to German culture and identity was great enough that the *Gleichschaltung* process was extended to include his work, regardless of his nationality, so that restrictions akin to those on free speech could be utilised in order to make the works 'safe' to read and perform. For the National-Socialists in the 1930s, it was better to control Shakespearean interpretations carefully from within the Party than to ban the plays and allow their ambiguity to exist outside of Nazi authority.

As a result of the *Gleichschaltung* and Shakespeare's significance in German culture, the DSG became 'a political instrument' and was made responsible for the authorisation of all new translations of Shakespeare.¹⁶¹ The influence of the *Gleichschaltung* process on the DSG came about gradually: initially through pressure to eject Jewish members; withholding

¹⁵⁹ Ruth Freifrau von Ledebur, "'The Country That Gave Birth to You a Second Time": An Essay About the Political History of the German Shakespeare Society 1918-1945', in *German Shakespeare Studies at the Turn of the Century*, ed. by Christa Jansohn (Newark: Delaware University Press, 2006), pp. 255–71 (p. 265).

¹⁶⁰ Franz Roh, *German Art in the Twentieth Century: Painting, Sculpture, Architecture*, ed. by Julia Phelps, trans. by Catherine Hutter (London: Thames and Hudson, 1968) (p. 152).

¹⁶¹ Ledebur (p. 262).

of membership fees from crucial city libraries pending proof that no Jewish members remained; and regulations about how Jewish critics could be quoted in new scholarship, which impacted on the ability to publish the *Jahrbuch* (the DSG's annual journal) that distinguished the Society.¹⁶²

When in 1936 Joseph Goebbels, the Reich Minister of Propaganda, sought advice from the DSG about Rothe's translations, the response the Society provided led him to ban them as 'liberalist efforts to corrupt the German stage'.¹⁶³ The effect upon Rothe's livelihood, and very likely, personal safety, led him to emigrate. Rothe wrote a year later that what was so special about German Shakespeare was the potential for new versions every decade, as opposed to English Shakespeare which remained – in textual terms – in its original form. What was demonstrated by Goebbels' 'edict prohibiting the translation of Shakespeare in Germany and commanding all German theatres to perform in future only the Romantic version of Schlegel and Tieck', was, Rothe argued, 'an odd misunderstanding of the function of Shakespeare in the German theatre'. Furthermore, '[t]hat it should have been found necessary, after more than 300 years, to forbid the unfalsified expression of Shakespeare's thoughts, is the most convincing evidence of his immortality'.¹⁶⁴

Nevertheless, Goebbels' ruling meant that Rothe's work was excluded from German cultural life during this time. In this way, the object narrative of this volume makes the potential significance of the SBT's burgeoning international collection strikingly clear. The attempt to not only ban but destroy Rothe's work is defeated by the volume's belonging in the SBT's collections, where it functions through the catalogue as a spotlight shining not

¹⁶² Ibid (pp. 265-66).

¹⁶³ Ibid (p. 265) Ledebur quotes from the official SS publication, *Das Schwarze Korps*, May 21, 1936, ADSG, GSA 148/155, 1936.

¹⁶⁴ Rothe, (p. 268-9).

only on Rothe's 'corruptive' translation, but on the particular difficulties faced by the National Socialists. It highlights their urgent desire to retain Shakespeare as part of German culture and the necessity of nullifying the plays' potential for subversive interpretations in order to do so. Furthermore, if, in the Nazi schema, the Schlegel and Tieck versions should be considered the authentic German Shakespeare translation to which all else must conform in order to be considered authentic, then another lesson of the Rothe edition is that what was really at stake for the Nazis was what Shakespeare had been to Germany in the moment of the Schlegel and Tieck translations. This includes the 'battering ram' against French neoclassicism, the link to lost culture, and the mythology of the deep-rooted foundation for German national culture.

The attempt to suppress the Rothe translations chimes with the *Hochstift's* request, in 1864, that the Goethe wreath become part of the collections. That year, the SBT's collections were targeted in the effort to establish links between Britain and Germany and the Shakespeare Societies in both countries. The Birthplace was and is figured as a ratified space in which the representation of Germany's contribution to Shakespeare studies legitimises Germany's claim on Shakespeare as an honorary German national poet. The requests of the *Goethe-Haus* with the wreath, of Ernst Rommel with his poem, of Thomas Schideck with his commemorative articles, for them to be *kept* in the collections, lend the idea of the SBT's collections as something much more than a repository for Shakespeariana. The same sense of posterity sought by the *Goethe-Haus* in 1864 works through Rothe's translations to ensure against the erasure that that Nazis sought. Furthermore, for Rothe, the birthplace, and in particular the burial place of Shakespeare were so important that he chose to have his ashes scattered outside Holy Trinity Church, Stratford-upon-Avon, in order

to be near to Shakespeare's resting place; a request that was carried out in January 1979.¹⁶⁵ The SBT's library collection holds several of his various obituaries in English and German newspaper clippings, as well as a clipping from 1931 that notes Rothe's attendance at the Malvern Theatre Festival and the occasion of his modern German translations. Rothe might have been pleased to know the fruitlessness of the political attempt to erase his contribution to Shakespeare's legacy.¹⁶⁶

Pre-war 'Accommodation': Lady Flower's Frankfurt Address, The Swastika in Bridge Street

The retention of Shakespeare in German culture became particularly profitable to the Nazi campaign in the immediate prelude to the Second World War, as a supposedly German affinity with Shakespeare's plays and characters were used as a form of what would now be understood as soft power. Hitler hoped for British and French understanding about – if not sought concessions for – his flouting of the peace treaties and pacts that were designed to limit German territory and power following the First World War. Thus, expressions of enthusiasm for Shakespeare 'linked in with the Third Reich's wooing of Britain; the bard himself becoming symbolic of the racial links between the two Aryan super states'.¹⁶⁷ As such, the previous century's inculcation of Britain and Germany's shared roots merged with 1930s preoccupations with eugenics, especially the emphasis on the perceived superiority of Nordic, 'Aryan' peoples, and Hitler's hopes to make Germany a world power without significant opposition. Thus, Hitler engaged the history of German veneration of

¹⁶⁵ Personal email from Rothe's granddaughter, Nina Rothe, September 30, 2018.

¹⁶⁶ SBT p 63.2 Germany, G. W. B., 'Shakespeare in Translation: A Version in Modern German', *Observer*, August 23, 1931.; SBT P 93.2 Rothe. Anton R. Obrist, 'Obituary of Hans Rothe', Submitted to *The Times* but not printed, 05/01/1978.; SBT P 93.2 Rothe, photocopied obituaries of Rothe in German, published in *Basler Zeitung* 05/01/1978 and *Die Zeit* 06/01/1978.

¹⁶⁷ Strobl (p. 19).

Shakespeare in the hope of influencing British responses to his political actions: closely adhering to the tenets of soft power that were laid out by Nye in 1990.¹⁶⁸ That Nye's tenets can be applied to many international interactions with Shakespeare's cultural capital is indicated throughout this thesis, but this instance is striking due to both its remarkable adherence to Nye's schema and retrospective awareness of what followed.

The SBT's collections reflect British hopes to avoid another war through indications that a relationship was being maintained by the literary societies of Britain and Germany as late as 1938 and 1939, despite Germany having already made significant military moves in the Rhineland and Austria. The appeasement negotiations between the British and French and the German governments – which aimed to avoid war by turning a blind eye to Germany's illegal (by the terms of the Treaty of Versailles) occupation of the Rhineland, for example – were well underway when Frederick Christian Wellstood (SBT Secretary) and Lady Flower (the Chairman's wife and prominent Stratfordian) represented the SBT at the Goethe birthday celebrations in Frankfurt in August 1938. According to a typed press release in the archive collection, Lady Flower gave one of the principal speeches (in German) and was 'vociferously applauded'.¹⁶⁹ The press release concludes with a reminder that

[f]riendly contact between the birthplaces of Shakespeare and Goethe was established as far back as 1864 when a beautifully illuminated address of congratulation on Shakespeare's Birthday was received from Frankfort [sic] followed by the gift from the English Circle at Frankfort of a wreath of oak leaves which had

¹⁶⁸ Nye Jr.

¹⁶⁹ SBT DR1030/2/6 Frederick Christian Wellstood, office papers.

been placed on a bust of Shakespeare during the celebrations there. Since that date, interrupted only by the great war, there has been an annual interchange of wreaths on the respective birthdays of the two poets, the Goethe wreath being always suspended at the front of Shakespeare's House during the Birthday celebrations.

Once again, as with the warm regards expressed between the SBT and DSG in the months prior to the First World War, the cultural societies appear to pull together as the political factions pull apart.

The Shakespeare birthday celebrations of April 1939 employed a 'business as usual' approach as the invitations to the world to fly their flags at the event were issued. Just five months prior to the invasion of Poland that would begin the Second World War, while Britain and France were pledging to defend Poland in response to Germany's initial threat of invasion, the Swastika flag flew in Bridge Street, Stratford-upon-Avon (figure 9). With the benefit of hindsight, this photograph is striking because of the ways in which it captures all of the associations of the Nazi swastika as part of the Shakespeare birthday in indelible, undeniable reality. At the time, the flag's presence was a sign of diplomacy that supported the appeasement efforts to avoid another war; although Sylvia Morris and Susan Brock note that the Stratford Herald of April 28 1939 reported 'with some satisfaction that "the German Charge d'Affaires pulled the wrong cord and brought his country's emblem tumbling to the ground in a bundle"'.¹⁷⁰ Perhaps this satisfaction stemmed from British awareness not only of the threat of war and imposition that emanated from Hitler's Germany, but also of

¹⁷⁰Susan Brock and Sylvia Morris, "'Enchanted Ground": Celebrating Shakespeare's Birthday in Stratford-upon-Avon', in *Shakespeare Jubilees: 1769-2014*, ed. by Christa Jansohn and Dieter Mehl (Zurich: Lit Verlag, 2015), pp. 31–56 (p. 47).

German regard for Shakespeare as one of their own alongside Schiller and Goethe, thus signalling a revival of the rivalry over Shakespeare that surfaced during the First World War.

However, the defence of 'diplomacy' and Stratfordian satisfaction at the bungled unfurling do not adequately mitigate the showing of the swastika on the occasion of Shakespeare's Birthday in Stratford-upon-Avon. In 1933,

James Waterman Wise wrote that '[i]n England, in France, in Italy, in Russia, in Poland, as in America, non-Jews vied with Jews in the expression of amazed indignation' at the treatment of German Jews by their government, and in the 'unanimity of the world's reaction [the] [!]ines of political demarcation like those of creed and nationality merged in a common protest'.¹⁷¹ The world was uniting against reports from Germany that

no longer deal with the fierce attacks and brutal outrages perpetrated upon German Jews during the first days of Nazi accession to power. [...] They no longer tell of



Figure 9: SBT DR 641/4/8. Reading Room - Other Occasions, 1937-1940.

¹⁷¹ James Waterman Wise, *Swastika: The Nazi Terror* (New York: Harrison Smith and Robert Haas, 1933), p. 66.

Storm Troop attacks upon civilians in the streets, of homes invaded, of individuals subjected to indescribable indignities, of terror and sudden death in the night. These have not ended. But they sink into insignificance compared to the reports which now come from Germany – not despite censorship but with its full sanction: Reports vaunting the organised, open campaign against German Jewry upon which the Nazi Government has embarked.¹⁷²

By the time of the Shakespeare Birthday celebrations in April 1939, Dachau, Sachsenhausen, Buchenwald, Flossenbürg, and Mauthausen concentration camps were all established and filling up due to the anti-Semitic, anti-democratic campaign of the National-Socialist government, with Ravensbrück due to be opened in the Autumn. Given this context, the photograph highlights the complexity of the diplomatic balance between aggravating tensions by refusing to include the German flag in the ceremony and appearing to countenance the atrocities that were being committed. The photograph thus draws attention to the unintended consequences of introducing flags – as symbols of nationalistic representation – to such an event.

The picture collections at the Shakespeare Centre do not contain photographs of every flag that flew on this occasion, nor indeed of every birthday celebration on which national flags flew. This makes this an even more compelling item, and the fact that it has been kept and catalogued both results from and reinforces the shock of seeing the Nazi flag in Stratford-upon-Avon. It makes the image stand out as a lesson from the past, as a reminder of the allowances that were made and their terrible consequences. Once again,

¹⁷² Ibid, p. 9.

the item's presence in the collections renders it a part of the Shakespeare story, a fact that caused concern in the early days of the first online catalogue, when a coding issue caused the homepage to revert to this image repeatedly. The system was supposed to use the image most recently uploaded – but this one seemingly got stuck. The Trustees were understandably concerned that this was not an appropriate image for the gateway to the SBT's collections, so the image was taken offline until the coding issue was fixed. It is now fully available for searches and the collection homepage displays a rotation of four carefully selected images from the SBT fine art collection.¹⁷³

Thus, this photograph encompasses the symbolism of the Nazi swastika, of fascism, anti-Semitic hatred, and the atrocities committed in Hitler's attempt at European domination. It encompasses the assertion of German 'ownership' of Shakespeare and the white supremacist narratives to which he was being subjected, symbolised by the flag's presence on his birthday despite the ongoing disintegration of the relationship between Britain and Germany. It encompasses the diplomatic attempts to appease Germany while her government's crimes against peace treaties and her own citizens accumulated, ultimately failing to prevent a Second World War. Just as the existence of this photograph symbolises the failure to contain the National Socialist threat, it also demonstrates the impossibility of a cultural event or organisation standing outside of politics when national flags are involved.

¹⁷³ The four images are: *Shakespeare State Two* by Steve Kaufman (SBT 2016-5); *A Family Saying Grace Before a Meal* (SBT 1990-49); *William Shakespeare* by David Magradze (SBT 2001-27/5); *William Shakespeare Between Tragedy and Comedy* by Richard Westall (SBT 1999-49).

Post-Second World War

In the wake of the Second World War, the birthday celebrations resumed, complete with flag-unfurling ceremonies and ambassadorial representation. In a recurrence of the flag invitation proceedings of the 1920s, the 'enemy' states were excluded from the opportunity to represent their nations at the festivities for several years. This exclusion was, then, a form of sanction on international representation being enacted through Shakespeare and the unique proposition of the annual celebration of his birthday. Following the First World War, Germany was absent from the Birthday celebrations until 1928, making a ten-year exclusion, but the post-Second World War exclusion lasted only seven years. Furthermore, while there appears to have been no communication between the SBT and DSG after the First World War until the invitation to send a flag was received in 1928, the DSG of 1951 appear to have been proactive. In a letter from the new, post-division Bochum office (the circumstances of which I will return to shortly), DSG representative Dr Stroedel quotes a newspaper article that describes the absence of German and Japanese flags at the birthday flag-unfurling ceremony. Stroedel asks if this report is correct and he adds that 'we should like very much to learn the reason of this measure'. Levi Fox, then Chairman of the SBT, replies with the explanation that the committee are guided by 'the official list of nations which have accredited representatives at the court of St James in London' and '[a]t that time I understood that Germany and Japan were not enjoying such ambassadorial representation, and that being so I am afraid their flags were not included'.¹⁷⁴ It is unclear whether further appeals were made, perhaps to St James's itself, but the German and Japanese flags both featured in the following year's flag ceremony.

¹⁷⁴ SBT DR 281/59, Shakespeare Birthday Celebrations Committee, General correspondence, 1951.

The post-Second World War atmosphere was dramatically different to that of the post-First World War atmosphere, as this recorded exchange suggests. Rather than aiming to hold Germany back, the Allied nations encouraged both amity and German prosperity to a much greater extent as ‘the nascent Cold War inspir[ed] the rapid rehabilitation of Germany from pariah state to important ally’.¹⁷⁵ At the end of his letter Fox declares his pleasure ‘to learn that your Society is still in existence, and I should be very interested to know what types of activity it is promoting at the moment’. The more tempered attitude towards Germany and its recovery is thus reflected in the response from Fox and the subsequent invitation to send a flag for the following year’s celebration.

The reinstatement of the wreath-exchange tradition is also indicated by photographs of the Shakespeare wreath sent by the SBT to the Goethe-haus on the occasion of Goethe’s birthday arriving at Frankfurt Airport in 1957 and 1958.¹⁷⁶ Both photographs show Sabena Airline staff holding the wreath at the foot of the steps into the aircraft and are inscribed on the reverse with the acknowledgement that the images



Figure 10: SBT PC29 1958/9 Wreath sent by the Shakespeare Birthplace in honour of Goethe arriving at Frankfurt Airport on his birthday 28.8.58.

¹⁷⁵ Daniel Cowling, ‘Anglo-German Relations After 1945’, *Journal of Contemporary History*, 54.1 (2019), 82–111 (p. 83).

¹⁷⁶ SBT PC29 1958/9; SBT PC29 1957/13.

were presented to the Trust by the Publicity Officer from Sabena Airlines. The suggestion of a commercial interest in being seen to be a part of this cultural gesture, that is engendered by the prominence of the Airline's brand in the images and the role of the Publicity Officer in producing and sending the images, indicates Shakespeare's usefulness to international cultural diplomacy. Specifically, it highlights how investment in Shakespeare's cultural capital can be beneficial for forging and reinforcing international relationships, and how that capital can be transferred to those who invest in it through public or recorded displays like this one.

East and West: Celebratory Ribbons

Despite the concern of the letter from the DSG in 1951, the Society was likely to have been keen to take up that opportunity to communicate with the SBT and make known the new Bochum office. Although Weimar was still the official home of the Society, the post-war division of Germany into East and West meant that it soon became isolated in its East German location, given that 'some of the most active members of the old Society had their home [in the West], in particular the 1943-51 President, Professor Saladin Schmitt (1883-1951)'.¹⁷⁷ The Bochum office was established in 1946, and in the same year the annual journal, the *Jahrbuch*, began to publish from Heidelberg as it found that most of its contributors came from Western Germany.¹⁷⁸ With the 350-year Shakespeare Birthday fast approaching (in 1964) the two societies entered into a series of rivalries over events. They organised festivities and conferences as well as publications, with the *Deutsche Shakespeare-Gesellschaft West* publishing its own separate version of the DSG *Jahrbuch* in

¹⁷⁷Dieter Mehl, 'German National and International Shakespeare Jubilees 1964 to 1993: From Weimar and Bochum to Vancouver and the ISA', in *Shakespeare Jubilees: 1769-2014*, ed. by Christa Jansohn and Dieter Mehl (Zurich: Lit Verlag, 2015), pp. 213–30 (p. 214).

¹⁷⁸ Ibid.

1965.¹⁷⁹ The main contention was the Weimar office's insistence that given the hundred-year-old tradition of Weimar as the official seat of Shakespeare studies in Germany, it should retain authority and status over and above the DSG in Bochum. Mehl describes the haste with which Weimar published a book to celebrate the hundred years of the German Shakespeare Society in 1964, and the ways in which the 1965 edition of the *Jahrbuch* gloried in the success of the previous year's Jubilee festivities, prominently framed as a joint celebration of Shakespeare's birthday and the DSG's centenary.¹⁸⁰ That *Jahrbuch* issue also mentions the Society's President, Martin Lehnert's invitation and subsequent visit to Stratford-upon-Avon for the Shakespeare birthday celebrations, indicating once more the ways in which *contact* with Stratford-upon-Avon's 'umbilical' connection to Shakespeare authenticates claims to a part in Shakespeare's legacy.¹⁸¹

The Weimar celebrations are also recorded in the SBT's collections through a set of decorative silk ribbons with '*Die Deutsche Shakespeare – Gesellschaft Weimar 1864 – 1964*' printed in gold.¹⁸² Although it was not accessioned until 2016 and very little provenance exists for this item, it is very likely that this was presented to the SBT on or around Martin Lehnert's visit for Shakespeare's birthday. The very specific wording on the item undoubtedly makes it a politically charged gift, designed to leave Stratford-upon-Avon and the SBT in no doubt about the real home of German Shakespeare. The ribbon, then, follows the original Tercentenary wreath in function: as a gift that announces the DSG (East, this

¹⁷⁹ Jansohn, pp. 175-82.

¹⁸⁰ Mehl (p. 217).

¹⁸¹ SBT 71 societies/ *Shakespeare Jahrbuch. Yearbook of Deutsche Shakespeare-Gesellschaft*. All editions, East and West.

¹⁸² SBT 2016-9/6 Ribbon/Pennant, 1964.

time) to the world and requests the acknowledgement of the SBT and a place within its collections.

Post-1964: Ephemera

Items relating to post-1964 Germany include the Yearbooks (*Jahrbücher*) of the East and West German Shakespeare Societies (and many more scholarly publications in the library), pamphlets advertising study trips to Stratford-upon-Avon in German, and newspaper clippings about the Mayor of Stratford-upon-Avon's visit to Plettenberg in 1977.¹⁸³ The latter two items offer no further insight to the collection narrative than the fact of long-held German interest in Shakespeare. With regard to the Yearbooks, the intrinsic value of the volumes to this study has already been explained in terms of their representation of the East and West German Shakespeare Societies and their varying ideologies and priorities. To go into further detail on the ways in which the two societies adapted Shakespeare to their specific, opposing ideologies would be to enter a critical discussion of the content of the texts rather than their *objective* value as items within the collection as objects.

The notion of 'shared roots' and kinship that is such a clear through line in this collection narrative has endured and is implied to the present day in the yearly communications from the *Goethe-Haus*. The letter received with the 2018 wreath reflects on post-Brexit Anglo-German relationships as it states: 'Our connection through the two great minds Shakespeare and Goethe is wonderful and shall never cease'.¹⁸⁴ A blog post published on the *Goethe-Haus* website on 23 April 2018 went a step further, not only celebrating the connection but once more bringing Shakespeare forward to make a political

¹⁸³ SBT DR357/37/6 Events in Stratford-upon-Avon: Tourism, 1966; SBT DR814/5 Lesley V. Rouch, Stratford-upon-Avon, April 1987.

¹⁸⁴ Letter from Prof. Dr. Anne Bohnenkamp-Renken, Frankfurt, dated 3rd April 2018. (not accessioned)

statement: 'We are happy to be a part of this tradition that holds England and Germany together within Europe'.¹⁸⁵ The connection between German and English cultural institutions that has been forged and maintained through the Goethe-Shakespeare wreaths makes intriguing the notion that in some years it will be possible to trace fully the role of Shakespeare in discourses on Europe through the SBT's collections.

Conclusion

The German collection narrative reflects on the broader narrative of Shakespeare in Germany in multiple ways. The early modern objects, although not technically German responses to Shakespeare, provide the narrative with early context. They indicate the communication of ideas through Europe that reflect on the possibilities for the first arrival of Shakespeare's plays in Germany. The translations that have been included in the narrative illuminate the political circumstances surrounding the reception of Shakespeare in Germany: the Eschenburg (1778) responding to the cultural battle between the French classicists and the German traditionalists; the Rothe (1934) revealing the limits that the National Socialists placed on the interpretive possibilities of Shakespeare to make the plays fit within their cultural 'streamlining'. The turn-of-the-century ceramics may be 'incidental' German responses to Shakespeare, but they highlight Shakespeare's part in souvenir culture and conspicuous consumption, thus referencing the tourism industry that has become vital to Stratford-upon-Avon's economy and how Shakespeare's cultural capital drives such purchases. Shakespeare's cultural capital makes any association with the writer, his home, and his works a signifier of cultural competence, erudition, and superiority. Meanwhile, the

¹⁸⁵ Happy Birthday Shakespeare! (2018). [Blog] *KURZ NOTIERT*. Available at: <https://www.goethehaus-frankfurt.de/kurz-notiert> [Accessed 22 Aug. 2018].

contextualisation of Matheson's edition of *Travels of Carl Phillip Moritz* offers an intriguing perspective on a positive form of nationalism that could have soothed the tensions of inter-war Europe, through engagement with international common interests. Matheson's proposition speaks to the moments of diplomacy that are represented in the collection narrative, and, with hindsight, indicates that those moments may not have been as free from competition and conflict as the regenerated form of 'inter-nationalism' required.

Several threads that run through this chapter establish processes that are relevant to the wider thesis. First, the pre- and inter-war items in this collection indicate Shakespeare's usefulness in processes of cultural diplomacy and expressions of soft power (British and German). Second, the ways in which the German gifts express the desire for SBT acknowledgement of Germany's admiration of Shakespeare illustrates the importance of the Birthplace as an aspect of Shakespeare's cultural capital and how that capital can be appropriated and/or shared. Third, this chapter suggests the ways in which gifts can be used in diplomatic processes: how they forge generative relationships between nations, how their presentation performs a nation's cultural identity, how their materiality stakes a claim to permanent presence in Shakespeare's legacy, how they bolster the cultural capital of both the SBT and the donor nation. Fourth, with particular attention to the Goethe wreath, this chapter expounds the usefulness of objects for generating multiple simultaneous meanings and how object studies might offer exciting new ways of understanding Shakespeare's international role.

The key theme of the collection narrative, the layered inculcations of the 'Anglo-German roots', chime with Döring's summation of nineteenth-century German celebration of Shakespeare as

a battering ram against French neoclassicism and the dominance of normative rule-governed poetics, a form of cultural resistance that quickly translated into political resistance against the powerful *ancien régime* contributions that Shakespearean engagements can make to the political culture of a given place and time.¹⁸⁶

Thus, 'Shakespeare became the patron of a literary declaration of independence'.¹⁸⁷ That declaration had been hinted at through the efforts of Retzsch, Dingelstedt, and Rommel, but could hardly have been made more dramatically and openly than on the 'stage' of the 1864 Shakespeare Tercentenary in Stratford-upon-Avon. The wreath and scroll make explicit what is merely suggested through the remaining gifts in this collection: that to place an item of national significance in the SBT's collections is to stake a national claim on Shakespeare's legacy. It is to exploit the SBT's authority over the narrative of Shakespeare's legacy – that which is grounded in the 'umbilical' connection to Shakespeare through the locus of the Birthplace – and to legitimise that claim. However, through the absences and biases of the inter- and post-war periods, this collection narrative shows that regardless of deeply layered and vehement assertions of blood-based connections to Shakespeare – the shared roots mythology – the SBT retains the authority to assert British ownership of Shakespeare when required to do so, not least in times of war. As such, it is clear that Shakespeare's legacy can be 'bought into' through gifts, but that the SBT will have ultimate control of what story the collections tell. Although that control is not often asserted with the international items, or is

¹⁸⁶ Döring (p. 132).

¹⁸⁷ Andreas Höfele, 'The Rebirth of Tragedy, or No Time for Shakespeare (Germany, 1940)', *Renaissance Drama*, 38 (2010), 251–69 (p. 253).

asserted in a haphazard, unconscious way, the resultant narrative will always be partial. This fact poses intriguing questions for the following chapters that explore items related to post-colonial nations: how will the SBT's partiality, and the power imbalance that this maintains and is maintained by, impact on the narrative for the US, and for India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh?

Chapter Three: U.S.A Collection Narrative

Introduction

Shakespeare arrived in America with the English settlers in the seventeenth century, although he only became a significant cultural presence there in the eighteenth century 'as colonists began to imagine a national identity separate from England's' in the lead-up to the War of Independence (1774-1783).¹⁸⁸ Around that time, Shakespeare quotations began to appear in various publications and his plays began to be performed more frequently. Despite the predominantly Puritan outlook of the nation, 'Shakespeare became a way of showing a serious turn of mind; Shakespearean images marked one's gentility, and his plays were a pleasure to attend'. Furthermore, as Frances Teague explains:

One can trace this abrupt interest both to Shakespeare's rising stock in eighteenth-century London, which strongly influenced America's colonial taste, and to the increased awareness of America's relationship to England in the years leading up to the American Revolution. Finally, the anti-theatrical prejudice commonly found in the settlements of New England began to diminish just as Shakespeare's reputation in London was rising, a coincidence that led to a renewed interest in him both as dramatist and as cultural icon in the years before the outbreak of the American Revolution.¹⁸⁹

¹⁸⁸ Frances Teague, 'Shakespeare and America', in *The Oxford Handbook of Shakespeare*, ed. by Arthur F. Kinney (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), pp. 719–37 (p. 719)

¹⁸⁹ *Ibid.* (p. 720)

Shakespeare references began to be used in advertising for items like furniture, indicating that he had become a tool of early conspicuous consumption and a signifier of class, learnedness, and sophistication.

The narrative of the SBT's US collection begins chronologically in the sixteenth century because of crucial discourses that were established then, but is thereafter organised in accordance with the ways in which the themes recognised within it vary, fluctuate, and return through time, making it otherwise impossible to create a coherent narrative. The thematic organisation of the US collection exposes many of the ways in which the US managed its relationship with Shakespeare, a relationship complicated by the questions raised in the aftermath of the War of Independence (1775-1783) of 'how to maintain a claim to Shakespeare while nonetheless disavowing his national identity and most of his ostensible politics'.¹⁹⁰ The negotiation of a US national identity that is individuated from British national identity runs through many of the subsections, as does the clear desire to appropriate the cultural superiority associated with England as the 'Old World' and to the US as the 'New World'.¹⁹¹ The varied and diverse objects that are discussed in this collection narrative suggest most strongly the perceived importance of material connections to history as ancestry. Furthermore, they emphasise how US agents utilised the cultural capital of both

¹⁹⁰ Michael Dobson, 'Fairly Brave New World: Shakespeare, the American Colonies, and the American Revolution', *Renaissance Drama*, 23 (1992), 189–207 (p. 189).

¹⁹¹ Use of the terms 'Old World' and 'New World' will be in inverted commas throughout to indicate the imperialist fallacy of America's newness that was based on the assumption that American history began with the white settlers as if generations of Indigenous people were not there long before them. 'Old world' is in inverted commas as it establishes an also fallacious hierarchy of nations in which Britain is superior because white people have ruled it longer. Rather than to reproduce the constructions the terms produce, I have used them in this way to indicate the discourses being drawn on in the circumstances being described. Furthermore, I use them because bringing terms with insidious meaning to light in critical ways is essential to undoing the discourses they invoke.

Shakespeare and the site-specific epistemologies of Stratford-upon-Avon and the Birthplace to legitimise those connections.

The 'New World': Mercator Map

The earliest item in the US collection is the 'Map of the Americas' by Gerhard Mercator (1512-1594), published posthumously in 1619 (figure 1). Mercator developed the flattened projection of the world we still see in maps today, and his use of longitudinal, latitudinal, and rhumb lines are widely thought to have prompted the line in *Twelfth Night*: 'He does smile his face into more lines than is in the new map with the augmentation of the Indies'.¹⁹² As such, Mercator's map indicates how the collection can reflect on Shakespeare's plays but is clearly not a US response to Shakespeare. The map, which is likely to have been drawn in 1552, is rather a European projection onto the Americas – one that is dotted with fearsome sea-monsters and features a frieze of Indigenous Brazilians preparing and imbibing a drink that seems to be made from 'the vomit of virgins'.¹⁹³

However, references to maps in early modern plays, like *Twelfth Night*, indicate the fact that maps 'did not only influence political decisions or facilitate their coordination, rather, in a very practical sense, countries, nations and empires – and, implicitly, their inhabitants – became maps, and were read and rewritten as such'.¹⁹⁴ In consequence, I have included this map in the US collection narrative to demonstrate that the European

¹⁹² William Shakespeare, 'Twelfth Night; or, What You Will', in *The New Oxford Shakespeare: The Complete Works*, ed. by Gary Taylor and others (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 3.2.60-61.

¹⁹³ Jan de Graeve, 'The Scientific Library of Gerhard Mercator', in *A World of Innovation: Cartography in the Time of Gerhard Mercator*, ed. by Gerhard Holzer and others (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2015), pp. 180–91 (180). Furthermore, Mercator's maps are now recognised as Euro-centric projections because of the way they privilege Europe as the centre of the world and distort the relative sizes of the African and Asian continents: J. Brian Harley, 'Maps, Knowledge, and Power', in *Geographic Thought: A Praxis Perspective*, ed. by George Henderson and Marvin Waterstone (Abingdon: Routledge, 2009), pp. 129–48 (pp. 130, 136).

¹⁹⁴ Philip Armstrong, 'Spheres of Influence: Cartography and the Gaze in Shakespearean Tragedy and History', *Shakespeare Studies* 1, 23.1 (1995) (p. 42)



Figure 11: SBT 83427371. Gerard Mercator, *Map of the Americas*, (France: Publisher unknown, 1619).

projection of the Americas was carried with the emigrants, and the ways in which it influenced the settler belief that the Americas had no history (that was valued in a contemporary European sense, at least) and could thus be imagined as a blank canvas to be illustrated – that is, known – as the colonists desired.

Indeed, this map of the Americas represents a typical sixteenth- and seventeenth-century projection as it exposes the map-makers' and voyagers' limited knowledge of 'new' lands through richly decorated and labelled coastal regions while the interior remains relatively empty, 'as if these lands were unoccupied and open to European claims'.¹⁹⁵ The inset illustration and description of the practices of Indigenous Brazilians is a rare

¹⁹⁵ Angela Sutton and Charlton W. Yingling, 'Projections of Desire and Design in Early Modern Caribbean Maps', *The Historic Journal*, 63.4 (2020), 789–810 (p. 790).

representation on such a map, but conforms to the usual practice of placing information about Indigenous presence 'in the decorative elements and cartouches, thus removed from their land and safely away from the European settlements upon it'.¹⁹⁶

The 'removal' – which is to say relocated representation – of Indigenous people is followed through in the images of Indigenous people at sea, where technical features of the boats' construction are labelled and the people are separated from the land in order to be categorised, with mysterious and monstrous sea creatures also pictured. Angela Sutton and Charlton W. Yingling explain that the colonists 'went into these ventures expecting to be terrified, and so they *were* terrified by the new animals, and by extension, by the new people they imagined encountering'. What is more, part of this fear was that 'Europeans would similarly degenerate in this climate'.¹⁹⁷ As such, the categorisation of the illustrated monsters with the strategically placed Indigenous people was a means of defining the boundaries and distinctions between the Europeans and the Americans, the map functioning as a reifying document of the fact. Thus, like Mercator, the early settlers in America projected their fears and hopes onto what they perceived as the 'blank canvas' of their new home, filling it with horrors and opportunities but also retaining select aspects of the 'Old World' they had left behind. This allowed them to appropriate that which they felt adhered to their sense of identity, like Shakespeare, while designing, rather than inheriting, a new national identity centred on 'liberty'.

Along with the obvious connection to *Twelfth Night*, this map and its context educes a reflection on *The Tempest*, the play most often used in postcolonial discourses on

¹⁹⁶ Sutton and Yingling (p. 799).

¹⁹⁷ Ibid (p. 803).

emigration, and how early modern literature helped to shape concepts of race and empire. Shakespeare imagined a mystic island inhabited by exoticised Others, a 'brave new world', and made it a place of redemption and forgiveness through which Prospero finds personal freedom.¹⁹⁸ Much of this US collection narrative responds to the experience and historical progress of the early European settlers in the Americas. As the collection narrative frames itself through the objects, the contexts of migration, juxtaposed with the connections prompted by the Mercator map, suggest a reading of Prospero's epilogue that refigures the island simultaneously as exotic 'New World' and oppressive 'Old World':

And my ending is despair
 Unless I be relieved by prayer,
 Which pierces so, that it assaults
 Mercy itself, and frees all faults.
 As you from crimes would pardoned be,
 Let your indulgence set me free.¹⁹⁹

As he begs to be set free, Prospero's words are at once those of the hopeful emigrant, pleading with God and government to pursue the life he chooses elsewhere, and, given the substance of the play, the jaded colonist, disillusioned by his own abuses of power. The interchangeability of the two worlds highlights the oppressive practices that Prospero brought with him from imperial Milan to the island, namely the domination and

¹⁹⁸ *The Tempest*, 5.1.183.

¹⁹⁹ *The Tempest*, Epilogue. 1-19.

enslavement of Ariel and Caliban, with the pointedly Indigenous latter seemingly still enslaved at the close of the play. Ewan Fernie points out that ‘Caliban’s potential to speak to the struggle for freedom is unarguably present in the play [...] when he says, “This island’s mine by Sycorax, my mother”’.²⁰⁰ Thus, the manner of Prospero’s colonisation of the island makes freedom a contested concept and affirms the disparity of its distribution. The theme of contested freedom and white supremacist imperialism echoes throughout this chapter and indicates the ways in which maps like Mercator’s contributed to early race-making practices.²⁰¹

Incorporation: US Edition, The Shakespeare Calendar

After the final separation from Britain in 1783, following the Revolutionary War, the desire for US editions of treasured works became apparent, and in 1795 the ‘First American Edition’ (as advertised on the title page) of Shakespeare’s works was published (see figure 2). The act of publishing a US edition was one of self-identification that incorporated what was valued from the ‘Old World’ without sacrificing the tenets of independence that formed the basis of the ‘New’. The editor of the edition is not named, but it is generally assumed to be Joseph Hopkinson, who was the son of one of the signatories of the Declaration of Independence. Hopkinson was ‘a young Philadelphia lawyer who had excellent American nationalist credentials’ – his father claimed to have designed the US flag and he himself wrote *Hail Columbia*, a distinctly patriotic popular song that ‘captured the essence of

²⁰⁰ Ewan Fernie, *Shakespeare For Freedom: Why the Plays Matter* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), p. 11.

²⁰¹ ‘Race-making’ should be understood as the process in which ‘race is reproduced via the marking of the racial Other and that racist ideas and practices are naturalised, made self-evident, and thus seemingly beyond audible challenge. It is at this level that race is reproduced long after its original historical stimulus – the slave trade and slavery – have faded. It is at this level that seemingly rational and ordinary folk commit irrational and extraordinary acts’. Thomas C. Holt, ‘Marking: Race, Race-Making, and the Writing of History’, *The American Historical Review*, 100.1 (1995), 1–20 (p. 7).

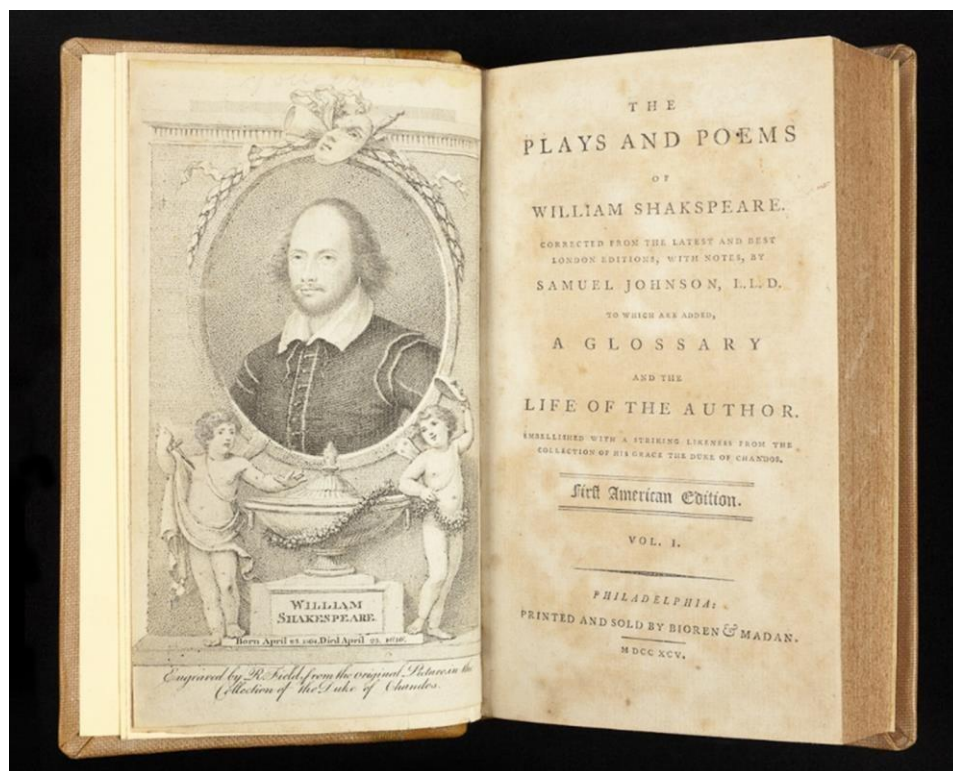


Figure 12: SBT 38/1795-6 SH. William Shakespeare, *The Plays and Poems of William Shakespeare. Corrected from the latest and best London edition, with notes, by Samuel Johnson, L. L. D. [...] The First American edition (Philadelphia: Bioren and Madan, 1795).*

nationalism’ while hinting ‘at the spectre of England, the ever-present natural enemy’.²⁰²

The preface of the edition, Kim C. Sturgess notes, was used ‘to explain to the reader why this American edition was published and what there was of value in Shakespeare’.²⁰³

Hopkinson quotes the high monetary value of editions of Shakespeare’s works in London, and argues that although the English stage was immoral, the works were not, and that Shakespeare should be considered ‘a founding father of the American language’. Thus, this edition ‘offered a wider public the opportunity to read and enjoy Shakespeare, and Hopkinson, with his preface, encouraged both the old elite and new readership to accept Shakespeare as exceptional, being both moral and instructional’.²⁰⁴ The emphasis on

²⁰² Kim C. Sturgess, *Shakespeare and the American Nation* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004), p. 62.

²⁰³ *Ibid.*, p. 63.

²⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 64.

reading is telling: Douglas Lanier explains that the prioritisation of individual contemplation of the written word over theatrical performance was a key facet of a specifically US-based approach to Shakespeare that ‘reflects a lingering Puritan suspicion of the stage’ and in the following century also reflects ‘the interests of the reading clubs and scholarly fraternities [...] interested as they were in differentiating their apotheosised bard from Shakespeare the popular playmaker’.²⁰⁵ This edition, which may have been bought as much for display within the home as for reading, denotes the first step in marking Shakespeare as culturally superior and turning him into a signifier of refinement, as will be discussed later in the chapter.

The first US edition of Shakespeare, then, affirms that the earliest US claims on Shakespeare were founded on shared language, which was crucial at a moment during which the Founding Fathers were battling to maintain the supremacy of English over several possible emigrant languages, most notably, German.²⁰⁶ Coppelia Kahn, drawing on Benedict Anderson, notes the role of print capitalism in supporting nationalist causes ‘by linking a “native” language (sometimes arbitrarily chosen as such) to the “imagined community” of the nation’; in this way, an ‘ancestral “Englishness”’ is incorporated in the use of English with ‘Shakespeare as its presiding genius’.²⁰⁷ Thus, shared language incorporates shared heritage, and this collection narrative indicates that the relationship of Shakespeare to the US relies on connections to desirable aspects of British history that provide context for developing US national culture and identity.

²⁰⁵ Douglas M. Lanier, ‘Commemorating Shakespeare in America, 1864’, in *Celebrating Shakespeare: Commemoration and Cultural Memory*, ed. by Clara Calvo and Coppelia Kahn (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), pp. 140–60 (pp. 150–151).

²⁰⁶ Carol L. Schmid, *Politics of Language* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), p. 15.

²⁰⁷ Coppélia Kahn, ‘Remembering Shakespeare Imperially: The 1916 Tercentenary’, *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 52.4 (2001), 456–78; referencing Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, rev. edn (London: Verso, 1991).

The *Shakespeare Calendar: New York City* by John Bostwick Moreau provides a clear example of the contextualisation of US culture through Shakespeare in practice.²⁰⁸ With two editions, published in 1880 and 1881, Moreau's calendar selects key moments in New York City's history for each day and provides a quotation from Shakespeare's plays to accompany it. The quotations are solemn, humorous, and at times scathing. For example:

9th July 1776 – Declaration of Independence read to the army: "Listen but speak not. /Be lion-hearted, proud". (*Macbeth*. IV. 1.)

5th July 1810 – P.T. Barnum born: "My revenue is the silly cheat" (*The Winter's Tale*. 4.2.)

11th March 1736 – It is determined that all beggars be put to hard labour: "This proceeds from policy, not love" (*Henry IV*. P. 2; 4.1.)

8th June 1809 – Thomas Paine died: "You are not worth another word" (*All's Well that Ends Well*. 2.3.)

The selected quotations are dislocated from their textual contexts and applied freely to events and figures well-known to New Yorkers. As such, they evince the utilisation of Shakespeare's words in a manner that references the post-independence tendency to move tributes to Shakespeare away from his 'British birth to his universal, transcendent qualities,

²⁰⁸ SBT 53/JBM John Bostwick Moreau, *Events in the History of New York City: With Illustrations from Shakespeare by a New Yorker* (New York: Analectic Press, 1880); SBT 53/JBM John Bostwick Moreau, *Events in the History of New York City: With Illustrations from Shakespeare by a New Yorker* (New York: Analectic Press, 1881).

especially his capacity to cross class and national boundaries'.²⁰⁹ Furthermore, as Kahn contends, the universalising approach to Shakespeare deepened the association with US identity, as it reflected on the Founding Fathers' envisioning of 'the basis of nationhood and citizenship as a set of universal principles rather than as any particular national, linguistic, religious or ethnic heritage'.²¹⁰

However, as Jean E. Howard and Marion F. O'Connor note, 'when texts are said to speak for humankind, humankind often shrinks radically to include only those within a traditional *pale* of privilege' (my italics).²¹¹ Indeed, Moreau's selection of quotes to accompany items relating to race relations in New York is particularly striking given their equivocation:

17th August 1776 – Ship *Gideon* arrived with a cargo of slaves. "I'm sorry to you ta'en from liberty" (*Henry VIII*. 1.1.)

18th November 1731 – Negroes who make a noise on Sunday to be arrested: "I would have such a fellow whipped" (*Hamlet*. 3.2)

22nd October 1742 – Negroes to be publicly whipped for riding horses through the street on Sundays: "Who hath read, or heard, / Of any kindred action like to this."
(*King John*. 3.2.)

²⁰⁹ Lanier (p. 147).

²¹⁰ Coppélia Kahn, 'Caliban at the Stadium: Shakespeare and the Making of Americans', *The Massachusetts Review*, 41.2 (2000), 256–84 (p. 260).

²¹¹ Jean E. Howard and Marion F. O'Connor, 'Introduction', in *Shakespeare Reproduced: The Text in History and Ideology*, ed. by Jean E. Howard and Marion F. O'Connor (Abingdon: Routledge, 2005), pp. 1–17 (p. 4).

6th June 1653 – West India Company granted leave to merchant to send ships to Africa for slaves: “Whether this be, / Or be not, I’ll not swear” (*The Tempest*. 5.1.)

Here, the *Hamlet* quote projects racist cruelty, the *Henry VIII* quote evokes sympathy, the *King John* quote suggests disbelief (either that such a law could be passed, or that anyone would ride through the streets on Sundays) and *The Tempest* quote refuses to commit to an opinion: a choice that demonstrates the privilege of whiteness – whether or not to mind the cruelty of enslavement – with chilling clarity. Perhaps Moreau’s equivocality results from a superficial understanding of the evils of slavery and racism that nonetheless precludes publicly defending the humanity of Black people as equal to white people.²¹² As an evasion, this resonates with the ‘Father of his People’ George Washington’s famously mixed attitude towards racial equality that resulted in the emancipation of his own enslaved people only following his death; a signal of reticent principles that are attenuated by the many ways in which he profited from continuous ownership of enslaved people throughout his life.²¹³

Moreau’s quotations may have been chosen to fit the context of the event without over-consideration of any affiliations or beliefs that they may connote as a result. What is certain is the effort to demonstrate Shakespeare’s ‘universal’ appeal for US citizens.

Furthermore, the evident ease of application of his words to the historical milieu of New

²¹² I have capitalised ‘Black’ in this sentence and throughout this thesis in accordance and agreement with the Associated Press’s decision in July 2020 to capitalise Black when it is used in a racial, ethnic, or cultural sense. See: Associated Press, ‘Explaining AP Style on Black and White’, *AP News*, 2020.

<<https://apnews.com/article/archive-race-and-ethnicity-9105661462>> [accessed 22 August 2021].

²¹³ L. Scott Philyaw, ‘Washington and Slavery’, in *A Companion to George Washington*, ed. by Edward G. Lengel (Chichester: Blackwell Publishing, 2012), pp. 104–20 (p. 105). Furthermore, Erica Armstrong Dunbar relays an account of Washington’s determination to recapture a runaway enslaved woman who belonged to his wife: Erica Armstrong Dunbar, *Never Caught: The Washingtons’ Relentless Pursuit of Their Runaway Slave, Ona Judge* (New York: 37 Ink/Atria Books, 2017).

York also demonstrates the ways in which Shakespeare's words can and have been used by political factions and regimes, occasionally by those with opposing ideologies simultaneously. Moreau has therefore compiled a calendar of events from random decades through which the days of 1880 and 1881 could be marked in the scheme of both New York's history and Shakespeare's plays, where Shakespeare's characters appear to comment on the events. Productions of Shakespeare have always interpreted the plays through the lens of contemporary events and perspectives, but through his calendars Moreau also fulfils the wish to assert a post-independence cultural-ancestral link with Shakespeare by writing Shakespeare directly into the city's history. This mode of appropriation exemplifies the symbolic function of many of the objects to be discussed in this chapter as it outlines the negotiations that were required to retain Shakespeare as an aspect of shared Anglo-US heritage.

Transatlantic Ties: Legal Affairs, Letters

The presence in the collection of a series of archival documents relating to mundane transatlantic legal affairs urges consideration of the Anglo-American settlement in terms of the ways in which Shakespeare became both a link to the past and 'a harbinger' for the new nation that was 'itself searching for the "representative poet" who could capture all that was good and fresh about the United States'.²¹⁴ These items provide evidence of the threads that bound the emigrants to those they left behind across the Atlantic and represent a desire for familial connection that is analogous with cultural connection to Shakespeare. For example, there exist a number of (retrospective) books and reports on the settlement, as well as transatlantic ancestries including *An examination of the English*

²¹⁴ Dickson, p. 112.

ancestry of George Washington, setting forth the evidence to connect him with the Washingtons of Sulgrave and Brington (villages in Northamptonshire, U.K.), which was published in Boston in 1889 for the New England Historic Genealogical Society.²¹⁵

Fantasies of connection were common on both sides of the Atlantic. A letter received in 1890 from Mr William Shakespeare of Missouri, sent for the attention of the Birthplace librarian, Mr Savage, is peppered with sarcastic annotations that were seemingly added by someone at the Birthplace (in square brackets, below):

Dear Sir I write you in regard to the Richard William Shakespeare family. Thair is a relative [indeed] here that wants to find out their address [no doubt], and if the daughters of said Shakespeare is married [just time they were] and what their names and address is. Either give this to Shakespeare family [?] or answer. Will enclose stamp for return letter the relative here is very anxious [I daresay after so many years] to learn their whareabouts...²¹⁶

²¹⁵ SBT P93.2 Washington. Further examples of degrees of connection between Britain and the US pre- and post- independence include: SBT DR18/1/2005-2006. Lease and release dated 19-20 August 1734. The release a conveyance from Richard Tidmarsh of Dorchester in South Carolina in America merchant, grandson of John Tidmarsh late of Adlestrop co. Glos. yeoman deceased, to Thomas Smith of London merchant and Samuel Dean of the same place and occupation of a close of meadow or pasture divided into two parts and known as Hourn grounds in Evenlode; SBT ER145/431-3. Miscellanea: Basil Hancock, solicitor. Notes on American affairs with estimate of the white inhabitants of the U.S.A. c.1780; SBT DR198/3 and DR198/15. Letters to George Philips. (1814 regarding the proposed blockade of American ports which would affect rival nations as well, whereas increased duty would affect only English trade; 1938 regarding abolition – this letter is discussed later in this chapter).

²¹⁶ SBT ER82/4/1/191 Correspondence file: Shakespeare 1880s-1900s. Correspondence to Richard Savage and The Shakespeare Birthplace Trust including The British Empire Shakespeare Society, William Shakespeare of Missouri, USA, The Rev. J. H. Shakespeare MA. and The Shakespeare Head Press.

Whether the writer's position is genuine or not, the desire for connection to *the* William Shakespeare is pervasive; the SBT's Reading Room continues to receive enquiries of this kind from around the world. The supercilious cynicism that the letter from Missouri received from the SBT annotator is indicative of British cultural superiority, and a widely propagated conviction that US citizens were necessarily 'provincial' and had to rely on European culture to express refinement.²¹⁷

The US desire for connection to British heritage is also indicated in a library collection item, an article by Moncure Conway (1832-1907), that was published in 1886.²¹⁸ In the six-page feature, Conway relates his quest to prove the legend that one of Shakespeare's pallbearers is buried in or near to Conway's hometown, Fredricksburg, Virginia. Conway states his fervent belief in the possibility of the existence of such a connection with Fredricksburg, because 'we had awe inspiring tombs beside the Rappahannock'. Thus, Conway recalls his childhood fascination with what frightens and also brings into the story the Native American roots of the location through the Algonquian name of the river. As his investigation leads him to a churchyard near Potomac Creek, Virginia, Conway inserts a recollection of visiting the spot as a child, and a story he wrote in response to the Gothic surroundings. The tale, Conway reveals, was about:

the last of the Stafford Indians, made to work with his little son in building the church. My red hero avenged the cruel architect's fatal maltreatment of his son by

²¹⁷ Regarding the urgency to be seen to celebrate the Tercentenary to refute such imputations, see Thomas Cartelli, *Repositioning Shakespeare: National Formations, Postcolonial Appropriations* (Abingdon: Routledge, 1999) p. 10; and Lanier, 'Commemorating Shakespeare in America, 1864'.

²¹⁸ SBT Pamphlet 30/HUN. Moncure Conway, 'Hunting a Mythical Pallbearer', *Harper's New Monthly Magazine*, 72 (January 1886) 211-216.

hurling him from the tower on the day of its completion, then executing himself. This was a fifteen-year-old fancy, not founded on any fact beyond the traditional injustice of early settlers toward the aborigines[.]

That this recollection is framed by a narrative that centres on tombstones and burial grounds brings to mind the much-used trope of the ‘haunted Indian burial ground’ in US popular culture, in which the white settlers’ crimes against Indigenous people return to haunt the settlers’ descendants.²¹⁹ The recollection thus suggests the difficulty of ‘digging’ into US history without unearthing the bodies of murdered, mistreated, and misplaced ‘aborigines’. Despite ideological attempts to bury this aspect of US identity in the national consciousness, Conway exemplifies a radical faction which refused to let the operation of white supremacist abuse in US society remain buried or unchallenged. Indeed, Conway fought against his upbringing in Virginia and became a strident abolitionist; accompanying his own father’s enslaved people in their escape to freedom in Ohio, where ‘Conway’s Colony’ came to be named after him. When this article was published, Conway had exiled himself to Britain after his frustration with President Lincoln’s cautious approach to the Confederacy had led him to attempt an unauthorised negotiation which earned him the President’s displeasure.²²⁰

²¹⁹ See C. Richard King, ‘Unsettled: Ghosts, Zombies, and Indians in the American West’, in *Undead in the West II: They Just Keep Coming*, ed. by Cynthia J. Miller and A. Bowdoin Van Riper (Lanham, Toronto, Plymouth UK: The Scarecrow Press, Inc, 2013), pp. 286–304.; Renée L. Bergland, *The National Uncanny: Indian Ghosts and American Subjects* (Hanover and London: University Press of New England, 2000).

²²⁰ Norman L. Schools, ‘Moncure Conway (1832–1907)’, *Encyclopedia Virginia*, 2008 <https://www.encyclopediavirginia.org/Conway_Moncure_Daniel_1832-1907#start_entry> [accessed 12 January 2019].

The deliberate ‘burial’ of the shameful and hypocritical elements of US history is constantly complicated by the characteristic reverence for history that is demonstrated by the desire to retain Shakespeare as part of US heredity. This desire has been illuminated by Teague’s account of a visit to the Birthplace in 1786 by the Founding Fathers and early US Presidents Thomas Jefferson (1743-1826) and John Adams (1735-1826), during which:

[n]ot only were the Americans saddened to find little regard for the battlefields of the English Civil War, which they regarded as a war in which English commoners fought for liberty as Americans had so recently done, but they were also troubled by the neglect of the birthplace. Their reverence may be seen by Jefferson’s kneeling to kiss the ground at Stratford-upon-Avon, and by Adams’s lecturing locals at Edgehill and Worcester[.]²²¹

Teague explains that throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, US culture was developing as ‘a synthesis of all that is excellent in the past’, into which Shakespeare was integrated as a signifier of high social status and decorum.²²² What was valued – Shakespeare and independence – came to represent US identity. Thus, the blank canvas with which the first settlers were met was filled in with a self-fashioned collective memory that carefully excluded hypocrisies regarding equality, freedom, and the treatment of Indigenous people. Furthermore, Jefferson and Adams’s dismay centres on the lack of

²²¹ Teague (p. 722). Teague references John Adams, *Diary and Autobiography of John Adams*, ed. by L. H. Butterfield (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1961), III. p. 185.

²²² *Ibid* (p. 725).

commemoration at sites imbued with significant historical contexts, where those sites represent a material and tangible connection to national history: a connection that cannot be forged naturally in the US while national history is formulated to include only Anglo-American events and people.

Through the contextualisation as well as the content, Conway's article reveals a clear desire for material connection to British heritage as expressed through Jefferson and Adams's dismay in Stratford-upon-Avon and Worcester and the decades of mythology surrounding the tombstone for Dr Helder as Shakespeare's pallbearer. In consequence, when Conway finds Helder's real tombstone to be free from any mention of Shakespeare but having in the epitaph the mention of the doctor's place of birth (Bedfordshire) and date of death that makes him Shakespeare's contemporary (1618), Conway celebrates instead that the false legend was 'the means of discovering to the New World its oldest English epitaph'. Thus, the tombstone comes to represent the link to England that is the basis of Anglo-American identity, and the desire to find Shakespeare within the story exposes the desire to find and institute Shakespeare within that identity, through the collective memory that is constantly being created. Furthermore, the ways in which Conway's article emphasises material and site-specific connections to history and identity present a useful framework for thinking about further US gifts in this collection narrative.

This article represents the only reference to Indigenous Americans in the SBT's US collection apart from a signature in the Visitors' Book from 1848, when four men of the Ojibwa, or Cheppeway, Nation visited in 1848 as part of a tour of Europe. The visitors

included Maungwudaus, who wrote a poem about his visit and had it published while still in the town.²²³

Gifts: Visitors' Book, Town Monuments, Sundial, Donations, 1964 Vase, Wyatt

Sculptures

Jefferson and Adams's concerns at Stratford-upon-Avon and Worcester indicate a discordance between Britain and the US about how history should be commemorated, especially with regard to site-specific commemorations. US disappointment in British commemorative practices reflects on the relative lack of material history available to the US on its own turf and suggests the importance of sites like the Shakespeare Birthplace and Stratford-upon-Avon for forging and maintaining a connection to history: a foundation that can support the building of a national identity upon it. Indeed, the SBT's US collection clearly evinces the US desire to memorialise Shakespeare in Stratford-upon-Avon in ways that met with US expectations.

The earliest such effort was made by Colonel Thomas Handasyd Perkins (1764-1854), of Boston Massachusetts, whose series of visits to the Birthplace in 1812 culminated with the purchase and laying out of the first ever Visitors' Book (see figure 3). Perkins's journals explain his reasoning – that the walls on which visitors to the Birthplace had been signing their names were full – and his intentions once he had purchased the volume, thus:

²²³ SBT DR185/2 Shakespeare's Birthplace Visitors' books, Stratford-upon-Avon, 09/1819-09/1848; James Shapiro, *Shakespeare in America: An Anthology from the Revolution to Now*, ed. by James Shapiro (New York: Library of America, 2013), p. 60.

I ruled it, making a column for the date, another for the name and a third for the Residence and having written in the beginning of it “Tribute of Respect to the Memory of the Bard of Avon” and furnished the woman with an ink stand and some pens, I subscribed my name, and wished her to deliver the Book when filled to the Librarian of the Town, who is to deposit it in the Library, and furnish another blank Book in its stead²²⁴

Perkins is not only interested in recording details about visitors to the Birthplace, but also in the posterity of the record itself. This US visitor was thinking about the future of Shakespeare’s legacy in a way not even considered by the custodian he encountered.

‘The woman’ mentioned in Perkins’s journal is Mary Hornby, who was tenant of the Birthplace from 1793 until 1820, when Mrs Court, her landlady, saw how lucrative Hornby’s Birthplace tours were proving to be and evicted her: an event that set the Birthplace’s first Visitors’ Book on an intriguing journey. Court’s contrivance to seize the entrance fees for herself was frustrated by Hornby’s removal of all the relics, including the Visitors’ Books, on her departure.²²⁵ The books eventually came to be sold by a distant relative of Mrs Hornby at auction in 1896 and formed part of the Folger collection until 1964.²²⁶ The Folgers were oil magnate Henry Clay and fellow Shakespeare enthusiast Emily Clara, who were so fervent in their efforts to gather anything and everything related to Shakespeare that they ‘posted

²²⁴ Thomas H. Perkins, ‘Thomas Handasyd Perkins Journal of Reminiscences of England and Wales’, (Massachusetts Historical Society, 1812), Thomas Handasyd Papers, Microfilm Edition, 17 reels, 1 July 1812.

²²⁵ Julia Thomas, p. 102.

²²⁶ Washington Irving, Richard Savage, and William Salt Brassington, *Stratford-upon-Avon from ‘the Sketch Book’ of Washington Irving. With Notes and Original Illustrations.*, ed. by Richard Savage and William Salt Brassington (Stratford-upon-Avon: The Shakespeare Quiney Press, 1900), p.115.

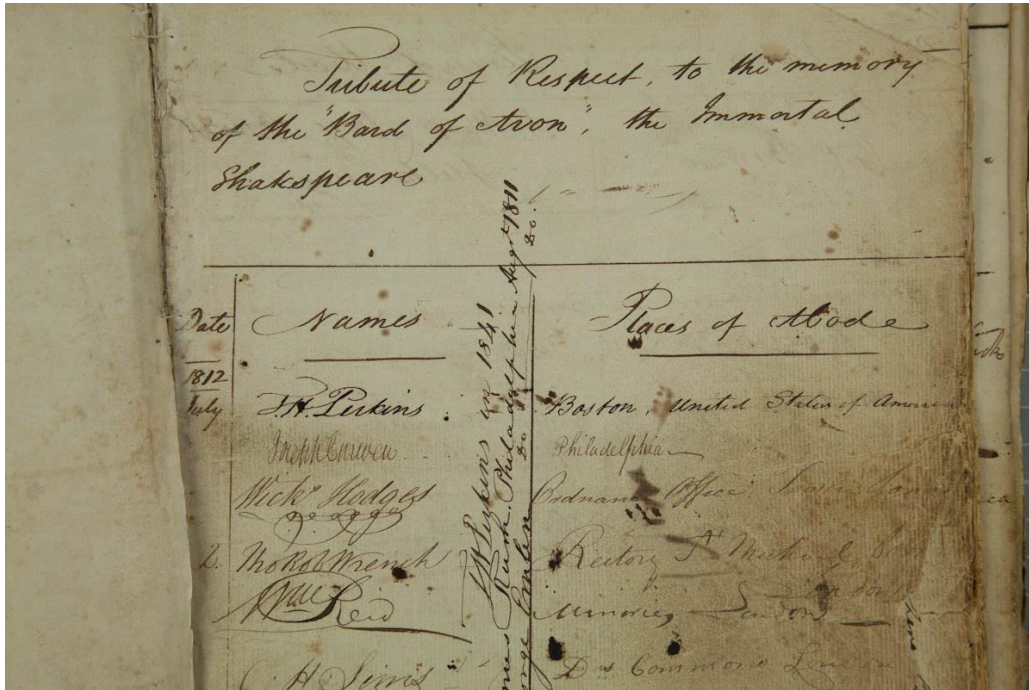


Figure 13: SBT DR185/1. Shakespeare's Birthplace Visitors' Books, Stratford-upon-Avon, 07/1812-08/1819.

agents across Europe, operating under pseudonyms, keeping close watch on everything that looked like it might come up for sale'.²²⁷ These 'frenzied' efforts began around the time of their marriage in 1885 and resulted in the dedication of the Folger Shakespeare Library on 23rd April 1932, coinciding with Shakespeare's birthday for maximum impact.²²⁸ Exactly thirty-two years later, the books, including the first Visitors' Book, were given to the SBT as a gesture of goodwill to celebrate the four-hundredth anniversary of Shakespeare's birth. In light of the concerns expressed by Perkins, compounded by those of Jefferson and Adams, might the fervency of the Folgers' collecting practices suggest they were also acting on concerns about British commemorative practices? If so, the return of the book in 1964 might be an indication that the directorship of Levi Fox had finally proven the Trust capable of looking after the material history of Shakespeare's legacy properly. This Visitors' Book,

²²⁷ Dickson, p. 103.

²²⁸ Ibid.

then, was twice gifted by US citizens in fascinating ways, and signifies a US-specific desire to preserve heritage that is characteristic in its urgency and rigour.

The inaugural Visitors' Book is the first of many significant US gifts to Stratford-upon-Avon. Gifts to the town are not part of the SBT's collections but are worthy of discussion because they illustrate several aspects of US gift-giving that are useful to the collection narrative. The series of ostentatious gifts donated to Stratford-upon-Avon in the late nineteenth century respond to the contemporary desire for 'a cultural, if not a political federation' between the US and Britain.²²⁹ As striking public monuments, the items not only constitute acts of cultural diplomacy but also make bold statements about US wealth and ability to provide substantial memorials to Shakespeare in town. Thus, they signal US cultural prowess as well as wealth, and appropriate Shakespeare's cultural capital to demonstrate and bolster US soft power on the Stratford-upon-Avon 'world stage'. The gifts include the American Fountain in Rother Street (1887); the public library, courtesy of philanthropist Andrew Carnegie's (1835-1919) Foundation grant scheme (1905); two stained glass windows in Holy Trinity Church (1896); and the significant contribution made by US citizens to the rebuilding of the Memorial Theatre following its destruction by fire in 1926. If, as Thomas Cartelli suggests, the Folger library can be understood as a 'counter-colonial appropriation' of Shakespeare, given its spatial triangulation with the US Capitol Building and Supreme Court, then these gifts to Stratford-upon-Avon can certainly be considered in a similar way. This thesis shows that most international gifts to the SBT encompass a tacit appeal for conferred cultural capital, but these gifts most clearly suggest the ways in which they also constitute the symbolic planting of a flag in the sand of Shakespeare's birthplace.

²²⁹ Rigney (p. 83).

That is to say, through the representation of specific nations in the SBT's collections (or, indeed, Stratford-upon-Avon), the nation not only demonstrates its cultural refinement but also 'colonises' a part of the collections (or the town) to legitimise its claim to a part in Shakespeare's legacy. Through the permanent monuments donated to the town by US citizens, that combined function becomes explicit. The clear difference between this counter-colonisation and colonisation-proper lies in Stratford-upon-Avon's perfect comfort with the situation, and indeed, encouragement of further investment in Shakespeare and the town. The US was specifically targeted for funds for the Memorial Theatre and in 1928 an extraordinarily large book (at 110 centimetres by 143 centimetres) was made to record the names of all the US donors before being taken on tour of the United States to much fanfare. A video clip, which can be seen on the British Pathé website, of the Mayor of New York signing the book in 1928 demonstrates the success of the giant book as a publicity generator.²³⁰ Bearing in mind that the lack of material and site-specific connections to British history in the US was the source and impetus for Jefferson and Adams's frustration with British commemorative practices, the permanent public monuments that have been donated by US agents to Stratford-upon-Avon signal the desire to legitimise the US claim to Shakespeare through material connections to the town of his birth.

One gift presented to the SBT in 1929 corresponds to the town monuments in its emphasis on connecting to Shakespeare through both site and materiality. The offer for a sundial for New Place Gardens from New York architect Cass Gilbert (1859-1934) is recorded in the SBT minute book of 22nd July 1925. Gilbert was renowned for iconic work including the Woolworth Building in New York and the US Supreme Court Building in Washington DC.

²³⁰ <https://www.britishpathe.com/video/for-new-shakespeare-memorial-theatre>. The book belongs to the RSC but is cared for as part of the SBT's collections.

The resulting octagonal monument with a baluster-shaped column was presented to the Trust in April 1929. The eight sides of the base were inscribed with the seven ages of man and Jaques's 'All the world's a stage' speech from *As You Like It* Act Two, Scene Seven.²³¹ Now heavily weathered, the pedestal is currently in storage after being removed from the gardens in 1999 to make room for the Greg Wyatt sculptures (to be discussed shortly).

The sundial is one of regrettably few items in the SBT's collections on which there is a substantial amount of detail provided within its object history file. Object history files are kept for all the objects in the museum collection, but due to a historic lack of record-keeping the majority contain little more than a reference number. This file was full because in 2011 a now discredited German scholar made unsubstantiated claims that the sundial could be dated back to Shakespeare's lifetime. Because the sundial had been removed into storage, these claims forced the SBT to make research-based refutations against charges of concealing the 'truth' about the item. The object history file for the sundial is an indication of what the file for every item in the collection could be if the Trust had the resources (as well as the impetus) to fill them. The recurrent concern shown by international visitors about the SBT's management of Shakespeare's legacy illustrates the tensions that result from the SBT's simultaneous obligation to promote Shakespeare for the benefit of Britain (as per the Acts of Parliament of 1891 and 1961) and the reliance on the idea of Shakespeare's 'universality' that has been built into Shakespeare's brand. The tension lies in the mixed message that Shakespeare belongs to everyone in the world but that the SBT will ultimately control *how* he belongs to everyone: which aspects and interpretations of

²³¹ SBT 1928-3, Sundial.

Shakespeare will be available, where, and when, and that they may ultimately work in favour of British interests.

Although the qualms came from a German visitor in this instance, the doubts regarding the SBT's ability to adequately commemorate and celebrate Shakespeare echo those expressed by Jefferson and Adams, Perkins, and, perhaps, the Folgers, in consequence of the fervency of their collecting practices. Similar concerns have been expressed by Mississippi writer Lee Durkee, who sent a series of emails to the Trust in 2010 and 2011 regarding the 'Hunt portrait'. Mr Durkee expressed outrage that the SBT had not and seemingly would not have the portrait tested to confirm his suspicions that it might be the one depiction of Shakespeare that was painted from life. The SBT was forced to explain that as a charitable trust with limited resources it was unable to undertake specific research at the request of individual researchers – besides the fact that it had no reason to suspect the portrait to be worth the costly investigation. The recurrent concern about the SBT's perceived responsibility to the world, to share Shakespeare fully and appropriately, reveals the complexity of the international nature of Shakespeare. Specifically, the sundial's object history and the email trail now connected to the 'Hunt portrait' reveals the complexity of Shakespeare's annexation into any non-British culture, since the SBT's assertion of authority over Shakespearean heritage – expressed primarily through the locus of the Birthplace – destabilises those claims and prompts the kind of anxieties that are expressed through such incidents. Furthermore, through the sundial's history the goodwill and trust that are engendered by international gifts are called into question through the tension created by the meeting of the SBT's authority and Shakespeare's supposed 'universal' availability to the world.

Prior to the charges mounted by the German scholar and the Mississippian writer (intriguingly, also in 2011) the SBT continued to extend invitations to its US friends for donations into the early 1960s, when it was building the Shakespeare Centre. Figure 4 shows a glass vase engraved with the dance of the reapers and nymphs from Act Four of *The Tempest*. The vase was given by the spouses of the US



Figure 14: SBT 2001-17 Glass vase.

Embassy staff and was designed and engraved by the prominent glass engraver John Hutton, who also engraved the large Shakespearean characters on the glass panels of the new Shakespeare Centre. Hutton had received acclaim for his work in the rebuilt Coventry Cathedral, which led to his being commissioned by the SBT.²³² The depiction of the dance reflects the festivity of the unveiling of the building and the quatercentenary celebrations.

The recurrence in this chapter of items referring to *The Tempest* may also reflect on the resonance of this specific play in the scheme of the relationship between Britain and the US, as ‘old world’ and the ‘brave new world’, and as they are bonded through shared history and Shakespeare. It is possible that this resonance was recognised as early as 1761, when

²³² Fox, p. 164.

The Tempest became 'the first Shakespeare play printed in the Western hemisphere', (by Gaines of New York).²³³ It is fitting, then, that the first of a series of bronze sculptures inspired by Shakespeare's works and crafted by US artist Greg Wyatt for New Place's Great Garden was a representation of *The Tempest* (see figure 5). The series of sculptures was commissioned for a sculpture trail in the Great Garden of



Figure 15: SBT 1999-28 Sculpture, *The Tempest*.

New Place by the Newington-

Cropsey Foundation, New York, and were co-sponsored by the SBT and the American Friends of the SBT. The American Friends is an independent non-profit organisation that was founded in 1999. Its primary objective is to raise money to provide opportunities for US students to study with the SBT and to assist with the maintenance of the SBT collections and properties in Stratford-upon-Avon by supporting renovation and enhancement projects.

²³³ Dobson, 'Fairly Brave New World: Shakespeare, the American Colonies, and the American Revolution' (p. 193).

The words of *The Tempest's* epilogue, already mentioned in this chapter, appear on the reverse of the sculpture, the front featuring Prospero's bearded face emerging from a rocky mass that evokes a lonely island rising from the sea, a ship broken in two by stormy waves, and Ariel's face and wings in his cloven tree. There is a cave-like hollow at the back of the face, intended to create the sense that the viewer can climb in 'and occupy the brain of Prospero'.²³⁴ In its belief that people would desire to do so, this notion brings forward the idea that Prospero was Shakespeare's most autobiographical character, as well as suggesting the sculpture was designed for those who would find their affinity with Prospero, the colonial ruler of the island. Indeed, the face largely resembles Wyatt himself and thus qualifies the sculptor's statement that 'I don't set out to depict characters in individual plays, but rather to express impressions of what a Shakespeare play presents to my mind's eye, how the ideas of the play can take on physical form'.²³⁵ With the eyes closed and a peaceful expression, as if enjoying a pleasant dream, Prospero's face is the largest feature of the sculpture, much larger than the ship, and as his face emerges in the centre of the piece from the rocky formation of the island, he appears to be part of the island itself. Coupled with the idea of the cave as an entrance point into Prospero's mind, this aspect of the sculpture suggests that the island is a figment of Prospero's cognitive construction, that is, of his (dreaming) imagination. While Wyatt's intended emphasis was on the dream-like qualities of the play, the sculpture inadvertently invites a post-colonial 'reading', in which it reflects on Prospero's role as coloniser. Through the representation of the island as

²³⁴ Gregg Wyatt, 'Sculpture of *The Tempest* by Greg Wyatt: Interview with Greg Wyatt, Dr Paul Edmondson, and Professor Sir Stanley Wells at Shakespeare's New Place', *Shakespeare Birthplace Trust*, 2019 <<https://www.shakespeare.org.uk/explore-shakespeare/shakespepedia/shakespeares-new-place/sculpture-tempest-wyatt/>> [accessed 10 April 2019].

²³⁵ Gregg Wyatt, 'Gregg Wyatt, Sculptor-in-Residence, the Cathedral Church of ST John the Divine, New York City', in *Shakespeare's Creative Legacies: Artists, Writers, Performers, Readers*, ed. by Paul Edmondson and Peter Holbrook (London: Bloomsbury Arden Shakespeare, 2016), pp. 160–61.

Prospero's dream, it reflects on the first British settlers in America, who saw the 'New World' as a blank canvas – itself an imagined space – on which they could paint their aspirations for the new nation and imagine the possibilities of its identity. Furthermore, in choosing to represent only Prospero and Ariel, the sculpture elides the 'other' Indigenous character from the play, Caliban, thus representing a striking repetition of the way Indigenous Americans have been elided as part of US/American identity, at least in the way it has been *imagined* by Anglo-American settlers and their descendants.

The epilogue, reproduced on the reverse of the sculpture, allows Prospero to beg for forgiveness and freedom, affirming the ways in which the structure of the play steers audience sympathy toward the coloniser, Prospero. It does so through the series of justifications it offers for Prospero's domination of the island and its inhabitants – his displacement from Milan, Caliban's attempted violence, Ariel's power over the elements – as well as his overwhelming desire for home in this final speech. Underlying the explicit justifications remains the fact that Shakespeare's plays overwhelmingly assume a white, patriarchal-minded audience.²³⁶ Thus, Wyatt's sculpture demonstrates not only Wyatt's own self-confessed sense of association with the coloniser, but it also reprises those assumptions through its emphases on Prospero's – and only Prospero's – experience of the island. This collection item reflects, therefore, on the complexity of rendering a representation of a Shakespeare play in a fixed construction. While a theatrical or filmed production can be subjected to directorial approaches that add nuance to such assumptions, minimising them, or presenting them in a way that causes an audience to question them, the composition of a sculpture makes static the aspect of the production to which the sculptor is drawn. In this

²³⁶ See: Ian Smith, 'We Are Othello'.

case, the privileging of the white coloniser's perspective, and indeed, dreams, coupled with the exclusion of the Indigenous and the female characters, reproduces the aspects of this play that make Shakespeare most exclusionary. Artists must be free to interpret Shakespeare as they wish, but the placing of this sculpture in the garden of New Place, on permanent public display, under the auspices of the SBT, adds credence and authority to a patriarchal and colonially sympathetic reading of the play that the SBT should consider in terms of their aims to provide a culturally sensitive and inclusive experience for all visitors.²³⁷ Furthermore, as a US gift to the SBT, this sculpture may be construed as an indication of the ways in which Shakespeare was implicated in the construction of a carefully delineated (white and predominantly male) Anglo-American identity.

Harvard House: The Star-Spangled Banner, Twain Portrait, Ceramic Bowl

Although the explicit and implicit criticisms articulated by Jefferson and Adams, Perkins, and the Folgers all suggest an indictment of the UK's memorialisation and maintenance of Shakespearean heritage, most of the gifts described in this chapter represent the friendly relationship between the two nations. They also indicate a desire and indeed a cultural need for US representation in Stratford-upon-Avon based on shared heritage and reverence for Shakespeare. It is no surprise, then, that the ultimate symbol of national representation, a US flag, also resides within the collections, and at first glance – given the evident eagerness for US 'footholds' in Stratford-upon-Avon – provokes considerations about the colonising action of flag planting. However, the flag is part of the Harvard House collection so is more likely to have been acquired by the Trustees of that house to decorate the property in

²³⁷ A more 'neutral' artistic response to Shakespeare by a US artist is available in the pop art revision of the Martin Droeshout engraving by Steve Kaufman (1960-2010), which the artist donated in 2016 to mark the 400th anniversary of Shakespeare's death: SBT 2016-5, Steve Kaufman, Shakespeare State Two, 1996.

the years before it came into the custodianship of the SBT via lease in 1991.²³⁸ The house was purchased and renovated on behalf of Harvard University in 1909 thanks to the British novelist Marie Corelli (1855-1924), who moved to Stratford-upon-Avon in 1899 and made it her mission to preserve the ancient buildings there. The purchase and work were funded by the millionaire Chicago businessman Edward Morris, who was persuaded by Corelli on the basis that the building was the childhood home of the mother of John Harvard, founder of Harvard University, and that the property should belong to the university and serve as 'one spot where America and England can shake hands like loving comrades in mutual admiration and reverence for their famous men'.²³⁹ The house is thus as much a monument to cultural diplomacy as it is to Harvard and Shakespeare.

The Harvard House collection belongs to Harvard University, but while under the custodianship of the SBT it is catalogued alongside the main collections. Thus, items from the Harvard House collection have been included in this thesis on the basis that they are searchable on the online catalogue. Most of the items, like the flag, constitute a British response to the US: items that the curator may have imagined would be of most interest to US visitors. The collection includes a photograph of Harvard's statue in Cambridge, Massachusetts; news cuttings about the first Harvard family member to attend Harvard University, Lionel de Jersey Harvard (a British citizen) in 1911; photographs of the Church and replicas for the records of John Harvard's marriage in South Malling, Lewes; and a relief moulding of a profile portrait of Mark Twain (1835-1910).²⁴⁰ As a famous Anti-Stratfordian

²³⁸ SBT UA2000-5 Flag (date unknown).

²³⁹ SBT DR663/1/15 America's Possession in Shakespeare's Town: The Harvard House Stratford-on-Avon. The Home of John Harvard's Mother Now the Property of Harvard University, Cambridge, Mass., USA; A Brief Description of its recent Purchase and Restoration by Marie Corelli. (Pamphlet).

²⁴⁰ SBT HH78 photograph of John Harvard's statue Cambridge, MA; SBT HH79 Replica magna carta; SBT HH96 news cutting re Lionel de Jersey Harvard ; SBT HH98 photograph of South Malling Church & church records; SBT HH118 Relief moulding.

authorship denier, Twain's portrait most likely appears due to the coincidence of his death being only a year before the opening of the house, although this cannot be qualified as the SBT record does not indicate when it was accessioned.

National identity, remembrance, and the relationship between US and British industry and culture in the aftermath of the Revolutionary war are indicated in another ambivalent item from the Harvard House collection: a ceramic bowl (see figure 6).²⁴¹ The creamware bowl is an example of what is now known as Anglo-American transferware. It features medallion portraits of Franklin, Washington, and Lafayette, plus the Great Seal of the United States around the outside and shows the guild insignia, 'the Shipwright's Arms',



Figure 16: SBT HH10 19th Century Ceramic Bowl

²⁴¹ Sections from this item's object narrative and some of the related theorisations of accidental appropriation that appear in the first chapter of this thesis have been published in Helen A. Hopkins, 'Founding Fathers: Patriotic Ceramics and Shakespeare in the United States', *Borrowers and Lenders: The Journal of Shakespeare and Appropriation*, 13.1 (2020) <<https://openjournals.lib.uga.edu/borrowers/article/view/2370>>.chapter

on the inside base. The insignia reveals that despite the patriotic images, the item was manufactured in England (most likely Liverpool).²⁴²

The connection between this bowl and Shakespeare is not obvious. However, the ways in which such items came into being, as a result of the revolution and US desire for distinction from and equal status with Britain, offers comparison with the ways in which Shakespeare was negotiated into US culture. Kariann Akemi Yokota explains that throughout the period of British rule in America parliamentary restrictions on new manufactories and immigration of skilled workers stymied early manufacturing attempts at home. This meant that fine tableware was only available as British imports, which, given the continued assumption of British cultural superiority in most things, added to its desirability.²⁴³ After the outbreak of the Revolutionary War, ‘technological advances [of ceramic transferware in the UK] coincided in a fortuitous manner with the political upheavals that were taking place in the Atlantic world’, and despite the recent animosity and bloodshed canny British manufacturers ‘promptly began custom designing their wares so as to tug on Americans’ patriotic heart-strings’, producing large quantities of tableware that ‘encouraged the former colonials to express their nationalism in material form’.²⁴⁴ In the process, they created a new market in which budding US manufacturers could not compete in terms of price or production rate.²⁴⁵ In consequence, ‘by the end of the

²⁴² Personal conversation with David Moffat, Decorative Art Curator, National Museums Liverpool on 7th February 2019.

²⁴³ Kariann Akemi Yokota, *Unbecoming British: How Revolutionary America Became a Postcolonial Nation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), p. 111.

²⁴⁴ *Ibid*, pp. 101, 102.

²⁴⁵ *Ibid*, pp. 103, 104.

eighteenth century, the new nation became the most significant consumer of British exports in the world'.²⁴⁶

The success of the British commercial strategy was achieved not only by the manipulation of the US's neoteric patriotism but also the longstanding perception of British goods as superior in quality as well as a sign of social refinement. The need to dispel the prevalent European discourse of US/American goods (thus, US/Americans themselves) as signifiers of 'embarrassing provincial rusticity' activated conspicuous consumerism in the new nation, boosting sales and perpetuating the perception of British superiority because of US insecurity.²⁴⁷ Despite the damage this did to launching manufacturers who were unable to match British costings, the desire for British ceramics meant that the new nation was ideologically as well as economically trapped. Yokota explains:

American elites continued to look to the old world not only for refined goods but also for direction on how to use them. And so while cultural and economic autonomy from the British was an ideal to which Americans aspired in the years following the Revolution, old templates of dependence remained in place long after the war ended.²⁴⁸

²⁴⁶ Ibid, p. 99.

²⁴⁷ Ibid, p. 95.

²⁴⁸ Ibid, p. 63.

This was also true of US culture, in which Shakespeare was, and remains, a pillar of refined cultural identity long after independence was established.²⁴⁹ This item was presumably intended to simply represent the domestic aspect of US patriotism in the Harvard House exhibition space. Instead, it illuminates the corresponding ways in which British objects or commodities, which also include Shakespeare, became a vital element in fashioning a specific US identity. The fact that such an item, brought into the SBT's collections in this indirect way, offers such a rich analogy for the desire for and appropriation of Shakespeare in the US is fascinating.

The particular element of US identity being celebrated through this bowl is denoted by the images of Presidents Washington and Franklin; of the Marquis de Lafayette, the French General who became instrumental in the Revolutionary War; and by the motto inscribed around the eagle of the Great Seal of the United States. The motto reads 'Republicans are not always ungrateful', which suggests that this item is one of many produced around the time of Lafayette's tour of the United States in 1824, when he was welcomed as the last surviving general of the War of Independence. Indeed, the motto is derived from the welcome speech given by the Mayor of New York in which the hope was expressed that 'the future conduct of my countrymen, to the latest period of time, will, among other slanders, refute the unjust imputation, that republics are always ungrateful to their benefactors'.²⁵⁰ The need to refute ingratitude as an element of US identity exposes once more the US's instability and insecurity about the way it is perceived by the rest of the world, while the need to value independence without devaluing the 'benefactor' – Britain,

²⁴⁹ Lawrence W. Levine, *Highbrow/Lowbrow: The Emergence of Cultural Hierarchy in America* (London: Harvard University Press, 1990), pp. 45-60.

²⁵⁰ Samuel Lorenzo Knapp, *Memoirs of General Lafayette: Embracing Details of His Public and Private Life* (New York: Barber and Robinson, 1825), p. 445.

or in this case Lafayette – directly corresponds with the desire to keep Shakespeare as the cornerstone of US cultural identity while maintaining the principles of the separation from the mother-country. Shakespeare was ingrained in US culture through citations found not only on the stage and in required reading lists at school, but also ‘on almanacs, patent medicines, saloon signs and the deeds to gold mines’.²⁵¹ Such citations indicate a ‘deferential relationship; it is frequently self-authenticating, even reverential, in its reference to the canon of “authoritative”, culturally validated, texts’.²⁵² Thus, through this bowl, self-identification as refined, grateful republicans who honour and take pride in their history (their European ‘parentage’, in particular) is played out. The motto’s presence indicates the ways in which citation became a crucial means of embedding within US culture the principles of both independence from and gratitude to the former oppressor, which mitigated the reliance on modes of refinement that were in turn entrenched in Britishness.

J. Samaine Lockwood’s work on ceramic collecting practices highlights the juncture at which items such as this bowl took on deeper significances for the memorialisation of the origins of US identity. Lockwood notes that in the early 1800s, a number of institutions and societies were created to ‘safeguard books, manuscripts, and objects that together recounted the story of the fledgling United States’ and that British-made ceramic items were a large part of that movement.²⁵³ Once again, the need to ‘safeguard’ history, here as mementos of the formation of the US, echoes the concerns first expressed by Jefferson and Adams about revering and honouring heritage. However, the Founding Fathers’ concerns came at a time when the process of creating US identity had barely begun, when US history

²⁵¹ Sturgess (p. 4).

²⁵² Julie Sanders, *Adaptation and Appropriation* (New York: Routledge, 2006), p. 4.

²⁵³ J. Samaine Lockwood, ‘Shopping for the Nation: Women’s China Collecting in Late-Nineteenth-Century New England’, *The New England Quarterly*, 81.1 (2008), 63–90 (p. 64).

was recent and rare, thus precious. At that moment, the idea of failing to honour their battlefields and those elements of British culture that were still valued was a destabilising one. To let them go would be to let go of identity itself. As the eighteenth century progressed, increased European immigration meant that 'the preservation movement sought not only to conserve America's legacy through its relics but also to distinguish those who had a proper role in it and those who did not'. As such,

the colonial inheritance seemed under attack as the United States grew increasingly modern, industrial, urban, and ethnically diverse. In saving china, collectors often imagined themselves to be recovering a story of Anglo supremacy and to be defending it against the threat of foreigners.²⁵⁴

In this way, the bowl becomes a tool of xenophobic anti-immigration sentiment. It demonstrates that even in the 'land of opportunity' such items were used to make it clear to whom those opportunities were available and to whom they were not. Furthermore, through this contextual enquiry the object narrative of this bowl becomes a warning about the function of museums as ideological apparatuses that can propagate damaging notions of a homogenous national identity through their collecting and exhibition practices.

²⁵⁴ Ibid, (p. 70)

Presidents: Framed Speeches, John Wilkes Booth, Puck Magazine, Washington

Chestnuts, Harding Letter, Eisenhower Box, Kennedy Telegram

The association of US presidents with Shakespeare's Birthplace was made many years before the SBT existed, when John Adams and Thomas Jefferson visited the Birthplace in 1786. The outcome of that trip has been mentioned already, in terms of the two Founding Fathers' disappointments at the lack of reverence they found in Stratford-upon-Avon and England – for both Shakespeare and national history in general.²⁵⁵ The US collection contains many more references to US presidents, including a pair of framed glazed extracts that were given to Harvard House by two students from DePauw University, Indiana, in 1954 to celebrate Shakespeare's birthday.²⁵⁶ The gifts pair the (notably versified) words of Abraham Lincoln's 1863 Gettysburg Address' alongside John of Gaunt's 'sceptred isle' speech (from Act Two Scene One of *Richard II*). A Putnam County newspaper of the same date celebrated their acceptance for Harvard House as 'perhaps the only contributions by American students in Shakespeare's birthplace'.²⁵⁷ The idea for the gifts was instigated by DePauw's Professor Edna Hayes Taylor after her visit to the property, where she saw copies of the Declaration of Independence and the Magna Carta hanging beneath US and British flags. The plaques, the article explains, were also hung with the flags, suggesting an intention to align the founding principles of the US and Britain with one another, with the words of Lincoln and Shakespeare as representative of those principles in action – despite

²⁵⁵ The collection holds a copy of a document belonging to the US library of Congress relating to this trip: SBT PR288 Thomas Jefferson, later President of the United States, Bill from William Pratt, innkeeper, Banbury [to Thomas Jefferson and John Adams]; and Thomas Jefferson's notes on subsequent expenses at Stratford-upon-Avon. Original: Library of Congress, Washington D.C.

²⁵⁶ SBT HH73, A framed and glazed extract on parchment from Lincoln's Gettysburg address; SBT HH72, A framed and glazed extract on parchment from Richard II, Act 2 Scene 1.

²⁵⁷ 'Two Plaques Accepted for Bard's Home: Work by Students to Hang in Shakespeare's Home', *The Daily Banner* (Greencastle, Putnam County, 23 April 1954), p. 1 <<https://newspapers.library.in.gov/cgi-bin/indiana?a=d&d=TDB19540423-01.1.1.1>>.

the striking incongruity between the thematic concerns of an elected presidency in one piece and an inherited monarchy in the other. The versification of Lincoln's words suggests his instatement as an analogous national poet, although while Shakespeare's words are associated with the complexities and failures of monarchy, Lincoln's are celebrated as the foundation of the superstructure of the US as a republic.

Lincoln's admiration of Shakespeare was well-known: he is reported to have carried a copy of the plays around the White House and would often read them aloud at night, giving impromptu recitations of powerful speeches.²⁵⁸ Following Lincoln's death, not only did several handbills and news reports feature quotes from *Macbeth*, but his assassin, John Wilkes Booth, quoted the same play in an explanatory letter, saying 'I do not wish to shed a drop of blood, but "I must fight the course". 'Tis all that's left me' (from *Macbeth* Act Five Scene Seven).²⁵⁹ John Wilkes Booth also made self-comparisons to *Julius Caesar's* most famous assassin, Brutus, and his reasoning that the assassination of President Lincoln was a patriotic act centred on his interpretation of *Julius Caesar*:

[w]hen Caesar had conquered the enemies of Rome and the power that was his menaced the liberties of the people, Brutus arose and slew him. The stroke of his dagger was guided by his love for Rome. It was the spirit and ambition of Caesar that Brutus struck at [...] I answer with Brutus.²⁶⁰

²⁵⁸ Shapiro, p. 181; Georgianna Ziegler, 'American Appropriation Through the Centuries', in *Shakespeare in Our Time*, ed. by Dymphna Callaghan and Suzanne Gossett (London and New York: The Arden Shakespeare, 2016), pp. 229–35 (p. 234).

²⁵⁹ John Wilkes Booth, 'John Wilkes Booth: Letter to the National Intelligencer', in *Shakespeare in America: An Anthology from the Revolution to Now*, ed. by James Shapiro (New York: Library of America, 2013), pp. 194–97

²⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

In this way, Booth uses Shakespeare to reframe the assassination as a patriotic act, the eradication of a menace to the state, rather than the bloody murder of the democratically elected president. Thus, the history of Shakespeare's appropriation by opposing factions is expressed once more in the stories of Booth and Lincoln, inspiring both murderer and victim, as well as the broader oppositions of Confederate and Unionist.

Booth was an actor from a theatrical family, and his father and brothers all specialised in Shakespeare. His brother Edwin became the most famous for his acting, and the SBT collections contain a range of items relating to Edwin's career; namely playbills, a letter, books and pamphlets, and a photograph that shows the unveiling of his portrait for the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre in 1922.²⁶¹ The last item listed reveals the significance of Edwin and his career. However, remembrance of his brother's terrible actions in a theatre across the Atlantic is connoted in every mention of the name Booth through the range of layered Shakespeare connections that bind those associations.

Lincoln is not the only assassinated US president to be remembered in and through the SBT's collections. A printed flyer from 1881 divulges Stratford-upon-Avon's mayor James Cox's request that respect be shown on the day of the funeral of President James Garfield (1831-1881, president 4th March 1881 – 19th September 1881).²⁶² Garfield was assassinated by Charles J. Guiteau, a man who believed a speech he had written had assisted in Garfield's election and was unhappy at the lack of gratitude – and government job opportunities – he

²⁶¹ SBT ML1/7/103 U.S.A. NY Winter Garden; SBT Pamphlet - 83.6 Booth/MAL *An actor's memory of Edwin Booth*. John Malone and SBT 83.6 Booth/CLA *The Elder and the Younger Booth* Asia Booth Clark and more; SBT DR1136/8/2/28 Autograph Collection: Maslin Collection Letter from Edwin Booth to Frederick J. Furnivall; SBT SC27/130 Photograph of presentation of the Booth portrait to the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre by the Rotary Club of America.

²⁶² SBT DR375/12/4 Stratford Miscellanea.

received for his service. He shot the president in the belief that it was God's will, and that he might have better thanks from Vice-President Chester A. Arthur (1829-1886, presidency 1881-1885).²⁶³ This belief arose from Arthur's involvement in the 'patronage' or 'spoils system' which brought the Republican victory in the 1880 elections.²⁶⁴ Following Garfield's death, Arthur benefitted from this corrupt system more than he could initially have hoped, but he broke ties with his conspirators – most notably the powerful New York Senator Roscoe Conkling (1829-1888) – after his inauguration. Arthur renounced the spoils system that put him into office and in December 1882 introduced the Pendleton Act, 'which enacted civil service reform to combat the system of patronage'.²⁶⁵

The fallout from Arthur's shifting politics is reflected in another item in the SBT's collections: an edition of *Puck* magazine (see figure 7). *Puck* was 'the nation's premier journal of political satire and humour', and its primary aim – to lampoon anyone 'it deemed in contravention to its moralistic, elitist definition of the public good' – was underpinned by the Shakespearean quote (Puck, of course) emblazoned on the cover of every issue: 'What fools these mortals be'.²⁶⁶ Thus, Shakespeare is evoked to define what is intellectually refined. In this issue, Arthur's rejection of Conkling is displaced onto Act Five Scene Five of 2

²⁶³ Richard Menke, 'Media in America, 1881: Garfield, Guiteau, Bell, Whitman', *Critical Inquiry*, 31.3 (2005), 638–64 (p. 643).

²⁶⁴ This system consisted of 'the awarding of government jobs in return for party loyalty, and the assessment upon office-holders of a percentage of their annual salaries to support party candidates. The natural result was a vast quantity of idleness and inefficiency at public expense, a civil service devoted principally to the desires of political chieftains', Thomas C. Reeves, 'Chester A. Arthur and the Campaign Assessments in the Election of 1880', *The Historian*, 31.4 (1969), 573–82 (p. 573).

²⁶⁵ Daniel Canter, Alexander Kutikov, and Robert G. Uzzo, 'How Chester Alan Arthur "Brightened" From a Political Spoilsman to a Civil Service Reformer', *BJU International*, 108.8 (2011), 1235–37 <<https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1464-410X.2011.10620.x>>.

²⁶⁶ Samuel J. Thomas, 'Mugwump Cartoonists, the Papcy, and Tammany Hall in America's Gilded Age', *Religion and American Culture: A Journal of Interpretation*, 14.2 (2004), 213–50 (p. 213).

Henry IV, as Conkling-as-Falstaff finds his favour with the Arthur's Henry V dissolved with the lines (given beneath the cartoon):

I know thee not, old man! Fall to thy prayers!

Presume not that I am the thing I was:

For heaven doth know, so shall the world perceive,

That I have turned away my former self;

So will I those that kept me company!

The lines are a conflation from King Harry's speech (lines 42-54). They are used to demonstrate the affinity between Conkling and Falstaff that can be perceived in Reeves's



Figure 17: SBT 2018-5/12 Puck Cartoon.

description of the spoils system as self-serving, corrupt, and idleness-inducing, and the cartoon deepens that connection through the analogous dramatic scene. Shakespeare's distinction as a superior (to the point of supercilious, here), authenticated 'barometer' of human folly is used to satirise the prominent political figures depicted. Thus, through Shakespeare, *Puck* claims to represent a superior faction of US society, those who not only know and understand the plays, but are discerning enough to locate the issues and traits Shakespeare depicts in everyday US life.

Thus, a person's ability to recognise correspondences between the plays and socio-political life in the US is a signifier of social and intellectual elevation. Further to this, the practice of drawing such connections as a form of national interest serves to reinforce US claims to Shakespeare as a fundamental element of national history and cultural identity. The SBT minute book records a more direct attempt to cement this hereditary link through the connection of the legacies of Shakespeare with George Washington. The entry for 4th December 1912 states that 'Mrs Julia Foster of Forest Glen, Maryland had presented some ivy plants and chestnuts from the tomb of George Washington'.²⁶⁷ Chestnuts are associated with Washington due to a particular legend of his planting thirteen horse chestnuts trees (representing the thirteen colonies) to provide shade for the walk between the homes of his mother and sister in Fredericksburg.²⁶⁸ He also planted many trees and shrubs at Mount Vernon, the home that became his burial place.

As a tourist attraction and monument, Mount Vernon now sells wooden souvenirs, ostensibly made from Washington's trees, capitalising on manufactured 'relics' in a similar

²⁶⁷ SBT TR/2/1/1 Minute book, December 4, 1912.

²⁶⁸ Emily Fleming, 'America's Historic Horse-Chestnut Tree', *D.A.R. Magazine* (Washington D.C., April 1926), pp. 226–27 <http://services.dar.org/members/magazine_archive/download/?file=DARMAG_1926_04.pdf>.

manner to the mulberry wood souvenirs that have been sold in Shakespeare's name. Although Washington relics are less scarce, a similar fascination for items that he touched – thus for the material connection to a person, place, or event that is crucial to the elevation of objects into relics – is evident through this donation of plants.

Washington's diaries show him to have been a keen horticulturalist, with, among many other garden-related entries, an entry on April 13, 1785, reporting the receipt of twelve small Horse Chestnut trees, four of which he planted in his shrubberies at Mount Vernon.²⁶⁹ These trees may have yielded the chestnuts that Mrs Foster gave to the SBT in 1912 in a gesture that aimed to honour Washington and Shakespeare simultaneously through their gardens and objects purportedly planted with their very hands. This echoes the occasion fifty-two years prior when the Prince of Wales (later King Edward VII) visited Washington's tomb and, to show his respect, planted horse chestnuts there 'with his own hands'. That tree did not survive, but the diplomatic significance of the gesture is compounded by the fact that the Prince commissioned another tree to replace it some years later.²⁷⁰ The SBT's head gardener, Glyn Jones, advises that he was not aware of any Horse Chestnut or Ivy plants in the gardens of the SBT's properties that could be identified as likely successors to the donated plants, so it may be that if they were ever planted in the Birthplace gardens they too did not survive.²⁷¹

The most explicit gesture of shared heritage in the US collection narrative is indicated in the transcript of a letter from President Warren G. Harding (1865-1923,

²⁶⁹ George Washington and John C. Fitzpatrick, 'The Diaries of George Washington, 1748-1799. Vol. 2', *Archives Unbound*, 1925 <<http://tinyurl.galegroup.com/tinyurl/8vq3v3>> [accessed 30 January 2019].

²⁷⁰ Jordan Ritchie, 'The Prince of Wales Visits Mount Vernon, 1860 · George Washington's Mount Vernon', *Mountvernon.Org* <<https://www.mountvernon.org/library/digitalhistory/digital-encyclopedia/article/the-prince-of-wales-visits-mount-vernon-1860/>> [accessed 14 January 2019].

²⁷¹ Personal correspondence with Glyn Jones, SBT Head Gardener (until summer 2020), 30th January 2019.

presidency 1921-1923) that expresses interest in the plans for the commemoration of Shakespeare's birthday in 1924.²⁷² The document, found amongst the records of the Shakespeare Club in Stratford-upon-Avon, states:

[t]he American people are always sympathetic with every appreciation of the works of the Immortal Bard. These works constitute a part of the magnificent joint heritage of the British and American Peoples, one of the ties which have so long bound them in a community of aspiration and earnest purpose on behalf of the highest interests of humanity.

Harding's evocation of a 'community of aspiration' echoes the sentiments of the earlier colonisers and nation builders who understood Shakespeare as a marker of social status. This also brings to the fore explicitly the bonds between Britain and America in the aftermath of the First World War. The 'interests of humanity' were of high importance at this time, as physical, political and economic wounds were being bound in varying ways around the world, and the US was establishing itself as an undisputed global superpower in consequence of the devastation of Europe. As an example of cultural diplomacy in action, this letter can be read as a simple expression of solidarity in appreciation of Shakespeare between two English-speaking nations with a strong historical bond. However, Harding's letter marks the moment of a significant shift in power, where the US assumes Britain's former quasi-parental position. Where Shakespeare in the US had been considered an

²⁷² SBT DR289/2/35 Records of the Shakespeare Club, of Stratford-upon-Avon.

inheritance from the British mother-country, he is now reframed as a *'joint heritage'*, thus asserting an equal claim to him and his legacy. Harding's letter functions as a reminder of the historical bond between Britain and the US, presented in a way that makes the US claim to Shakespeare irrefutable and offers a subtle admonition against any attempt at refutation given the relative hierarchical shifts in global power.

The SBT's US collection indicates another way in which this global shift manifested in Stratford-upon-Avon. On February 11th 1947, the Borough Council decided that the Freedom of the Borough should be presented to General Dwight David Eisenhower (1890-1969), following his success as Supreme Commander of the Allied Expeditionary Forces in Europe and, in particular, in the success of his D-Day campaign in June 1944.²⁷³ An engrossed and illuminated volume containing the council's resolution was prepared, along with a specially made cigar-box within which the volume would be presented (see figure 8). The box is carved with images of the Birthplace, Anne Hathaway's Cottage, and King Edward VI (Shakespeare's) School. The SBT's minute book report for 29th January 1947 relates the decision to authorise the use of mulberry wood for the casket, 'should the wood prove suitable'.²⁷⁴ The provisional nature of this note suggests the notorious difficulty of working with mulberry – an issue well-known to those acquainted with the questionable quantity (and quality) of 'authentic' mulberry items produced in the name of Shakespeare in and around Stratford-upon-Avon.

Although Eisenhower's casket is actually walnut, the casket in which the first Freedom of the Borough was presented, to David Garrick in 1769, is alleged to be made

²⁷³ SBT TR/2/1/4 Minute Book 1937-1957, February 11, 1947.

²⁷⁴ SBT TR/2/1/4 Minute Book 1937-1957, January 29, 1947.



Figure 18: SBT BRR/14/28 Town Clerk's Office; Miscellaneous Volumes, Eisenhower presentation box.

from the original Mulberry tree planted by Shakespeare. Garrick's Freedom of the Borough was the first of only four to have been presented by Stratford-upon-Avon by that time. The remaining two are Sir Frank Benson (1858-1939) and Sir Archibald Flower (1865-1950), marking their considerable significance to the Shakespeare industry in Stratford-upon-Avon. Garrick led the Jubilee of 1769; Benson managed the Shakespeare festivals between 1886 and 1916; Flower managed the appeal and rebuilding of the Memorial Theatre after the fire of 1926. Garrick, Benson, and Flower each played crucial roles in the establishment and

reification of Shakespeare's status as national poet and an international icon, in a way that tied his importance to Stratford-upon-Avon.

Eisenhower's addition to the list of beneficiaries of 'the Freedom', then, suggests an acknowledgement that without his efforts in the Second World War, the Stratford-upon-Avon Shakespeare industry could have been changed irrevocably. Germany had been staking a very particular claim on Shakespeare since 1864 and given the ways in which Shakespeare was weaponised in the wartime rhetoric of both the UK and Germany the threat to Shakespeare as a British institution must have been felt keenly. The anxiety it provoked is likely to have been at the core of the desire to express gratitude to Eisenhower's efforts to prevent German success. The honour never was presented to Eisenhower; hence the box and volume remain in the SBT's collections. According to the *Stratford-upon-Avon Scene* of 1947, General Eisenhower accepted the honour but was never able to confirm a date to receive the presentation.²⁷⁵

Sixteen years later, in 1963, President Eisenhower's successor, President John F. Kennedy and his wife Jacqueline were reinventing the White House as a hub of culture with the aim of 'encouraging public acceptance of the arts'.²⁷⁶ Jacqueline's particular enthusiasm for Shakespeare was demonstrated through her role as President of the American Shakespeare Committee established that year to organise celebrations of Shakespeare's four hundredth birthday in 1964. Through the close contact kept by then Director of the Trust, Levi Fox, and the Chairman of the American Shakespeare Committee, Eugene Black, President Kennedy had been slated to attend and open the celebrations in Stratford-upon-

²⁷⁵ SBT Periodicals and Reading Room Periodicals, *Stratford-upon-Avon Scene* - 1946-1950, Vol. 1 - Vol 3 (specific reference not available due to the closure of the Shakespeare Centre under Covid-19 restrictions).

²⁷⁶ White House Historical Association, 'The Kennedys and Performing Arts', *Whitehousehistory.Org*, 2019 <<https://www.whitehousehistory.org/the-kennedys-and-performing-arts>> [accessed 7 March 2019].

Avon.²⁷⁷ After his assassination on November 22, 1963, the invitation was transferred to Jacqueline. Figure 9 shows the telegram Eugene Black sent explaining that Mrs Kennedy would be unable to attend as she had decided not to make any public appearances for one year. Mr Black accepted in her stead, and as a result his name features on the marble wall plaque outside the Shakespeare Centre on Henley Street. The assassination of Kennedy is one of the most iconic tragic moments in modern history: the death of a young husband and father and the democratically elected President of the US was made even more terrible by its occurrence on live broadcast around the world, and by Jacqueline's devastating reaction to the fatal shots to her husband's neck and head. The significance of this moment in world history makes this telegram one of the most striking and evocative items within the US collection. Indeed, the US presidents section of this collection is most striking because of the events and contexts it brings into the narrative: the three presidential assassinations, the

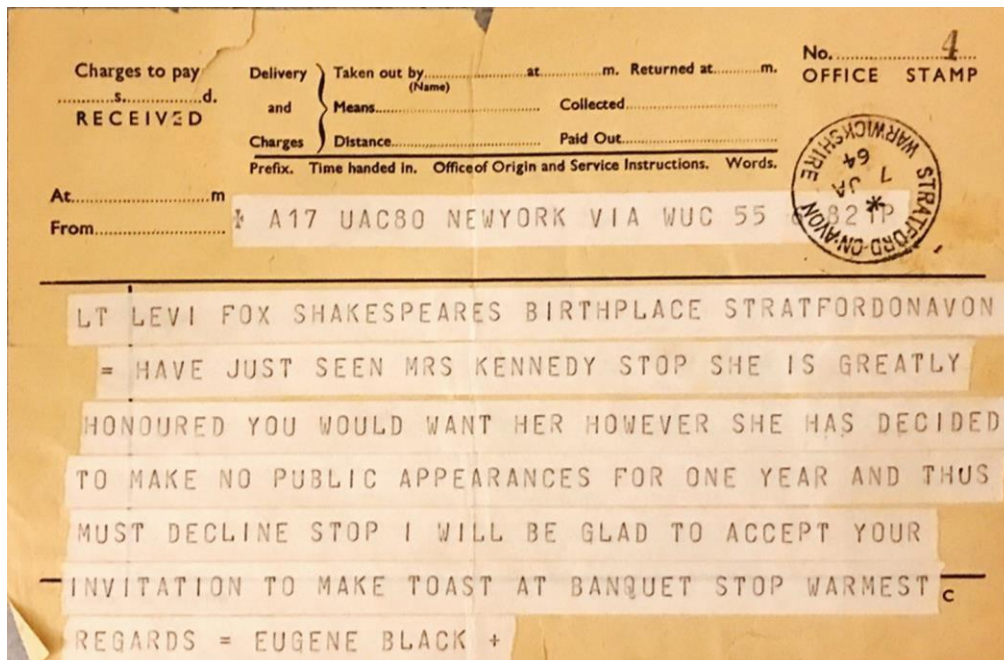


Figure 19 SBT DR1260 Telegram from Eugene R. Black to Levi Fox, regarding Jacqueline Kennedy. 7 January 1964.

²⁷⁷ Fox, p. 191.

aftermath of the Second World War, and the crucial address given by Lincoln at the Gettysburg Soldier's National Memorial, which famously propounded the principles of the Union as embedded in the concept of the equality of all men: a point that was necessary to distinguish Unionist policy from Confederate policy.

Confederacy: Jefferson Davis's Walking Stick and Letter

As if in response to the framed Gettysburg Address, an astonishing addition to the US collection is a photograph and catalogue record for a walking stick that belonged to the president of the Confederate States of America from 1861-1865, Jefferson Davis (see figure 10). Confederate history is tied to the legacy of the enslavement of Black African people and especially the war that was fought to defend the right to own enslaved people. As such, to have such an item draws the SBT's US collection into twenty-first century debates about the way that the Confederacy and its most prominent figures should be remembered. US concerns about the relationship between history and identity are a key theme in this collection narrative. The significance of the US habit of self-determining identity through



Figure 20: SBT HHB Walking Stick Belonging to Jefferson Davis.

selective remembrance can be discerned by the ongoing disputes and outbreaks of violence that erupted especially in 2015 and 2017 over Confederate statues. A key argument of those who rejected the call to remove statues was that Davis and his Confederate colleagues were not fighting for the continuance of slavery, they were fighting for the sovereignty of the south in the face of the north's exercise in oppression – which just happened to include the question of the abolition of slavery in the US, amongst other things. Ergo, the historical narrative of the US Civil War is disputed in order to argue against the statues' removal, and the arguments largely concern the implications of the removal for the identity of the South.²⁷⁸ The complexity of establishing a coherent narrative for such an item in any of the SBT museums is evident. As such, it is reasonable to deduce the SBT's relief as well as embarrassment at the fact that the walking stick is currently lost. In any other circumstances, the loss of a collection item, particularly one with such rich narrative connotations, would elicit deep concern about the museum or collector's historic record of professionalism, but in this instance, it rather prompts contemplation of a potentially deliberate 'mislaying' of a 'skeleton' in the SBT's 'closet'.

Fortunately, the object history file for the stick, which contains the photograph seen in figure 10, has not been lost. The stick came into the collection when it was left to Harvard House by Marie Corelli on her death. Corelli's father, Charles Mackay, had met and

²⁷⁸ Benjamin Forest and Juliet Johnson, 'Confederate Monuments and the Problem of Forgetting', *Cultural Geographies*, 26.1 (2019), 127–31 (p. 128) <<https://doi.org/10.1177/1474474018796653>>. Regarding the protests and violence of 2015 onwards see Daniella Silva, 'National Battle Over Confederate Monuments Renewed After Charlottesville Violence', *NBC News*, 2017 <<https://www.nbcnews.com/news/us-news/national-battle-over-confederate-monuments-renewed-after-charlottesville-violence-n792716>> [accessed 29 May 2019]; Brian Mejia, 'Virginia Judge Rules Confederate Statues Are War Monuments and Can't Be Removed | US News | The Guardian', *The Guardian*, 2019 <<https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2019/may/01/virginia-judge-rules-confederate-statues-are-war-monuments-and-cant-be-removed>> [accessed 29 May 2019]; The Associated Press, 'A Look at Confederate Monuments Removed across the US', *AP News*, 2018 <<https://www.apnews.com/b53a37b4cb7543709f80c459be2c7f94>> [accessed 29 May 2019].

befriended Davis in Richmond, Virginia, where Mackay was working as a correspondent on the US Civil War for the *Illustrated London News*. Davis was imprisoned for two years after the war then embarked on a tour of Europe, meeting Mackay in Scotland in 1869, where they went on a walking tour together. Their friendly exchange of walking sticks at their parting led to the stick being passed to Marie Corelli, who left it to the Harvard House collection in her will. The photograph reveals that the mounted and framed stick was displayed in Harvard House at some point before the building was repurposed as the Museum of British Pewter in 1996. The image and object history file notes indicate that it was hung alongside the Declaration of Independence with the caption: 'A walking stick once owned by Jefferson Davis, President of the Confederate State of America, nineteenth-century'. This suggests a curatorial intention to represent the Confederate cause in the most neutral way possible through a relic belonging to a significant figure within that cause. A lack of information about what else was displayed around it means it is not possible to determine whether the neutrality of the caption was augmented in any way by surrounding items relating to the Confederate or Unionist cause or the related and resultant experiences of enslaved and Black people. In this way, the listing of this walking stick in the SBT's catalogue prompts timely questions about how contentious elements of the past – so-called 'skeletons' – can or should be remembered in a museum collection. To exhibit this item would require acknowledgement of its varying significance to multiple groups: the descendants of the enslaved people who would have been denied enfranchisement by Davis; the descendants of enslavers and confederate soldiers and supporters, the contrite, the embarrassed, and the proud; the supporters of the confederacy today, those who uphold the racist agenda of the 1860s, and those who deny that it was ever about race. Ethical historical exhibition should be collective and representative of as many perspectives

as possible, and a socially conscious, and in this case, anti-racist, museum should reflect this in its curatorial and labelling practices.

The SBT, as a charity that is dependent on ticket sales, may be cautious about allowing any political influence in its interpretation practices. However, it is also a politically driven choice to avoid any given subject, and since the failure to challenge oppressive behaviour or discourse ultimately serves to maintain it, the SBT's choice ultimately undermines its attempted neutrality. In its brevity, the original caption signifies an attempt to contain or suppress the controversial and conflicting meanings that it encompasses. But, through its presence in the SBT's collections (albeit now only a trace of presence, via a photograph and an object history file), the walking stick expresses those potential meanings nonetheless. Furthermore, through its refusal to engage with and refute the oppressive meanings, the SBT's past interpretation implicates it in the associations of racial violence that the object invokes.

The connection between Davis and the Stratford-upon-Avon locality is deepened through several further references to him in the collections, which suggest the possibility of contextualising the walking stick through the ways in which it draws attention to British sympathy with the confederate cause. The first, an article from the *Stratford Herald* dated 4th December 1868, recounts the naming of a racehorse for Jefferson Davis in nearby Leamington Spa. The naming of the horse is likely to be the legacy of the town becoming a hub for visiting (or fleeing) Confederates during the US Civil War years of 1861-1865, due to its convenient location and rail connection between Liverpool and London; its being the location chosen by Davis's representative, James M. Mason, to campaign for British support in the war; and possibly its fame as the location in which Nathaniel Hawthorne – who visited

the Birthplace in June 1855 – spent time at the end of his tenure as US consul (1853-1857).²⁷⁹ Although Britain was ostensibly neutral in respect to the War, Unionists and Confederates both perceived sympathy for the other in the ‘injustice’ of not receiving an open declaration of support for themselves.²⁸⁰ Certainly, British dependence on the cotton trade that was itself deeply dependent on slave labour provides a plausible reason for many to belie their outward articulations about the ‘detestable’ nature of ‘the principle of the superiority of the white man and his right to hold the black in slavery’ through actions that demonstrate a more self-serving attitude.²⁸¹ As such, the light the missing walking stick throws onto this moment in history raises doubts about the sense of moral superiority that is attached to Britain’s ‘early’ abolition of slavery – in 1833 in comparison to 1865 in the US.

Indeed, a letter in the SBT archive from Jefferson Davis to Lord William Leigh (1824-1905) of Stoneleigh, Warwickshire dated 27th March 1869, is indicative of the support that Davis found, or at least courted, during his tour of the UK. The letter, which came into the SBT’s collection as part of the estate collections that are held for several prominent Warwickshire families, expresses concern about a riding accident suffered by Lord Leigh and offers ‘very grateful remembrance of your kindness to me when I came, without introduction, to sojourn in your county’.²⁸² Although these items have no obvious

²⁷⁹ Jenny St John, ‘Confederate Nest in Leamington Spa’, *Discover Royal Leamington Spa with the Leamington History Group*, 2014 <<http://www.leamingtonhistory.co.uk/confederate-nest-in-leamington-spa/>> [accessed 7 March 2019]. Hawthorne visited Stratford-upon-Avon and signed the Birthplace Visitors’ book on June 27, 1855: SBT TR/35/1/2 Shakespeare Birthplace Visitors’ book 1851-1857.

²⁸⁰ Robert E. May, ‘Introduction’, in *The Union, the Confederacy, and the Atlantic Rim*, ed. by Robert E. May (Gainesville: University Press of Florida), pp. 1–42 (pp. 8-12).

²⁸¹ ‘Gladstone’s Speech at Newcastle’, *Times*, 1862. Given in Roland Quinault, ‘Gladstone and Slavery’, *The Historical Journal*, 52.2 (2009), 363–83 (p. 376). Quinault outlines Gladstone’s expressions of admiration for Davis’s unification of the South as well as his personal family connections to slavery in the Caribbean.

²⁸² SBT DR18/31/786c Stoneleigh Estate, Miscellaneous personal volumes. Also SBT DR198/15 Letters to George Philips, in which Thomas Cooper (1759-1839) of Columbia, South Carolina writes to Philips (a prominent cotton trader) that slavery is essential for the trade and that ‘the slaves of the southern states here, are upon the whole the happiest’.

connection to Shakespeare and do not function as responses, the ways in which they represent the US in the collection narrative draws allusions and parallels with prevailing issues. In this case, issues include the role and responsibilities of museums in presenting contested histories, broadly, and the role and responsibilities of the SBT in doing so as a museum that bases its significance on Shakespeare's 'universality'. The attempted neutral approach to the walking stick that was taken circa 1996 reminds us that Shakespeare cannot be 'for everyone' if a museum operating under the umbrella of his name refuses to acknowledge the violence of the Confederacy towards Africans and African Americans, not to mention the potential British support that the archive reveals.

Challenging the Narrative: Ira Aldridge, Paul Robeson, Debra Ann Byrd

Through items like those relating to Jefferson Davis, which signify their connection to Shakespeare in oblique ways, the SBT's collections weave Shakespeare's legacy through significant world events. A more straightforward connection between Shakespeare and the legacy of slavery in the US is available in the range of items the SBT holds relating to Ira Aldridge (1807-1867), the first Black actor to perform Shakespeare in England (Othello, in 1825) and Paul Robeson (1898-1976), the first Black actor to perform Shakespeare in the US (in 1943). Both US citizens, the century-long delay between their pioneering performances is striking, and no less because white actors continued to play Othello in the intervening years in the UK despite the acclaim Aldridge received. In his 2015 edition *Great Shakespeare Actors*, Stanley Wells endows Aldridge with another significant first, naming him 'the first great American Shakespeare actor', and he is also credited as an innovator in naturalistic

acting techniques.²⁸³ Having been born in the year that the UK outlawed the slave trade (though not slave ownership), much of Aldridge's career took place in Britain and continental Europe as a result of the racial prejudice that precluded opportunities for him in the US.²⁸⁴ Although opportunities were available to him in England, racist reviews in London drove him out to provincial theatres, including at the Royal Shakespeare Theatre in Stratford-upon-Avon where he played Othello in 1851.²⁸⁵ As Joyce Green MacDonald explains:

[t]he Aldridge phenomenon is contextualized by abolition and its cultural aftermaths. Emancipation and revolt – the 1833 act was preceded by a major slave rebellion in Jamaica at Christmas, 1831 – sharpened the attention the British public paid to the position occupied by the continuing successful exploitation of nonwhite bodies in maintaining empire, as the imperial focus shifted from the New World to Africa and Asia. Aldridge's onstage presence was just as powerfully conditioned theatrically, by the existing tradition of blackface and tawny Othellos and by the almost exactly contemporary growth of the minstrel show tradition in the United States.²⁸⁶

²⁸³ Stanley Wells, *Great Shakespeare Actors: Burbage to Branagh* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), p. 988.; Kim F. Hall, *Othello, the Moor of Venice: Texts and Contexts*, ed. by Kim F. Hall (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), p. 24.

²⁸⁴ Regarding the closure of William Henry Brown's entirely black-run theatre in 1824, and the imprisonment of the performers (which may have included Ira Aldridge) until they promised not to perform Shakespeare again, see Alden T. Vaughan and Virginia Mason Vaughan, *Shakespeare in America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), p. 113.

²⁸⁵ Adam Meyer, 'Victim and Villain: Shylock in the African American Imagination', *Borrowers and Lenders: The Journal of Shakespeare and Appropriation*, VII.2 (2012), 11.

²⁸⁶ Joyce Green MacDonald, 'Acting Black: "Othello," "Othello" Burlesques, and the Performance of Blackness', *Theatre Journal*, 46.2 (1994), 231–49 (p. 232).

Thus, at the time in which Aldridge was establishing the possibility of a Black Othello, the role ‘proved an intense and disorienting problem for nineteenth-century actors, producers, and audiences, as has the subject of Africa in western discourse generally’.²⁸⁷

Aldridge’s awareness of the delicate state of race relations at this time is indicated by the note attached to his signature in the SBT Visitors’ Book, which he signed while in Stratford-upon-Avon for his performance as Othello in 1851. Against his name he wrote:

‘The African tragedian, Senegal, Africa “Mislike me not for my complexion the shadowed livery of the burnished sun”’.²⁸⁸ The quote is taken from *The Merchant of Venice*, Act 2 scene 1,

when the Prince of Morocco asks Portia not to reject him as a suitor on the basis of his skin colour. Aldridge often referred to himself as ‘The African Roscius’, as seen in the playbill at figure 11, which, Krystyna Kujawińska Courtney explains, was a title given customarily to talented young performers. It alluded to a celebrated Roman actor, and ‘African’ added ‘extra resonance when theatre managers began to spread the rumour that he was the son of a Christian Fulani prince from Senegal. Aldridge, whose staple role was Shakespeare’s

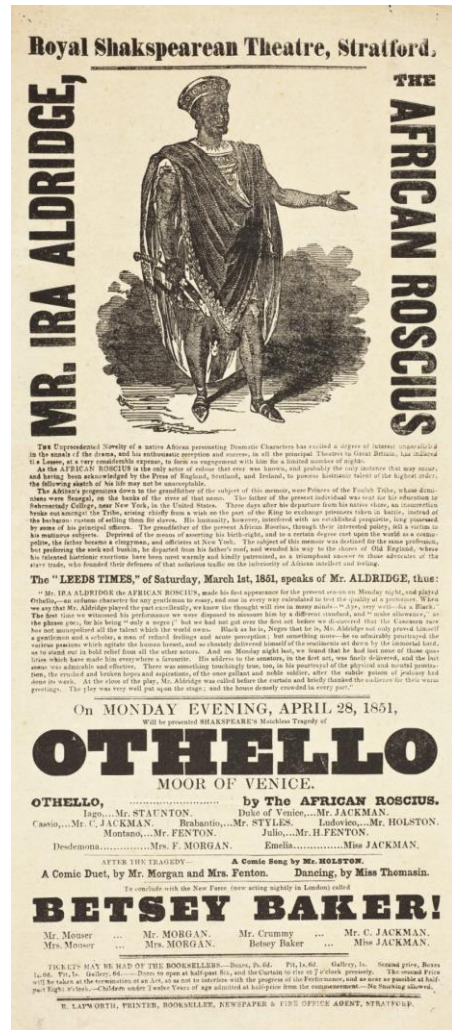


Figure 21: SBT Playbill - Othello at the Royal Shakspearean Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon, April 1851.

²⁸⁷ Ibid (p. 233).

²⁸⁸ SBT DR185/3 - Shakespeare’s Birthplace Visitors’ Books, Stratford-upon-Avon - 09/1848-09/1889 Page 23.

Othello, could be said to have made a profitable career out of playing a Moor playing a Moor'.²⁸⁹ The epithet is often found on Aldridge's playbills, and in accordance with his self-identification as African in the SBT Visitors' Book, indicates that he actively embraced African identity as a marketing strategy to capitalise on his difference. How he felt about that difference and the potential requirement *to* embrace it remains unclear. As Ayanna Thompson points out, despite using the 'African' monikers to 'explain his blackness and sell his performances', Aldridge's Blackness still 'prevented him from being heralded in the major venues in New York and London', and, crucially, 'Aldridge's story is not one of unqualified Shakespearean uplift'.²⁹⁰

Kujawińska Courtney explains that Aldridge 'contributed considerably to the popularity of Shakespeare's plays in many European countries', being the first to introduce them in Serbia (1858) and being a catalyst for the foundation of the National Theatre in Belgrade, although 'he is not given his due in the British Isles, where he established his magnitude as an actor of world stature, nor in the USA where he was born'.²⁹¹ Indeed, Aldridge's popularity and acclaim in Russia in particular is marked in the SBT's collections by a picture of him displaying the Medal of Leopold and the White Cross that was awarded him by King William 4th of Russia, along with a knighthood, and through a drawing by Ukrainian poet Taras Shevtshenko.²⁹²

²⁸⁹ Krystyna Kujawińska Courtney, 'Ira Aldridge: European Shakespeare Tragedian', in *The Globalization of Shakespeare in the Nineteenth Century*, ed. by Krystyna Kujawińska Courtney and John M. Mercer (New York: The Edwin Mellen Press, 2003), pp. 117–38 (p. 121).

²⁹⁰ Ayanna Thompson, 'Introduction', in *Red Velvet*, ed. by Lolita Chakrabarti (London: Methuen Drama, 2014), pp. ix–xviii (p. x).

²⁹¹ Kujawińska Courtney, (pp. 118, 119).

²⁹² SBT OSPC83/6 Portrait of Ira Aldridge; SBT PC83.6 Drawing of Ira Aldridge. See also the online SBT exhibition <https://collections.shakespeare.org.uk/exhibition/exhibition/ira-aldrige-in-the-collections>.

Although Aldridge is honoured as one of only thirty-three people who had a bronze chair plaque dedicated to them in 1932 in the rebuilt Shakespeare Memorial Theatre (in Stratford-upon-Avon, following the fire of 1926), the funds for it were raised by the African American and Afro-Caribbean communities through the American Shakespeare Foundation. Thus, what is often touted as a significant act to celebrate Aldridge in Stratford-upon-Avon only occurred as a result of Black American effort. Although the SBT's series of blog posts and online exhibition regarding Aldridge's story could be interpreted as a conscious effort to redress this, the fact that Aldridge is effectively 'wheeled out' for talks, blog posts, and tweets every year during Black History Month gives pause, prompting questions about what it means for a predominantly white institution like the SBT to use Aldridge and his story this way: as an example of Black success in Shakespeare at times that are culturally constructed as appropriate to do so. If, as Kim F. Hall set out in her ground-breaking exposition, *Things of Darkness: Economies of Race and Gender in the Early Modern Period*, racialised subjects were objectified through jewellery and paintings in order to establish white identity in contrast, we might consider what kind of identities are being established through this regular but ephemeral display of Aldridge's legacy. Does it do more to establish a particular identity for the Trust (as progressive and anti-racist) than it does for Aldridge's fame and legacy? To extend the analogy: 'in most portraits the black attendant is a liminal figure who inhabits edges, corners, and shadows and thus never fully "participates" in the painting'.²⁹³ Does the SBT's 'use' of Aldridge circumscribe Black engagement with Shakespeare, by keeping him on the edges and corners of cultural life, to be represented only on specified dates? Aldridge will always be a vital element of Shakespeare's legacy but telling his story

²⁹³ Hall, *Things of Darkness: Economies of Race and Gender in Early Modern England*, p. 227.

should not be confined to celebratory moments and should be part of more rounded and permanent recognitions of actors of colour in order to change the narrative of Black participation – or lack thereof – in Shakespeare and society at more than a leaden pace.

Indeed, object narratives behind the SBT's collection of photographs, recordings, and artwork relating to Paul Robeson's performance as Othello in 1959 at the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre demonstrate the torpid rate of change in the hundred years following Aldridge's conspicuous breakthrough (see figure 12). Focusing on the US context of Robeson's career, Hall explains that 'Robeson's accounts of his role [as Othello] indicate that his own experiences with racism profoundly affected his performance', in particular, with regard to 'the United States' long history of antimiscegenation laws'.²⁹⁴ Although any performance of Shakespeare is mediated by the specificity of its historical moment, Aldridge and Robeson's performances each added their racialised physicality to the thematic concerns of the play in contextually specific firsts. Aldridge performed against the backdrop of the fight to end the enslavement of Black people in the US and British colonies. Robeson, over one hundred years after Aldridge's Shakespearean debut, lived and worked in a US that was still



Figure 22: SBT RSC/PR/3/3/39 Postcard - Paul Robeson as Othello and Sam Wanamaker as Iago, Stratford-upon-Avon 1959.

²⁹⁴ Hall, *Othello, the Moor of Venice: Texts and Contexts*, p. 29.

poisoned by white supremacy. Not only were the southern states zones of political terror where people of African descent could not vote, serve on juries, or run for political office, but the rest of the country had apartheid-like social relations that humiliated black people at every turn. Even in liberal New York Robeson was barred from service in most restaurants, hotels, and night clubs, was confined to balconies in most theatres, could not live in most neighbourhoods, and could not work at most occupations.²⁹⁵

Furthermore, on leaving the US in 1929, he discovered that although Western Europe was 'less color conscious', it still held people of colour 'as the colonies, denying them political independence and the right of self-determination'.²⁹⁶ Robeson used his celebrity – he was not only a successful actor, but a renowned singer, a successful boxer, and a professional American football and basketball player – to challenge racism, including criticism of racist imagery in films.²⁹⁷ Following his eventual refusal to act in US movies at all, or perform in segregated theatres, he became the US's 'first politically-engaged black performing artist and its most outspoken critic'.²⁹⁸ He drew the particular attention of the McCarthy-era government when he openly praised communism: Robeson had observed the connections between global capitalism and racial inequality, the ways in which the latter 'kept people of

²⁹⁵ Mark D. Naison, "'Americans Through Their Labour": Paul Robeson's Vision of Cultural and Economic Democracy', in *Paul Robeson: Essays on His Life and Legacy*, ed. by Joseph Dorinson and William Pencak (Jefferson, N. C.: McFarland & Company, Inc., 2002), pp. 187–93 (p. 189).

²⁹⁶ Ibid.

²⁹⁷ Jeffrey Conrad Stewart, 'Paul Robeson: Icon or Hero?', in *Paul Robeson: Essays on His Life and Legacy*, ed. by Joseph Dorinson and William Pencak (Jefferson, N. C.: McFarland & Company, Inc., 2002), pp. 194–212 (p. 194).

²⁹⁸ Ibid (p. 195).

color in poverty and transformed them into cheap sources of labor', as well as the warm, prejudice-free welcome he received in the Soviet Union in 1935.²⁹⁹ His subsequent membership of communist groups in the US led to the House of Un-American Activities Committee blacklisting him, to FBI harassment, to the revocation of his passport in 1950, and to media silence on his activism and his work. His passport was returned to him in 1958, but, as Jeffrey Conrad Stewart notes, the 'state-induced isolation, silence, and, ultimately, media irrelevancy' had taken a toll on his mental and physical health from which he never recovered.³⁰⁰ The 1959 performance of *Othello* that is memorialised in the SBT's collections marks, in effect, the return of his liberty to work and be heard. As well as the postcard image of Robeson's anguished *Othello* grasping Sam Wanamaker's *Iago* (figure 12), the SBT's collections also remember Robeson in a photograph, smiling and staring down Paul Hardwick's *Brabantio* as he clasps Mary Ure's *Desdemona* to him; in the programme of the Stratford-upon-Avon poetry festival of 1959, in which he took part alongside Peggy Ashcroft and Osian Ellis at the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre; in a sound recording of another *Othello*, produced by Columbia Masterworks (date unavailable due to lack of access to SBT collections during Covid-19 restrictions); in a pen and pencil drawing of him in full *Othello* regalia based on the 1959 production; a collection of press cuttings; a photograph of him in the Shakespeare birthday procession in 1959; and through a copy of his auto-biography, *Here I Stand* (1958).³⁰¹ As such, Robeson's contribution to the SBT's collections is as rich as

²⁹⁹ Naison (p. 189).

³⁰⁰ Stewart (p. 210).

³⁰¹ SBT GL1/1/1959/OTH1/5 Tom Holt Theatre Photographic Collection, *Othello*, 1959; SBT GL6/1959/10 A Programme of Poetry, Songs and Music; SBT LC 71.22/SHA Sound Recording of *Othello* with Paul Robeson; SBT 2017-13/58 Pen and Pencil Drawing by David G. Phillips, commissioned by Waldo Lanchester, of Paul Robeson as *Othello*; SBT GL5/83.6 – Press cuttings Collection: Theatrical biography: Paul Robeson; SBT RL9/Box 3/Item 7 Photographs taken by Maurice Daniels – 1951-1959; SBT 83.6 Robeson/ROB Paul Robeson, *Here I Stand* (London: D. Dobson, 1958)

Aldridge's in both the items that define it and the contexts that define them. The Trust's more frequent reliance on Aldridge to represent its engagement with Black history, as the 'first first', thus validates Thompson's concern that the reiteration of Black achievement in terms of being 'the first' means that 'the history of black Shakespearean actors is effectively erased. Many can call to mind the profiles for white Shakespearean actors like Simon Russell Beale or Mark Rylance, but can as many do the same for Joseph Mydell or Adrian Lester? Why (not)?'³⁰²

The vital importance of the SBT broadening its engagement with Black responses to Shakespeare, to avoid tokenistic reliance on Aldridge and send the clear message that Black Shakespeare is Shakespeare, and not just for Black History Month, has been indicated in several ways in the last few years. Along with blog posts and online exhibitions already mentioned, in 2017 the SBT consciously engaged with both the effect that racist practices have had on performers of colour, and the advances that were made by Aldridge and Robeson, by welcoming the director of the Harlem Shakespeare Festival and Take Wing and Soar Productions, Debra Ann Byrd, to undertake a writers' residency in Stratford-upon-Avon. In this way, the SBT put into practice the principle of bringing forward those who are under-represented in Shakespeare studies (in the collection, theatre, academia, and the over-arching brand) in ways that not only permit but encourage minoritised and underrepresented voices to tell their own stories in their own words.³⁰³ The aim, which is echoed in my own project, is to use the cultural capital of the British Shakespeare industry to make those voices heard, without imposing a cultural imperialist script that reinforces

³⁰² Thompson, 'Introduction', in *Red Velvet* (p. xiii).

³⁰³ The Residency was organised in partnership with Warwick University and Misfit Incorporated at Debra Ann's suggestion.

marginalisation – advertently or inadvertently. Byrd’s work centres on seeing actors of colour cast in classical roles, something still relatively rare due to the predominance of white privilege and racism in the theatrical industry (and in society). The SBT’s invitation to Byrd was an outcome of the ‘Shakespeare on the Road’ project of 2012-2014 in which the SBT’s Paul Edmondson and the University of Warwick’s Paul Prescott toured US Shakespeare festivals and conducted interviews with producers. The SBT holds the archive for the tour, which reveals that Prescott and Edmondson presented every theatre company and festival they visited with a carved plaque made from a cedar tree from the Birthplace Garden with an inset medallion carved by Wyatt, the artist responsible for the sculpture trail at New Place.

The weekly write-up of the tour that appeared in the arts section of the *Stratford-upon-Avon Herald* for the week of 21st August 2014 divulges Byrd’s reaction to the offering and provides a valuable exposition on the multi-faceted power of an object. The column iterates Byrd’s observation that:

the tradition of black actors performing Shakespeare in America started many years before The Shakespeare Birthplace Trust even existed and the tree [that made the plaque] planted. She said: “The rings in that wonderful piece of cedar tree from Shakespeare’s Birthplace remind us of the many years we have struggled to be recognised and taken seriously as performers of Shakespeare. This evening we are deeply proud to accept this special gift from Stratford-upon-Avon.” Lots of people,

especially children, came forward at the end of the evening wanting to touch the plaque – a bit of Stratford in Harlem.³⁰⁴

Thus, Byrd reflects on the complex web of meanings represented by that particular piece of wood, and aptly reflects Edmondson and Prescott's intention that the plaques would draw out the 'birthday party' aspect of the event and represent 'a heightened moment of cultural exchange'.³⁰⁵ Byrd draws attention to the many years of wilful ignorance to the work, skill, and talent of people of colour in the theatre and broader society which outlives the cedar tree; to the tree as a symbol for that wilfully ignorant dominant culture, which is now presented as a gift to those it previously denied; the 'deep pride' that is felt, for her work to be recognised, and in the light of those who struggled for so long – a particularly poignant thought given that the evening's performances included a recital that evoked Ira Aldridge and Paul Robeson. Finally, through the audience's desire to touch the plaque, the column suggest the ways in which relics provoke the desire to make a physical connection with another place or time, and thus suggests the power of the Birthplace as 'shrine' as well as the power of objects to both disrupt and maintain dominant narratives. One of the carved plaques is on display in the Birthplace Museum, forging a reverse connection with all those who received one during the tour, which enhances the relic-properties of the item as well as remembering US contributions to Shakespeare's legacy and continued cultural status.

³⁰⁴ SBT DR1414 Shakespeare on the Road, Papers, 2013-2014.

³⁰⁵ Paul Edmondson and Paul Prescott, 'Celebrating North American Shakespeare Festivals in 2014', in *Shakespeare Jubilees: 1769-2014*, ed. by Christa Jansohn and Dieter Mehl (Zurich: Lit Verlag, 2015), pp. 301–16 (p. 309).

Contributions to Shakespeare's legacy from figures including Debra Ann Byrd and Devon Glover – the New York-based 'Sonnet Man', as well as Black-British artists Adrian Lester and Floella Benjamin, and South African actor and writer Buhle Ngaba also feature in the Birthplace museum, in an exhibition entitled 'Be Inspired: Shakespeare and Me', which is also available as an online exhibition.³⁰⁶ The exhibition showcases the many and varied ways in which artists from around the world have engaged with Shakespeare and thus constitutes another example of the SBT seeking to use Shakespeare's cultural capital as a stage on which non-hegemonic and non-Anglo-centric culture can be presented. But it also works to maintain the problematic notion of Shakespeare's 'universality', and by operating as a discrete exhibition that 'makes space' for non-Anglo-centric responses it echoes the event-driven, celebratory engagement with Ira Aldridge and signals 'diverse' Shakespeare's separateness to traditional, Anglo-centric, hegemonic Shakespeare.

Relics and Souvenirs: Letters, Wooden Relics

While the cedar plaques that toured the US and were handed out to festival hosts embodied the relationship between the SBT and its theatrical contacts in the US, this section of the US collection narrative reflects on the ways in which wooden relics have had a special resonance within Shakespeare memorial culture for several centuries. The legend of the mulberry tree planted with Shakespeare's own hands in New Place Garden and cut down by the Reverend Francis Gastrell, the owner of the property in the 1750s, has spawned impossible numbers of 'mulberry' relics, supposedly made from either the original Shakespeare tree or scions from it. The importance of wooden relics, and the ways in which

³⁰⁶Shakespeare Birthplace Trust, *Be Inspired: Shakespeare and Me* (Stratford-upon-Avon: Shakespeare Birthplace Museum, 2021).; the online exhibition is available at <http://collections.shakespeare.org.uk/exhibition/exhibition/be-inspired-shakespeare-and-me/page/2>

they ‘embodied and recalled the mulberry wood tree from the late 1750s in Stratford-upon-Avon’ has been demonstrated frequently in this chapter.³⁰⁷ The account of Washington Irving’s (1783-1859) visit to Stratford-upon-Avon in 1815, which he provides in his *The Sketch Book of Washington Irving* (1820), suggests an awareness of the power of trees as connectors to the past.³⁰⁸ While Irving treats the dubious relics of the Birthplace under Mary Hornby’s curatorship and those in his room at the Red Horse Hotel with ‘good humoured credulity’, he finds at Holy Trinity Church that

[t]he feelings, no longer checked and thwarted by doubt, here indulge in perfect confidence: other traces of him may be false or dubious, but here is palpable evidence and absolute certainty. As I trod the sounding pavement, there was something intense and thrilling in the idea, that, in very truth, the remains of Shakespeare were mouldering beneath my feet. It was a long time before I could prevail upon myself to leave the place; and as I passed through the churchyard I plucked a branch from one of the yew trees, the only relic that I have brought from Stratford.

Irving cannot touch the remains of Shakespeare, but he can touch the yew trees that grow from the same ground as that in which Shakespeare lies, and that may have existed at the same time and place as him. Irving’s preoccupation with the authenticity of the connections

³⁰⁷ Edmondson and Prescott (p. 310).

³⁰⁸ SBT 87.3/IRV ‘Stratford-upon-Avon from the Sketchbook of Washington Irving. With Notes and Original Illustrations. Edited by Richard Savage and William Salt Brassington, F.S.A. 1820; Also SBT ER25/3/29/1 Lines written by Washington Irving in the Birthroom, and later printed as a postcard (also SBT DR406/110).

to Shakespeare illustrates the tension, perceived throughout this chapter, between the town's right to claim authenticity, and, once again, its failure to reach the standards of maintenance anticipated by its US visitors.

Following Irving's lead, in 1858 J. Newman Hank wrote home from Stratford-upon-Avon to Washington D.C. on a sheet of paper featuring an engraving of the Birthplace that was 'purchased from the lady curator of this place, in the very room where Shakespeare was born'. Layering the souvenir-connections, he also enclosed an ivy-leaf which had been 'plucked from the wall of the church' (Holy Trinity).³⁰⁹ A letter from 1886 from Ms Mary Stickney of Greensboro Alabama (in transcript, given to the SBT by her grandson) exposes the significant popularity of wooden souvenirs as, the writer explains, when she begged a piece of carved wood from a repair site at Holy Trinity Church, the workman replied 'you American folks would carry the whole thing away if we would let you' – a comment that evokes the P. T. Barnum/Birthplace controversy of 1844.³¹⁰ When the Birthplace was put up for sale that year, British factions only swung into action to organise the purchase when rumours began that the US showman, who signed the Visitors' Book in 1844, intended to purchase the building himself and ship it brick by brick over the Atlantic as one of his touring attractions.³¹¹ Stickney's letter not only echoes Irving and Newman Hank's desire for organic relics, but also reveals the effect of Irving's visit on Stratford-upon-Avon's tourism industry. On her arrival, Stickney says, the group 'of course went to the noted inn Red Horse where

³⁰⁹ SBT DR1020 J. Newman Hank 1858.

³¹⁰ SBT DR843 Mary Sledge Stickney 1886.

³¹¹ Phineas Taylor Barnum, *Struggles and Triumphs: Or, Forty Years' Recollections of P. T. Barnum* (Hartford, Connecticut: J. R. Burr & Company, 1869), p. 365; SBT DR185/7 Visitors' Book September 5th 1844: 'PT Barnum - Guardian of Gen. Tom Thumb'; The SBT collections also contain a letter, with no indication of how it came into the collections, from PT Barnum to James Redpath, founder of the Boston Lyceum, written in 1879 regarding their working together on touring lectures: SBT DR317/24 Stratford-upon-Avon and area miscellanea 1870-1890.

Washington Irving stayed and wrote his sketch book. His chair is kept in the little parlor where we took our meals but it is under a glass case as the proprietor is afraid it will be worn out by so many people sitting in it'. Her 'of course' indicates the notoriety of Irving's work and of his stay in the town, and the museumization of the room in which he wrote echoes that of the Birthplace: a kind of merging of the two writers' legacies. This makes evident the transferability of Shakespeare's cultural capital, but also the potential for sharing it. For the period of Irving's heightened fame, a space on the Stratford-upon-Avon stage was carved out in his honour. It was fortified by the Shakespeare connection but did not depend on it or revolve around it, unlike the engagements represented in the *Shakespeare and Me* exhibition.

While the previous two items only offer descriptions of relics taken from Stratford-upon-Avon visits, to signify the role of relics in maintaining and sharing Shakespeare's cultural importance around the world, a 1982 letter from the Connecticut Historical Society to SBT director Levi Fox offered the relic itself. The Society sent a box-frame containing a piece of wood and another letter dated 1887 from a William Greaves, stating that the wood was:

procured by my deceased Father in law who was a resident of Stratford on Avon, and he lived directly opposite the Shakespere [*sic*] house. through his intimate friend the joiner, who was intrusted with necessary repairs... (some 40 years ago) ... and was sawed from one of the timbers at his request, so that I can assure you that the piece of wood now in your possession is as genuine as the light of heaven.

The item had been given to the Society in 1955 and was offered to the SBT as it was being deaccessioned. The correlation of its provenance with the 'light of heaven' as a guarantee of the object's veracity and authenticity accords with the establishment of the Birthplace as shrine and place of pilgrimage in the nineteenth century, which itself adds weight to the relic-status of the piece of wood. The setting of this innocuous shred of timber – framed with the letter – signals its value to its earlier keepers: the significance of an 'authenticated' material connection to Shakespeare through the Birthplace building is clear. This is further indicated by the Connecticut Historical Society's supposition that it ought to be returned to the Birthplace 'shrine'.

The sense of wooden relics 'returning home' continues with a wooden punch ladle, gifted to the Trust by US architect John M. Carrere and writer Frederick E. Partington, who signed the Visitors' Book in July 1904.³¹² By September of that year the SBT minute book reported the receipt of the item and provided a transcription of the note that accompanied it:

I found it behind the wainscoating [*sic*] on the ground floor of the great room in Shakespeare's House in Henley Street, Stratford on Avon in 1860. the house was under repair and restoration. I was the Sub-Contractor under Mr Gibbs Arch[itect]. Mr Reed was manager. Mr Callaway was Clerk of the Works. I was foreman over the masons. A Punch Bowl spoon- wooden. I give it to Clara R Barlow, White Lion Hotel, Bidford. I sign this paper as being true. Feb 19th 1897 Sam'l Wilkes Broom

³¹² SBT 1904-2 Wooden punch ladle.

The declarations that accompany this and the scrap of beam demonstrate that authenticity is a foremost concern, but what is also clear is that there is a general sense that the relics belong in the Birthplace and should be returned to it. This is intriguing in the context of this chapter: many of the gift donors have expressed concern about English preservation of history and historical artefacts. This shift may suggest that the connection to place, as in the Birthplace as shrine, overwhelms any such concerns.

Sense of place is key in the final item for this sub-section: archived photographs of the moments in which soil and water were taken from the Birthplace garden and River Avon to send to Dallas, in order to be sprinkled on a replica Globe playhouse that was being opened at the Great Texas Fair of 1936.³¹³ In this case, the collection item commemorates Stratfordian relics being transported away to ‘bless’ a Shakespearean stage on the other side of the world. This item most clearly expresses the deep significance of Stratford-upon-Avon as Shakespeare’s birthplace and the quasi-religious sentiment that has been attached to it as part of Shakespeare’s cultural capital, where relics function/ed as ‘ritualistic tokens [that] supported a cult of secular sainthood which invited the purchaser of such objects to share in a reliquary of location’.³¹⁴ As such, the items in this section testify to the centralisation of Stratfordian power over Shakespeare’s legacy in the SBT as the custodians of the ‘sacred’ space of the Birthplace. Furthermore, despite earlier indications of US concern about inadequate memorialisation of Shakespeare in England, this section

³¹³ SBT SC27/181 and SC27/182-83. Context from Calvo, ‘Shakespeare’s Church and the Pilgrim Fathers: Commemorating Plymouth Rock in Stratford’ (p. 55).

³¹⁴ Pauline Mackay and Murray Pittock, ‘Beyond Text: Burns, Byron and Their Material Cultural Afterlife’, *Byron Journal*, 39.2 (2011), 149–62 (p. 152).

demonstrates the desire not only to restore relics to the 'shrine' but also for Stratfordian authentication of US Shakespearean activities.

Clubs: Kate Friend's Letters

In the decade prior to the transportation of the soil, the ways in which Shakespeare was used to legitimise the activities of US women's clubs, in particular, was brought to light by a collection of letters sent to the Birthplace librarian Frederick Wellstood (1884-1942, at SBT 1910-1942) from Kate Friend (1856-1949), the director of the Waco Shakespeare Club, Texas (see figure 13).³¹⁵ Friend's letters reveal the ways in which Shakespeare clubs empowered many US women in the aftermath of the First World War, as they fought for the right to vote and take their places in the public and intellectual spheres. Friend's letters acknowledge these shifts as she begins her first letter to Wellstood with a request that he 'relax conventionality' by allowing her to use her typewriter. 'American women', she explains,

have come out into the open so much that many of us have taken to the [machine].

As for me, I live at it – scarce know how to hold my pen any longer. It is this personal use which is bringing us to correspondence on what was formerly considered prope[r] only for the business office.

³¹⁵ SBT DR 289/2/35-6. The letters are not dated with a year, but references to prohibition date them after 1920 (1920-1933). The letter from the American Consular Service that refers to the clubs' representation at the Stratford Shakespeare birthday celebrations is dated 1923, and Friend alludes to her subscription fees for the year 1924.

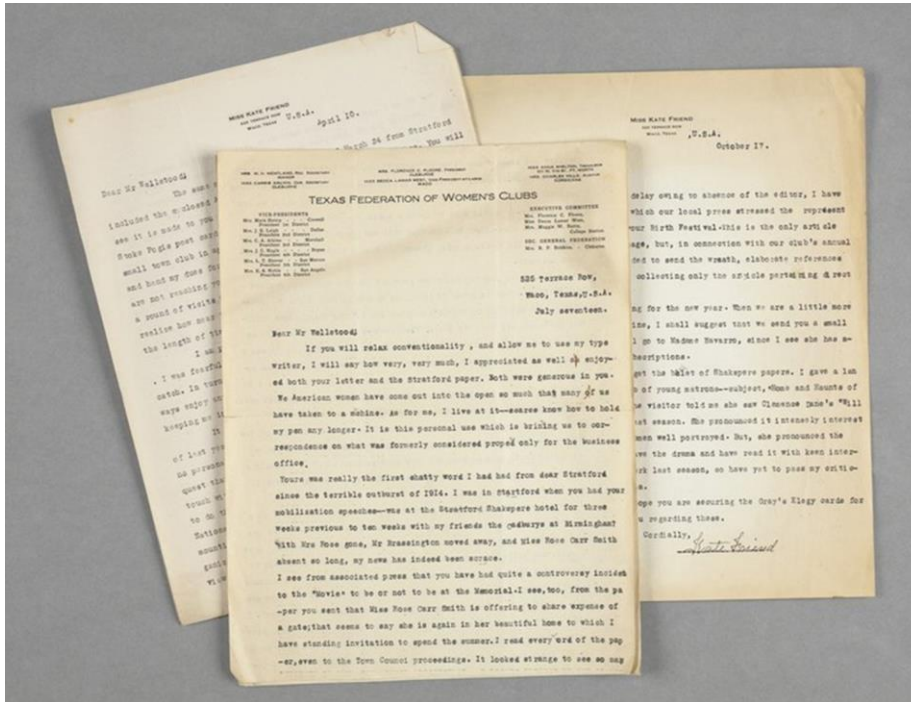


Figure 23: SBT DR 289/2/36 Ms Kate Friend's Letters.

Friend thus suggests the ways in which technology aided the suffrage movement, as a typed letter, being more often associated with matters of business than so-called women's affairs, lends credence to her letters by distinguishing them from more typical handwritten notes exchanged by women. The typewritten letter signifies the appropriation of a tool of the masculine (business) world in the feminine (personal) world. Nevertheless, her use of the machine does not quite alleviate her insecurity about being 'foreign' to the centralised academe by virtue of being female, from the US, and without credentials. This is indicated when she asks: 'Would your Society sometime like to hear a paper from me – a woman across the water, and an amateur?'. A later letter declares her pleasure that Wellstood enjoyed her essay 'If Shakspeare should come to America' and adds thanks for a circular sent by him: 'I always enjoy anything from Stratford, and appreciate your kind thought in thus keeping me in touch with the fountain head of my patron bard'. Her communications with

Stratford provide a link to the centre of the scholarly Shakespearean sphere, and thereby authenticate her work, role, and club pursuits in the US.

Friend's first visit to Stratford-upon-Avon was in 1900, as the winner of a writing competition sponsored by the Shakespeare Association of America.³¹⁶ Her letters make frequent reference to the people she met, such as the custodians of the Birthplace from 1900-1921, Mr and Mrs Rose (where she claims to have saved Mrs Rose's custodianship after her husband's death by applying to Sir Sidney Lee (1859-1926), Chairman (1903-1926), on her behalf), Sir Frank Benson (1858-1939, actor-manager and organiser of the Stratford Festivals), Frederick Furnivall (1825-1910, founder of the New Shakspeare Society in London), and Marie Corelli (the novelist and energetic preserver of the historic building of Stratford). The name-dropping indicates her desire for connection to Stratford-upon-Avon society and is an attempt to eliminate any doubt about her knowledge of the place and its people, thus making her a worthy correspondent. It reflects the troubled relationship with Shakespeare that is demonstrated throughout this chapter, where US culture, which aims to signify the nation's pride in its individuality as independent from Britain, is nevertheless underpinned with British sources and values.

For many women in the US at this time, however, the desire to connect went beyond the cultural capital of Shakespeare. Clubs like the Waco Women's Shakespeare Club allowed women to connect with each other socially and intellectually, making space for women in an arena from which they were more often excluded. Furthermore, their output (courses, lectures, and papers, all of which were contributed by Friend) served as a refutation that

³¹⁶ Megan Seaholm, 'FRIEND, KATE HARRISON', *Handbook of Texas Online*, 2012
<<https://tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/ffr22>> [accessed 28 February 2019].

women were intellectually unsuited for the vote. Katherine West Scheil explains that Shakespeare journals began to print essays and updates on the activities of the women's clubs with regularity, thereby legitimising the work and opening up further opportunities for women.³¹⁷ The social connections that clubs afforded were particularly valuable in the many isolated communities that populated the states. Lysbeth Em Benkert's article on the Shakespeare Club of Aberdeen, South Dakota, explains that although membership fluctuated and activities altered in response to local and national changes and pressures, 'what remain[ed] consistent [was] the group's desire to stay connected with the world outside of their households and outside of South Dakota'.³¹⁸ In such a community, far from the intellectual centres and at the mercy of extreme seasonal weather conditions, such clubs were 'an outlet for the social and intellectual energies of its members'.³¹⁹ Furthermore, the Shakespeare clubs founded by the National Association of Coloured Women (established in 1896), which developed its department of literature in 1904, assisted the Association's aims towards 'racial uplift and self-improvement', and, West Scheil states,

[m]uch evidence survives to suggest that for black women in the decades around the turn of the century, from Boston to St Louis to San Francisco, reading Shakespeare

³¹⁷ Katherine West Scheil, *She Hath Been Reading: Women and Shakespeare Clubs in America* (London: Cornell University Press, 2012), p. 15.

³¹⁸ Lysbeth Em Benkert, 'Shakespeare on the Prairie: The Shakespeare Club of Aberdeen, South Dakota', *Borrowers and Lenders: The Journal of Shakespeare and Appropriation*, 2.1 (2006), no pagination.

³¹⁹ Scheil, p. xi.

was part of a larger plan of empowerment, and his cultural capital was recognized and used in their educational programs.³²⁰

Clubs allowed marginalised people to connect to each other, to the intellectual world, to their communities, to their nation, and even to clubs in other nations. Indeed, the ways in which clubs broadened Friend's narrow feminine sphere – what she describes as the 'personal' – is clear.

Nevertheless, Shakespeare's cultural importance is emphasised as Friend relays recent Independence Day celebrations in Waco, described as an opportunity to 'renew our allegiance to our national principles' following the great global divisions of the First World War. Her club took the float prize in the grand parade with their Shakespeare themed automobile. The car was decorated with portraits of Shakespeare, English ivy and daisies, 'two immense United States flags', as well as smaller flags of all nations. The idea, she explains, was 'as you have it in Stratford at the Birth celebration, that all nations recognise William Shakespeare'. The 'cause of William Shakspere [*sic*] is strong with us', she explains. Friend's notion that the day on which the US celebrates independence from Britain should be modelled on the Shakespeare birthday celebrations in Stratford-upon-Avon is an intriguing one that illuminates the ways in which Shakespeare is understood as an aspect of Anglo-American heritage, even on the day in which associations with the 'Anglo' aspect of that heritage would be expected to have the least prominence. Another letter rejoices in the

³²⁰ Scheil, p. 97.; For more on Black Shakespeare clubs in the US, especially in Black colleges, see Marvin McAllister, 'Shakespeare Visits the Hilltop: Classical Drama and the Howard College Dramatic Club', in *Shakespearean Educations: Power, Citizenship, and Performance*, ed. by Coppelia Kahn, Heather S. Nathans, and Mimi Godfrey (Lanham: University of Delaware Press, 2011), pp. 219–46.

appearance of the Texan Lone Star flag in the Stratford Shakespeare birthday processions.

As Friend thanks Wellstood for the photographs he sent of the flag on the occasion, she explains that the flag

means a great deal by way of Romantic bravery in the establishment of our commonwealth. When we first won our independence from Mexico, we were, as you perhaps know, a lone republic for a few years; it was then that the single star appeared in our flag. When, later, we entered the United States, we kept our original flag, and we are known all over America as "the Lone Star State". Thus it was that we sent you that special design[.]

The importance of this flag as a symbol of Texan history is evident, and Friend admits that she 'never anticipated this act which is to emanate far from my study in the interest it shall attract'. Friend thus acknowledges the 'world stage' effect of the Shakespeare birthday celebrations in Stratford-upon-Avon, where nations and, in this case, states, demonstrate their importance, and cultural awareness and prowess, by their presence. It represents membership of a worldwide society for the appreciation of Shakespeare, which would have particular significance for those who value being members of such a club on a local scale, and at the 'fountain-head', too. The inclusion of the Lone Star flag sent by the Waco Club at this event was clearly felt to be a great honour, and once more, symbolic of a connection between the club and 'the fountain head' that authorised and valorised their work. The closing thanks of the letter consciously indicate the importance of representation: 'once more, thank you so much for your thoughtfulness in letting Waco see ourself over there'. As

Caroline Howarth explains, images – in this case the photograph of the flag, but also figurative images – legitimise and reify particular knowledge systems.³²¹ Thus, ‘seeing oneself’ as part of Shakespeare’s birthday through the photograph of the Texan flag can be understood as a reification of Friend’s hope for recognition and inclusion in the proceedings of the Stratford Shakespeare Society.

The letters provide a rich glimpse into several other aspects of the period. The horror of the First World War is evoked as Friend writes that she ‘was in Stratford when you had your mobilization speeches’, then as the war advanced, she had to flee Paris for London, at which point a hotel clerk told her ‘Don’t worry, Miss, this will all blow over in a few days’. The way the quotation is left hanging on the page resonates with how the immense tragedy and loss of the ‘Great War’ must have hung over everyday life in the early 1920s. Another letter contains a reflection on US life in the prohibition era, following Friend’s receipt of a Stratford newspaper: ‘It looked strange to see so many “spirit and liquor” and “brewery” references, now that we are in national prohibition’, and the expression of her desire to try some of the mulberry wine that is said to have been made from a tree that is ‘a slip of the original Shakespeare mulberry’. A later letter (April 10) describes her club’s efforts to arrange ‘a typical Elizabethan menu’ for the celebration of Shakespeare’s birthday, but ‘alas! no ale over here! How can it be Shaksper without our social quaff?’. Thus, Friend’s concerns about prohibition here revolve around the ways in which it limits her Shakespearean activities and also represents a divide between her society and not only Shakespeare’s, but Stratford’s, as the ‘fountain head’.

³²¹ Caroline Howarth, ‘A Social Representation Is Not a Quiet Thing: Exploring the Critical Potential of Social Representations Theory’, *British Journal of Social Psychology*, 45.1 (2006), 65–86 (p. 68).

In the 'Club Forum' section of the Shakespeare Association of America's *Bulletin* of 1930, Mrs Robert Carlton Morris extols the virtues of Miss Friend, as one known to all women club members across the nation due to her influence and assistance in outlining courses and guest lectures.³²² In this article, Friend's membership of the Shakespeare Society of Stratford-upon-Avon is mentioned as a badge of honour, as is her endorsement of the *Bulletin*. Miss Friend, it reports, wrote to Mrs Morris that 'I receive the [*Bulletin*] and, as our darkies say, read it from "kivver to kivver"'. This expression of mocking racism is a sad indictment of someone who clearly prided herself on intelligence and sharp social analysis, as well as someone who fought for gender equality. While it suggests that Friend's brand of equality would fit firmly into the category of 'white feminism', this comment also draws attention to the ways in which collection items crystallise moments in time. In the same way that Friend's allusions to the War and to prohibition crystallise the moment of her writing, this comment crystallises a moment in which Shakespeare is being used to bring people together, bring about positive change, but at the same time to express casual racism.

Conclusion

Friend's comments resonate with the racial tensions that can be detected throughout the SBT's US collection and this chapter, beginning with the projections of the first settlers expressed through the Mercator map, in which the Indigenous people were no more than a curiosity and history was to begin with the white European populace. Race hovers in the ambiguity of Moreau's calendar, which casually makes the oppression and criminalisation of people of colour in the US the substance of an exercise in celebration of Shakespeare's work and New York's history. It resides in the frequent allusions to *The Tempest*, the Shakespeare

³²² SBT reference unavailable due to Covid-19 restrictions. Mrs Robert Carlton Morris, 'The Club Forum', *Shakespeare Association Bulletin* 5.3 (1930) 142-143 (p. 142).

play that explores most directly the relationship between white colonisers and Indigenous Others. In Conway's 'Hunting the Mythical Pallbearer' it exists in the attention that is drawn to the US's buried histories, in reference specifically to the Indigenous American populations, and its closing re-assertion of the importance of the British elements of US history despite the Indigenous and racial issues that haunt the piece. It is clearly stated in the ideologies of John Wilkes Booth, which are brought forward in the collection's presidential items and those relating to the Booth family's theatrical acumen, as well as in Jefferson Davis's walking stick. There is a self-evident fixation on race in the section about Ira Aldridge, Paul Robeson, and Debra Ann Byrd, although in setting these talented individuals apart on the basis of their race does them all a disservice in some ways. Although Aldridge, Robeson, and Byrd's stories necessitate the discussion of the impact of racial politics on their lives and work, having a distinct 'race section' risks a tokenistic form of representation that, by ringfencing their contributions to Shakespeare's legacy in this way, maintains a white supremacist epistemology through implicit notions of 'race narratives' as 'Other' and distinct from an ideologically established (hegemonically white) 'main narrative'. This risk is mitigated, I hope, by the chapter's illumination of the workings of white supremacy throughout, and how, through the recognition of white supremacist ideas in ostensibly benign objects – the Harvard House ceramic bowl, for example – it reflects on the ways in which racial politics underlie both the cultural exchanges it focuses on and day-to-day life. In most of the items here noted, the purpose of the item – in its mode of acquisition and/or inclusion in the collection narrative – was not to prompt a discussion about race, just as, in the Harvard House bowl, the purpose of the item was not to prompt a discussion about Shakespeare in the US. Seemingly incongruous relations to historical events, key persons, and issues in this collection narrative are a product of the broad

contexts that the objects offer. The frequent emergence of race within those contexts is a sign of the effort that was made to configure the US's racial identity – as 'Anglo-Saxon' which is to say, white – with and through Shakespeare throughout the timespan of the collection. Indeed, Ruben Espinosa explains that the emphasis that was placed on Shakespeare as both 'universal' and an aspect of linguistic inheritance – the association of Shakespeare with Englishness which is foregrounded in the first US edition of Shakespeare's works – consequently rendered Shakespeare inaccessible to the Latin-American community.³²³ In the total absence of Latin-American responses in the SBT's US collection a key US demographic are missing from this story of Shakespeare in the US. Because of the SBT's reactive collecting practices this absence can be considered as a reflection of a structural issue in US access to Shakespeare, rather than a gesture of deliberate refusal by the SBT. However, should the SBT wish to create an exhibition of the US collection, without first inviting responses from this large community, it should note that the perpetuation of those silences would also perpetuate the marginalisation that is highlighted by Espinosa.³²⁴

This chapter expands on the first chapter, on Germany, in several ways. The connection to Shakespeare that is based on a mythologised concept of shared identity is echoed and redefined in order to encompass the open and outright rejection of almost every other aspect of Britishness that was necessary for the formation of the United States in the late eighteenth century. Both nations emphasise 'Anglo-Saxon' roots to qualify Shakespeare's role in establishing the new national culture but as Levine explains:

³²³ Ruben Espinosa, 'Stranger Shakespeare', *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 67.1 (2016), 51–67 (p. 52).

³²⁴ See: Rhiannon Mason and Joanne Sayner, 'Bringing Museal Silence into Focus: Eight Ways of Thinking About Silence in Museums', *International Journal of Heritage Studies*, 25.1 (2018), 5–20 (p. 8).

Shakespeare's popularity in frontier communities [...] [fits] our knowledge of human beings and their need for the comfort of familiar things under the pressure of new circumstances and surroundings. James Fenimore Cooper had this familiarity in mind when he called Shakespeare "the great author of America" and insisted that Americans had "just as good a right" as Englishmen to claim Shakespeare as their countryman.³²⁵

Thus, although the US and Germany collection narratives demonstrate similar approaches to Shakespeare's role in their national cultures, the motives and implications are distinct. For example, the need expressed by Fenimore Cooper to address and express the US's right to Shakespeare illuminates an underlying ambivalence about the US claim, not only to Shakespeare, but to all aspects of Britishness that remained desirable to US citizens after independence.

Likewise, the ways in which German agents have invested in the SBT's collections to legitimise a national claim to Shakespeare is echoed and enhanced in the US collection narrative. Through the gifts to the town, donations for the Memorial Theatre, and the many individual contributions to the material substance of the SBT property and collections – the first visitors' book, the sundial, and Washington's chestnuts, for example – the US collection narrative affirms a clear imperative to manifest the material connection to the desirable Anglo-American heritage that is not available in the US. In doing to, US donors enhance

³²⁵ Levine, p.20.

Shakespeare's cultural capital by 'proving' his transatlantic appeal, while also boosting US cultural status and soft power.

Chapter Four: India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh Collection Narrative

Introduction

This chapter employs a chronological approach to items from or relating to India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh, and is divided into sub-sections on pre-Partition India, post-Partition India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh. As such, it offers the opportunity to contextualise the collection narrative not only through the objects but through the structure of the chapter as it accords with the division of the Subcontinent in 1947, when Pakistan was formed from regions in north-western and eastern India, and 1971, when Bangladesh was established from the East Pakistan territory.

The collection narrative has a predominant focus on items relating to Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941), the pioneer of Bengali literature, and Muhammad Iqbal (1877-1938), the national poet for Pakistan. Both writers played significant roles in the Indian cultural response to the British Empire, during and at the end of its rule over India. Through the SBT's collections, Tagore and Iqbal's contributions to Shakespeare's legacy illuminate a range of cultural responses that oscillate between Iqbal, Tagore, Shakespeare, diplomatic representatives of India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh, the SBT, the gifts themselves, and the cultures of the Indian Subcontinent.

The object narratives explored in this chapter bring forward the SBT's role as creator and/or maintainer of broader cultural narratives that are aligned to colonial history in more pronounced ways than those of the US or German collections. The collection narrative demonstrates that even as the seventieth anniversary of the end of the Raj was celebrated

at the Birthplace, the residue of imperial discourses about the Subcontinent were in operation in the SBT's interpretation of key items in this collection. This is testament to the success of the British imperial mission to degrade and rewrite the culture of the territories (colonial or otherwise) of the global South and East: a mission that worked in parallel to the economic exploitation and not only maintained British control through the notion of cultural superiority but justified it by creating the impression of a void of native culture. As such, this chapter reveals the necessity of incorporating the imperial context into any discussion of Shakespeare and India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh.

Colonial Cabinets: Tortoise shell, Coryate's Travels

Shakespeare's arrival in the Indian Subcontinent was 'part of a new educational curriculum designed for the training of the native bourgeoisie, and as an inventor of plots and characters that could be freely adapted and re-purposed for the use of the stage'.³²⁶ It was, therefore, an element of the British colonial mission to instate the English language and employ European cultural ideas as 'civilising' effectives for the subjected Indians.³²⁷ Prior to these nineteenth-century direct assertions of domination through dissemination, European explorers were making maps and gathering curiosities to bring home for examination and display in *Kunstkammers*, cabinets of curiosities, in private stately homes. These activities continued throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and the collections foregrounded the establishment of the first European museums, as well as the practice of creating narratives about and categorising objects and people as 'Other' to a European 'norm'.

³²⁶ Supriya Chaudhuri, 'Remembering Shakespeare in India: Colonial and Postcolonial Memory', in *Celebrating Shakespeare: Commemoration and Cultural Memory*, ed. by Clara Calvo and Coppelia Kahn (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), pp. 101–20 (p. 102).

³²⁷ Dadabhoy (p. 230).

The oldest item in the Indian collection is a useful example of this early collecting practice, and of the ways in which such items have been and can be interpreted. The shell of an Indian Star Tortoise – so called because of the distinctive markings on its shell and as it is commonly found around India and Sri Lanka – has been fitted with silver mounts and a clasp to transform it into a container for keepsakes or jewellery (see figure 1).³²⁸ Dated by its silver furniture to the seventeenth century, the item calls to mind Romeo's evocation of the apothecary's shop in Act Five of *Romeo and Juliet*: 'I do remember an apothecary,/ [...] And in his shop a tortoise hung,/ An alligator stuffed, and other skins of ill-shaped fishes', as well as Prospero's taunting of Caliban in Act 1 of *The Tempest*, when the latter is called 'tortoise' and 'poisonous slave'.³²⁹ Throughout *The Tempest*, Caliban's difference is presented as monstrous, his appearance 'deformed'. The items in the apothecary's shop in *Romeo and Juliet* are chosen and described to evoke otherworldly associations. As such, both instances establish the tortoise as a monstrous and mystical creature, associated with the unknown and, certainly, un-European. In both evocations this item references the Orientalising principle of collecting objects, people, and eventually countries, often from the global East as colonial property, categorising and/or transforming them (physically or through the language used to categorise them), and using them in displays of European power and superiority. Thus, the shell's transformation into a container for other precious items accords with the ways in which colonisers transformed people and objects into 'useful' entities for their purposes and to signify wealth and status as owner of that which is Other.

³²⁸ SBT 2006-34 Indian star tortoise shell with silver mounts.

³²⁹ William Shakespeare, 'Romeo and Juliet', in *The New Oxford Shakespeare: The Complete Works*, ed. by Gary Taylor and others (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 5.1.37-44.; William Shakespeare, 'The Tempest', in *The New Oxford Shakespeare: The Complete Works*, ed. by Gary Taylor and others (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 1.2.317-320.



Figure 24: SBT 2006-34 An Indian starred tortoiseshell with silver mounts.

While the tortoise shell connotes the Orientalising principles of European *collecting* practices, an example of seventeenth-century travel writing demonstrates the corresponding principles of European *categorising* practices through the written word in an edition of *Thomas Coriate trauller for the English vvits: greeting. From the court of the Great Mogvl, resident at the towne of Asmere, in easterne India*.³³⁰ R. E. Pritchard has made a case for Coryate's writing as a source for Shakespeare, as the playwright's references to 'gorgeous palaces' and 'cloud capped towers' in *The Tempest* echo some of Coryate's depictions of his experiences.³³¹ However, like the tortoise shell, the book itself is not technically an Indian response to Shakespeare. The inclusion of the edition in this collection narrative is due to its ability to provide a frame of reference for historical approaches and attitudes towards the global south and east by European travellers, writers, collectors,

³³⁰ SCBT SR – 87/ Coryate, Thomas (c. 1577-1617) *Thomas Coriate trauller for the English vvits: greeting. From the court of the Great Mogvl, resident at the towne of Asmere, in easterne India*, London: Printed by W. Iaggard, and Henry Featherston, 1616 [1730?].

³³¹ R. E. Pritchard, 'Shakespeare and Thomas Coryate', *Notes and Queries* 2, 51.3 (2004), 295–96.; Shakespeare, 'The Tempest', (4.4.152).

colonisers, and museum curators from the early modern period onwards to reflect on the SBT's own approaches to its international collection items. Coryate (1577-1617) travelled to India in the early seventeenth century as a guest of the East India Company, and Jyotsna G. Singh explains that Coryate's writing is one of the many 'narratives spawned by the East India Company's writing culture [which] implicitly evoke a colonizing imagination at work', although they 'do not represent direct empire-building' themselves.³³² Texts like Coryate's fed the tradition of employing the 'discovery motif' that enabled 'European travellers/writers to represent the newly "discovered" lands as an empty space, a *tabula rasa* on which they could inscribe their linguistic, cultural, and later, territorial claims'.³³³ This motif was used to gain

a privileged epistemological position, whereby as "discoverers" [the British] could claim new knowledge which they could then process and circulate via the intractable colonial binarisms: civilisation and barbarism, tradition and modernity, and Christianity and heathenism, among others. The legacy of these binaries has extended through history, passing through the enlightenment to the postcolonial era in India.³³⁴

Thus, by categorising the lands and people he encountered as Other, Coryate's writings fulfil the 'protoimperialist necessity of imposing order' and function as 'a safe conduit through

³³² Jyotsna G. Singh, 'The Local and Global East India Company', *Journal for Early Modern Cultural Studies*, 17.3 (2017), 121–25 (p. 123)

³³³ Jyotsna G. Singh, *Colonial Narratives/Cultural Dialogues: 'Discoveries' of India in the Language of Colonialism* (London: Routledge, 1996), p. 1.

³³⁴ Singh, *Colonial Narratives/Cultural Dialogues*, p. 2.

which readers become protected tourists'.³³⁵ Although Singh explains that Coryate's writing was more sympathetic to India and much less proto-imperialist than others, like Thomas Roe's, Coryate's writing was part of a system of texts that established the Orientalist authority on which imperialism rested and through which it justified its assumption of superiority over colonial subjects.³³⁶ Orientalism, Said explains, is 'a style of thought based upon an ontological and epistemological distinction made between "the Orient" and (most of the time) "the Occident"', through which prominent Western thinkers have propagated hegemonically accepted distinctions 'between East and West as the starting point for elaborate theories, epics, novels, social disruptions, and political accounts concerning the Orient, its people, customs, "mind," destiny, and so on'.³³⁷ Orientalism established its own pervasive and persuasive authority in this way, and the tortoise shell and *Thomas Coriate* are cogent examples of the source materials that supported Orientalist thought and authority. Furthermore, both items were collected by the SBT intentionally, as opposed to donated/gifted like the majority of the international collection items. The ornament and the book were, no doubt, intended to illuminate an aspect of early modern English life and culture in the museum and library, respectively, but they raise the question: can their object narratives be separated from their imbrication with the development of Orientalist and colonial ideologies? As such, by illustrating the ways in which seventeenth-century collecting and categorisation practices underpinned the development of Orientalism, which, as Said explains, is also to say the white supremacy that buttressed the imperial project, the tortoise shell and travel narrative provide a framework for the remaining collection

³³⁵ Hall, *Things of Darkness: Economies of Race and Gender in Early Modern England*, pp. 39, 30.

³³⁶ Singh, *Colonial Narratives/Cultural Dialogues: 'Discoveries' of India in the Language of Colonialism*, pp. 19-51.

³³⁷ Said, *Orientalism*, p. 2.

narrative as it explores the SBT museum's approach to items from formerly colonised and Othered locations.³³⁸

Pre-Partition: Translations, Clippings

After the tortoise shell and *Thomas Coriate*, the collection narrative continues chronologically in the period of the Raj. The SBT library holds an extensive range of translations in over eighty languages – including Bengali, Hindi, Marathi, Tamil, Urdu, Gujarati, Kashmiri, Punjabi, and Kannada. The earliest translation of Shakespeare into a Subcontinental Indian language is an edition of *Othello* in Marathi, by Rav Saheb Mahadev Govin Shatstri Kolhatkar.³³⁹ The translation was published in Bombay in 1867 and is thought to be the first Shakespeare play translated into Marathi. The book was one of many gifted to Sir R. A. Cross (1823-1914) during his office as Secretary for the State of India from 1886-1892 by the Home Department, Government of India. The books arrived in the SBT's collections after Cross's sojourn at the India Office, London, in 1964 – possibly in relation to the celebration of Shakespeare's quatercentenary. There are also several archival documents from the colonial period: postcard invitations to a talk given in Stratford-upon-Avon by Sir Arthur Hodgson in 1892 titled 'Our Indian Empire and the Indian Mutiny' and newspaper clippings about a former Head Boy at King Edward VI school, Stratford-upon-Avon, who was assassinated in office as a judge in Kolkata in 1931.³⁴⁰ These documents are testament to the resistance to British rule in India that was consistent from the arrival of the British East India Company in 1613 until the Crown granted independence in 1947. The most

³³⁸ Said, *Orientalism*, pp. 226-8

³³⁹ SBT 50.25 Marathi/1867 Kolhatkar, Govin Shatstri, *Othello: A Drama by Shakespeare*. Bombay: Indu-Prakesh Press, 1867

³⁴⁰ SBT ER25/3/4/35-36 Lectures at the Union Club, 4 May 1892-18 May 1892; SBT DR856 Mary Ann Hancox, Snitterfield, 1867-1937. Also the order of service for Garlick's funeral SBT BRR/13/11/51a Town Clerk's Office, Miscellaneous Papers, 1 Aug 1931.

significant uprising was that of 1857 when sepoys (Indian soldiers) turned their weapons on their British officers. The violence of the British retribution was so extreme that the British East India Company was dissolved within a year.³⁴¹ The Government of India act followed in 1858 to finalise the takeover of India by the Crown.³⁴² This established the new British Raj, which clung to power until British authority finally left India and newly partitioned Pakistan in 1947.

Pre-Partition: Tagore's Poem for Shakespeare

The Nobel prize-winning Bengali poet, novelist, playwright, composer, painter, and essayist Rabindranath Tagore lived and wrote throughout the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century agitation for Indian independence, and an ivory tablet inscribed with a poem he wrote in honour of Shakespeare is a key object in this collection (to be discussed). Tagore's role and significance in early twentieth-century Indian thought and literature is entwined with resistance to the Raj and the domination over the Indian people that was maintained through more than military means. The outline of the campaign of economic exploitation and deindustrialisation of India that follows is necessary to contextualise several key items in this collection, including those that relate to Tagore, as well as to inform a discussion of the SBT's approach to the items.

Shashi Tharoor explains that through the systematic destruction of India's industry by the East India Company, the 'great manufacturing nation' had become 'a mere exporter of raw materials and foodstuffs', and that 'India's share of manufacturing exports fell from

³⁴¹ Shashi Tharoor describes the deaths of thousands of mutineers and unarmed civilians by gunfire, hanging, dismembering, and firing from cannons. Shashi Tharoor, *Inglorious Empire: What the British Did To India* (London: Penguin Random House, 2017), p. 166.

³⁴² S. M. Burke and Salim Al-Din Quraishi, *The British Raj in India: An Historical Review* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), p. 35

27 per cent to 2 per cent under British rule'.³⁴³ Funds were siphoned off to Britain in the form of heavy taxation, and the payment of the largest salaries to those who preferred (and had vested interests in) British imports meant that:

[b]y the end of the nineteenth century, India was Britain's biggest source of revenue, the world's biggest purchaser of British exports and the source of highly paid employment for British civil servants and soldiers all at India's own expense. Indians literally paid for their own oppression.³⁴⁴

The Indian nationalist movement gained strength as the century turned and India became economically weakened by the Raj's system of exploitation. Poulomi Saha explains that Tagore's home state, Bengal, was then considered 'an unruly charge for colonial administration' and that the decision to partition it in 1905 'was the result of colonial policy intended to isolate the eastern portion of the province from the outspoken nationalist agitation that was largely centred in Calcutta (in West Bengal)'. However, the plan 'backfired when the partition unleashed a torrent of revived nationalist sentiment, outrage[d] by the legal and symbolic violence that had lacerated the body of the Bengali motherland'.³⁴⁵ The outrage prompted a new form of resistance that sought to redress the obliteration of Indian industry and commerce as well as protest the partition. The *Swadeshi* movement 'forbade the buying, selling, or wearing of foreign products, particularly of imported cloth and

³⁴³ Tharoor, p. 8.

³⁴⁴ Ibid, p. 20-22.

³⁴⁵ Poulomi Saha, 'Singing Bengal into a Nation: Tagore the Colonial Cosmopolitan?', *Journal of Modern Literature*, 36.2 (2013), 1-24 (p. 6).

clothing from Britain'.³⁴⁶ The movement proved successful, as 'British merchants in Bengal complained of a dramatic downturn in their sales and the conversion of regular profits into unaccustomed losses, the agitation triumphed: the British reversed the Partition'.³⁴⁷

Tagore was initially a supporter of the *Swadeshi* movement, and by 1905, as Patrick Colm Hogan asserts, he was a 'major world figure in every literary genre' whose 'political writings have had an impact surpassed only by that of a few Indian activists, such as Gandhi or Nehru'.³⁴⁸ Furthermore, Amit Chaudhuri states that it was through Tagore's writing that Bengali first emerged as literary language and that this had such a profound effect on the Bengali people that the adjective *Rabindrik*, derived from his first name, came to encompass 'an entire generation, an outlook, that came into being with the poet's work'³⁴⁹. Tagore wrote the anthem for Bengali unity in 1905, *Amar Sonar Bangla* ('My Golden Bengal'), and the song became Bangladesh's national anthem at its formation in 1972. In 1911, he wrote another anthemic song, *Jana Gana Mana* ('Thou Art the Ruler of the Minds of All People'), which became the national anthem for India following its partition in 1947.³⁵⁰ In 1913 Tagore published his English translation of *Gitanjali* and won the Nobel Prize in Literature, making him, and Bengali literature, internationally famous. It also earned him a knighthood in 1915, although he renounced this four years later following the atrocities at Jallianwala

³⁴⁶ Jaya Mehta, "'Some Imaginary 'Real' Thing": Racial Purity, the Mutiny, and the Nation in Tagore's *Gora* and Kipling's *Kim*', in *Rabindranath Tagore: Universality and Tradition*, ed. by Patrick Colm Hogan and Lalita Pandit (London: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2003), pp. 199–212 (p. 205).

³⁴⁷ Tharoor, p. 71.

³⁴⁸ Patrick Colm Hogan, 'Introduction: Tagore and the Ambivalence of Commitment', in *Rabindranath Tagore: Universality and Tradition*, ed. by Patrick Colm Hogan and Lalita Pandit (London: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2003), pp. 9–28 (p. 12-13).

³⁴⁹ Amit Chaudhuri, 'Foreword: Poetry as Polemic', in *The Essential Tagore: Rabindranath Tagore*, ed. by Fakrul Alam and Radha Chakravarty (Cambridge, MA: The Belnap Press of Harvard University Press, 2011), pp. xv–xxxiv (pp. xx, xix).

³⁵⁰ Saha (p. 6).

Bagh, Amritsar, where between 379 and 1499 unarmed Indians were massacred on British orders.³⁵¹

Tagore and his work were rooted in the Bengali landscape and cultural traditions and, crucially, followed the *Swadeshi* tenet of writing in the Bengali tongue. Yet, Tagore was apprehensive about prevailing notions of the nation as the basis of unity. He saw patriotic attachment to politically drawn geographical boundaries as a narrowing of ‘the freedom with which one accepts ideas from the whole world and how one views commitments towards people who are distant as well as near’.³⁵² Hence, ‘his engagement with and influence in the West, when read alongside his deep affiliation to his motherland, modelled a structure of attachment to nation and to home that challenged the primacy of the ideological and affective forces that policed those boundaries’.³⁵³ He believed that the categoric rejection of all outside influences, which the nationalist *Swadeshi* movement insisted on, would limit an independent India’s economic as well as creative and intellectual regeneration. Furthermore, he believed that ‘the adoption of the Western concept of nationalism by Indians in their fight for freedom meant succumbing to the aliens yet again, though it furthered the anti-imperialist cause’.³⁵⁴ Tagore’s proposed alternative was ‘a permanent basis of unity’ that would be achieved ‘socially and not politically’.³⁵⁵ It would be ‘an ethical community in which the spatial markers of the nation-state are replaced by a

³⁵¹ Tharoor p. 169. The numbers killed are disputed in British and Indian accounts.

³⁵² Manju Radhakrishnan and Debasmita Roychowdhury, “Nationalism Is a Great Menace”: Tagore and Nationalism’, in *Rabindranath Tagore: Universality and Tradition*, ed. by Patrick Colm Hogan and Lalita Pandit (London: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2003), pp. 29–48 (p. 39).

³⁵³ Saha (p. 4).

³⁵⁴ Radhakrishnan and Roychowdhury (p. 29).

³⁵⁵ *Ibid* (p. 36).

common spiritual engagement, and a Greater India where "inner truth" makes possible organic anticolonial ideologies rather than poor mimics of Western nationalism'.³⁵⁶

Tagore was as outspoken against 'poor mimics' of nationalism and all that was damaging to India as he was about embracing that which would be beneficial. Saurav Dasthakur explains that although Tagore advocated cultural cohesion, it was not a 'homogenized universalism' that he sought but an Indian variation with tolerance of pluralism and diversity at its core.³⁵⁷ Tagore's assertion that 'Indians must take the best of the West and assimilate it with the best of India so as to create a self-reliant country and dispense with its dependence on alien rule' encompassed scientific and technological advancements as well as literary and artistic influences.³⁵⁸ Hogan explains:

Few modern Indian authors were as deeply immersed in – and committed to – Indian literature and culture, extending back to the earliest Sanskrit poems. But, at the same time, few could claim anything like Tagore's command of the English canon. His writings are sprinkled with allusions to the *Bhagavad Gītā* and the Bible, Kālidāsa and Shakespeare, Jayadeva and Shelley. As soon as a reader thinks he/she has located a work by Tagore in one tradition, he/she is sure to come upon some crucial structural element that places it squarely in the other camp – not the Sanskrit *mahākāvya*, but Spanish modernism; not English romanticism, but the Urdu *ghazal*.³⁵⁹

³⁵⁶ Tagore, quoted in Saha (p. 16).

³⁵⁷ Saurav Dasthakur, "'World-History', 'Itihāsa', and Memory: Rabindranath Tagore's Musical Program in the Age of Nationalism', *Journal of Asian Studies*, 75.2 (2016), 411–32 (p. 420).

³⁵⁸ Radhakrishnan and Roychowdhury (p.35).

³⁵⁹ Hogan p. 10. *Ghazal* is poetry written 'in the classical Persian language on themes related to the mystical tradition of Islam' in J. T. P. De Bruijn, *Persian Sufi Poetry: An Introduction to the Mystical Use of Classical Poems* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2013), p. 1.

The cultural expansion that Tagore espoused was a key aspect of the 'Bengali Renaissance' of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Specifically, Tagore's idealised system of sharing different, opposing, and complementary cultural mores from all over the world was a democratic one without hierarchical value judgements on what was 'better' or 'correct' in recognition of how such thinking limits one's creativity and connection to the world.

Tagore's relationship with Shakespeare, however, was complex. Radha Chakravarty explains that having translated *Macbeth* into Bengali at the age of only thirteen, Tagore's 'early plays, such as *Raja o Rani* (1889) and *Visarjan* (1890), clearly show the influence of Shakespeare' in their five-act structure, tragic motifs, and representation of class divides in poetry and prose.³⁶⁰ In the preface to his play *Malini* (1892), which discusses Bengali drama, Tagore stated: 'Shakespeare plays are always our dramatic model. Their manifold varieties and extensiveness and conflicts had captured our mind from the beginning'.³⁶¹ Nevertheless, Tagore's perspective on Shakespeare, and western theatre in a broader sense, altered as resistance to the British oppression of India grew and he perceived the need for 'a less submissive attitude towards the coloniser'.³⁶² Although Tagore's admiration for Shakespeare's ability to present 'the portrait gallery of human nature' was expressed to the latter years of his life, the turn of the century brought a more tempered attitude to Shakespeare that was in line with his condemnation of British imposition and influence on

³⁶⁰ Radha Chakravarty, 'Tagore and Shakespeare: A Fraught Relationship', in *Performing Shakespeare in India: Exploring Indianness, Literatures and Cultures*, ed. by Panja Shormishtha and Babli Moitra Saraf (New Delhi: Sage Publications India, 2016), pp. 207–16 (p. 209).

³⁶¹ Rabindranath Tagore, 'Introduction to *Malini*', in *Rabindra Rachanabali* (Kolkata: Govt. of West Bengal, 1961), v, 485.; quoted in Chakravarty (p. 209).

³⁶² Chakravarty (p. 211).

Indian life and culture.³⁶³ In 1902, Tagore published an essay comparing *The Tempest* with *Shakuntala*, a play by the fifth-century Sanskrit poet and dramatist, Kālidāsa, paying particular attention to the ways in which Shakespeare's play reveals 'the Western will to conquer and dominate'.³⁶⁴

The poem, 'In Honour of William Shakespeare', that is inscribed on the ivory tablet in the SBT's museum collection was irrefutably written against a backdrop of colonial violence and exploitation. Accordingly, the poem teases out the ambivalent aspects of Tagore's philosophies of nation in response to Shakespeare as both England's national poet and world literature. Tagore's English translation (from the Bengali original) is given below:

When by the far-away sea your fiery disc appeared from
behind the unseen, O poet, O Sun, England's horizon felt
you near her breast and took you to be her own.

She kissed your forehead, caught you in the arms of her
forest branches, hid you behind her mist-mantle and
watched you in the green sward where fairies love to play
among meadow flowers.

A few early birds sang your hymn of praise while the rest
of the woodland choir were asleep.

³⁶³ Rabindranath Tagore, 'Sahityer Mulya', in *Rabindra Rachanabali* (Kolkata: Visva-Bharati, 1961), xiv, 195–96.; Quoted in Chakravarty (p. 213).

³⁶⁴ Chakravarty (p. 211).

Then at the silent beckoning of the Eternal you rose higher
 and higher till you reached the mid-sky, making all quarters
 of heaven your own.

Therefore at this moment, after the end of centuries,
 the palm groves by the Indian sea raise their tremulous
 branches to the sky murmuring your praise.

The poem figures Shakespeare as the sun/son of the maternal England, the imagery of the first stanzas evoking the forests, mists, 'green swards', meadow and woodlands of an England that may be most recognisable in this context through its evocation of Shakespeare's only comedy set in England, *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, in which meadow-fairies are invoked by Mistress Quickly to torment Falstaff in the woods.³⁶⁵ It may also evoke the magical woodland of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, in which a fairy king and queen fight over the possession of an Indian boy. Figured as a 'fiery disc', Shakespeare is adopted by England-as-mother and nurtured by the charms of her landscapes. Tagore thus acknowledges England's claim to and nurture of Shakespeare but ultimately positions Shakespeare and his posthumous legacy outside the boundaries of the nation. Like the sun, Shakespeare cannot be ring-fenced as the property of any one culture or even language since his 'light' has reached every corner of the earth. While the first stanzas acknowledge

³⁶⁵ William Shakespeare, *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, in *The New Oxford Shakespeare: The Complete Works*, ed. by Gary Taylor and others (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 5.5.57.

the acquisitiveness of the British quest for dominance, and the sense of entitlement that sees the coloniser take the sun in the sky to be 'her own', by the fifth stanza Shakespeare's 'light' may be interpreted as symbolic of the 'common spiritual engagement' Tagore proposed as an alternative to nationalism.

However, the poem suggests Tagore's opposition to the imposition of Western ideas, ideals, and, of course, rule, through the language of Empire that reappears in the fourth stanza, in which the poet's speaker journeys from England and makes 'all quarters of heaven [his] own'. In this way, the Shakespeare/sun becomes the colonial force, gaining territory and establishing itself as a ruler of sorts. In the final stanza, the 'tremulousness' of the branches that reach upwards towards the sun-poet introduces the notion of the danger posed by sun, which nurtures but also burns, is both generative and destructive, and is ultimately an imposition on the Earth that has to be endured in all its modes. As Tagore perceived Shakespeare as a simultaneously generative and destructive force, depending on how and by whom his oeuvre was being marshalled, this interpretation clearly reflects on Shakespeare's utilisation through the Raj-era as a 'civilising tool' that consequently inculcated the relative 'incivility' and 'worthlessness' of extant Indian cultural forms and languages.

The poem's preoccupation with light adds to this anti-colonial reading. Santanu Niyogi asserts that '[s]ince the closing years of the eighteenth century, British colonial discourse on the question of introducing English education in India has been centred round the binary of two archetypal metaphors: Light and darkness', which 'emerges as a significant discursive tactic assigning the Imperium the status of a superior agency illuminating the

intellectually dark space of the colonies'.³⁶⁶ Niyogi explains that this was a strategy of 'epistemic violence', as internalised hatred of Indian culture and uncritical acceptance of the superiority of English literature and Shakespeare was inculcated in Indian children at school.³⁶⁷ The act of ripping away pride in Indianness and replacing it with reverence for Englishness in order to control 'the cultural discourse of the colony and bring[] the colonised under the ambit of disciplinary power' can be understood through Niyogi's terminology as an injury to Indian culture and identity that matched the physical injuries to Indian bodies sustained through economic deprivations and state violence and neglect.

Niyogi's own interpretation of the poem finds Tagore himself an inculcated victim of the epistemic violence inflicted by the Raj on Indian subjects, as '[t]he very choice of the metaphor [of the sun] is a vindication of the archaeological trope of light/darkness that operated at the substratum of the colonial discursive practices'.³⁶⁸ However, it seems unlikely that Tagore's use of the sun/light idea was indeed an indication of colonialist sentiment given his frequent anti-colonial commentary and his critique of *The Tempest* that was published fourteen years prior to this poem for Shakespeare. Rather, through his *ostensibly* honorific allusions to the sun, Tagore is able to reflect on the complexity of his admiration for Shakespeare by acknowledging the potential for both generativity and destruction, just as he understands Shakespeare as both national poet of England and 'an epitome of internationalism and cosmopolitanism'.³⁶⁹

³⁶⁶ Santanu Niyogi, 'Shakespeare as an Instrument of Epistemic Violence', in *English Studies in India: Contemporary and Evolving Paradigms*, ed. by Banibrata Mahanta and Rajesh Babu Sharma (Singapore: Springer Nature, 2019), pp. 35–46 (pp. 35, 36).

³⁶⁷ *Ibid.* (p. 41).

³⁶⁸ *Ibid.* (p. 44).

³⁶⁹ Chakravarty (p. 214).

Tagore's 'In Honour of William Shakespeare' was published in 1916, two years into the First World War. In consequence, aspirations of global unity surmounting nationalist interests assume a greater significance. The poem was written for Israel Gollancz's *A Book of Homage to Shakespeare To Commemorate The Three Hundredth Anniversary of Shakespeare's Death 1916*, which contained tributes from all over the world (excluding Germany, Austria-Hungary, and Turkey). In the first paragraph of his introduction, Gollancz acknowledges the disunity of the war-torn world as he regrets the curtailment of the planned festivities because of the war: 'For years past as far back as 1904 many of us had been looking forward to the Shakespeare Tercentenary as the occasion for some fitting memorial to symbolise the intellectual fraternity of mankind in the universal homage accorded to the genius of the greatest Englishman'.³⁷⁰ Gordon McMullan asserts that Gollancz's volume 'performs a cultural moment with both brio and care, enabling the reader to find within its pages the Shakespeare with which he or she is most familiar'.³⁷¹ Through Tagore's 'sun/light' metaphor, Gollancz's celebration of the 'intellectual fraternity', and McMullan's appraisal of the *Book of Homage* as international common ground, the book might be interpreted as a material instance of Tagore's conceptual common spiritual engagement between diverse communities. However, as discussed in the general introduction to this thesis, the meeting point that Shakespeare provides between diverse communities is only partial, given the volume's exclusion of Germany, Austria-Hungary, Turkey and those outside the 'intellectual fraternity' across all borders. The grip of

³⁷⁰ Israel Gollancz, 'Preface', *A Book of Homage to Shakespeare To Commemorate The Three Hundredth Anniversary of Shakespeare's Death 1916*, ed. by Israel Gollancz (Oxford: Humphrey Milford, OUP, 1916), p. vii.

³⁷¹ Gordon McMullan, 'Forgetting Isreal Gollancz: The Shakespeare Tercentenary, the National Theatre and the Effects of Commemoration', in *Antipodal Shakespeare: Remembering and Forgetting in Britain, Australia and New Zealand, 1916-2016*, ed. by Gordon McMullan and others (London: Bloomsbury Arden Shakespeare, 2018), pp. 29–62 (p. 47).

nationalist interests is shown to hold, as well as mastery over the narrative of Shakespeare's legacy by the British intellectual elite.

Post-Partition India: Tagore Tablet, *Roopakam*, Statuette, Board Room Table, Gilt Flowers, Tagore Bust, Tagore Necktie

The ivory tablet with Tagore's poem engraved in Bengali script (see figure 2) was presented to the Trust forty-eight years after the poem was written and seventeen years after the Partition of India and Pakistan which took effect on 15th August 1947. Tagore died in 1941, making it impossible to know what he would have made of the final division of India – and specifically Bengal – into (initially) two separate nations. His philosophies regarding nationalism, hopes for spiritual unity, and response to the temporary partition of Bengal in 1905 suggest he would not have supported it. Indeed, as Saha explains, Tagore perceived the 1905 partition as 'a vestigial fracture [between the Hindu and Muslim communities of Bengal] that would eventually splinter irreparably', so it is likely he would have seen it as the disastrous consequence of this earlier fracture.³⁷² As a Brahma Samajist, Tagore did not count himself among the factions of Hindu and Muslim, although his monotheistic religion does incorporate elements of Hinduisim, Christianity, and Islamic Sufism. The Brahma Samaj believed that 'the essence of all religions, worth the name, was the same' and that above all

³⁷² Saha (p. 5).

importance was 'faith in one God and service to humanity'.³⁷³ In its universalising ideas his religion was, therefore, an inspiration for his syncretic aspirations for India's future.³⁷⁴

Although Bengal had been divided into East (Pakistan) and West (India), a cultural tradition remained in which Tagore was central, and Anisuzzaman explains that the question of whether this tradition would be upheld in Pakistan was heavily disputed in the decades following the

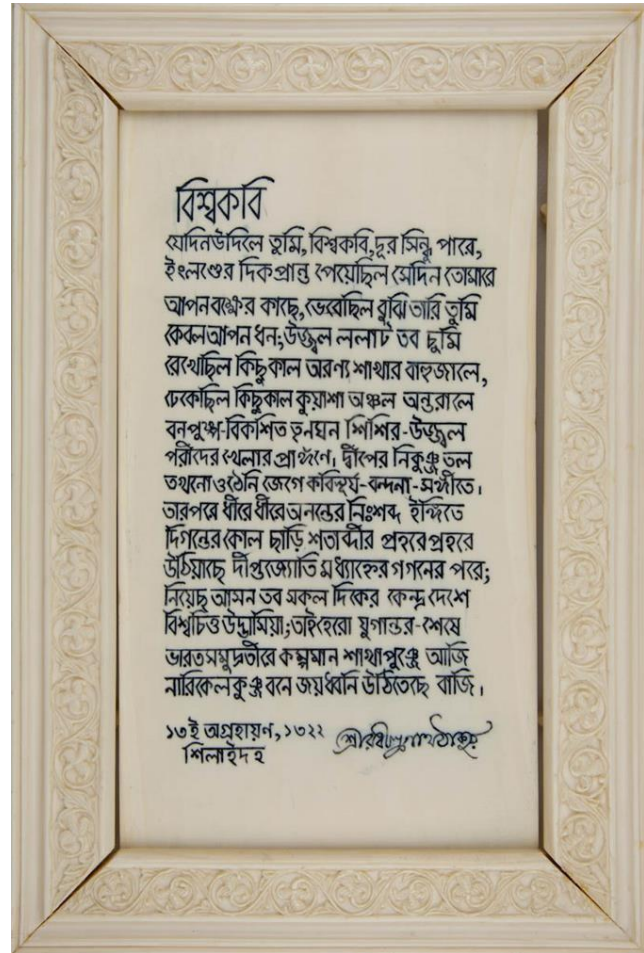


Figure 25: SBT 2013-2 Ivory tablet inscribed with a poem by Rabindranath Tagore.

³⁷³ Sophia Dobson Collet, *The Life and Letters of Raja Rammohun Roy*, ed. by Dilip Kumr Biswas and Prabhat Candra Ganguli, 3rd edn (Calcutta: Sadharan Brahmo Samaj, 1960) p. 245.; in Leonard Lewisohn, 'Rabindranath Tagore's Syncretic Philosophy and the Persian Sufi Tradition', *International Journal of Persian Literature*, 2 (2017), 2–41 (p. 5).

³⁷⁴ Because this thesis revolves around the objects in the SBT's collection and Indian Sikhs are relatively absent from the regions of India that are discussed, the Sikh experience of Partition is underrepresented here. The impact of Partition on the Sikh communities of India is described by Nisid Hajari as revolving most urgently around the potential division of the Punjab as the most densely Sikh-inhabited region, which was desired by both factions for its fertile land, network of canals, and proportionate contribution to the Indian military. The decision to divide the Punjab was made because the Muslim majority was focused in the western portion of the region. There were too many non-Muslims in the eastern portion to give the entire region to the Muslim state, but the Sikhs understood the division as the scattering of their community, loss of their sacred spaces, and, potentially, bowing to Muslim rule. While the negotiations went on and after the line of Partition was set religious factions formed mobs and massacred each other in the streets, each believing the others intended to kill them first.

Nisid Hajari, *Midnight's Furies: The Deadly Legacy of India's Partition* (Stroud: Amberley Publishing, 2015), pp. 45, 81, 99.

Partition.³⁷⁵ The question was not simply whether Tagore's works and ideals were in accord with those of the new nation, but whether they were 'antipathetic to the *concept of Pakistan*' (my italics): whether embracing the symbol of Bengal and united Bengali culture that Tagore had become would undermine the 'racial disparity of cultures on the basis of which Pakistan was founded'.³⁷⁶ Tagore's philosophies of spiritual unity would not overcome this national divide, but would conversely provide a central persuasion for opponents of his status in East Pakistan's cultural tradition.

The distinction this collection narrative has to make between objects from India or Pakistan from after 1947 registers the displacement of the millions of people who were subject to the Partition of the Subcontinent in that year. Millions more had to negotiate a new national identity when Bangladesh was formed from East Pakistan in 1971, and this division is also reflected through the structure of this chapter. In consequence, Tagore's poem, which was written in Bengali with the aim of representing the language and literary tradition on the 'world stage' of the *Book of Homage*, becomes an object that may not be considered representative of many of the people it would have represented only two decades earlier. The presentation of the ivory tablet and poem to the Trust in 1964 by the Calcutta Arts Society, then, stakes a clear claim for Indian proprietorship over Tagore's legacy.

The choice of material for this tablet raises several points for discussion about the intent behind the gift as well as the ethical implications of its display. Ivory has been used for various utilitarian as well as decorative purposes in many places around the world from

³⁷⁵ Anisuzzaman (p. 1060).

³⁷⁶ Ibid (p. 1061; p. 1063).

the pre-historic ages, although, as Daniel Wylie explains, most of the ivory used to produce jewellery, piano keys, billiard balls, and decorative items like this tablet, used African rather than Indian ivory.³⁷⁷ Now widely understood as a symbol of the cruel demand for the luxurious material that brought elephants to near-extinction, the sale and purchase of ivory has been addressed in UK law.³⁷⁸ The ethical implications of ivory are further complicated by its historical association with the African slave trade. Demand for ivory items in nineteenth-century Europe undermined the British abolition of slavery in 1833, when ivory prices increased and prompted the enslavement of many more people who were forced to carry the tusks to the coast – where they were sold along with the ivory.³⁷⁹ It is not possible to determine whether the ivory of this tablet is Indian or African without carbon testing, but the history and implications of ivory artefacts should be acknowledged.

The ivory of the tablet also prompts reflection on whether the object might conform to Tagore's aversion to nationalist pride, given the longevity of the cultural history of ivory in the Subcontinent. The significance of the elephant in Indian societies dates back to five-thousand-year-old rock drawings, religious iconography, and a literary tradition that is rich with stories of elephants, men, and gods.³⁸⁰ The choice of material for the Tagore tablet could be related to a nationalistic association with Indian elephants in Indian cultural history. It could also be related to the Begram Ivories: a collection of carved plaques that were found on an archaeological dig in Afghanistan in the late 1930s and were dated to the

³⁷⁷ Daniel Wylie, *Elephant* (London: Reaktion Books, 2009), p. 156.

³⁷⁸ Although it is yet to be enforced due to Brexit related complications, see the UK legislation: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2018/30/contents/enacted>; an outline of the legal issues as yet pertaining: <https://www.keystonelaw.com/keynotes/ivory-act-2018-latest-developments>.

³⁷⁹ Innocent Pikirayi, 'Gold, Black Ivory, and Houses of Stone: Historical Archaeology in Africa', in *Historical Archaeology*, ed. by Martin Hall and Stephen W. Silliman (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2006), pp. 230–50 (p. 239–240).

³⁸⁰ Wylie, p. 66–87.

period of the Kushan dynasty that ruled the regions of Afghanistan, Pakistan, and northern India in the first century BCE.³⁸¹ This gift might, in that case, serve as a reminder of the ancient civilisations of the global East and the artistic traditions that Tagore was heir to. The ivory can thus be interpreted as a communication of pride at the relative longevity of the culture and crafts of South Asia that pre-date Shakespeare and the period that is celebrated as the ‘Golden Age’ of English culture. The inscription directs pride more specifically at Bengali culture, through the language and hand of Tagore. Thus, the tablet suggests a desire to utilise Shakespeare’s cultural capital to represent the Bengali culture on the ‘world stage’ in Stratford-upon-Avon.

The Bengali script that has been carved into the ivory also has ambivalently diplomatic connotations. Jaya Mehta explains that Tagore’s innovative work was of great cultural significance in Bengal because he refashioned traditional Bengali in order to meet ‘modern literary demands’.³⁸² Tagore’s work aimed to challenge ‘urban middle class and Sanskritic high-cultural hegemony through adding a strong rural, subaltern, “folk” dimension to the emergent modern Bengali subjectivity that lay at the heart of all his creative-critical-praxiological endeavours’.³⁸³ Thus, Tagore’s revived Bengali prose brought literature to the Bengali masses to whom the ‘chaste and Sanskritized Bengali which was then accepted in literary writing’ had previously been unavailable, along with most Western texts, ideas, and styles.³⁸⁴ Tagore was convinced that the development of Bengali literature would bring unification with the literatures of all the languages of India as part of the ‘ongoing

³⁸¹ St John Simpson, ‘The “Begram Ivories”: A Successful Case of Restitution of Some Antiquities Stolen from the National Museum of Afghanistan in Kabul’, *International Journal of Cultural Property*, 23 (2016), 459–77 (p. 461).

³⁸² Mehta (p. 202).

³⁸³ Dasthakur (p. 421).

³⁸⁴ Sabyasachi Bhattacharya, *Rabindranath Tagore: An Interpretation* (Haryana: Penguin Random House India, 2011), p. 100.

construction of the Indian nation'.³⁸⁵ In accordance with Tagore's anti-nationalist views, however, this 'unification' would be based on the concept of a shared space which would nurture cultural differences even as it brings them together.

The representation of Bengal and Bengali modes within non-homogenised spaces was of utmost importance to Tagore and is suggested by the reproduction of his own handwriting on this tablet. Tagore felt that presenting his poetry in his own hand was a valuable means of personalising it, allowing him to form a sort of personal contact with his reader.³⁸⁶ Furthermore, he felt, it formed contact with and represented Bengal: when discussing autograph-hunters in China and Japan, he stated '[t]hey wanted me to write in Bengali, because a signature in Bengali was on the one hand mine, on the other hand the whole Bengali nation's'.³⁸⁷ The likelihood that Tagore would have been pleased with the reproduction of his handwriting on the SBT's tablet is suggested by an account he gave of his delight at his discovery in Germany of a machine that could reproduce handwriting using aluminium sheets.³⁸⁸ Tagore's remarks about the importance of handwriting attest to the idea that his sense of pride in Bengali culture and hopes for the future of Indian multi-culture was always about connection, never about supremacy. Accordingly, the ivory tablet uses Tagore's dedication to Shakespeare to forge a space of inter-cultural engagement that also represents Bengali culture. This is achieved through the poem (for Shakespeare), and the presentation of the tablet (to the SBT), alongside the context of its material substance (the ivory) and the significance of the Bengali script and Tagore as the writer who

³⁸⁵ Ibid, p. 44.

³⁸⁶ Rabindranath Tagore, *Rabindra-Racanabali*, 1961, xiv.; Given in Rabindranath Tagore, *The Jewel That Is Best: Collected Brief Poems*, ed. & trans. by William Radice (New Delhi: Penguin Books India, 2011) (p. 10).

³⁸⁷ Rabindranath Tagore, 'Appendix A: An Essay on Lekhan', in *The Jewel That Is Best: Collected Brief Poems*, trans. by William Radice (New Delhi: Penguin Books India, 2011), pp. 166–76 (p. 166).

³⁸⁸ Tagore, 'Appendix A: An Essay on Lekhan' (p. 168).

revolutionised Bengal's literary legacy. Thus, although the tablet connotes nationalistic pride through its associations with India's rich cultural history, the combination of these factors with the Shakespearean legacy that is invoked through the poem and presentation to the SBT manifests the tablet's potential to function as a non-homogenised space. Rather than a nationalistic appropriation of Shakespeare's cultural capital, designed to assert pride in Indian culture on the 'world stage' of the Shakespeare Centre, the tablet is an epitomisation of Tagore's syncretistic vision as it honours both poets and cultural traditions simultaneously.

On 20th October 1964, the tablet was presented to the SBT by a delegation from the Indian High Commission and the Calcutta Art Society. The visiting representatives incorporated some ceremony into their presentation of the tablet through the performance of recitations in the Centre's brand-new Marble Hall (see figure 3). As such, the circumstances of the presentation of the tablet appear to substantiate the idea that the gift was intended to facilitate a Tagorean common cultural or spiritual engagement. The occasion was simultaneously the quatercentenary of Shakespeare's birth and the opening of the Shakespeare Centre, and the tablet was evidently intended to adorn the new building's walls. Along with the board room table that the Indian Government sponsored for the Shakespeare Centre's new meeting room, the gift exposes a desire for representation at the Birthplace through a permanent fixture that forms part of the fabric of the building. In the VIP Visitors' Book P. C. Sinha, the General Secretary of the Calcutta Art Society, signed his name and commented: 'Simply wonderful to pay respects', which leaves open the suggestion of respects being paid to either or both Shakespeare and Tagore.³⁸⁹ Although the

³⁸⁹ SBT VIP Visitor's Book, October 20, 1964.



Figure 26: The presentation of the Tagore tablet: image from Levi Fox, *The Shakespeare Birthplace Trust: A Personal Memoir* (Stratford-upon-Avon: The Shakespeare Birthplace Trust, 1997) p. 190.

specifics are unrecorded, I have been advised that the leader's seated posture in the photograph suggests it was a recitation from the *Upanishads*, the spiritual texts that are the basis of Hinduism and were partly adapted into the teachings of the Brahmo Samaj.³⁹⁰ Tagore's own interest in the *Upanishads* derived from the 'passion for welding together the secular, rational, liberal humanist spirit of European Enlightenment and the Indigenous classical Sanskrit and Upanishadic heritage, at the heart of the strong nineteenth-century urban Bengali reformative impulse'.³⁹¹ The ancient texts also played a part in his efforts to design a 'liberal education that wedded the past to the present, [and] brought the East and the West in an interdependent continuum that was global in scope and vision', as he elevated their importance alongside that of modern scientific studies.³⁹² The inclusion of a

³⁹⁰ Via personal communication with Tagore expert Obhi Chatterjee, 10th September 2019.

³⁹¹ Dasthakur (p. 421).

³⁹² Bashabi Fraser, 'Rabindranath Tagore's Global Vision', *Literature Compass*, 12.5 (2015), 161–72 (p. 162).

recitation from the *Upanishads*, then, highlights Tagore's multi-national, multi-religious, truly multi-cultural sources and inspirations, which included Shakespeare without elevating his importance above the Indian sources.

This event prompts reflection on the effect of such performances when they take place inside cultural institutions like museums. In the choices that the visitors made, they were able to represent an aspect of Indian culture – the ceremonial use of incense and possibly recitation of the *Upanishads* – on their own terms within the walls of a British museum. This is pertinent because in any museum display, the museum usually holds the curatorial power to decide which elements to emphasise and which to downplay, which truths to assert and which to ignore.³⁹³ The narrative the institution chooses to present emerges from an ideological perspective and can be biased towards the milieu of the hosts and can thus misrepresent the culture in question. In the event of the presentation from the visitors from Kolkata, then, the power of the museum to interpret, curate, and narrate was revoked in favour of the visitors, albeit in a fleeting manner. Thus, the performance dissolved politically inscribed national boundaries by enacting a cross-encounter of aspects of British and Indian cultures.

The performance might also be considered in the light of the early-twentieth-century drive to assert pride in Indian cultural traditions, which is suggested by the Calcutta Art Society's inception as one of the first societies established by the Raj (in 1831) to redress the 'erosion of native craft and decorative arts' that had by then become noticeable.³⁹⁴ Rakesh

³⁹³ Steven D. Lavine and Ivan Karp, 'Introduction: Museums and Multiculturalism', in *Exhibiting Cultures: The Poetics and Politics of Museum Display*, ed. by Ivan Karp and Steven D. Lavine (London: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1991), pp. 1–10 (p. 1).

³⁹⁴ Marcella Sirhandi, 'South Asia 1800-1900', in *Atlas of World Art*, ed. by John Onians (London: Laurence King Publishing, 2004), pp. 248–49 (p. 249).

H. Solomon explains that, in accordance with the *Swadeshi* movement, performed patriotism was a form of resistance against the Raj's official use of English in all forms of communication, administrative and judicial systems, government, and education, the latter of which consisted of 'a school and college curriculum of English literature and European history and philosophy accompanied by a simultaneous discouragement and disparagement of Indian languages, history and culture'.³⁹⁵ English was, as Preti Taneja concludes, 'a compulsory mode for advancement through communication in the "master" language, taught by way of Shakespeare'.³⁹⁶ As such, visiting the birthplace of Shakespeare and speaking the Sanskrit of the ancient Upanishads can be understood as a gesture that moves to redress the epistemic violence that has been inflicted on Indian people and culture, as does the tablet itself.

In their study of social performance and cultural pragmatics, Jeffrey C. Alexander and Jason L. Mast explain that '[t]hrough social performances we tell a story about ourselves to ourselves and, because performances precipitate degrees of liminality, they are capable of transforming social relations'.³⁹⁷ The liminal element is the suspended 'threshold' that performance creates between one state, or time, or reality, and another. In this 'space' hierarchical relations are also suspended, as part of the audience's suspension of disbelief. Through representation at the Shakespeare Birthplace the Calcutta Art Society's performance indicated an alignment of India's rich cultural heritage with England's. By

³⁹⁵ Rakesh H. Solomon, 'Culture, Imperialism, and Nationalist Resistance: Performance in Colonial India', *Theatre Journal*, 46.3 (1994), no pagination.

³⁹⁶ Preti Taneja, 'Does Shakespeare's Text Even Matter?', in *Performing Shakespeare in India: Exploring Indianness, Literatures and Cultures*, ed. by Shormishtha Panja and Babli Moitra Saraf (New Delhi: Sage Publications, 2016), pp. 175–90 (p. 176).

³⁹⁷ Jeffrey C. Alexander and Jason L. Mast, 'Introduction: Symbolic Action in Theory and Practice: The Cultural Pragmatics of Symbolic Action', in *Social Performance: Symbolic Action, Cultural Pragmatics, and Ritual*, ed. by Jeffrey C. Alexander, Bernhard Giesen, and Jason L. Mast (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), pp. 1–28 (p. 13).

holding the stage there, and by controlling the narrative of the moment, the performance constitutes a momentary rupture of imperialist hierarchies. Dwight Conquergood asserts that '[l]iminality [...] represents ideal sites for contestation [...] where performances of resistance and subversion are understood to flourish in the ceremonial and interactional practices of the marginalised, the enslaved, and the subaltern' where 'subaltern groups "create a culture of resistance," a "subjugated knowledge" that must be conceptualised not as a discourse but as "a repertoire of performance practices"'.³⁹⁸ This 'repertoire', then, signifies the group's cultural identity, but consequently leads to its theorisation 'as embodied and experiential, and thus wholly unrecognizable to members of the dominant culture'.³⁹⁹

As noted, the specifics of this presentation ceremony performance were not recorded, and in fact the only way the event has been recorded is through the photograph (figure 3) and the memoir of the director of the SBT from 1945 to 1989, Levi Fox (1914-2002). Fox recalls:

a delegation from the Calcutta Arts Society, accompanied by diplomatic representatives from the Indian High Commission, made a special visit to the Shakespeare Centre. With impressive ceremony and the recitation of speeches, songs and prayers, the leader made a presentation to the Chairman of the Trust of an ivory plaque on which was carved the text of a poem in praise of Shakespeare composed by the great Indian poet, Rabindranath Tagore. During the course of the

³⁹⁸Dwight Conquergood, quoted in Alexander and Mast (p. 14).

³⁹⁹ Alexander and Mast (p. 14).

proceedings the leader swung a censer, presumably containing sacred oil, to the accompaniment of his recitation, and by mischance spots of the oil fell on Sir Fordham Flower's [chairman of the Trust's] suit. Nothing daunted, he made a most appropriate response to this unusual tribute to Shakespeare.⁴⁰⁰

Through this ceremony, the SBT, as much as Shakespeare, was being honoured not only with a carefully considered and culturally valuable gift, but a performance of an Indian cultural tradition, and both were presented with pride and goodwill. The entire episode, if understood in terms of Tagore's philosophies, seems to have been guided towards international inclusion and appreciation of difference. Fox's anecdote, however, trivialises it as a spectacle of foreignness in which the most pressing detail is the besuited Englishman's 'most appropriate response'.

The account as given in Fox's memoir thus chronologises the moment in a way that seizes the power of representation back from the Indian visitors and incorporates it into the SBT's history in a way that represents an Anglo-centric imperialist perspective that is signalled by the conceptualisation of the 'unusual' in opposition with the imperially established 'appropriate'. Fox's configuration of the event aligns with Alexander and Mast's acknowledgement of the dominant culture's inability to recognise the visiting culture as culture, but even more strikingly with Said's outline of the organising principles of Orientalism: the method by which the concept of white supremacy has been maintained through the colonial project through today. Said defined Orientalism as 'the corporate

⁴⁰⁰ Levi Fox, *The Shakespeare Birthplace Trust: A Personal Memoir* (Stratford: The Shakespeare Birthplace Trust, 1997), p. 191

institution for dealing with the Orient – dealing with it by making statements about it, authorizing views of it, describing it, by teaching it, settling it, ruling over it’ – approaches that are in evidence in the travel writing and implicit in the collecting practices that are outlined in the first part of this chapter.⁴⁰¹ Through his failure to name his guests and willingness to gloss aspects of the ceremony that he does not understand (‘presumably containing sacred oil’) Fox delineates what he felt would or should be worthy of the attention of his readers – who he evidently imagines to be aligned with himself in a world that regards knowledge and culture as a domain of Anglo-centric whiteness that is, nonetheless, understood to be ‘universal’. The names of the Indian guests are shown to be less important than the name of the Englishman and the details of the ceremony are shown to be less important than the *unusualness* of them.

Fox’s treatment of the performance not only trivialises the particularities of the moment but, in more general terms, trivialises the culture of his visitors. It demonstrates the Orientalist desire to understand one’s Western self as rational and post-spiritual in ‘a world replete with magic, mystery, and spiritual vitality’ that is associated exclusively with the global East.⁴⁰² This distinction was a foundational tenet for the notion of white European supremacy over colonised territories, through the establishment of ‘the European intellectual as the privileged subject capable of rational and scientific endeavors’, hence the description of Flower, who behaved ‘appropriately’ despite the (implied) strangeness of the visitors’ behaviour. Thus, India is figured as mysterious, unknown, and beneath notice as a

⁴⁰¹ Said, *Orientalism*, p. 3.

⁴⁰² Christopher Goto-Jones, ‘Magic, Modernity, and Orientalism: Conjuring Representations of Asia’, *Modern Asian Studies*, 48.6 (2014), 1451–76 (p. 1454).

serious member of the international community.⁴⁰³ The description also locates Fox ‘outside the Orient, both as an existential and as a moral fact’.⁴⁰⁴ The significance of this positioning, Ayse Ozge Kocak Hemmat argues, is that through the externalisation of the Orient by Western chroniclers like Fox, ‘the Orient is also silenced, exoticised and prevented from entering into a meaningful dialogue with the scholar’.⁴⁰⁵ Fox’s memoir is the Trust’s only record of the presentation of such an important item, and it is telling that the gift should therefore come to demonstrate the workings of white cultural supremacy instead of Tagore’s philosophies for shared cross-cultural creativity. However, it is through the omissions and Orientalism of this record that the importance to this thesis of the Calcutta Art Society’s ceremonial presentation at the Shakespeare Centre becomes pronounced, because they emphasise the critical brief moment of cultural integrity in the recitation and proceedings before they were rehabilitated for the historical record in written English as strange, inappropriate, and distinctly inferior. Fox’s memoir account eliminates the potential of this reversal of narrative power and re-appropriates the moment into an assertion of Anglo-centric cultural superiority. By destroying the potential of this visit and gift, the memoir, carrying the credence and authority of Fox’s role as Director of the sanctified space of the Birthplace, constitutes an uncomfortable indictment of the mode and reach of Anglo-centric curatorial practices at the SBT.

1964 was an important anniversary year, thus, several more gifts were received from India throughout the year, including a pair of bronze gilt commemorative medals, also from the Calcutta Art Society, a volume of articles on Shakespeare in Marathi, a statuette of

⁴⁰³ Ayse Ozge Kocak Hemmat, ‘The Past as an Object: Orientalist Fantasies’, *Middle Eastern Literatures*, 20.2 (2017), 1475–2638 (p. 232).

⁴⁰⁴ Said, *Orientalism*, p. 21.

⁴⁰⁵ Hemmat (p. 234).

Shakespeare, and the Shakespeare Centre's new board room table.⁴⁰⁶ The volume of essays, an edition of *Roopakam*, was presented in December by Dr Jivraj Narayan Mehta, the same High Commissioner who attended the presentation of the tablet, and the SBT's picture collections contain a record of the moment. The photograph (figure 4) has been provided with a detailed label on the reverse explaining that it shows Mehta and Fox exchanging the volume and a handshake at India House (the High Commission for India in London). The level of detail and effort toward record-keeping is striking in comparison with the photograph from the presentation of the tablet. This presentation differs from that of the tablet in very clear ways. The tablet ceremony followed Indian traditions and imperatives, where the 'world stage' of the Birthplace was briefly given over to the visitors. The



Figure 27: SBT PC 29.1965.13 Presentation to the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust by Indian High Commission, 1964

⁴⁰⁶ SBT 1964-19/1-2 Commemorative Quatercentenary medals, 1964; SBT 63.2 India/Roo, *Roopakam: (Annual Publication of the Marathi Natya Parishad) Shakespeare Volume*, ed. G. M. Watve, 1964; SBT 1989-36 Commemorative Shakespeare statuette, c. 1964. The board room table does not have an accession number as it is considered part of the fixtures and fitting of the Shakespeare centre rather than a collection item.

presentation of *Roopakam* denotes a stately occasion that conformed to priorities and hierarchies more familiar to Fox and the SBT, taking place at official and state-sanctioned premises in London and comprising a handshake and a photograph. The latter ceremony is conducted in a language that is much easier to understand and is therefore more readily chronicled in the SBT collections.

Raymond Cohen explains that the handshake is a component of the ‘Great Tradition’ of diplomacy that originated in ‘the cuneiform civilisations of Mesopotamia down to Classical Greece and Rome’, as a ‘body of ideas, norms, practices and roles governing relations between political entities, usually, but not always, sovereign authorities’.⁴⁰⁷ More specifically, Cohen identifies the handshake as an indicative ‘ritual of friendship’ that can be traced to the ninth century BC:

[o]n an Assyrian relief from Nimrud, the Assyrian king Shalmaneser III is depicted shaking hands with the king of Babylon. The same stylized gesture of pledge is found in both the Bible and in Greek sources. The handshake has passed down to us as an integral part of diplomatic choreography alongside the state visit, joint motorcade and photo opportunity.⁴⁰⁸

Furthermore, Juliana Schroeder et al. advise that

⁴⁰⁷ Raymond Cohen, ‘The Great Tradition: The Spread of Diplomacy in the Ancient World’, *Diplomacy and Statecraft*, 12.1 (2007), 23–38 (p. 23).

⁴⁰⁸ *Ibid* (p. 36).

the act of shaking hands together could be considered a form of synchrony [...] the coordinated movement of two people in time, [which] has been shown to produce positive emotions, weakening the boundaries between the self and the group and enhancing cooperation and liking. Relatedly, people who mimic the behaviours of their counterparts appear more affiliative and are better liked.⁴⁰⁹

Furthermore, the authors assert that ‘the mere knowledge that a person shook hands - even in the absence of physical touch - will influence perceptions of cooperative intent’, thus signalling the extent of the gesture’s significance as a social ritual.⁴¹⁰ In comparison with the incomprehensibility of the dress, ritual behaviours, and Upanishadic recitations of the earlier visit from the Calcutta Art Society, the second presentation from Indian representatives in 1964 would have soothed the imperialistic tendencies of the Stratfordian representatives, through the familiarity of the handshake and its benign, rather than uncertain – thus challenging – subtext. The emphasis on diminishing cultural boundaries through handshaking also prompts the association of the action with Tagore’s philosophies on nationalism and syncretism – where the aim of world culture is to reconcile disparate people. If the handshake can be taken to have universal symbolism, then it may function through this photograph as aliment for the assumptions of universality that are often attached to Shakespeare. The presumed and problematic ‘universality’ of Shakespeare is symbolised by this handshake, between the English representative of institutional

⁴⁰⁹ Juliana Schroeder and others, ‘Handshaking Promotes Deal-Making by Signaling Cooperative Intent’, *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology: Interpersonal Relations and Group Processes*, 116.5 (2019), 743–68 (p. 744).

⁴¹⁰ Ibid.

Shakespeare and the Indian High Commissioner, and the photograph can consequently be interpreted as a satisfying 'proof', perhaps, of English cultural supremacy.

Assuming that the cataloguing and clear labelling of the photograph of the handshake can be taken as an indication of greater interest in, and acceptance of, this presentation than that of the tablet, it may also have been because the object itself was more comprehensible to the Trust. A volume of essays on Shakespeare is a comfortingly familiar gift for the collections (even if written in Marathi), whereas the tablet, as I have demonstrated, carried layers of specifically Bengali meaning that would have rendered it incomprehensible to recipients who viewed the object through an Orientalist lens. The presence of the label on the photograph, and another inside the edition of *Roopakam*, may have been motivated by the stateliness of the event, and the import it thus attributes to Fox and the Trust; it may have been the result of further cultural superiority and Orientalist thought; it may be an example of a more efficient process of chronicling that occurred simply by chance. In any case, it draws attention to the lack of deliberate chronicling of the tablet presentation ceremony, and indeed the lack of an archived photograph of it – the photograph included in this collection narrative has been taken from Fox's book due to the apparent absence of the original image in the SBT's picture collections.

A statuette of Shakespeare that was made for the 1964 quatercentenary is also missing some key acquisition data, although it bears a signature that suggests it is the work of the internationally recognised sculptor Sadashiv Sathe (1926-) (figure 5). The statuette stands at 25.5 centimetres tall including a wooden plinth painted with 'William Shakespeare / Quater-Centenary / 1964 / from / Rangraj International / 210, Wallace Street, Bombay-1'. Without any acquisition data, it is unclear whether the sculpture was commissioned specifically by

Rangraj as a gift for the SBT, and under what circumstances it was sent and received.⁴¹¹ Sathe made many

sculptures and busts of prominent Indian figures and has work on display all over the world. However, seeing the item in person brings into question the likelihood of it actually being one of Sathe's works. The figure appears to be bronze, but close inspection reveals

that while certainly metal, the bronze colour has been painted. It is also much lighter than one would expect a

bronze figure to weigh. The wooden plinth appears cheaply made, thin, wobbly, and with a hand painted inscription. The name 'Sathe' appears etched into the back of the metal base without the degree of finesse expected for such a renowned artist, and there is a visible seam through the back of the figure from the moulding process. The statuette is therefore not of the quality one might expect from a sculptor of such high esteem. Moreover, the image itself appears to be a copy of the towering bronze statue that the SBT commissioned Douglas Wain-Hobson to make for the new Shakespeare Centre in 1963 (the same statue that appears in the photograph of the presentation of the ivory tablet, figure 3). The figurine wears the same attire, stands in the same position (feet apart, quill raised in right hand,



Figure 28: SBT 1989-36 Commemorative Shakespeare Statuette.

⁴¹¹ I have been unable to find any information about this company despite contacting several Mumbai libraries (and the company currently at the address) asking if they have any records/information.

looking off to the right), and features the low hairline and short pointed facial hair that is familiar in the majority of images of Shakespeare. As a copy, and a poor quality one, it is unlikely that this is Sathe's work.⁴¹² Whether the name of Sathe was scratched onto the base by its makers or senders remains unknown, but it does indicate the desire to connect a great Indian artist with Shakespeare, either to increase the value of the object for sale in India, or to increase the perception of the gift's value in Stratford-upon-Avon. As such, it seems likely that this statuette is a cheaply-made souvenir that was manufactured around the time of the 1964 celebrations, was bought by Rangraj International and sent to the SBT – although this certainty is muddied somewhat by the date of accession being 1989. It may have been held for twenty-four years before being made part of the collection, or it may have been received in 1989 in circumstances that can only be speculated. The former seems more likely as the information given in the accession register simply repeats the information painted onto the plinth.

Conjecture is also required for the next item in the post-Partition Indian collection. In 1991 a visitor to the Shakespeare Centre delivered a business-card sized card with two silver-gilt flowers attached, and this message, in ball-point pen: 'These two flowers are sent to adore the literary feet (also feat) of William Shakespeare, the world-famous dramatist, by his humble admirer N. B. Godbole'.⁴¹³ The message incorporates layers of punning metaphors, as the flowers are to be metaphorically strewn at the poet's literal feet in adoration of his metrical feet, the excellence of which is his celebrated feat. The three-

⁴¹² See Sadashiv Sathe, "'Salt of the Nation": Sculpture in Form and Spirit, as Conceived by Sadashiv Sathe for "Dandi March Memorial"', *Dandimemorial.In*, 2019 <<http://www.dandimemorial.in/#gandhistatue>> [accessed 17 September 2019]. This is a statement made about his creation for the Dandi March Memorial (inaugurated in January 2019). Sathe's discussion of his vision for his art reveals the unlikelihood of him producing a straightforward copy of another sculptor's work.

⁴¹³ SBT 1991-101 Pair of late 20th-century silver-gilt ornamental flowers; mounted on card with a dedication written in blue and red biro.

centimetre-tall flowers symbolise the fleeting span of Shakespeare's life while the silver-gilt material symbolises the endurance of his fame. The reverse of the card adds the full name of the giver, Neelkanth Babu Godbole, and an address in Pune. An internet search leads to a jeweller's showroom under the company name of Vishwanath Neelkanth Godbole.

However, what is not recorded in the online catalogue is the involvement of V. V.

Shirwadkar (1912-1999), whose name and address is found in the object history file, with the note 'present from Poet Laureate of India'. Shirwadkar, who is also known by his pen name, Kusumagraj, was a key figure in Marathi language literature, having published a collection of poems called *Vishakha* in 1943 that established him as 'a major poet during the Quit India movement' as the themes of his poetry mirrored 'the genuine nationalist spirit of the times'.⁴¹⁴

The Quit India movement was a civil disobedience movement announced by Mahatma Gandhi on August 9th, 1942, which had the ultimate aim of ending British rule in India. However, the immediate result was the arrest of Gandhi and the Congress leaders as traitors against the Raj, which led to weeks of widespread and bloody rioting and lasted until the end of the Second World War in 1945. Shirwadkar was well-known for his plays, poems, adaptations and translations. His best known translation of Shakespeare, *Natasamrat*, was 'crystallised from Shakespeare's *King Lear*' as a 'tragedy of error judgement'.⁴¹⁵ Avinash Sapre's obituary for Shirwadkar explains that in balance with his great pride in Marathi literary forms Shirwadkar's plays demonstrated his 'high esteem' for Shakespeare, which he 'proved by adopting or translating Shakespeare's plays or by

⁴¹⁴ Shripad D. Deo, 'Marathi Literature', in *Handbook of Twentieth-Century Literatures of India*, ed. by Nalini Natarajan (London: Greenwood Publishing Group, 1996), pp. 207–48 (p. 221).

⁴¹⁵ Manish Surendrarao Gomase, 'Some Prominent Playwrights in the Marathi Theatre', *Aayushi International Interdisciplinary Research Journal*, 6.4 (2019), 42–45 (p. 43).

imbibing Shakespearean characteristics in his independent, original plays'.⁴¹⁶ *Natasamrat* was his most celebrated play, and '[e]very great actor of Marathi theatre has found the soliloquies of *Natasamrat* a great and fulfilling challenge (It is this great creation of his dramatic career which brought him the most prestigious Jnanpith Award)'.⁴¹⁷ One of Shirwadkar's essays featured in *Roopakam*, the volume presented to Fox by Dr Jivraj Narayan Mehta in 1964. 'Shakespeare in Marathi Theatre' describes the differences in staging the plays of the Sanskrit poets to those of Shakespeare: namely, that Marathi audiences were so familiar with the Sanskrit plays that actors could play with their roles and adlib the texts freely, without any perceived loss of meaning, while Shakespeare's lines had to be learnt and recited accurately and performed in prescribed ways in order for the audience to follow the action. Nevertheless, Shirwadkar explains, '[Shakespeare's] plays accomplished the important task of firmly establishing literary language on the Marathi stage: or at least expedited it'.⁴¹⁸

In addition to the note found in the object history file for the gilt flowers is a letter from Roger Pringle, Director of the Trust from 1989 to 2007, to Mr Godbole, in which Pringle regrets being unable to meet Godbole on his visit to Stratford-upon-Avon. Giving thanks for the gift, Pringle offers assurance that it will be added to the special collections 'both as a memento of your visit and also as a token of the abiding power of poetry in our lives and of Shakespeare's inspiration to other writers', thus grounding the principal role of such gifts as emphasising international cultural syncretism while also prioritising Shakespeare as the

⁴¹⁶ Avinash Sapre, 'Kusumagraj: Poet-Hero of the People', *Indian Literature*, 43 (1999), 131–36 (p. 135).

⁴¹⁷ Ibid.

⁴¹⁸ V. V. Shirwadkar, 'Shakespeare in Marathi Theatre', in *Roopakam: Shakespeare Volume*, ed. by G. M. Watve, trans. by Harish Thakkar (Poona: Marathi Natya Parishad, 1965), pp. 27–28 (pp.32–33); given in Poonam Trivedi, "'Bananas on a Mango Tree": Colonial Mimesis, Hybridity and Modern Indian Theatre', in *Refiguring Mimesis: Representation in Early Modern Literature*, ed. by Jonathan Holmes and Adrian Streete (Hatfield, Herts: University of Hertfordshire Press, 2005), pp. 99–116 (p. 106).

originator of international inspiration. At the top of the object history file copy is noted that the letter is the copy of a version that was sent to 'Mr V. V. Shirwadkar'. It seems, then, that Pringle may not have been fully aware that Godbole was the maker and not the poet.⁴¹⁹ This may be due to a mistaken identification with N. R. Godbole, the co-author and translator of an English translation of a biographical encyclopaedia of key Hindu saint-poets. *Stories of Indian Saints: Translation of Mahipati's Marathi Bhaktavijaya*, with Justin Edwards Abbott, was first published in Pune in 1933 and remains a heavily referenced resource. It is to be assumed that Shirwadkar presented the gift and himself at the Birthplace, and the resulting message to the Director was incomplete, leading to the mistake in his letter. As a gift from Shirwadkar, the silver gilt flowers call attention to Shakespeare's role in the Marathi writer's significant career and his development of Marathi theatrical tradition, thus making space for him and it on the SBT's 'world stage' via Shakespeare's cultural capital. However, once again the SBT's historic record-keeping suggests either a sense of illegibility or a lack of care in its interactions with Indian visitors that undermines the potential of this intercultural engagement.

The Birthplace received a visit in the same year, 1991, from the Vice-President of India, Shankar Dayal Sharma and the High Commissioner for India in the UK, Dr L. M. Singhvi. The visitors were shown the ivory Tagore tablet and a series of events were triggered by Singhvi's reaction to it. The events prompted the production of a booklet that details them and in which Singhvi writes that on seeing the tablet he was reminded of a teacher who had 'cited Tagore's ode to Shakespeare written in 1916 on the Tercentenary of Shakespeare's death to expound on the universality of Kālidāsa, the pre-eminent poet and playwright of

⁴¹⁹ Roger Pringle advised that he does not remember this incident so is not able to shed any further light on it. Personal communication 19/09/2019.

India's long and many-splendored literary tradition'. Through Singhvi's eyes this tablet represents an alignment of Kālidāsa, Shakespeare, and Tagore that occurs within the meeting point of the Birthplace.⁴²⁰ The significance for Singhvi of the alignment of the three poets in terms of his education and presumably the kindling of his passion for literature is clear through his ecstatic response and the urgency with which he began the process of arranging for the installation of another tribute to Shakespeare and Tagore, one that would be constantly on display to all.

Singhvi's 'dream came true' when the Chief Minister of West Bengal, Jyoti Basu, offered to send a bronze bust of Tagore that the Kolkatan sculptor Debabrata Chakraborty had created for the Government of West Bengal to Stratford-upon-Avon (see figure 6). The large bust was unveiled in 1995 with much ceremony. Flowers were laid as poetry and songs were recited and performed in Bengali and English. The bust had by then been mounted on a stone plinth with Tagore's poem 'In Honour of William Shakespeare' in the original

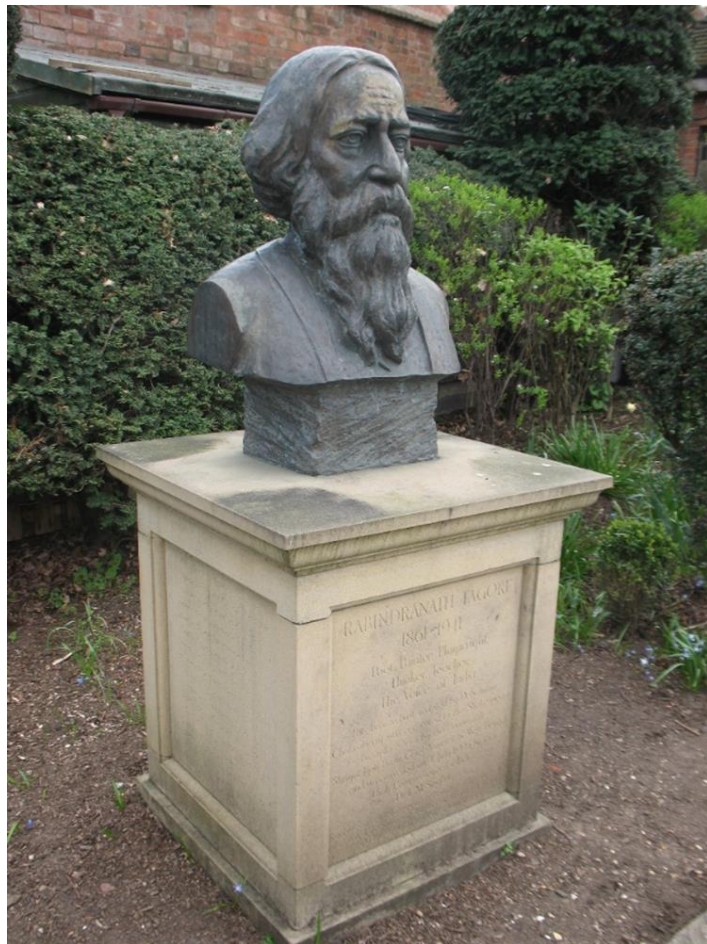


Figure 29: SBT 1995-46 Bust of Rabindrath Tagore in the Garden of Shakespeare's Birthplace

⁴²⁰ SBT pamphlet 62/SIN 'Rabindranath Tagore and his Homage to Shakespeare' by L. M. Singhvi.

handwritten script engraved into the base with the poet's English translation on the opposite side. On the front of the plinth, as it faces out into the Birthplace Garden, is a dedication that lists the names of the prominent Indian figures involved. In effect, therefore, the donators provided their own label for their gift to the museum. In light of Fox's rather limited memorialisation of the 1964 presentation of the Tagore tablet and elision of the names of the Indian High Commissioner, Jivraj Narayan Mehta, and the General Secretary of the Calcutta Art Society, P C Sinha, which could be found quite easily in the SBT's VIP Visitors' Book, the donors' evident desire to be named and to memorialise this event in their own terms gains additional significance. The donor-written label registers another instance of Indian representatives taking control of the narrative and their own representation within a British museum setting. In this case, unlike the fleeting cultural performance that accompanied the presentation of the original tablet, the chosen narrative was carved in stone.

However, although the SBT interpretation panel that stands next to the bust also names Dr Singhvi and the Kolkata sculptor Debabrata Chakraborty, it fails to mention any of Tagore's polymathic achievements aside from the one poem he wrote about Shakespeare. It does not mention his Nobel Prize, and that he was the first non-European to be awarded one. It does not mention that he wrote in every genre imaginable, in several languages, and was prolific beyond Shakespeare's dreams. The panel does not mention that he travelled the world, all but created Bengali literature, and is the writer of two national anthems – the only person to ever do so. It does not mention that he received, and renounced, a knighthood. The Anglocentrism of the panel, which suggests that this engagement with Shakespeare's legacy is the most important aspect of Tagore's contribution to world, may be the result of the limited character allowance for the board, but it is striking that the fact

that he wrote one poem about Shakespeare is elevated above all of his other achievements. The implications of the SBT's curatorial power, and that this can especially circumscribe the 'Other's' desire for Shakespearean cultural authority and engagement, becomes vital once more. The SBT seems to exploit the gift of the bust to bolster Shakespeare's cultural capital and 'universal' appeal while offering an Anglo-centric interpretation that enacts the fundamental flaw in the very concept of Shakespeare's 'universality': that it is grounded in the historic imbrication of Shakespeare as white property through white authority.⁴²¹

The QR code at the bottom of the panel, which I hoped would lead me to a more rounded account of Tagore and his enormous significance to Bengali and world literature, was broken. The blog it would have led to is more detailed and gives an impression of most of the achievements described above, although Shakespeare and the honorific installation of the bust remain the priority of the piece. In the final sentence of the blog, however, Tagore's renunciation of his knighthood is explained away as a protest against 'British policies in the Punjab'. With these words, the SBT elides much more than Tagore's significant achievements. Tagore's rejection of all ties to the British Empire, including his knighthood, came after the massacre of hundreds of unarmed people at Jallianwala Bagh, Amritsar, on 13th April 1919, when Brigadier-General Reginald Dyer ordered his soldiers to open fire on peaceful protestors in an enclosed garden. As Kim A Wagner explains, the shooting was a pre-emptive strike prompted by fear of a repeat of the violent uprisings of 1857, and the massacre remains the most well-known occurrence of exemplary violence –

⁴²¹ See: Arthur L. Little Jr., 'Re-Historicizing Race, White Melancholia, and the Shakespearean Property', *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 67.1 (2016), 84–103; Ian Smith; Dadabhoy.

that which was designed to terrify colonial subjects into compliance – that was repeatedly enacted by British rulers during the Raj.⁴²²

The SBT's Tagore bust creates a nexus that connects the legacy of Shakespeare with the biography of Tagore, of which the massacre at Amritsar is an incontrovertible element. In consequence, the routine sanctioned violence of the British Empire in its colonies also becomes an incontrovertible element of the SBT's collections. The decision to avoid engaging with this aspect of Tagore's biography is telling. Institutions have for many years consistently chosen to sanitise aspects of British history that do not conform to preferred narratives of Empire in which it can be taken as a source of pride for British patriots. The SBT is not a museum of Empire, and has its clear remit to memorialise Shakespeare, but a deeper commitment to understanding its international items through this project has illuminated points of connection between Shakespeare and Tagore (in this instance) that could create displays that do justice to both poets, both cultures, and ultimately model the sort of interpretation that is in keeping with current discourses of decolonisation and anti-racism in the UK culture and heritage sectors. The SBT must begin to find a way of engaging with the colonial past without inadvertently maintaining inequitable colonialist principles.

In a fascinatingly meta coincidence, the choices made by the SBT about how to engage with the story of Tagore's knighthood can themselves be illuminated by one of Tagore's critiques of nationalism. Tagore called the idea of the nation:

⁴²² Kim A Wagner, "Calculated to Strike Terror": The Amritsar Massacre and the Spectacle of Colonial Violence', *Past and Present*, 233.1 (2016), 185–225 (p. 204).

one of the most powerful aesthetics that man has invented. Under the influence of its fumes the whole people can carry out its systematic programme of the most virulent self-seeking without being in the least aware of its moral perversion - in fact feeling dangerously resentful if it is pointed out.⁴²³

As oppressive ideas are sustained by the status quo, the SBT's passive, 'neutral' stance effectively serves to maintain them, making clear the 'moral perversion' of the SBT's avoidance of the topic of the massacre. Even with the opportunity to extend and broaden the narrative that was brought by the use of QR codes, the SBT, perhaps under the influence of the 'fumes of nationalism', still circumvented one of the most the vital aspects of Tagore's relationship with Britain to ensure against contamination of Shakespeare's legacy, thus maintaining the cultural supremacy that was built into the ideology of the Raj.

Tagore defended his notion of a cultural syncretism that reaches across national boundaries even despite the British Empire's devastation of key areas of Indian life, enacted under the claims of innate cultural superiority. The SBT's interpretation of the bust is symptomatic of the continued circumvention of such ideas in the Anglosphere into the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, when the blog post and interpretation panel were produced, respectively. Nevertheless, Dr Singhvi's dedication to the creation of common ground between those who appreciate the work of Tagore and Shakespeare was indicated in another item he presented to the Birthplace at the unveiling of the bust in 1996. A necktie he designed himself was handed directly to Roger Pringle, who noted its inclusion of both Shakespeare and Tagore's signatures (Tagore's in English and Bengali), the

⁴²³ Saha (p. 4); Rabindranath Tagore, *Nationalism* (London: Macmillan, 1917), p. 57.

coat of arms of Stratford-upon-Avon, and the emblem of Visva-Bharati – the university Tagore founded in Santiniketan, West Bengal, in 1921. The website for Visva-Bharati presents its core ethos in Tagore's words to this day: 'Visva-Bharati represents India where she has her wealth of mind which is for all. Visva-Bharati acknowledges India's obligation to offer to others the hospitality of her best culture and India's right to accept from others their best'.⁴²⁴ Pringle's observation is recorded in a note to the museum curator that has been kept in the object history file that requests that the item be accessioned (it was). The suggested grounds for doing so emphasise the fact that the emblems celebrate the 800th anniversary of Stratford's charter and the 75th anniversary of Visva-Bharati, as well as commemorate the installation of the bust. The tie, then, brings together the personal touches of Tagore's and Shakespeare's handwritten signatures, the history of Shakespeare's hometown, Tagore's legacy through the Bengali literary tradition and Visva-Bharati, as well as exemplifying the philosophies of cross-border spiritual unity that Tagore called for throughout his life.

Post-Partition Pakistan: Iqbal Plaque, Iqbal Illumination, Silver Bowl

The first reference to Pakistan in the SBT's collections appears in the Minute Book for 1958, in the entry for September 3 in which the recent visit of the Speaker of the Parliament of Pakistan was reported.⁴²⁵ The visit in 1964 of a delegation from Pakistan has been memorialised in the collections through a photograph from the Quatercentenary celebrations, although those featured are not named.⁴²⁶ In 1990 a fabric panel by Tibor

⁴²⁴ Rabindranath Tagore, 'Visva Bharati :: Home', *Visvabharati.Ac.In* <<http://www.visvabharati.ac.in/index.html>> [accessed 21 September 2019].

⁴²⁵ SBT TR/2/1/5 Minute Book Shakespeare Birthplace Trust 1957-1965, 3 September 1958, p. 95.

⁴²⁶ SBT Reading Room Picture Collection SBT Events 1964. I contacted the Pakistani High Commission for assistance with identifying the visitors but did not receive a response.

Reich, the Stratford-upon-Avon-based designer of many textiles for the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre and Shakespeare Centre, was donated to the collections.⁴²⁷ The panel features Henry VIII and his wives and was discovered in Pakistan by a future SBT staff member. In 1997 the RSC visited Lahore with that year's touring production of *The Comedy of Errors* to take part in Pakistan's Golden Jubilee celebrations, and a commemorative mug has made its way into the collections – a sign of the SBT vaults functioning as a repository in which objects relating to Shakespeare are sent for safe keeping. A celebration of Pakistan's independence must implicitly also commemorate the violence of the partition from India. As such, the play's undercurrents of separation, loss (and finding) of loved ones, and violent inter-state conflict make it a striking prospect for that particular event.

The main focus of this sub-section is the marble plaque that was given to the Trust in 2010. It presents a poem for Shakespeare written by Dr Sir Allama Muhammad Iqbal (see figure 7). Like the Tagore tablet, the poem first appeared in Israel Gollancz's *Book of Homage* in 1916. The plaque features the English translation alongside the poem in Urdu and includes an image of the poet, etched into the stone in the centre. Beneath the portrait is the epigraph 'Dr Sir Muhammad Iqbal, The Poet-Philosopher of the East', which creates a strong impression that this item is designed to celebrate Iqbal through Shakespeare, not the other way around. The portrait, of Iqbal with his head tilted to rest contemplatively on his fist, is rendered in a central medallion with the poet's features revealed through the play of polished and unpolished marble. Without defined lines, colour, or shadow, the ambiguous image that results prompts a process of pareidolia within the observer, where the brain interprets 'random or ambiguous stimuli as being something clear and distinct' as a result of

⁴²⁷ SBT 2003-11, Fabric picture.

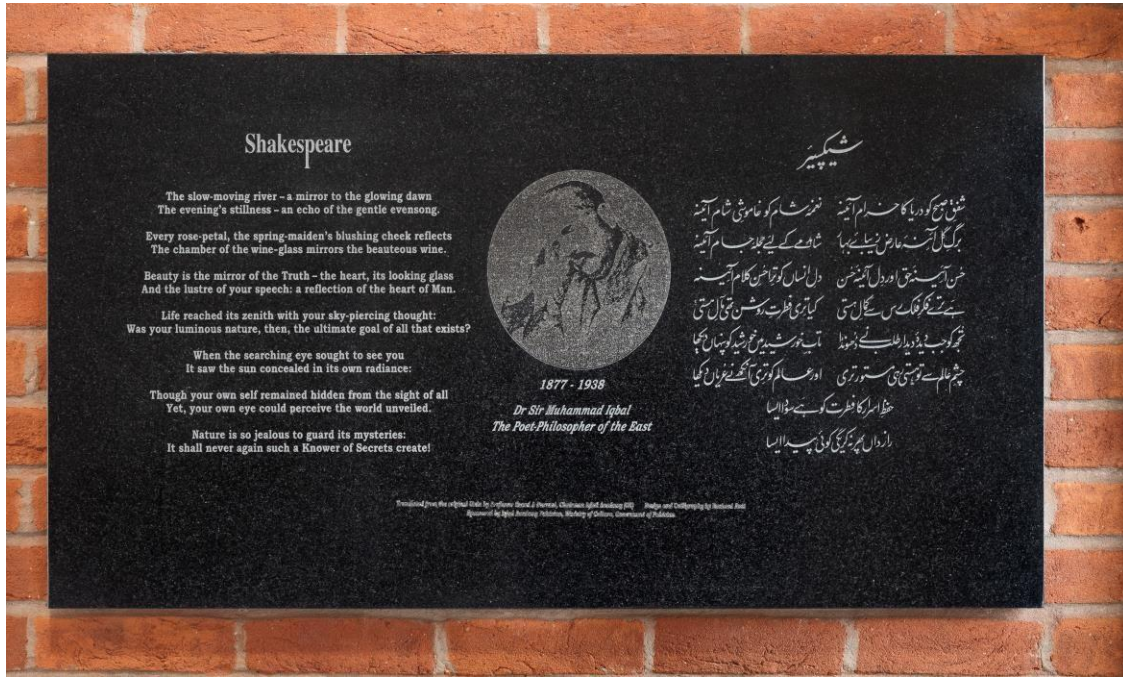


Figure 30: (Unaccessioned) The Iqbal Plaque in the Marble Hall, Shakespeare Centre, Stratford-upon-Avon-upon-Avon

priming or patterning that teaches the brain to expect to see certain things.⁴²⁸ In this instance, the circular image resembles the Earth, as the eye automatically interprets the dull and shiny patches within the circle as the terrain and sea. References to a globe in a Shakespearean context often signify an allusion to the Globe Theatre. In consequence, this rendering draws attention to the collegiality of Shakespeare and Iqbal as poets as well as aligning the two writers as national poets in a specifically global tradition. The epigraph is necessary then, to re-assert the importance of Iqbal within the Subcontinental Indian (given as 'Eastern') tradition.

The Iqbal Festival booklet clearly expresses the connection between Iqbal and Shakespeare. However, as Durrani's contribution explains, Iqbal admired many 'savants of the West' including Dante, Milton, and Goethe. The poem Iqbal wrote in honour of

⁴²⁸ Caleb W. Lack and Jacques Rousseau, *Critical Thinking, Science, and Pseudoscience: Why We Can't Trust Our Brains* (New York: Springer Publishing Company, 2016), p. 82.

Shakespeare was amongst several he wrote about 'distinguished figures of national, regional and world history. He comments on their work and contribution, noting their distinction, recording his admiration for them, and acknowledging, explicitly or implicitly, his intellectual or spiritual debt to them'.⁴²⁹ A translation of his poem for Shakespeare is given below:

'Shakespeare'

The slow-moving river - a mirror to the glowing dawn

The evening's stillness - an echo of the gentle evensong

Every rose-petal, the spring-maiden's blushing cheek reflects

The chamber of the wine-glass mirrors the beautiful wine.

Beauty is the mirror of the Truth - the heart, its looking glass

and the lustre of your speech: a reflection of the heart of man.

Life reached its zenith with your sky-piercing thought:

was your luminous nature, then, the ultimate goal of all that exists?

⁴²⁹ Mustansir Mir and Muhammad Iqbal, 'Personalities', in *Tulip in the Desert: A Selection of the Poetry of Muhammed Iqbal*, ed. by Mustansir Mir (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1999), pp. 70–81 (p. 70).

When the searching eye sought to see you

It saw the sun concealed in its own radiance:

Though your own self remained hidden from the sight of all

yet, your own eye could perceive the world unveiled

Nature is so jealous to guard its mysteries:

It shall never again such a Knower of Secrets create!⁴³⁰

Iqbal's poem identifies Shakespeare's work as reflecting beauty and illuminating truth, and the sun metaphors correspond intriguingly with the poem written by Tagore, who had been Iqbal's friend and teacher for some years, for the same 1916 volume. In Iqbal's poem, the sunlight radiating from Shakespeare's 'luminous nature' blinds sight of, but also, perhaps, occludes understanding of, the poet. Shakespeare is endowed with an ability to see and reflect on truth and beauty as nature's secrets, so that 'jealous nature' will 'never again such a Knower of secrets create'. Shama Futehally explains the religious connotations of these images, as in Iqbal's work the mirror 'represents the earthly being who mirrors the divine one, and which sees God as a mirror-maker', and the veil (in the sixth stanza) is 'not just the one that hides a beautiful face, but one which hides the face of the Divine from its

⁴³⁰ Translated by Professor Saeed A Durrani, Chairman of the Iqbal Academy (UK).

seeker'.⁴³¹ The poem's preoccupation with sight and reflections also, perhaps, acknowledges the frequent references in Shakespeare's works to mirrors and reflections as proto-psychological indicators of identity; or in one of the most famous of his lines, in *Hamlet*, to describe the purpose of plays 'to hold, as 'twere, the mirror up to nature; to show Virtue her own feature, scorn her own image, and the very age and body of the time his form and pressure'.⁴³² Iqbal therefore emphasises the 'unknowability' of Shakespeare because of his luminosity (and his 'lustrous' speeches) as a contradistinction to the knowledge and understanding of the many identities that are demonstrated in his works.

Corresponding ideas about reflectivity are discernible in the marble of the plaque and emphasised through the polished and unpolished surface sections of the portrait of Iqbal at its centre. Through this choice of medium, Iqbal, like Shakespeare in the poem, is found and unfound, reflected and dull, as the texture of the marble changes. In this poem, Mir asserts, 'Iqbal compares Shakespeare to the mirror of the human heart – and mind, we might add. Of particular interest in this poem is Iqbal's observation on the remarkable detachment or objectivity Shakespeare was able to maintain in his work – what Keats called his "negative capability"'.⁴³³ In this Keatsian concept, Shakespeare's key attribute as a 'Man of Achievement' is determined as his capability 'of being in uncertainty, Mysteries, doubts, without any irritable reaching after fact & reason'.⁴³⁴ The uncertain rendering of Iqbal's image in the marble plaque thus represents a corresponding capability: the doubt that is engendered by the medium, the ambiguity of the globe-like image of Iqbal is comfortable in

⁴³¹ Shama Futehally, *Slivers of a Mirror: Glimpses of the Ghazal* (Ahmedabad: MapinLit, 2005), p. 15.

⁴³² William Shakespeare, 'The Tragedy of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark', in *The New Oxford Shakespeare: The Complete Works*, ed. by Gary Taylor and others (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 3.2.17-19.

⁴³³ Mir and Iqbal (p. 71).

⁴³⁴ John Keats, *The Letters of John Keats*, ed. by Hyder E. Rollins (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1958), I, p. 193-4.

its own ambivalence, and deliberately offers uncertain possibilities for its meaning to convey a sense of the complexity of Iqbal as its figure.

Iqbal died before the formation of Pakistan but is nevertheless renowned as one of its founding fathers and as its national poet, because along with his patriotic poetry that was ‘inspired by the beauty of the land of his birth’ he was also active in the agitated Indian political scene during the rule of the British Raj.⁴³⁵ Indeed, it was Iqbal who first proposed the formation of a Muslim State out of India. As Islam is a monotheistic religion (as opposed to polytheistic Hinduism), he saw the religious diversity of India as a threat to ‘the Islamic principle’ that held the Muslim community together.⁴³⁶ He believed that ‘humanity unites in divinity, that humanity attains equality in divinity, that humanity attains freedom in divinity, that if this divinity were denied and disrespected, mankind would be divided and disintegrate’.⁴³⁷ Thus, Iqbal perceived the disintegration of a crucial Islamic principle in modern Indian society, and sought partition in order to maintain the integrity of the community of his faith.

Iqbal’s dream of a Muslim nation was frequently expressed in his poetry. As Mustansir Mir points out, his ‘poetry and philosophy do not exist in isolation from each other, but are integrally related, his poetry serving as a vehicle for his thought’.⁴³⁸ Mir continues: ‘[a]lthough his interests range widely, Iqbal essentially belongs to, and speaks from within, the Islamic tradition, employing for his purposes its historical, religious,

⁴³⁵ Jai Narain Sharma, *Encyclopedia of Eminent Thinkers: The Political Thought of Mohammad Iqbal* (New Delhi: Concept Publishing, 2008), p. 50.

⁴³⁶ Muhammad Iqbal, ‘The Muslim Community - A Sociological Study’, in *Speeches, Writings and Statements of Iqbal*, ed. by Latif Ahmed Sherwani (Lahore: Iqbal Academy Pakistan, 2009), p. 120; quoted in Walid Iqbal (p. 3).

⁴³⁷ Walid Iqbal, ‘Nature and Values of Iqbal’s Ideal Society’, in *International Conference on Allama Iqbal, Muslim Institute, Islamabad, Pakistan, 2017*, pp. 1–11 (p. 2).

⁴³⁸ Mustansir Mir, ‘Introduction’, in *Tulip in the Desert: A Selection of the Poetry of Muhammed Iqbal*, ed. by Mustansir Mir (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1999), pp. 1–8 (p. 1).

philosophical and literary resources' in order to 'arouse socio-religious consciousness among Muslims'.⁴³⁹ His teachings were understood as 'spiritually [...] the chief force behind the creation of Pakistan'.⁴⁴⁰ Furthermore, as Javed Majeed explains, Iqbal's poetry works to redress the colonisation of the cultural traditions of India, specifically those demonstrated through the Western archives of travel writing that includes but is not limited to Coryate's comparatively temperate account. Iqbal's poetry does this through imagined dialogues with Nietzsche and the Persian poet Rumi, for example. Thus, '[i]n Persian and Urdu travelogues of the nineteenth century the archives and libraries of Europe are testimonies to imperial power. In Iqbal's work, however, the archive is transformed by the poet's creative imagination into authors with whom he engages'.⁴⁴¹ In this way, Iqbal's work answers back to empire and the stories it tells about the cultures of Subcontinental India.

The marble plaque was presented to the Trust as part of the 'Shakespeare – Iqbal Festival of the World' that took place at the Shakespeare Birthplace from 23rd to 25th April 2010 to coincide with the Shakespeare Birthday celebrations of that year. The presentation event, on Friday 23rd (the day Shakespeare's birthday is traditionally celebrated) included recitations of Urdu and Persian poetry, with English translations; musical and folk performances, and two civic receptions, one hosted by the Mayor of Stratford-upon-Avon, one hosted by the High Commissioner of Pakistan, Wajid Shamsul Hasan, who had also been responsible for the unveiling of the plaque; a short account of 'Iqbal's contributions to world literature and metaphysical thought' from Professor Saeed A Durrani, the Chairman of the Iqbal Academy UK. The Iqbal Academy are based at the University of Birmingham, and

⁴³⁹ Mir (p. 5).

⁴⁴⁰ Fazlur Rahman, *Islam* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979), p. 255.; in Mir (p. 2).

⁴⁴¹ Javed Majeed, 'Geographies of Subjectivity, Pan-Islam and Muslim Separatism: Muhammad Iqbal and Selfhood', *Modern Intellectual History*, 4.1 (2007), 145–61 (p. 158).

Durrani's involvement in the day and as the driving force for the gift itself attests to the significance of the proximity to Birmingham to Stratford-upon-Avon: Birmingham is home to the world's largest Pakistani community outside Pakistan.⁴⁴² At only twenty-two miles away and with a direct train service between Birmingham and Stratford-upon-Avon, the notion that creating a space for the national poet of Pakistan at Shakespeare's birthplace could benefit this large Pakistani population is clear, and signals one of the ways in which Shakespeare's cultural capital could and should be utilised for a greater good than just reiterating Shakespeare's greatness.

The program for the day, which was preserved in the booklet produced for the event, demonstrates an effort to harmonise the celebration of both Shakespeare and Iqbal. High Commissioner Hasan expressed his hopes that 'the monument would serve as a living memory of the connection between two legends who lived over two centuries apart... I am confident that this momentous event would be a milestone in the endeavours towards cultural cohesion between the East and the West'. The Prime Minister of Pakistan at that time, Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani, also contributed to the booklet, expressing his pleasure at the installation of the plaque, which will 'rest for all time among other memorials honouring internationally acclaimed writers, philosophers and poets'.⁴⁴³ Both statements allude to an understanding of the Birthplace as a key locus for world culture, for celebration of the fellowship of world poets. Moreover, Hasan's term 'living memory' highlights the evolving nature of the poets' legacies, at home and abroad, how memorialisation and interpretation

⁴⁴² Karamat Iqbal, *The Arts & Cultural Needs of Birmingham's Pakistani Communities Research Report Transforming Narratives Project*, 26 June 2019

<https://www.transformingnarratives.com/_userfiles/pages/files/community_facilitation_kalaboration_pakistani_arts_survey_report.pdf> [accessed 25 April 2021].

⁴⁴³ SBT pamphlet 62/SHA – Shakespeare Festival of World Poetry & Music, Stratford-upon-Avon, 23-25 April 2010.

reshapes understanding of Shakespeare and Iqbal's lives and works. The plaque brings those legacies together into one narrative, in which the poets are bonded by their art, and Gilani's statement emphasises the sense of permanence that derives from this memorial (the plaque) within this monument (the birthplace). In its substance as well as the intent behind the plaque, then, the gift prompts allusions to Shakespeare's 'Sonnet 55', which insists that poetry outlives even 'marble, or gilded monuments'.⁴⁴⁴ The endurance and imperviousness of the marble of the plaque provides material weight to a metaphor for the endurance and imperviousness of both poets' worldwide renown. It also affirms the impetus behind this and perhaps all gifts to the Shakespeare Birthplace Museum: to buy into this sense of permanence and be represented in (figurative or actual) marble on this 'world stage'.

The Urdu calligraphy was carved onto the plaque by celebrated Pakistani calligrapher Rasheed Butt, who, the booklet notes, has exhibited his art at key monuments in Pakistan as well as globally and at the iconic Mecca Gate in Saudi Arabia. Calligraphy is an important art form within Islamic culture, established as such in the early years of the religion through 'metaphors of God's act of creations being akin to that of writing'.⁴⁴⁵ In part as an alternative to depicting humans, which is discouraged in Islamic culture (because of the connotations of idolatry, which is forbidden), Mangho A. L. Loeb explains that '[t]he growth of religion and the art of writing have been intertwined, because religious scriptures are believed to contain the written word of God. [...] The written word was magic; it brought hope, happiness and the power to heal'.⁴⁴⁶ The calligraphy on the Iqbal plaque, then,

⁴⁴⁴ William Shakespeare, 'Sonnet 55', in *The New Oxford Shakespeare: The Complete Works*, ed. by Gary Taylor and others (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), pp. 2815–92 (p. 2841).

⁴⁴⁵ David J. Roxburgh, "'The Eye Is Favored For Seeing the Writing's Form": On the Sensual and the Sensuous in Islamic Calligraphy"', in *Muqarnas - Frontiers of Islamic Art and Architecture*, ed. by Julia Bailey and Gülrü Necipoglu (Leiden: Brill, 2008), pp. 275–98 (p. 279).

⁴⁴⁶ Mangho A. L. Loeb, 'Tessellations in Islamic Calligraphy', *Leonardo*, 28.1 (1995), 41–45 (p. 41).

provides another layer of meaning and value to the object: through the high profile of the artist, the spiritual implications, and the evident gesture of sincere goodwill between the two international cultural institutions.

Two further gifts were presented alongside the plaque in 2010. An ornate silver bowl stamped with the state emblem of Pakistan and the surrounding message ‘Presented by Prime Minister / The Islamic Republic of Pakistan’, and an illuminated calligraphy of a second Iqbal poem, ‘The Birth of Adam’, also made by Butt (see figure 8). The value of calligraphy as a form that can adequately represent Pakistani artistry on the SBT’s ‘world stage’ is



Figure 31: (Unaccessioned) Illuminated calligraphy of Iqbal's ‘The Birth of Adam’, by Rasheed Butt.

indicated by the second item in particular. The richly decorated illumination features intricate patterning around the poem’s borders in blue, indigo, yellow, red, and gold, and demonstrates Butt’s unique skill as the first in Pakistan to use illumination alongside

calligraphy and as ‘the only calligrapher capable of working gold in *qalam* (pen)’.⁴⁴⁷ When I was given the opportunity to meet with representatives from the Iqbal Academy on a visit to the Birthplace in December 2019, I was struck by their disappointment at finding out that the illuminated poem was hung in the CEO’s office, and not on public display like the plaque. It was by far the more expensive of the two gifts, Murawat Hussain explained, and had been commissioned and given with the idea that it would convey the importance of Iqbal as a poet in his own right, to be displayed alongside his dedication to Shakespeare.⁴⁴⁸ Once again, the desire for self-representation, to exert control over the narrative that would be presented by the SBT is indicated and is shown to have been unsuccessful.

Later events prompt consideration of the ambiguous nature of the first representation of Iqbal at the SBT, however, on the marble plaque. The choice to present the image of the poet in a slightly obscured way may be responding to Islamic concerns about the depictions of humans. Nonetheless, it also has the effect of occasioning an unanswered question: what elements of Iqbal’s work, and more pressingly, his religion, were expressed through the performances that took place at the SBT on the day of the plaque’s presentation?

Six years later, on November 9th, 2016, Iqbal’s birthday was celebrated at the SBT, and the official press release from the Press Information Department in Islamabad provides some detail not available in the SBT’s collections. The press release announces the ‘historic occasion for the Pakistan Consulate, Birmingham and the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust UK’,

⁴⁴⁷ Rayan Khan, ‘Rasheed Butt: The Life and Times of a Calligrapher’, *The Express Tribune*, 2011 <<https://tribune.com.pk/story/206755/rasheed-butt-the-life-and-times-of-a-calligrapher/>> [accessed 4 March 2020].

⁴⁴⁸ Personal Communication with Murawat Hussain, Head of Arts and Culture at the Iqbal Academy UK, 2nd December 2019 at the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust.

which is ‘a manifestation of growing literary and cultural ties between Pakistan and the United Kingdom’ and is ‘expected to play an important role in community cohesion and integration’. The event would feature, it said, Iqbal’s poetry, English translations, his poem for Shakespeare, and one of Shakespeare’s that is very similar to Iqbal’s – ‘Lab Pe Aati Hai Dua’ (‘My Heart’s Desire Comes to My Lips As A Prayer’), as well as ‘live Sufi music based on his poetry and philosophy’.⁴⁴⁹ The event was also attended by the Pakistan High Commissioner to the UK, His Excellency Syed Ibne Abbas, Pakistan Consul General Birmingham Mr. Maroof Syed, and Mr. Makhdoom Chishti, who was Chair of the Sufi Trust.⁴⁵⁰ The incorporation of the performance of Sufi music is interesting not least because although Iqbal was inspired by Sufi writers, he rejected Sufism as essentially un-Islamic. Carl W. Ernst sums the relation up by explaining that Iqbal’s engagement with the Sufi poets – Rumi and Hallaj in particular – comes through in his work, where Rumi features as a principal character in Iqbal’s *Book of Eternity*, and Hallaj’s influence is evident in his theory of the dynamic self. Nevertheless, Ernst advises that ‘Iqbal rejected what he saw as the negative aspects of Sufism, which could be described as fatalism, passivity, and a false notion of the absorption of humanity in unity with God’.⁴⁵¹ Adeel Hussain clarifies that Iqbal felt that the Sufi rejection of the material world ‘robbed Muslims of the potential to tackle the precarious material conditions that surrounded them’, stripping them ‘of even the

⁴⁴⁹ ‘Pakistan Consulate, Birmingham and Shakespeare Birthplace Trust United Kingdom to Jointly Organize Allama Iqbal’s Birthday’, *Official Press Release*, 2016
<<https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/A467642633/STND?u=uce&sid=STND&xid=aefb883f>> [accessed 23 September 2019].

⁴⁵⁰ Sophie Clausen, ‘Iqbal and Shakespeare’, *The Shakespeare Birthplace Trust*, 2016
<<https://www.shakespeare.org.uk/explore-shakespeare/blogs/iqbal-and-shakespeare/>> [accessed 27 July 2021].

⁴⁵¹ Carl W. Ernst, *The Shambhala Guide to Sufism* (Boston, Massachusetts: Shambhala Publications Ltd, 1997), p. 201.

faintest ability to act'.⁴⁵² Thus, the choice to present Iqbal's work through Sufi music seems incongruous and misrepresentative.

Eighteenth- and nineteenth-century colonial Orientalism has long presented Sufism as a 'sect with a nebulous relation to Islam', made up of 'freethinkers who had little to do with the stern faith of the Arabian Prophet. They had much more in common, so went the argument, with true Christianity, with Greek philosophy, and with the mystical speculations of the Indian Vedanta'.⁴⁵³ In this way, the term 'Sufi' became 'an appropriation of those portions of "Oriental" culture that Europeans found attractive', and Ernst asserts that studies taken into the late 1990s found that 'many of the underlying assumptions of the early Orientalists [about Sufism] are still active, despite the relatively much larger base of knowledge that is currently available'.⁴⁵⁴ The denunciation of Sufism by fundamentalist Muslim factions as being derived from 'the idolatrous practices of Saint-worshipping Christians and from the heretical doctrines of pantheistic Greek philosophers' in combination with the broad swathe of Western thinkers 'who uncritically accept Muslim fundamentalists as the true representatives of Islam' led to a tacit acceptance of 'fundamentalist denunciations of Sufism as marginal to Islam'.⁴⁵⁵ This process was undertaken by colonialists and/or Orientalists in order to perpetuate European power, in the understanding that 'to have such acknowledge of such a thing is to dominate it, to have authority over it. And authority here means for "us" to deny authority to "it"'.⁴⁵⁶ Sufi music and dance (most famously the 'Whirling Dervish') became such a property, understood in

⁴⁵² Adeel Hussain, 'Muhammad Iqbal's Constitutionalism', *Indian Law Review*, 2.2 (2018), 135–58 (p. 142).

⁴⁵³ Ernst, p. 3., p. 8.

⁴⁵⁴ *Ibid*, p. 8., p. 18.

⁴⁵⁵ *Ibid*, p. xii., p. 18.

⁴⁵⁶ Said, *Orientalism*, p. 32.

exoticised ways that foregrounded the supreme rationality of the colonisers by its relative peculiarity.

Western interest in ideas of benign, Euro-superiority affirming Sufism increased through the twentieth century, and Martin van Bruinessen explains that '[t]he revulsion felt by reform-minded [Muslim] intellectuals at the loud and ecstatic rituals of some of the 'popular' Sufi orders has been exacerbated by their awareness of westerners watching these rituals as exotic expressions of a backward religiosity'.⁴⁵⁷ Taken for an emblem of Sufism as a whole, the fact that the 'Whirling Dervish' dance is a ritual practiced by just one predominantly Turkish order of Sufis, the Mevlevis, and the fact that the movement represents an intense mode of worship and is not merely entertainment, is largely ignored under the Western gaze.⁴⁵⁸ The programming of Sufi music in the 2016 celebration of Iqbal, an Indian Muslim poet who was manifestly not Sufi, seems to indicate an intentional alignment of Pakistan's national poet, a key element of Pakistani culture, with an aspect of Subcontinental Indian culture that is perceived in the West as a reassuring, 'safe' version of Islam that may be more welcome. Colonial configurations of Sufism as the antithesis of the fundamentalism that has been at the centre of media coverage of Islam following decades of 'jihadi' terror have thus been re-appropriated by an originating culture as a form of soft power.⁴⁵⁹

My interpretation of the inclusion of Sufi music in the Iqbal birthday celebrations of 2016 as mode of Pakistani soft power proposes that several of Iqbal's key principles were

⁴⁵⁷ Martin van Bruinessen, 'Sufism, "popular" Islam, and the Encounter with Modernity', in *Islam and Modernity: Key Issues and Debates*, ed. by Muhammad Khalid Masud, Armando Salvatore, and Martin van Bruinessen (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2009), pp. 125–57 (p. 19).

⁴⁵⁸ Ernst (pp. 185, 191, 192).

⁴⁵⁹ van Bruinessen (p. 18).

sacrificed by the programmers in order to make Iqbal's Muslim identity appealing, if not to promote Pakistan's global reputation. Although, as the authors clearly state, as of 2014 there was 'no central authority with a formal obligation for publicity and promotion of Pakistan to the international public', Salman Yousaf and Li Huaibin's article 'Branding Pakistan as "Sufi" Country: The Role of Religion in Developing a Nation's Brand' very clearly advocated doing so, arguing that '[p]romoting Pakistan's image as a "Sufi country" is fairly consistent with the prevailing disposition of Pakistani society as compared to the current image of Pakistan cultivated in the world's media as a country with terrorist roots'.⁴⁶⁰ Whether the decision to associate Iqbal with Sufism at the SBT was a decision made solely by the visiting programmers or through a broader, national system of intention to alter international perceptions about Islam, it was a decision that was most likely made with awareness of the stereotypes and prejudices that exist/ed in the UK as a result of several hundred years of Orientalism, imperialism, and 'wars on terror'.

There is no indication that any other aspect of Iqbal's faith was exhibited in the proceedings. Thus, the obscured, ambiguous rendering of the poet etched onto the marble plaque reflects on the representation of his self and his beliefs at the 2016 celebration in Stratford-upon-Avon. The Iqbal that was represented was an opaque rendering, adapted to suit the audience's sensibilities and potentially to fit the political purposes of the givers. In this respect, then, Iqbal's legacy as a national poet is aligned with Shakespeare's: Shakespeare has been used as a most pervasive form of British soft power for hundreds of years, dating as far back as 'Garrick's Jubilee' in 1769. Soft power works through attraction, influencing 'others' into a favourable attitude through the subtlety of advertising shared

⁴⁶⁰ Salman Yousaf and Li Huaibin, 'Branding Pakistan as "Sufi" Country: The Role of Religion in Developing a Nation's Brand', *Journal of Place Management and Development*, 7.1 (2014), 90–104, (pp. 99, 97).

values and interests – Shakespeare, for instance – with the ultimate aim of making ‘its power seem legitimate in the eyes of others’.⁴⁶¹ Like so many international gifts, the plaque suggests, therefore, the desire to both buy into and, through Iqbal, emulate Shakespeare’s cultural capital and usefulness as a national symbol on the Birthplace’s ‘world stage’. All international gifts to the SBT can be understood in terms of soft power, but the concept and uses are especially noticeable in this case due to the incongruous emphasis on Sufism.

The plaque is mounted on the wall of the Marble Hall in the Shakespeare Centre, overlooking the gardens in which the bust of Tagore sits. As such, the two gifts, which represent the desires of specific communities to see their national poets honoured alongside Shakespeare, allow contemplation of Shakespeare as a meeting point between India and Pakistan.⁴⁶² This notion was brought forward in a 2017 exhibition on Shakespeare in South Asia that was curated by Islam Issa, with the assistance of his students at Birmingham City University, and fittingly took place in the Marble Hall, alongside the Iqbal plaque and in view of the Tagore bust. The exhibition was prompted by the Year of India campaign, a UK government initiative to mark seventy years since partition. Although the notion of the Birthplace as a cultural meeting point for Pakistan and India does little to soothe the tensions that have been ongoing for many decades (and certainly not to mitigate the many lives that have been lost), it emphasises the role of culture, and of course poetry in particular, in resituating expressions of common humanity when political concerns overwhelm the instinct to connect across national, social, or religious barriers. This message is emphasised by the fact that in addition to India, Issa actively chose to make the exhibition

⁴⁶¹ Nye Jr (p. 167).

⁴⁶² Paul Edmondson, ‘Afterword: “Speak What We Feel, Not What We Ought to Say”’, in *Shakespeare and I*, ed. by William McKenzie and Theodora Papadopoulou (London: Continuum, 2012), pp. 258–68 (p. 268).

about Shakespeare and Pakistan, Bangladesh, The Maldives, Sri Lanka, Afghanistan, Nepal, and Bhutan, as a very clear reminder about borders and the implications of the Partition of 1947 for the whole region.⁴⁶³ Shakespeare cannot soothe those implications – the suggestion that he and his work can relies on the problematic notion of universality – but this exhibition showed that with thoughtful interpretation the SBT could use Shakespeare’s cultural capital and ‘world stage’ to represent ‘other’ cultures in a way that redresses Anglo-centric imperialism.

The Iqbal plaque commemorates the poet’s introduction into the community of memorialised thinkers and writers of the world that have been connected by the Shakespeare Birthplace. Indeed, the specific connection with Tagore within that community was at the core of the gesture from its inception: SBT Head of Research and Knowledge Paul Edmondson remembers the occasion of the 2008 celebration of Tagore’s birthday, at which the Iqbal Society were present and suggested the gift of the plaque to commemorate Iqbal alongside Tagore, in celebration of the friendship of the two poets.

However, my research on this item highlighted a circumstance that may have complicated the SBT’s relationship with Pakistan had it come to light previously. As an item that is fixed to a wall of the building (the Shakespeare Centre), the plaque is, in insurance terms at least, part of the fabric of the building. According to the collecting policy, then, it does not need to be accessioned in the collection, and consequently was not. The illuminated ‘Birth of Adam’ and the silver bowl were not accessioned either, when a case could have been made for them as objects that connote Shakespeare’s global significance, although somewhat obliquely. The consequence of this policy is that the items are not

⁴⁶³ Personal conversation with Dr Islam Issa, October 2017.

searchable in the online catalogue. A general online enquiry about how Pakistan is represented in the SBT collections would fail to disclose the existence of this extremely significant plaque – unless the conscious decision was made to make it visible as an unaccessioned item. For the sake of the cataloguing system, this status would then be discernible by the catalogue reference prefix of ‘UA’. Indeed, a search for ‘Pakistan’ in Discover Shakespeare brings up only two results, the commemorative mug from the 1997 anniversary performance of *The Comedy of Errors*, and the Tibor Reich fabric picture of Henry VIII and his wives, which does not actually explain in the catalogue description the connection to Pakistan.

That representation in the SBT’s collections is important to Pakistan was affirmed through a personal encounter in 2019, when the Shakespeare Centre was unexpectedly visited by the Deputy Consul General for the Pakistani Consulate in Birmingham, Sardar Muhammad Khatak. As Khatak explained that he had come to see what the collections contained in relation to Pakistan, perhaps following the Consulate’s involvement in the 2016 celebrations of Iqbal’s birthday, I was introduced to him, because I was then working on the Indian, Pakistani, and Bangladeshi collection. I showed him the Iqbal plaque and then took him to the display case in which the silver bowl from the Prime Minister of Pakistan had been displayed, not realising that it had just been put away in the vaults. The sense of disappointment in the SBT’s failure – however unreasonable that might be – to value a Pakistani gift according to the donors’ intentions echoed the disappointment expressed by Murawat Hussain from the Iqbal Academy, with regard to the ‘Birth of Adam’ illumination.

Representation in the SBT’s collections denotes the membership of Iqbal in the international community of artists who perform their significance to their home culture on

the SBT's 'world stage'. The 'world stage' is not only the museum but the online catalogue that is freely available for anyone with an internet connection to browse. As such, this accessioning/cataloguing decision effectively concealed Iqbal's membership in that community of poets, and presence on the 'world stage', and had the decision been made to list it as unaccessioned, would have conspicuously demonstrated it as a different class of object to the majority of the other items listed. The absence of representation in the online catalogue means the plaque only exists to those who visit the museum in person, and even then, they must explore a part of the building that is only open to the public for occasional exhibitions at certain times. To exacerbate this issue, the Tagore tablet, bust, and even the necktie are all accessioned, and searchable in the online catalogue. This is in part because a previous Head of Collections at the SBT interpreted the collecting policy differently, but it is reasonable to surmise that this could also be due to the 'unfavourable' representation of Pakistan that has prevailed in the media – the cause of the strategic use of Sufism as Pakistani soft power at the celebration of Iqbal's birthday in 2016. The unbalanced representation of Iqbal and Tagore could have had diplomatic consequences, but as a result of this study the Iqbal plaque and illuminated poem that was given alongside it are being accessioned imminently.

Post-Partition Bangladesh: Silver Plate, Filigree Bowl, Tagore Portrait

The youngest nation of the three represented in this chapter, Bangladesh, has only three objects in its name (to date). In chronological order of presentation to the Trust, the first is a silver plate with a circular brass insert showing the national emblem of Bangladesh in the centre, engraved with motifs from the emblem around the edges, which was given by President Abdur Rahman Biswas on an official visit in 1995. The second is a portrait of

Tagore given by the High Commissioner of Bangladesh to the UK, Mohamad Mijarul Quayes in 2013. The third is a silver filigree dish that was presented by President Abdul Hamid on his official visit in 2015.⁴⁶⁴ The plate and dish represent the desire to present a gift in line with cultural custom on an official visit, with the added nationalistic impetus of placing a ‘flag in the sand’ of the Birthplace, and thus becoming part of the ongoing story of Shakespeare. The plate is accessioned and listed in the online catalogue, the bowl is not. The portrait, which is unaccessioned but listed in the catalogue as a gift from the official representative of Bangladesh in the UK represents the Bangladeshi claim on Rabindranath Tagore. Although Tagore was born in Calcutta, his family estates were in Shelaidaha, which became Bangladeshi territory with its creation in 1971. This portrait is, then, a statement of Tagore’s importance to Bangladesh, as well as India.

Tagore’s advocacy of Bengali culture and language had played a significant role during the Bengali fight for independence from Pakistan because that fight was centred on the divergence of the cultural and linguistic values of East and West Pakistan. Nazneen Ahmed states that although Muhammad Ali Jinnah (1876-1948), the leader of the All-India Muslim League (1913-1947) and then Pakistan’s first Governor General (1947-1948), had insisted that Pakistan would be ‘secular and democratic in nature’ and that religious freedom would be a central tenet, he announced in August 1947 that ‘in order to facilitate a project of cultural unification, [...] Urdu “and no other language” would be made the state language of both wings’.⁴⁶⁵ For Bengali-speaking East Pakistan this move towards linguistic

⁴⁶⁴ SBT 1995-45 Presentation plate, c. 1995.; SBT UA2015-1, Picture: Rabindranath Tagore by A.S. Toufiq.; Unaccessioned filigree dish.

⁴⁶⁵ Nazneen Ahmed, ‘The Poetics of Nationalism: Cultural Resistance and Poetry in East Pakistan/Bangladesh, 1952-71’, *Journal of Postcolonial Writing*, 50.3 (2014), 256–68 (p. 257).; quoting from Nitish Sengupta, *Bengal Divided: The Unmaking of a Nation (1905-1971)* (New Delhi: Penguin/Viking, 2007), p. 257.

homogeneity was indicative of a dismissive and neglectful attitude towards Bengali identity and led to state violence in February 1952.⁴⁶⁶ Furthermore, 'well after Bengali was introduced as one of the national languages of Pakistan in 1956, literature, songs and dramas were being produced invoking the events of 21 February 1952 as an emblem of collective pride and defiance against the Pakistani state'.⁴⁶⁷ As a consequence of the threat to Bengali culture signalled by Jinnah's announcement, the facility of poetry to act 'as a vehicle for the performance of collective expression ("nation language") and the ritualized remembrance of collective trauma' made Tagore's work vital to the fight for representation and official use of the Bengali language.⁴⁶⁸

In 1961, fierce debates raged in East Pakistan about the celebration of Tagore's birth centenary. Contentions about Tagore's religion, imperialism, and monarchism were raised by Pakistani authorities and those who saw Tagore and his ideals as 'antipathetic to the concept of Pakistan'.⁴⁶⁹ As such, embracing the 'Bard of Bengal' was seen as tantamount to 'denying the radical disparity of cultures on the basis of which Pakistan was founded'.⁴⁷⁰ Despite counter-arguments that he had an ancestral home in East Pakistani territory and that 'many of his works were based on human life in the natural environment of East Bengal', his songs were slowly phased out of broadcasting playlists as the 1960s progressed.⁴⁷¹ This prompted widespread protest in East Pakistan, and in the years leading up to and throughout the liberation war of 1971, Tagore's song 'Amar sonar Bangla' (My Bengal of Gold) became increasingly popular, and was consequently made the national

⁴⁶⁶ Ibid (p. 258).

⁴⁶⁷ Ibid (p. 259).

⁴⁶⁸ Ibid (p. 257).

⁴⁶⁹ Anisuzzaman (p. 1061).

⁴⁷⁰ Ibid (p. 1063).

⁴⁷¹ Ibid (1062).

anthem on the creation of Bangladesh in December of that year.⁴⁷² By 1986, the 125th anniversary of Tagore's birth was widely celebrated in Bangladesh, which had firmly and officially re-established Tagore as a poet of national significance, in line with the fight for independence from Pakistan on the basis of Bengali identity.⁴⁷³

The picture of Tagore that was presented to the SBT in 2015 is a pencil drawing (approximately 15cmx20cm) mounted inside a considerably larger frame (approximately 70cmx50cm). On the backboard of the frame is a piece of paper, seemingly stuck to the board with glue, with the note 'Personal collection of Mohamed Mijarul Quayes'. The gift was also accompanied by its own brass plaque with the inscription: 'Image of Rabindranath Tagore by AS. Toufiq (Etching: 1911) From the Rabindranama Collection, Dhaka Art Centre' and the details of the presentation from Quayes, to the SBT, and his diplomatic position as the High Commissioner of Bangladesh to the UK from 2012-2014. The portrait thus draws attention to a continuing interest in Tagore and his work in Bangladesh, particularly in Dhaka, where an exhibition evidently took place in 2011. The frame suggests an enlargement of the portrait itself, to establish the importance of the sitter despite the smallness of the image. The note and the plaque suggest the desire to control the reception and representation of the portrait, its subject, and the giver within the SBT's records and exhibition spaces, thus reflecting on the ways in which many of the gifts in this narrative have sought to claim or reclaim cultural dignity.

⁴⁷² Ibid (1064).

⁴⁷³ Ibid (1065).

Conclusion

The prevailing focus throughout this chapter on the work and philosophies of Rabindranath Tagore creates a ready-made schema for this conclusion. The overwhelming preoccupation in the presented collection narrative with anti-colonial resistance and defence of local culture and language lends itself to engagement with more Tagorean doctrine, in particular his opposition to ‘narrow identification’ with religious, racial, caste, or national groups, the result of which can only be ‘exclusion, hierarchy – and violence’.⁴⁷⁴ Modes of identification – through Orientalist and colonialist ideological thinking – are in evidence throughout this chapter, as are, through the same modes, exclusion, racial and cultural hierarchisation, and violence. As such, this collection, of all four in this thesis, makes most certain the ways in which the European ‘explorer/coloniser’ impulse to categorise humans and their effects into value-driven hierarchies found its home in museums.

This chapter also signals most clearly how the establishment of Shakespeare as a ‘universal genius’ in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries impacts on world culture today. The European conception of Others during this time and through the colonial period, which was authorised through the travel writing and curiosities featured in the first part of the collection narrative, resurfaces through the SBT’s interpretation of Subcontinental Indian gifts in the twentieth century. While the SBT has appropriated the gifts as confirmation of Shakespeare’s ‘universal genius’, attention to the interpretation reveals the imbrication of Shakespeare’s cultural capital with elite British identity and colonial ideology that underpinned the establishment of his ‘universalism’, and simultaneously renders the construction paradoxical. Meanwhile, the necessity for Othered cultures of conforming to

⁴⁷⁴ Hogan, (p. 16).

expectations set by Western standards is indicated by the Sufi display at the 2016 celebration of Iqbal's birthday, when the utilisation of soft power attributes is not so much an act of agency but a defence against prejudice.

While celebrations for the birthdays of both Tagore and Iqbal have taken place at the Birthplace on a regular basis for several years now, and the SBT has maintained close friendships with their Indian, Pakistani, and Bangladeshi contacts, the repeated instances of gifts being presented with their own labels should be considered potential indications of concern about the ways in which artists and their contributions from around the world, especially outside of Europe and North America, have been interpreted and represented by the SBT. The performed moments, which can all be understood as assertions of soft power, offer along with the 'pre-prepared' object labels a vital framework for the rehabilitation of the SBT's 'world stage' as a space on which diverse cultural forms, artists, and writers could be presented without bias or privilege. As such, this chapter confirms the need for more research and reflexive work throughout the interpretative systems of the SBT to locate and target the operation of imperialism within the organisation. The highly appealing notion of a cultural common ground, in which Tagore and Iqbal would be presented alongside Shakespeare as distinct but equally valuable, evidently depends on such enquiry.

Chapter Five: The China Collection Narrative

Introduction

The SBT's Chinese collection narrative echoes the previous three chapters in the way it contemplates a nation addressing its cultural identity through Shakespeare, but in this case, there is a particular emphasis on the negotiation of its place in the global cultural marketplace. The Chinese collection illuminates a quandary that has been troubling the nation for at least the last two centuries: whether to enter the burgeoning Western-dominated global cultural sphere or to channel its energies into the revivification of its own traditional culture. The SBT's Chinese collection narrative affirms Shakespeare's usefulness for negotiating this juncture, as his international status provides a model for bolstering internal cultural confidence and his cultural capital carves a space on the external global stage. Furthermore, his early modern biography creates a connection with one of China's revered traditional playwrights, Tang Xianzu⁴⁷⁵ (1550 – 1616), who died in the same year as Shakespeare and wrote a play that has been likened to *Romeo and Juliet* in theme and substance.⁴⁷⁶ The efforts made in the past decade to emphasise the latter connection in China and Stratford-upon-Avon, in particular, through the statue of Tang and Shakespeare that was presented to the SBT as a joint commemoration in 2016, indicate recognition of what Alexa Huang calls Shakespeare's ability to function as 'an intercultural sign that could be read productively in a cultural space that existed outside Shakespeare and China': the

⁴⁷⁵ In order to harmonise my citations and respect the named persons' preference I have adhered to the formatting of Chinese names as I found them in the source texts, i.e. either Surname/Forename as is traditional in China or Forename/Surname as is traditional in the West.

⁴⁷⁶ Alexa Huang, *Chinese Shakespeares: Two Centuries of Cultural Exchange* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009), p. 62.

‘cultural cache associated with Shakespeare’ meant he could be treated as a ‘heuristic document’ through which meanings could be made without concern for historical or textual accuracy.⁴⁷⁷ This is because, in contrast to the collection narratives of Germany, the US, and Subcontinental India, the individual responses to Shakespeare in this collection narrative are largely unconnected to Shakespeare’s works and their substance, tending to focus on Shakespeare-the-man as a figurehead or symbol that is even occasionally reconfigured into a Chinese context. As the discussion (to follow) on Lin Shu and Wei Yi’s loose and creative translation of Lamb’s *Tales from Shakespeare* indicates, the characteristic refusal to slavishly adhere to any notion of a sacred original or source text attests to a commitment to invest in Shakespeare in the interests of Chinese cultural traditions and strictly on Chinese terms.⁴⁷⁸

In consequence, this chapter illuminates the implication of Shakespeare in the workings of Chinese as well as British soft power: the latter being more clearly in evidence in the previous three chapters. A ‘core concept in Chinese cultural development policy framework’ from 2007, when President Hu Jintao stressed its importance in a keynote work report, soft power offered a way of creating cultural cohesion within and beyond China by promoting Chinese culture and declaring appreciation of the culture of the world.⁴⁷⁹ The chronologically organised narrative of this chapter, which concentrates on the last one hundred and twenty years of Chinese history, as dictated by the collection items, thus develops into a treatment of Shakespeare’s cultural capital as a tool for soft power in the

⁴⁷⁷ Huang, *Chinese Shakespeares: Two Centuries of Cultural Exchange*, pp. 66-67.

⁴⁷⁸ The Chinese cultural tradition that is most relevant to this chapter is *xiqu*, which Alex Alice Joubin defines as a ‘stylized Chinese theatre form that often includes operatic elements of dance, songs, acrobatics, and metonymy. More than 360 regional variations of this genre exist in many dialects ranging from Mandarin, Cantonese and Southern Min to Suzhou dialect and Shanghainese’. Alex Alice Joubin, *Shakespeare and East Asia*, p. 237.

⁴⁷⁹ Weihong Zhang, ‘China’s Cultural Future: From Soft Power to Comprehensive National Power’, *International Journal of Cultural Policy*, 16.4 (2010), 383–402 (p. 383).

twentieth and twenty-first centuries that reflects on expressions of Shakespeare's broader international appeal throughout this thesis.⁴⁸⁰

Early Encounters: Chinoiserie, Cotton Trade, Travel Narratives, Vidler letters, Rice Letters

The SBT's Chinese collection begins with objects that indicate early British interest in Chinese art and culture. These include the Chinese salt cellar and chair that are preserved as items taken from the Chinese Temple, or pagoda, which was set up by William Hunt for David Garrick's Shakespeare Jubilee in 1769 (see figure 1).⁴⁸¹ These items indicate the eighteenth-century taste for chinoiserie that spread across Europe following the establishment of East India Company factories in Canton in 1715, and as a manifestation of 'a western preoccupation with "possessing" specimens of other cultures as a means of demonstrating one's own enlightened modernity'.⁴⁸² Collection items relating to China from the nineteenth century testify to the gradual effect of burgeoning globalism as the distance between Britain and China metaphorically shrank through increased travel and trade. These include letters to George Philips (the 'Cotton King' also referred to in chapter three) about the potential for British trade with China and travel journals written by Gilbert Henry Chandos Leigh during his Grand Tour.⁴⁸³ Also, a dictionary in the ancient and critically

⁴⁸⁰ Due to the Covid-19 pandemic dating from March 2020 this chapter was written without access to the SBT's stacks, object history files, and library. As such several collection items are included without fully substantiating research (explanations are given in the footnotes), and my reading has been limited to what I was able to access prior to the library closure and that which is available online.

⁴⁸¹ Deelman, p. 126.

⁴⁸² Linda Walsh, *A Guide to Eighteenth-Century Art* (Chichester: Wiley Blackwell, 2017), p. 135; p. 136.

⁴⁸³ SBT DR198/2 Letters to George Philips mainly from G[eorge] A[ubrey] Lee, Manchester, 1806.; SBT DR671/384 Gilbert Henry Chandos Leigh (eldest son of William Henry Lord Leigh), 1851-1884, Journal of travels in America, Japan, China, Singapore, Johore, Siam, Java, Ceylon, India.



Figure 32: SBT t31 Chinese Transitional Style faience jug; SBT 1868-3/392 David Garrick's chair; SBT 1971-5 Salt Cellar; SBT 1995-39/3 laquered bellows c.1880.

endangered Manchu language has been incorrectly accessioned as a Manchu translation of *Macbeth* and is dated 1829. Unfortunately, I am unable to find out any more about the volume's arrival in the SBT's collections without access to the library accession register, but the style of the English inscription and apparent age of the SBT classmark sticker suggest it may have been in the early twentieth century.⁴⁸⁴

The impact of the tentative steps towards globalisation that were taken in the nineteenth century is evidenced in two sets of letters from the early twentieth century.

⁴⁸⁴ SBT SRP - 50.19 Manchu/1829 Shakespeare's *Macbeth*/ translated into Manchu by Mandarin Munfort Chang-fu, place of publication unknown: publisher not identified, 1829.

Letters to poet Marian Vidler (1854-1938) reference a shipload of indentured slaves (described in the letter as ‘coolies’) who were transported from Hong Kong in May 1904 to work in the gold mines of the British Transvaal colony, South Africa, and letters from Elizabeth Rice (1868-1949), a British missionary in Wanhsien (modern-day Wanzhou), China in 1921, describe civil unrest, drug induced violence, and the successful conversion of a family to Christianity that was brought about by the death of their child.⁴⁸⁵ Rice’s letters foreshadow the ‘Wanhsien Incident’ of September 1926 when battle broke out between Royal Navy gunships and a local warlord, General Yang Sen, after he commandeered British-owned steamers to transport his troops. The incident ended when the HMS Cockchafer fired on the town, possibly killing around three thousand civilians – although this number is unconfirmed and in British publications usually described as Chinese propaganda.⁴⁸⁶ However, that some Members of Parliament in Britain had qualms about the appropriateness of the action is indicated in Hansard reports from December 1926 and February 1927, especially where the second report exposes the Governmental point of view that disclosing the ‘true particulars from the officers on the spot’ would not ‘serve the interests of peace or good relations between ourselves and the Chinese people’.⁴⁸⁷ Rice’s letters bring this incident into the collection narrative through connotation. Like so many items in this thesis, they prompt consideration of the operation of British imperial power in the world throughout the last several centuries, and the ways in which Shakespeare’s legacy

⁴⁸⁵ SBT DR495/330 Marian Vidler: Ferrers of Baddesley Clinton - 29 Dec 1904.; SBT DR724/7/1 Elizabeth Rice (1868-1949) - 10 June 1921.

⁴⁸⁶ Peter Stursberg, *No Foreign Bones in China: Memoirs of Imperialism and Its Ending* (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 2002), p. 169.

⁴⁸⁷ Anon., ‘WANHSIEN INCIDENT’, *Hansard*, 1 December 1926

<<http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/commons/1926/dec/01/wanhsien-incident>> [accessed 9 May 2021].;

Anon., ‘WANHSIEN INCIDENT’, *Hansard*, 23 February 1927

<<http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/commons/1927/feb/23/wanhsien-incident>> [accessed 9 May 2021].

has been entwined with incidents of violence such as this. Even if the connection between Shakespeare and the Wanhsien Incident ostensibly exists only through this object's belonging in the SBT's collections, the fact that Shakespeare's 'universal genius' has been used to qualify the cultural superiority that props up British imperialism entangle Shakespeare's cultural capital, authority, and status with such actions.

The catalogue description for Vidler's letters is also worth mentioning because the description for the items that was given in the open access digital catalogue quoted the use of the racial slur that is noted above. When I drew the SBT's archivists' attention to it the description was altered to read 'indentured slaves' instead. The casual and unproblematised repetition of racialised language in the public space of the digital catalogue at 'Discover Shakespeare' could suggest affiliation with the views that coined the term and thus perpetuate the marginalisation and dehumanisation of labourers from Asian nations.

From this chronological point, the collection narrative becomes focused on responses to Shakespeare that indicate a Chinese interest in British culture that resulted at least in part from the work of missionaries like Rice. After the fall of the imperial Qing Dynasty (1644-1912) the renewal of Chinese culture became a more urgent necessity. The intellectual community noted that the traditional ideology and culture were infused with feudal principles, mostly from Confucian ideals, and was therefore 'incompatible with the republican form of government. That consensus became the driving force for intellectual development in the early twentieth century'.⁴⁸⁸ The enlightenment movement that followed the 1911 revolution culminated in the May Fourth Movement of 1919, an organised

⁴⁸⁸ Fan-Sen Wang, 'Was the Enlightenment a Continuous Process from the Late Qing to the May Fourth Period?', *Journal of Modern Chinese History*, 13.2 (2019), 189–210 (p. 194).

reaction to the Treaty of Versailles's redistribution of German colonies in China to Japan, which held that it was China's 'hierarchical politics, clan-based local culture, and an economy based on agriculture and the rhythms of the natural world' that was responsible for the humiliating terms of the Treaty.⁴⁸⁹ The Confucian ideals of the old order were thence understood as 'a forced ritual system that only benefitted the old centralized power', while 'Western culture made a good impression on the minds of Chinese intellectuals, not because of its inner truth or good values, but because of its pragmatic value'.⁴⁹⁰ The ways in which missionaries in China had drawn on British Renaissance culture in their ideological teachings resulted in the perception by Chinese intellectuals of Shakespeare and his context as 'a paradigm for expounding their own views on the renewal of Chinese culture' – the idea of 'the new growing out of the old'.⁴⁹¹ This led to 'urgent calls for the birth of a Chinese literature so that China could catch up with its Western counterparts'.⁴⁹²

Shakespeare's Arrival in China: Lin Shu's *Tales from Shakespeare*

Dramatic and theatrical traditions developed in China and England in parallel but 'respectively on their own courses without any reciprocal influences', despite the likelihood that commerce between the two countries commenced in the late sixteenth century.⁴⁹³ While Shakespeare was revived in England first by the Jubilee of 1769 and second by Victorian fascination (and nationalistic impetus), by the turn of the twentieth century classical Chinese drama such as that written by Tang Xianzu – who will become a key focus

⁴⁸⁹ Haiming Wen and Deming Chen, "'Confucian Cultural Fallacy' in the 20th Century Chinese Enlightenment Movement', *Frontiers of Philosophy in China*, 8.2 (2013), 199–214 <<https://doi.org/10.3868/s030-002-013-0015-7>> (p. 203).

⁴⁹⁰ Wen and Chen (pp. 204-205)

⁴⁹¹ Hao Liu, 'Shakespeare and Tang Xianzu: Their Significance to the Formation of World Drama', *Neohelicon*, 46.1 (2019), 21–36 <<https://doi.org/10.1007/s11059-019-00486-1>> (p. 24).

⁴⁹² Huang, *Chinese Shakespeares: Two Centuries of Cultural Exchange*, p. 61.

⁴⁹³ Liu (p. 22).

in this chapter – had become disconnected from its audiences without similar events and projects to call it forth. Increased contact with the world outside China in the final years of the Qing dynasty introduced Shakespeare’s significant cultural presence through a mention in Lin Zexu’s (1785-1850) compendium of world cultures that was published in 1839, which led to ‘over half a century in which Shakespeare was frequently evoked to support or suppress specific agendas’: despite a dearth of Chinese translations of the actual works.⁴⁹⁴ Testament to the intensity and pervasiveness of the concept of British literary supremacy, the problematic gulf between early twentieth-century Chinese culture and the classical works of the past led some scholars to call for the abolition of traditional Chinese drama with Shakespeare, Ibsen, and Bernard Shaw proposed as ‘paragons for Chinese dramatists’ where ‘the remedy for the withering Chinese drama was the scripts and theories of Western drama’.⁴⁹⁵

Not all responses to Western drama were so deferential, however. As Huang explains, a separate cohort of twentieth-century intellectuals sought to align Shakespeare with traditional Chinese poets in order to preserve the specificity of Chinese culture by putting Shakespeare’s prevalent and prevailing cultural currency to use.⁴⁹⁶ Comparisons allowed them simultaneously to ‘eulogize [traditional Chinese writers] and to boost Chinese confidence in traditional literary values in the face of the globalization of Western cultural values’.⁴⁹⁷ Thus, they recognised the Western-imposed value system in the global cultural scheme, and found that Tang, in particular, would add value to Chinese cultural ‘stock’ in

⁴⁹⁴ Alexa Huang, ‘2011, June 26: Encountering Shakespeare’s Plays in the Sinophone World’, in *A New Literary History of Modern China*, ed. by David Der-wei Wang (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2017), pp. 924–30 (p. 925).

⁴⁹⁵ Liu (p. 24).

⁴⁹⁶ Huang, *Chinese Shakespeares: Two Centuries of Cultural Exchange*, pp. 61-65

⁴⁹⁷ *Ibid*, p. 63.

this global cultural 'market' through the alignment that could so easily be made between him and Shakespeare.

In 1903, an anonymously authored/translated Chinese edition of ten translations from Charles and Mary Lamb's *Tales from Shakespeare* was published in Shanghai. Lambs' *Tales*, first published in England in 1807, comprises twenty of Shakespeare's comedies and tragedies in an 'easy reading' prose form designed for children and young women who may not have access to 'their fathers' libraries' at such an early age as their brothers.⁴⁹⁸ In simplifying the stories, the Lambs emphasised moral lessons in the hope – stated in their preface – that their readers' return to the Shakespearean originals in later life may then encourage 'a withdrawing from all selfish and mercenary thoughts' and 'teach courtesy, benignity, generosity, humanity'.⁴⁹⁹ According to Stanley Wells's estimations, there now exist two hundred editions of the *Tales* in English, and at least forty translations – of which the Chinese version is the first Chinese translation of Shakespeare in any form.⁵⁰⁰

One year after the first anonymous Chinese version, translators Lin Shu and Wei Yi published *An English Poet Reciting from Afar* (*Ying-guo shiren yinbian yanyu*), which included all twenty stories from Lambs' *Tales* (see figure 2). The translators' methods reflect their non-deferential approach, as Lin, who was unable to read English, wrote the Chinese tales based on Wei's description of the Lambs', and he did so with the clear aim of reflecting on Chinese forms and concerns.⁵⁰¹ To emphasise the similarities between Shakespeare and traditional Chinese narratives, Huang explains, 'Lin clearly capitalised on Victorian critical

⁴⁹⁸ Charles Lamb and Mary Lamb, *Tales from Shakespeare* (London: Dent & Sons, 1957), p. vi.

⁴⁹⁹ Lamb and Lamb, p. vii.

⁵⁰⁰ Stanley Wells, 'Tales from Shakespeare', in *Shakespeare On Page and Stage: Selected Essays*, ed. by Paul Edmondson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), pp. 24–48 (p. 28).

⁵⁰¹ Huang, *Chinese Shakespeares: Two Centuries of Cultural Exchange*, pp. 71-97.

ethics and exaggerated the potential for moral instruction in Shakespeare. However, he also made significant changes to the Lambs' text for his own agenda'.⁵⁰² Lin's adjustments brought Shakespeare

close to the Ming and Qing narrative tradition of love, filial piety, and exotic fairy stories. In Lin's traditionalist Confucian framework, the Lambs' tales, intended for women and children, became stories for the predominantly male elite community in late Qing and early Republican China. [...] Lin used this strategic rewriting to counter the rhetoric deployed by those of his contemporaries who were in favor of total Westernization and had been influenced by the Enlightenment and rationalism.⁵⁰³

Furthermore, as Qi-Xin He explains, '[s]ince numerous allusions to classical mythology could be found in Shakespeare's plays, Lin treated the tales as legend, providing for each tale a two-character mythical title, typical of the legendary stories common in the Tang (618-907 A.D.) and Song (960-1279 A.D.) dynasties'.⁵⁰⁴ As such, Lin's versions conformed to the conventions of traditional Chinese short stories (*chuanqi*) through titles that focused on the main protagonist's name/profession and/or a key plot element; for example, *Hamlet* becomes 'The Ghost's Edict', and *The Merchant of Venice* becomes 'The Contract of Flesh'.⁵⁰⁵ In this way, the combination of Shakespeare's receptivity to broad interpretation;

⁵⁰² Huang, *Chinese Shakespeares: Two Centuries of Cultural Exchange*, p. 80.

⁵⁰³ *Ibid.*, p. 85.

⁵⁰⁴ Qi-Xin He, 'China's Shakespeare', *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 37.2 (1986), 149–59 (150).

⁵⁰⁵ Ruru Li, 'The Bard in the Middle Kingdom', *Asian Theatre Journal*, 12.1 (1995), 50–84 (p. 54).

use of, as well as membership of, a literary tradition; and the Lambs' propensity for moralisation made the *Tales* the ideal vehicle for Lin's project.

The SBT's copy was given to the Memorial Theatre in July 1915 by Ching Li Wang.⁵⁰⁶ The details of the edition have been correctly recorded in the digital catalogue but the envelope in which the delicate book has been filed records the author's name as Hsu Ling instead of Lin Shu.

This mistake has also been

written in coloured pencil on the

cover of the book, along with the class mark and 'Tales from Shakespeare'. The orientation of the English writing on the edition is also upside down, as the librarian was evidently not aware that Chinese books are read from right to left, with the spine on the right. It is disappointing to find that in the case of such an important element of the story of Shakespeare in China the historic curatorial mistakes have not yet been thoroughly

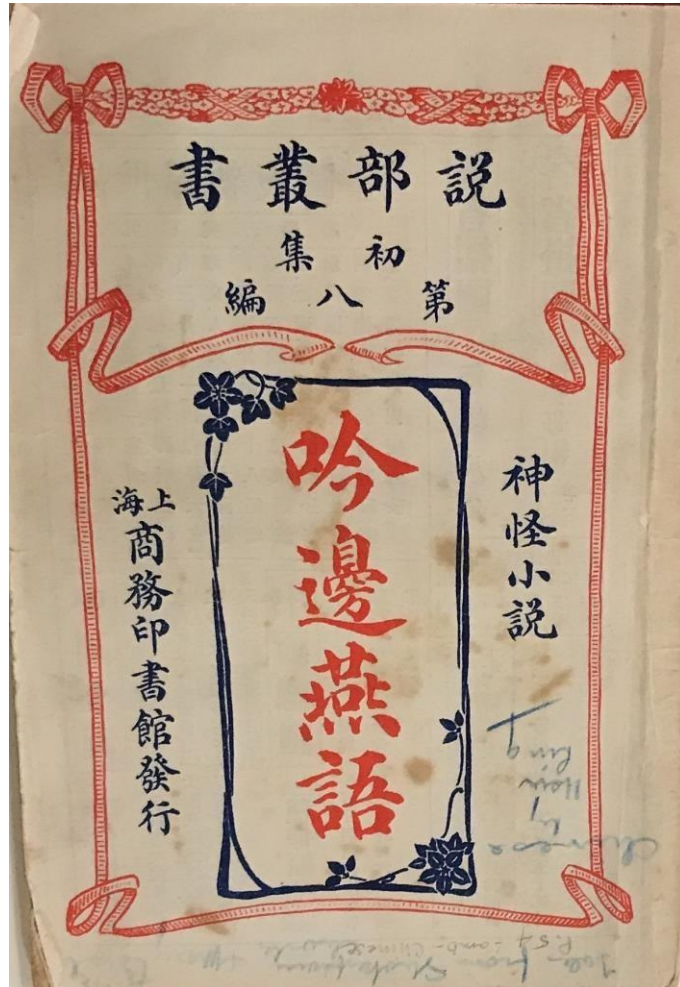


Figure 33: SBT Pamphlet - 54 Chinese Tales from Shakespeare in Chinese translated by Lin Shu and Wei Yi, (China: publisher not identified, 1914).

⁵⁰⁶ According to the SBT library accessions register, there was an accompanying letter but I am unable to find and check this document due to the close of the Shakespeare Centre under Covid-19 restrictions. I would like to see this as it may contain further information about Shakespeare in China in 1915 and help to identify Ching Li Wang.

corrected; it is a relief to see that they have not been replicated on the online catalogue. It is also interesting that the emphasis in the labelling of the book is on the fact that it is a translation of the Lambs' work. This may have been under the guidance or instruction of the donor, on the premise that the dislocation of the tales (by the Lambs) from the plays (by Shakespeare) was commonly accepted in the Chinese readership and scholarly interpretation fields: warring traditionalists and modernisers both furthered their cause through 'foreign sources and translations of foreign literature that freely adapt and rewrite the contents, making the source text invisible, replacing the originals and even functioning as such in the target culture'.⁵⁰⁷ Consciousness of this dislocation, which comprised not only alterations to Shakespeare's (supposed) meanings in accordance with Chinese contexts and exigencies, but also those put in place by the Lambs to make the stories suitable for women and children, may have caused the SBT librarian of 1915 to hesitate to attribute to Shakespeare this feminised, infantilised, 'Eastern' version.

The possibility of such a hesitation is supported by the fact that 1916 was to be the grand tercentenary celebration of Shakespeare, on which Israel Gollancz declared he had pinned 'the dream of the world's brotherhood to be demonstrated by its common and united commemoration of Shakespeare'.⁵⁰⁸ The celebration was curtailed by the First World War, but, as evidenced by Gollancz's declaration in his *Book of Homage to Shakespeare*, which was published in its lieu, Shakespeare had by then been established in a firmly masculine tradition as a source of British pride and morale, which was complemented by European aims to use Shakespeare 'to erase the memory of Anglo-French enmity at Agincourt and construe a bond between current allies fighting against the same foe in the

⁵⁰⁷ Huang, *Chinese Shakespeares: Two Centuries of Cultural Exchange*, p. 71.

⁵⁰⁸ Gollancz (p. vii).

trenches of the Western Front'.⁵⁰⁹ In this context, emphasising the Lambs connection, rather than the Shakespearean 'origins' of this volume would have allowed the SBT to avoid any contamination of this muscular iconography, just as it made a convenient bridge for Chinese intellectuals to Shakespeare's cultural capital without compromising the values of traditional Chinese culture. Even if the attribution to the Lambs' rather than Shakespeare simply reveals a commonplace way of thinking about the *Lambs' Tales* or the erratic and unsystematic accessioning processes at work at that time, the consideration of further possibilities has brought an additional context to this collection narrative that highlights the ways in which Shakespeare was being utilised in Europe in the period in which China presented this gift.

China Reconstructs: Translations, 'Shakespeare in China' Article

Lin and Wei's edition came to be the primary route to Shakespeare for many Chinese readers, becoming the source text for the first spoken drama performance (*huaju*) in China in 1913 – an adaptation of *The Merchant of Venice* called *Yi bang rou (A Pound of Flesh)* – and being reprinted eleven times in three editions between 1905 and 1935.⁵¹⁰ It was precursor to more faithful translations of Shakespeare that were produced in the following decades. These are represented in the SBT collections through a reprint of the first full translation of *Hamlet*, by Tien Han, which was first published in 1922, and versions of *Romeo and Juliet*, *The Merchant of Venice*, *Macbeth*, *Twelfth Night*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and *As You Like It*, all published in the mid-1950s.⁵¹¹ Tien's version of *Hamlet* was

⁵⁰⁹ Clara Calvo, 'Fighting Over Shakespeare: Commemorating the 1916 Tercentenary in Wartime', *Critical Survey*, 24.3 (2012), 48–72 (p. 49).

⁵¹⁰ Huang, *Chinese Shakespeares: Two Centuries of Cultural Exchange*, pp. 70–71.

⁵¹¹ SBT 50.07 Chinese/1974, *The tragicall historie of Hamlet: Prince of Denmarke* By William Shakespeare Translated by Tien Han (Shanghai: Chung-hua Book Store, 1922/1974); SBT 50.24 Chinese/1953, *Much Ado About Nothing*, Translated into Chinese by Fang Ping (Shanghai: Ping Ming Publishing Company, 1953); SBT 50.29 Chinese/1954, *Romeo and Juliet*, Translated into Chinese by Tsao Yu (Peking: Peking Writers' Publishing

vital to the later publications as an example of a new kind of translation that was ‘drawn line by line from a reliable text’ and ‘cross-checked with a Japanese translation’.⁵¹²

Five of the above listed translations were produced by Tsao Wei-Feng, including a second version of *Hamlet*. The library collection also contains an article written by Tsao in 1955 for the magazine *China Reconstructs*, an English-language magazine designed to bridge the cultural gap between China and the Western world.⁵¹³ ‘Shakespeare in China’ acknowledges the importance of the Lambs’ *Tales* for the initial introduction and Tien’s early translations for their ‘stimulating effect both on the study and the translation of Shakespeare’. As evidenced by the gap in the SBT’s Chinese translations between Tien’s *Hamlet* in 1922 and Fang Ping’s *Much Ado About Nothing* in 1953, however, there was a delay between the stimulation and the reward. Tsao accounts for this, explaining the dearth of translations from the 1920s to the early 1950s was due to the ‘impoverished state’ of Chinese theatres and a lack of demand from publishing houses. Both were working through and against the continued upheavals engendered by the fall of the imperial Qing dynasty and the establishment of the Republic, which included calls for total rejection of all traditional culture that were matched by those for revivification of it. Some translations and performances of Shakespeare still took place despite this, but ultimately cultural institutions floundered against demands to ‘simultaneously confront[] economic crises while attempting

Company, 1954); SBT 50.21 Chinese/1954, *The Merchant of Venice*, Translated into Chinese by Fang Ping (Shanghai: Ping-Ming Publishing Co., 1954); SBT OSP - 50.19 Chinese/1955, *Macbeth* in Chinese, translated by Tsao Wei-Fang (Shanghai: New Literature Publishing Co., 1955); SBT 50.35 Chinese/1955, *Twelfth Night*, Translated by Tsao Wei-feng (Shanghai: New Literature Publishing Co., 1955); SBT 50.23 Chinese/1955, *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, Translated by Tsao Wei-Feng (Shanghai: New Literature Publishing Co., 1955); SBT 50.07 Chinese/1955, *Hamlet*, translated into Chinese by Tsao Wei-Feng (China: publisher not identified, 1955); SBT 50.03 Chinese/1955, *As You Like It*, Translated by Tsao Wei-feng (Shanghai: New Literature Publishing Co., 1955); SBT 50.03 Chinese/1955, *As You Like It*, Translated by Chang Tsai-chen (Peking: Peking Writers’ Publishing Co., 1955).

⁵¹² Dickson, p. 368.

⁵¹³ SBT Pamphlet 63.2 China/TSA ‘Shakespeare in China’, Tsao Wei-Feng, in *China Reconstructs*, Vol. 4, no 7, July 1955.

to implement fundamental social reforms'.⁵¹⁴ Furthermore, Li Ruru explains, through the twenties and thirties the developing *huaju* form favoured 'works of realism and naturalism: among the plays staged at that time were those of Ibsen, Shaw, Gorky, and even Wilde. For a while Shakespeare was forgotten, since his plays did not seem relevant to contemporary society'.⁵¹⁵ The Sino-Japanese War of 1937-1945 both disrupted theatrical activities and prompted an engagement with Shakespeare that led to performances of *The Merchant of Venice*, *Othello*, *Hamlet*, *Romeo and Juliet*, and *Macbeth* that stressed martial themes.⁵¹⁶ With the establishment of the People's Republic of China (PRC) in 1949 came a strict ideological emphasis on all forms of culture. Concerns about Shakespearean themes and potential interpretations meant that Shakespeare's plays were performed only seven times between 1949 and 1966 – when Chairman Mao's Cultural Revolution banned them entirely.⁵¹⁷ Officially beginning in 1966, in the latest phase of Mao's quest to create a unified communist cultural identity, anything that might be construed as bourgeois or anti-socialist was attacked, including all foreign literature and Western culture, which was thought to be corruptive to 'proletarian ideas and socialist ideology'.⁵¹⁸ For ten years, only eight plays were permitted on Chinese stages (to be discussed shortly).

Tsao's article indicates the effort being made to show the Anglophone world how China was engaging with Shakespeare in 1955 and is revealing as both a collection item and a resource. Tsao emphasises scholarly endeavours, for example of the research group formed to determine how best to translate Shakespeare into 'acting versions', rather than

⁵¹⁴ Joshua Goldstein, *Drama Kings: Players and Publics in the Re-Creation of Peking Opera, 1870-1937* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2007), p. 171.

⁵¹⁵ Li, 'The Bard in the Middle Kingdom' (p. 57).

⁵¹⁶ *Ibid* (p. 60).

⁵¹⁷ *Ibid* (p. 62).

⁵¹⁸ Yanna Sun, 'Shakespeare Reception in China', *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, 2.9 (2012), 1931–38 (p. 1934).

'literary versions', and their decision to do so through collaborative experimental work between actors and translators. He makes little reference to politics, except to note the interpretative influence of Soviet essays on Shakespeare and the appeal of *Romeo and Juliet* to Chinese audiences who 'knew and hated the injustices of the feudal marriage system'. Tsao's lamentation of the lack of opportunity for translating Shakespeare in the thirties and forties is qualified with the assertion that 'a growing number of people thought it should be done', thus defending his own persistence as a translator and in writing the article itself. The piece ends with an unusually reverential statement, of certainty that the continued work of Chinese translators would soon transcend the remaining barriers of language and 'historical experience', as 'none of our writers, producers or actors believe that the Chinese people will find any difficulty in appreciating or understanding the universal humanity and glorious poetry of Shakespeare's gift to all mankind'. The emphasis on the works, on understanding them as fully as possible and making them understandable to Chinese audiences seems designed to counter the notion that China would be content with the simplistic older versions of the Lambs' *Tales*. As the article was presented to the Trust by the Chinese Charge d'Affaires it becomes not only a useful contextualising source for the objects under discussion in this collection narrative but also an object for discussion itself: a gift that affirms the desire for recognition within the collections at Shakespeare's Birthplace at a time in which China was extending a hand to the Western world.

Cultural Revolution: Zhu's Complete Works, The White-haired Girl

Tsao's article also acknowledges the 'most noteworthy' significance of Zhu Shenghao, the translator who worked throughout the troubled 30s and 40s to produce the first complete works of Shakespeare in Chinese, of which the SBT has several sets. The circumstances of

this and later editions' receipt at the SBT have been made available as a result of the work of SBT library volunteer Lingling Xie, who translated inscriptions and published her findings in an SBT blog.⁵¹⁹ Two sets of the first edition were received in 1955, one presented by Huan Hsiang, Diplomatic representative of the Chinese People's Government, the other by the Classical Theatre of China (see figure 3). The former, Xie notes, 'showed a politically motivated "goodwill" by the PRC government through cultural diplomacy'.⁵²⁰ The emphasis on the potential political motivations for the gift in Xie's reading illuminates a clear distinction between this collection narrative and those of the previous three chapters, in which most international gifts to the SBT are framed with assertions of disinterested love for Shakespeare's poetry. Xie's reading highlights the relevance of Shakespeare's cultural capital within every international gift, and the honesty of the Chinese approach urges caution in the mode of acceptance of such gifts. To assume that any international gift to the SBT is a 'pure' indication of that nation's veneration of Shakespeare, free from self-interest in the cultural prestige associated with that name, may be an assumption built on the imperialistic notion of Shakespeare's 'universalism' as the 'world's greatest poet'. Thus, to confound an act of cultural diplomacy with the assumption of bardolatry may constitute an act of cultural supremacy on the part of the SBT. The cautiousness and alertness with which international collection items should be interpreted is brought forward with startling clarity by this interaction.

The first editions of Zhu's translations of Shakespeare were published in 1954, ten years after Zhu's death and nineteen years after he decided to attempt to translate the

⁵¹⁹ Lingling Xie, 'Shakespeare in Chinese', *Shakespeare Birthplace Trust Blogs*, 2018 <<https://www.shakespeare.org.uk/explore-shakespeare/blogs/shakespeare-chinese/>> [accessed 3 January 2021].

⁵²⁰ *Ibid.*



Figure 34: SBT 47 Chinese/1998-2007 Thirty-one plays by Shakespeare, translated into Chinese by Chu Sheng-hao (Beijing: Writers Publishing House, 1954).

complete works within two years. Such an ambitious target was unlikely to succeed given the demands of the task, but Zhu's timeframe was stretched even further as Japanese invasions in 1937 and 1941 destroyed most of his work in progress each time.⁵²¹ When he died in 1944 from tuberculosis he had completed the translation of thirty-one plays, and his wife, Song Qingru, recalled his deathbed assertion that 'If I had known that I would never recover from this sickness, I would have exhausted every possibility in order to finish all translations'.⁵²² According to his biography, Zhu's determination was motivated by Japanese taunts that China's lack of Shakespeare translations was testament to its lack of culture.⁵²³ In the context of the broader quest to determine, revitalise, and/or modernise Chinese culture

⁵²¹ Dickson, p. 379.

⁵²² Jiemin Wu and Hongda Zhu, *Biography of Zhu Shenghao (Zhu Shenghao Zhuan)* (Shanghai: Shanghai Foreign Language Education Press, 1990); William Baker and Tianhu Hao, 'Shakespeare in China: The Case of Zhu Shenghao', *ANQ: A Quarterly Journal of Short Articles, Notes and Reviews*, 2019, 1–5 <<https://doi-org.apollo.worc.ac.uk/10.1080/0895769X.2019.1613341>> (p. 3).

⁵²³ Wu and Zhu, p. 108.

to bolster its global identity, not to mention the ongoing threat of Japanese invasion, Zhu's mission is thus framed as a patriotic one, and Murray J. Levith notes that Zhu became 'an example of selfless devotion to the revolution'.⁵²⁴ The pragmatism of Xie's interpretation of the presentation of the first editions of Zhu's *Complete Works* is illuminated through this brief history of the politicization of Shakespeare's translation in China in the 1940s and 50s.

As Zhu's *Complete Works* contained only 31 plays, a committee of scholars planned to finish the collection of translations in time for Shakespeare's Quatercentenary in 1964, but the publication and indeed the planned celebration were cancelled in the lead up to the Cultural Revolution.⁵²⁵ For ten years, all art and literature had to eulogise the proletariat or was banned, thus, 'China was once again shut off from the outside world and Shakespeare disappeared completely from the lips and pens of the Chinese'.⁵²⁶ The *yangbanxi* (model opera/drama) were the eight plays sanctioned to be performed in Chinese theatres and opera houses during this time. They were both broadly popular and 'ideologically extreme', therefore the perfect vehicle for propaganda.⁵²⁷ The established popularity of one such play is suggested by the fact that it was given to the Trust in 1955 along with the first edition of Zhu's *Complete Works* by the Chinese Charge d'Affaires, Huan Hsiang.⁵²⁸ *The White-haired Girl: An Opera in Five Acts* by Ho Ching-chih and Ting Yi, translated by Yang Hsien-yi and Gladys Yang, includes music and songs from the opera and is presented in Romanised Chinese and English. Rosemary A. Roberts explains that 'the story narrates the triumph of the proletariat (peasantry) and the communist party over the exploitative and decadent

⁵²⁴ Murray J. Levith, *Shakespeare in China* (London: Continuum, 2004) p. 130.; Baker and Hao (p. 1).

⁵²⁵ Levith, p. 55.

⁵²⁶ Yanna Sun (p. 1935).

⁵²⁷ Rosemary A. Roberts, *Maoist Model Theatre: The Semiotics of Gender and Sexuality in the Chinese Cultural Revolution (1966-1976)* (Leiden: Brill, 2010) p. 1.

⁵²⁸ SBT 86.91/HO *The White-haired Girl: An Opera in Five Acts* by Ho Ching-chih and Ting Yi, translated by Yang Hsien-yi and Gladys Yang (Peking: Foreign Languages Press, 1954).

ruling class' while also exploring popular notions of beauty and romance.⁵²⁹ It was thus an ideal choice to present to the SBT as an example of popular Chinese opera in the 1950s and it is clear why it was attractive to the Cultural Revolutionaries in the 1960s and 70s. Roberts also explains that at the end of the Revolution, in 1976, the *yangbanxi* were 'exiled to the political wilderness', although *The White-haired Girl* has seen renewed interest since.⁵³⁰

The end of the Cultural Revolution also saw revived interest in Shakespeare in China, with reports of long queues at re-stocked bookshops to buy copies of the plays within hours of the ban lifting.⁵³¹ A greater gesture of renewed interest was made in 1978 by an international visit to Stratford-upon-Avon by the Chinese Dramatists Association, represented by actors Zhao Xun and Wu Shiliang, actor, director, translator and future Chinese vice-minister of culture (1986-1990) Ying Ruocheng (1930-2004), and translator Cao Yu (1910-1996), whose *Romeo and Juliet* is amongst the earliest Chinese translations in the SBT's library collection (1954).⁵³² Whilst at the Royal Shakespeare Theatre, the visitors presented another edition of Zhu's *Complete Works*: the edition that had been planned for the 1964 celebrations that were cancelled and had now been realised with the aid of another eight translators. Levith construes this visit as a significant symbol of 'the Chinese mainland's re-entry into the world of global Shakespeare activity', not least because of the perceived imperative of presenting the new – properly complete – *Complete Works* in Chinese.⁵³³ SBT library volunteer Xie's examination of the edition identified the signatures of

⁵²⁹ Roberts, pp. 91, 201.

⁵³⁰ Roberts, p. 138.

⁵³¹ Dickson, p. 350.; J. Philip Brockbank, 'Shakespeare Renaissance in China', *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 39.2 (1988), 195–204 (p. 197)

⁵³² SBT 47 Chinese/1978 *Shakespeare works* translated into Chinese by Zhu Shenghao with amendments by other translators (Beijing: People's Literature Publishing House, 1978); SBT 50.29 Chinese/1954 *Romeo and Juliet* translated into Chinese by Tsao Yu (Peking: Peking Writers' Publishing Company, 1954).

⁵³³ Levith, p. 56.

the visitors listed above, as well as an inscription inserted in the book. The note praises Zhu's ten-years dedication to his thirty-one plays and celebrates the publication of the finished works before stating: 'However, the editor made three mistakes in classifying the plays. This is disrespectful to Mr. Zhu. Yang Shipeng found the mistakes on 22nd August 1978'. Yang Shipeng (1935-), also known as Daniel S. P. Yang, is an expert in Western and Chinese theatre who trained in Taiwan and Hawaii. In his long career in the US (as founder/director of the Colorado Shakespeare Festival), Hong Kong, and mainland China, Yang has been dubbed a 'cultural ambassador' for his dedication to bridging Chinese and Anglophone cultures through producing Western drama in China and translating Chinese works for Western readers.⁵³⁴ He also translated English-language works for Chinese readers, including the editions of *The Taming of the Shrew* (1982), *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (2001), and *King Lear* (2002) in the SBT's library collection.⁵³⁵ As Yang is not mentioned in the record of the giving of the edition, how his note got there is unknown, as are the details of the perceived disrespectful mistakes. Nevertheless, in this note the reverence that is more usually directed towards Shakespeare and the importance of his works is redirected to Zhu and his translation. Shakespeare's works almost assume a perfunctory role as simply the vehicle for Zhu's work to enter the global cultural marketplace. Yang's note therefore supports the idea that the irreverence indicated in the early twentieth century is continued or revived in the late 1970s: that for some Chinese

⁵³⁴ Siyuan Liu, 'Daniel S. P. Yang', *Asian Theatre Journal*, 30.2 (2013), 309–22 (p. 318).

⁵³⁵ SBT OSP 50.30 Chinese/1982 *The Taming of the Shrew in Chinese* translated by Daniel S. P. Yang (Hong Kong: publisher not identified, 1982); SBT 50.23 Chinese/2004 *A Midsummer Night's Dream* translated by Daniel S.P. Yang (Taipei: Owl Publication House, 2001); SBT [no class mark] *The Tragedy of King Lear* by William Shakespeare translated by Daniel S.P. Yang (Taipei: Ecus Publishing House, 2002).

readers, critics, and theatre-makers Shakespeare's symbolic cultural worth had more importance than his artistic worth.

Yang Shipeng's family are an example of many Chinese mainlanders who moved to Taiwan to escape unrest on mainland China. Another example is Liang Shih-chiu (1903-1987) an academic who had begun translating Shakespeare in the 1930s, and who was the first person to translate the *Complete Works* singlehandedly, his version being published in Taipei in 1967: a feat that could not then be achieved in mainland China due to the Cultural Revolution and the ban on Western literature. The SBT has a copy of the first edition, but I am not able to ascertain any details about its arrival at the SBT due to the Covid-19 restrictions on access to the SBT library and accession register.⁵³⁶ The edition was not available on the Chinese mainland until 1996, long after the end of the Cultural Revolution, because 'Liang was politically on the wrong side: he fled to Taiwan with the defeated Nationalist forces in 1949'.⁵³⁷ Furthermore, Liang's work was 'criticized as paraphrases, and they fell afoul of Mao Zedong [...] for their opposition to the class struggle'.⁵³⁸ Not only does Liang's edition bring into the Chinese collection the strained relationship between mainland China and Taiwan, but it highlights once more the significance of the political role of Shakespeare in the region through the striking delay of almost thirty years before its arrival on the mainland.

⁵³⁶ SBT 47 Chinese/1967 *Shakespeare's plays translated into Chinese* by Liang Shih-chiu (Taipei: Far East Book Co., 1967).

⁵³⁷ Baker and Hao (p. 4).

⁵³⁸ Ibid. See also: Liping Bai, 'The Literary Critic as Translator: A Case Study on Translation and the Translator's Literary Poetics', *Neohelicon* 2, 46 (2019), 241–59 (P. 245).

Rebuilding From Failed Revolution: Qiu's Article, Cao's *Romeo and Juliet*, Huang's 'Complexion' Article, Russian Biography, Shakespeare Society Foundation, General Secretary Hu's visit, Assorted Ephemera

The evident intertwining of Shakespeare translation and cultural politics justifies the supposition that Liang's sole effort *Complete Works* has been largely ignored in favour of Zhu Shenghao's collaborative edition because of the former's place of publication and ideological position. Certainly, there have been fewer mentions of Liang's translation than of Zhu's in my sources, despite Liang's properly complete version being published earlier. An exception to this is a mention in an article in the SBT's library collection by Qiu Ke'an from 1984 that emphasises Liang's efforts as the first successful solo project and positions Zhu's edition as 'next to him' in the most plays translated into Chinese.⁵³⁹ 'Shakespeare and China' is Qiu's translation of one of his own articles that was published in the Hong Kong newspaper *Ta Kung Pao* (no date given). It accompanies a clipping, from the English-language magazine *China Pictorial*, which describes the first performance of a 'world classical play ever' in Tibet in 1982. The production of *Romeo and Juliet* by graduates of the Shanghai Theatrical Institute also toured Shanghai and Beijing before travelling to Tibet's capital, Lhasa. The SBT's collections also include an album containing photographs of the Shanghai performance dated 1981.⁵⁴⁰ 'Since the founding of New China', the article explains, 'the Shanghai Theatrical Institute has trained three groups of approximately 100 young Tibetans. [...] They are still active today'. The way in which the two articles have been bundled together suggests that both were written by Qiu Ke'an, although the clipping does not say so. The articles – and photograph album – are likely to have been presented to the

⁵³⁹ SBT p.63.2 China/Qiu, Qiu Ke'an, 'Shakespeare and China', 1984.

⁵⁴⁰ SBT 72.29/Shanghai. Shanghai Academy of Drama. Photograph Album of *Romeo and Juliet*. 1981.

trust when Qiu visited in October 1990 and donated several editions of Shakespeare's plays.⁵⁴¹ Qiu's translated article discusses a new series of scholarly editions of Shakespeare being published by the large scale cultural and educational institute and publishing house the Commercial Press, Beijing. The editions would be the first printed since the Sino-Japanese war (1937-1945) due to rising demand resulting from increased study of English in China in the years following the Cultural Revolution. The editions of *Hamlet*, *Julius Caesar*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and *As You Like It* are all in English with Chinese notes (by Qiu) and were published by the Commercial Press. Thus, the editions and the accompanying articles function as purposeful testimonies to China's renewed interest and investment in Shakespeare and Shakespeare studies.

Throughout these decades following the Cultural Revolution, many more Chinese donations to the SBT were made that suggest the same sense of providing documentary evidence of serious scholarly interest in Shakespeare, to join the cultural community engendered by Shakespeare. Items include the documentation relating to the visit of the translator Cao Yu in January 1980, including inscriptions in the edition of his translation of *Romeo and Juliet* that he presented to then Director of the Trust, Levi Fox.⁵⁴² Cao signed the edition: 'Presented to the Shakespeare Society – Cao Yu, 80.1.18, Stratford-on-Avon [*sic*]'. Fox added: 'Presented to me by CAO YU, Chairman of the Chinese Dramatists' Association on the occasion of the first Chinese theatre group to visit Britain under the auspices of the British Council'. The British Council was and is the government's cultural diplomacy

⁵⁴¹ SBT 50.07 Chinese/1984 *Hamlet* with introduction and notes by Qiu Ke'an (Beijing: The Commercial Press, 1984); SBT 50.15 Chinese/1985 *Julius Caesar* with introduction and notes by Qiu Ke'an (Beijing: The Commercial Press, 1985); SBT 50.23 Chinese/1987 *A Midsummer Night's Dream* with introduction and notes by Qiu Ke'an (Beijing: The Commercial Press, 1987); SBT 50.03 Chinese/1990 *As You Like It* with introduction and notes by Luo Zhiye and Li Derong and revised by Qiu Ke'an (Beijing: The Commercial Press, 1990).

⁵⁴² SBT OSP - 50.29 Chinese/1979 *Romeo and Juliet* translated into Chinese by Cao Yu (Peking: People's Literature Publishing Company, 1979).

department, established in 1934 with the aim of engendering ‘a basis of friendly knowledge and understanding of the people of this country, of their philosophy and way of life, which will lead to a sympathetic appreciation of British foreign policy’.⁵⁴³ As such, it is evident in this and many other items discussed in this collection narrative that this form of soft power, that is, diplomacy that seeks to achieve its objective through attraction and persuasion, was operating in both directions between China and England throughout the twentieth century.⁵⁴⁴

An article in the SBT’s library collections by Huang Long, entitled ‘Shakespeare’s Views on Complexion’, is a well-intentioned attempted anti-racist tract published by Nanjing Normal University, Department of Foreign Languages and Literature.⁵⁴⁵ In the accompanying letter from the writer to Levi Fox, dated 15th January 1985, Huang expounds his hypothesis that it is ‘the Shakespearean humanism based on the lofty spirit of Christianity that did inspire Shakespeare to advocate ethnical equality and oppose racial discrimination. [...] What a pity this ideological treasure should have not been unearthed for centuries past!’ The pity is, perhaps, more that the Premodern Critical Race Theorists had not yet produced the epoch-altering body of work that expounds the many ways in which Shakespeare’s poetry and prose helped to construct racist ideas of whiteness and its ‘racial Others’ that not only served the ideology of colonial oppression but maintains white supremacy through today.⁵⁴⁶ Huang closes with the request that Fox ‘deign to ppraise [sic] the above said

⁵⁴³ Anon., ‘Our History’, *British Council*, 2021 <<https://www.britishcouncil.org/about-us/history>> [accessed 20 April 2021].

⁵⁴⁴ Weihong Zhang (p. 385).

⁵⁴⁵ SBT Pamphlet - 65.095/HUA Shakespeare’s views on complexion by Huang Long (Nanjing: publisher not identified, 1983).

⁵⁴⁶ Examples from the first wave include Kim F. Hall, *Things of Darkness: Economies of Race and Gender in Early Modern England* and Peter Erickson, ‘Representations of Blacks and Blackness in the Renaissance’, *Criticism*, 35.4 (1993), 499–527. For more recent scholarship see especially *Shakespeare and Race*, ed. by Ayanna Thompson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021).

abstract? Kindly favor me with a reply at your earliest convenience. I hereby express my heartfelt appreciation for your fraternal support in anticipation'. Huang's request may have been connected to the postscript that informs of an upcoming academic symposium and adds that an immediate reply would be appreciated. This may have been so the appraisal – or indeed praise – from the director of the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust could there be attached to his research. The file does not include Fox's response. While many of the items discussed in this thesis have indicated the desire for inclusion in the collections as a mode of representation in the Shakespearean cultural community that derives authority from the locus of the Birthplace, this request may indicate the transferability of that authority to places outside of Stratford-upon-Avon through the word of the SBT's director. Transferral of the SBT's authority may then be understood as a form of sharing, as it takes nothing from the giver while benefitting the receiver. Alternatively, the request may simply indicate the occurrence of the Chinese communicative ritual of *keqi*, or 'behaviour of guest', of which courtesy, consideration, modesty, and especially humbleness are the key tenets.⁵⁴⁷ In this way, the importance of derailing Anglocentrism through detailed research (or, where possible, consultation) and thorough contextualisation of international collection items is emphasised as a vital element of the curatorial process to avoid both assumptions of cultural supremacy and cultural stereotyping.

A 1984 edition of a biography of Shakespeare that had been translated from Russian into Chinese remembers an important aspect of Shakespeare's reception in China: that since the opening up of China in the 1920s the Soviet Union, perceived in China as 'the model of

⁵⁴⁷ Tony Fang and Guy Olivier Faure, 'Chinese Communication Characteristics: A Yin Yang Perspective', *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 35.3 (2011), 320–33 (p. 322).

State communism', had been a great influence on all matters.⁵⁴⁸ Zhang Wei explains that early Soviet Marxist configurations of Shakespeare as realist, progressive, and combative was 'fully applicable to the revolutionary struggle in China', meaning that 'Shakespearization could therefore be used as a programme guiding the Chinese revolutionary literature'.⁵⁴⁹ Later scholarly work, published around the time of this Chinese translation, following the hiatus of the Cultural Revolution, was more interested in Marxist aesthetics.⁵⁵⁰ *Shashibiya Zhuan (A Life of William Shakespeare)*, translated by Alexandr Anikst (1910-1988) from the 1964 original, encapsulates the way in which Shakespeare and Shakespeare studies in China have been filtered through Russian Marxist theories and ideological interests.⁵⁵¹

The formation of the Chinese Shakespeare Society in 1984 is acknowledged in the library collection by a bundle of clippings from the English-language *Beijing Review*, dated January 7th and May 6th 1985.⁵⁵² The 1986 visit of the General Secretary of the Communist Party of China, Mr Hu Yaobang, to Stratford-upon-Avon is remembered in archival records of the communications preceding the event.⁵⁵³ These include the programme for Mr Hu's stay, indicating that the visit to Stratford-upon-Avon and Shakespeare's Birthplace was 'a cultural day outside of London'. In Stratford-upon-Avon Mr Hu was hosted by the town's Mayor, who was in turn invited to a dinner hosted by the Prime Minister, Margaret Thatcher. The enclosed seating-plan for the dinner reveals that Mayor Leslie Rouch was

⁵⁴⁸ Ruru Li, *Soul of Beijing Opera: Theatrical Creativity and Continuity in the Changing World* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2010), p. 130.

⁵⁴⁹ Wei Zhang, 'The Development of Marxist Shakespearean Criticism in China', *Multicultural Shakespeare: Translation, Appropriation and Performance*, 20.35 (2019), 99–113 (p. 100).

⁵⁵⁰ *Ibid* (p. 107).

⁵⁵¹ SBT 25/ANG *Shashibiya Zhuan (A life of William Shakespeare)* translated from the Russian by Aleksandr Anikst, Beijing: Chinese Dramatists Publication House, 1984.

⁵⁵² SBT Pamphlet 63.2 China/SHA Shakespeare Society founded. Place of publication unknown : publisher not identified, 1985.

⁵⁵³ SBT DR814/4 Lesley V. Rouch, Stratford-upon-Avon, File concerning the visit of Mr. Hu Yaobang, General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China, June 1986.

seated with the Chairman of the BBC, Stuart Young, the Chairman of the Mirror Group, Robert Maxwell, and the Chairman of the Times Newspapers, Rupert Murdoch, among several professors of the London School of Economics and Chinese State Council and State Committee members. Rouch was the only Mayor on the total guestlist of State Ambassadors, Chairmen of Banks, Overseas Trade Boards, and World-Wide Shipping agencies, and Presidents of the Trade Council and the Royal Society. This item prompts reflection on the work Shakespeare was being made to do between China and Britain at this moment. Although the trip to Stratford-upon-Avon was styled as the 'cultural day out', the visit to Shakespeare's Birthplace and Rouch's presence at the Prime Minister's dinner merges the Shakespeare industry with the pinnacles of British commercial endeavour. This signifies the importance of Shakespeare as a mode of British soft power that would have been especially potent so soon after the foundation of the Chinese Shakespeare Society, which was itself so soon after the reconnection of China with the West. In this way, the special emphasis on Shakespeare in this moment can be understood as a mode of connection that was intended to bridge cultural differences and soften what would otherwise have been a purely mercantile meeting of the two nations.

Chinese collection items from the late 1980s and 90s include a pamphlet with calligraphed lines in memorial of Shakespeare from the School of Teachers' Training of Eastern Liaoning University; a pamphlet containing an introduction to the Jilin Province Shakespeare Society, the first provincial Shakespeare society, established in 1985; and a report on the teaching and study of Shakespeare in the China dated August 1992 by Professors Meng and Yang from Northeast Normal University in Jilin Province.⁵⁵⁴ These items

⁵⁵⁴ SBT Pamphlet – 63.2 China/Fan Lines written in memorial of Shakespeare / Zheng Fangshun. 1988; SBT Pamphlet 71 societies/BRI A brief introduction to Jilin Province Shakespeare Society (JPSS) / translated by

accord with earlier items as donations to the collections that seek to confirm Chinese engagement with Shakespeare studies. A printed linen shopping-bag remembers Shakespeare Day, Beijing, in 1997, through images of Shakespeare and the Swan Theatre, and an RSC programme memorialises the touring production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* that ran at the Lyric Theatre, Hong Kong, in February 1997 – prior to the handover of the British colony to Chinese sovereignty in July of the same year.⁵⁵⁵ The latter two items prompt the question of whether Shakespeare was used as an intercultural balm of sorts in that year, by both China and Britain, echoing the inclusion of Shakespeare in the visit of 1984 when Shakespeare was used as a reminder of common interests to engender international connection.

Millennial Shakespeare in China: Steel Engravings, Liu Portrait, Zhu Xiaolin & Edition

In 2004, the 440th anniversary of Shakespeare's birth was marked through two Chinese gifts. First, a facsimile of a collection of forty-five steel engravings of images and extracts from Shakespeare's plays in Chinese and English was presented to the Trust on a visit to the Birthplace by the publishers. Second, a striking, three-quarter length life sized hanging scroll portrait of Shakespeare was presented by the Liaoning International Cultural Exchange Promotion Association (see figure 4).⁵⁵⁶ The portrait depicts a recognisable figure in ruff and doublet, with a receding hairline, neat beard, and parchment or book in hand reminiscent of

Wang Xiaoqun, 1991; P63.2 China XIA A report from China: her teaching and studying of Shakespeare / by Meng Xianqiang [and] Yang Lingui. China: publisher not identified; date not identified.

⁵⁵⁵ SBT 1998-6/1 Shakespeare Day shopping bag c. 1997; SBT RSC/PRO/1/1997/MND – *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Lyric Theatre, Hong Kong – 1997.

⁵⁵⁶ SBT Extra Large Folio - 56/ Shakspere gallery : being a collection of forty-five steel engravings after pictures by eminent artists, Shijiazhuang: Hebei Education Publishing House, 1997; SBT 2005-4 Portrait of Shakespeare, 2004.

many of the well-known images of Shakespeare. This image is partially transliterated, however, by the scroll form, the Chinese lettering up the side and across the bottom of the portrait, and the dark hair and facial features that are suggestive of an East Asian phenotype. Through the recognisability of the Shakespearean iconography, the artist, Liu

Bingliang, rendered an original representation of Shakespeare that incorporates both his early modern English origins and the local and international appropriations – in this case specifically Chinese, of course – that engender his continued worldwide renown. This Shakespeare is

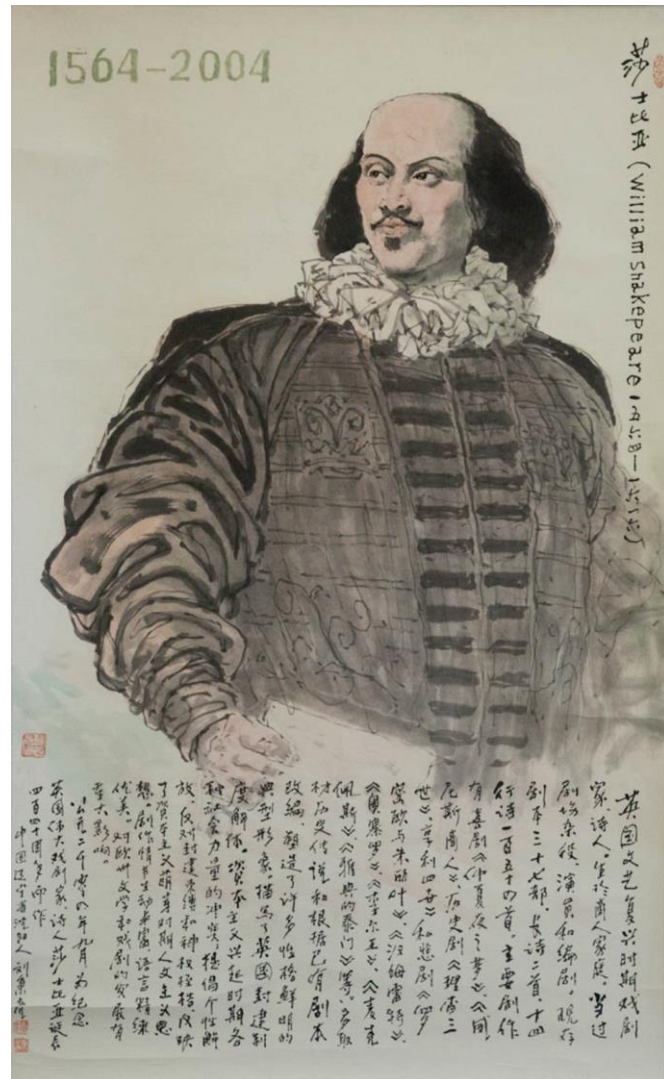


Figure 35: SBT 2005-4 Portrait of Shakespeare by Liu Bingliang.

of early modern England, but for twenty-first century China. It is respectful to both and without the deference that accompanies so many similar gifts to the SBT.

As a precisely located appropriation of Shakespeare, this portrait also illustrates the Chinese desire to think about Shakespeare in terms of the Renaissance tradition of which he is part. As Liu Hao explains, translators like Lin Shu had ‘tried to justify the position of

classical Chinese by labelling Shakespeare as a trophy of the "old" cultural tradition of the West', thus turning Shakespeare 'into a double-sided reminder of both progress and national traditions'. Furthermore,

If in the first half of the last century, Chinese directors used Shakespeare to advocate for a different kind of drama, and indigenized Shakespeare with traditional elements, now Shakespeare is often viewed as a platform to share Chinese values, for both the directors and the audience are more conscious of the significance of rediscovering national values in the "world".⁵⁵⁷

The image of an unmistakable but distinctly Chinese Shakespeare on this scroll illustrates these concerns and approaches through its medium, style, and conception.

The text beneath the portrait provides a list of Shakespeare's plays, a brief biography of Shakespeare, and a revealing summary of the themes and content of the plays:

The plays describe the collapse of the English feudal system, the conflict among different social forces during the rise of capitalism, the advocacy of the liberation of the individual, the opposition to feudal bondage and religious oppression, and the reflection of humanism at the budding stage of capitalism.

⁵⁵⁷ Liu (p. 25).

This ideologically drawn summation of the meaning of Shakespeare's plays is as striking as the transliterated portrait. Its preoccupation with feudalism, capitalism, and social forces indicates the continued influence of Marxism on literary studies in China. Furthermore, it elicits a clearly delineated interpretation that suggests its own finality, of the end of interpretation with no allowance for alternative views. The text serves, therefore, to emphasise that this is China's Shakespeare, and that the political purposes he serves remain particular and of high importance.

The object history file for this item discloses a rather confused chain of communication between the Trust and the portrait's donors. Beginning in November 2004, with the initial offer of the donation, the email printouts divulge the donors' request for a representative of the Trust to visit Beijing for a formal presentation ceremony at the British Embassy. To this, then director of the Trust, Roger Pringle, sent apologies that no one would be free to attend due to prior commitments. The donors agreed to send the portrait by airmail but requested that its arrival at the Shakespeare Centre be filmed, as there was great interest in the artist, Liu, and it would make a news feature for the forty-two million inhabitants of the province. Furthermore, the email states, Shakespeare was known as 'a master of plays and a man of letters, but that's all. The other aspects of his life were less known. People who love Shakespeare are keen to know everything about him'. The request for a filmed record was answered with a video of SBT Director Roger Pringle, Museum Curator Ann Donnelly, and Chairman Stanley Wells discussing the portrait and expressing thanks to the donors that was produced by Media students from nearby Stratford-upon-Avon College. The donors also requested an 'official acknowledgement' of the gift for the artist. The confusion arises in both this request – as the letter that followed from Roger Pringle offering acknowledgement and thanks to Mr Liu was not what was desired – and

when the package with the DVD recording of the portrait's arrival at the Shakespeare Centre did not arrive in China within the expected timeframe. It transpired that the acknowledgement expected follows the fairly strict format of a certificate with Mr Liu's name, the seal of the Shakespeare Centre, and the signature of the curator. This certificate is desirable to the artist, the emails suggest, as evidence of the inclusion of his work in the SBT's collections. Through the request for both the certificate and the video, the emphasis on documentary evidence of China's interest in Shakespeare is as noticeable in this item as in the cases of the aforementioned explicitly testimonial articles by Tsao (1955), Qiu (1984), and Huang (1983). The video request also suggests the scale of interest expected in a news story about a local artist's work being included in the SBT's collections, thus indicating the potency of Shakespeare's cultural capital in China even when, as stated by the donors, not that much was actually known about Shakespeare. This suggests a fascination that is grounded in iconography, a transferred sense of cultural importance, which may be due to the ways in which Shakespeare's introduction to Chinese culture was tied to the cultural-political causes of the early twentieth century.

Evoking the political purposes served by the first translations of Shakespeare's complete works in Chinese, a special visit in 2010 revived the fascinating story of Zhu Shenghao's attempt. Zhu's granddaughter, a professor at the Beijing International Studies University, personally donated a 1994 edition of her grandfather's *Complete Works*.⁵⁵⁸ A note has been added to the edition, presumably according to the conversations held between Zhu Xiaolin and the librarian at that time, that mentions Zhu's troubles and tragic

⁵⁵⁸ SBT 47 Chinese/1994 *Shakespeare Works* translated into Chinese by Zhu Shenghao with amendments by other translators (Beijing: People's Literature Publishing House, 1994).

death at the age of 32, China's continued preference for his translations of Shakespeare, and that a museum in his honour was being opened in a reconstructed version of his former home. The note emphasises the notion of Zhu's visit to the Birthplace fulfilling her grandfather's dream, and the SBT's pleasure 'to accept this gift from the other side of the world, created with such devotion to our great playwright in circumstances of real difficulty'. This note, along with Tsao's reverential note on 'universal humanity' in 1955, is the closest anything in the Chinese collection comes to bardolatry, and even if the sentiments are apt, it is telling that it was written by a representative of the SBT. The combined motivations for Zhu's near impossible task were more complicated than simple devotion to Shakespeare, as illustrated earlier in this chapter, although a great love for the works was undoubtedly a large part of it. Moreover, the use of 'our great playwright' is troubled as the suggestion of ownership is left untethered: does the 'our' belong to the SBT, Britain, or the world? The use of possessives should be carefully qualified in international and interracial contexts, as they can constitute – or indeed, belie – the structural effects of language that covertly privileges 'the included' by excluding those who have been Othered. The excluded, in this instance, may be those who are denied access to Shakespeare through socio-economic, cultural, racial, or linguistic restrictions, those who may be more likely to understand themselves as outside of the 'our' of 'our great playwright'. The pronoun 'our' may signal an open-hearted gesture of shared, international ownership, but it remains that the failure to acknowledge the ideological effects of language constitutes and furthermore 'enables the normative invisibility of whiteness' and other oppressive hegemonies, of which, Ian Smith notes, invisibility is a sign.⁵⁵⁹ International collection items should be interpreted

⁵⁵⁹ Ian Smith (p. 107).

with a keen eye to potential racial, class-based, and/or Anglo-centric solipsism like that revealed by this encounter.

Approaching 2016, The Year of Shakespeare and Tang: Premier Wen visit, Scroll, Teapot, Fan, Red Chamber Volume, Cao Yu Sculpture, Peony Pavilion Scroll, Paper Cut portrait

The revival of the story of the most famous Chinese translation of Shakespeare ushered in a busy decade of visitations and events between the SBT and various cultural organisations in China, beginning with the greatly significant visit of Premier Wen Jiabao in June 2011.

Dickson characterises the three-day excursion as a combined mission to iron out several pressing international issues while maintaining a warm diplomatic relationship.⁵⁶⁰ Indeed, the Director of the Trust from 2007 to 2017, Diana Owen, recalls being told that it was

a private visit requested by Premier Wen and meant to be low-key. He spent a great deal of time with us and brought his own calligraphy pens to sign the visitors' book. He enjoyed speaking with our Chairman, Professor Stanley Wells, seeing the actors perform and talked about the importance of being familiar with each other's cultures to sustain relationships in the longer term.⁵⁶¹

Premier Wen flew directly to Birmingham in order to visit the Birthplace before travelling to London to meet Prime Minister David Cameron, spending an hour and a half seeing the

⁵⁶⁰ Dickson, p. 347.

⁵⁶¹ Private email communication with Diana Owen, 2nd March 2021.

house, the First Folio, the Quiney letter, and sitting on a bench in the gardens to watch a scene from *Hamlet*.⁵⁶² The media coverage of the visit generated a significant increase in Chinese visitors to the Birthplace that has been steadily maintained until the curtailment of international visitors due to the Covid-19 crisis in 2020. Moreover, the bench on which Premier Wen sat quickly became an important addition to Chinese visitors' tour of the Shakespeare Birthplace, many pausing for photographs with or on it. While many international gifts have suggested a sense of colonisation of the collections, as they function as flags in the Birthplace sand and a bid for a stake in the ongoing legacy of Shakespeare, the simple action of the Chinese Premier sitting on a bench has taken that notion to a new level. The bench quickly became a collection item or commemorative locus in itself, dedicated not to Shakespeare but to one who came to commemorate him during a diplomatic visit. Indeed, for some time, a photograph of Premier Wen on the bench in the Birthplace Garden has been part of the 'Famous Beyond Words' exhibition in the first part of the Birthplace Museum. The significance of this private visit, then, seems to resound both for Chinese visitors and the Trust, suggesting that the Trust recognised in it the significance of Shakespeare's soft power, his ability to draw a figure of such import as Premier Wen from the centre of business in London just to spend a couple of hours in Stratford-upon-Avon. As such, the display of the photograph of the event in the Birthplace Museum is, like many of the international museum items on display, really an exhibition of Shakespeare's international importance and 'universality'.

⁵⁶² Dickson, p. 347. According to Dickson, Premier Wen donated an edition of *Love's Labour's Lost* translated by Liang but I have been unable to verify this due to the shutdown of the Shakespeare Centre library under Covid-19 restrictions.

In the same year, Owen visited Suichang, China, and returned with several gifts from the people of Suichang County: a silk brocade hanging scroll, a small clay teapot, and a decorative paper folding fan (see figure 5). The scroll, like the Liu portrait of Shakespeare, represents Chinese cultural traditions through its composition, and the calligraphed text tells the story of Tang Xianzu, the playwright who lived and worked there for many years and died in the same year as Shakespeare. The text is as follows: ‘The Peony Pavilion sings of Tang Xianzu’s works / The Tempest (this stormy day) welcomes the people from Shakespeare’s hometown / This is a gift to the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust / From Shan ‘Nan’an Songlin and the people of Suichang’. The scroll thus brings Tang and Shakespeare into alignment through reference to Tang’s play, *The Peony Pavilion*, and to Shakespeare’s *The Tempest* through the stormy weather of the night on which the scroll was created. The teapot has a painted bust portrait of Tang, his dates (1550 – 1616), and some untranslated text that is noted as being lines of verse in Chinese (in the catalogue description). It was presented in a silk bag inside a padded lined box. The fan is painted with a landscape of trees, mountains, and water as the background to two red-crowned cranes. Cranes are used to symbolise longevity and wisdom and given the emphasis on Tang in the other two items, it is possible to surmise that the pair of cranes in the fan represent Tang and Shakespeare, their creativity, and their enduring legacies.⁵⁶³ These items indicate the early stages of a

⁵⁶³ Anon., ‘Birds in Chinese Symbolism’, *Chinasage*, 2021
 <<https://www.chinasage.info/symbols/birds.htm#XLXLSymCrane>> [accessed 11 February 2021].



Figure 36: SBT UA2012-2/1 Scroll; SBT UA2012-2/2 Teapot; SBT UA2012-2/3 Hand fan.

collaborative relationship between the SBT and various Chinese cultural industries seeking to unite Tang and Shakespeare's legacies.

The three gifts also highlight the importance of gift-giving in international meetings and the abundance of Chinese gifts in the SBT's collections. However, some gifted items remained in the Director's office for several years after being given, and for many items details about the giver and the circumstances of receipt were unfortunately not immediately captured and passed on to collections staff and can therefore only be surmised. These include another fan, this one decorated with brightly coloured birds and trailing vines with purple flowers on one side and Chinese text on the other (untranslated).

This fan has been dated circa 1975-1989 and the catalogue record states that it was ‘probably presented by the artist to Dr Levi Fox, Director of the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust 1945-1989’. The date range for the item seems to have been roughly defined, therefore, by the end of the Cultural Revolution (1976) and the end of Fox’s tenure at the Trust. There is also an unaccessioned boxed book about Can Xueqin, the writer of the *Dream of the Red Chamber* – also known as *The Story of the Stone* – by Hong Lou Meng, which may relate to the attendance of the SBT’s Diana Owen and Paul Edmondson at a conference on the subject of Hong’s work in Beijing in 2013.⁵⁶⁴ An unaccessioned statuette of the translator Cao Yu may have been given to the Trust when a delegation from the Cao Yu Research Council visited in 2011. It is bundled with an album of photographs of Festival productions which Cao had presented to the Trust on an unspecified visit – the only visit I can find (without access to the Visitors’ Books during Covid-19 restrictions) is the previously mentioned one in 1980, which is too early as the first Shakespeare Festival in China was in 1986.⁵⁶⁵ Finally, an unaccessioned, beautifully painted handscroll depicting scenes from Tang’s *Peony Pavilion*, presented in a fine silk brocade box, may have been given to Diana Owen by a visiting delegation from Suichang in 2014 (see figure 6).

Unlike framed pictures or vertical hanging scrolls (like the Liu Shakespeare portrait) a handscroll is not designed to be viewed all at once but held in two hands and unrolled section by section.⁵⁶⁶ Like all Chinese text, the scroll reads from right to left and a

⁵⁶⁴ Unaccessioned and uncatalogued item. Cover translation and identification by SBT intern Ivy Dai, July 2019.

⁵⁶⁵ SBT UA2012-1/1 Statuette of the Chinese playwright Cao Yu.; He p. 156).

⁵⁶⁶ Dawn Delbanco, ‘Chinese Handscrolls’, *The Metropolitan Museum of Art*, 2008
<https://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/chhs/hd_chhs.htm> [accessed 11 February 2020].

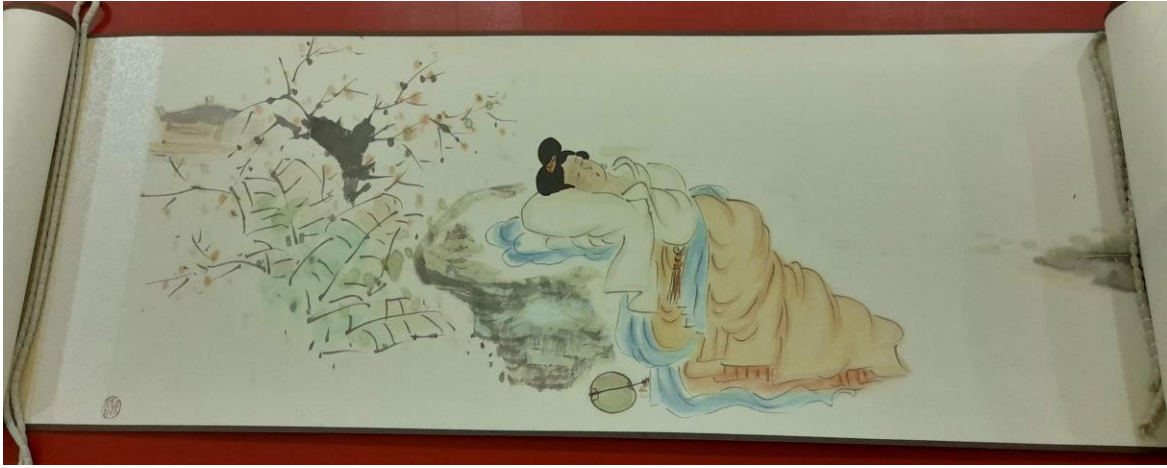


Figure 37: (unaccessioned) Handscroll with scenes from Tang Xianzu's *Peony Pavilion*.

combination of text and painted vignettes direct the eye and reveal the narrative. The viewer enjoys the vignettes or text scene-by-scene, the rolling motion of the scroll encouraging both continuation of the narrative and the opportunity to pause over each moment represented. This makes it a wonderfully expressive vehicle for representation of a play. In the case of this scroll, it invites viewers in Stratford-upon-Avon to discover Tang's *Peony Pavilion* through a traditional Chinese medium, offering an entirely new experience that is almost like holding the play in one's hands and enjoying the scenes at an individual pace. Handscrolls are designed to be kept rolled up, secured by the fasteners at either end, and stored in their boxes. Since the handscroll's conception in ancient China, the box has protected the delicate paper and silk from damaging environmental factors and also made it portable: early Buddhist monks (eighth - ninth century CE) would carry sutras on scrolls on journeys and were always ready to recite from them.⁵⁶⁷ This explains the sumptuous detail of the brocade covering and silk lining for this gift; the box is not simply a container for the gift but a part of the gift, in its beauty and its tradition.

⁵⁶⁷ Li Zhi, 'An Introduction to the Chinese Handscroll', *Artnet*, 2013 <<https://news.artnet.com/art-world/an-introduction-to-the-chinese-handscroll-30455>> [accessed 11 February 2020].

Handscrolls follow a formulaic construction, with a calligraphed frontispiece, then the painting, then a colophon at the end. The SBT's *Peony Pavilion* scroll is partially translated. SBT intern Ivy Dai advised that the frontispiece designates a popular scene from the play: 'The dream in visiting the garden' / 'The interruption of a dream'. In Tang's play, Du Liniang and Liu Mengmai fall in love in their dreams. The heroine, Du, dies of lovesickness but is brought back from death to be with her lover. The first vignette on the handscroll shows the lovers meeting in a garden, the second shows Du asleep under tree. This scene has been carefully chosen for this gift, as the play's emphasis on dreams is one of the aspects that are named to draw similarities between it and *Romeo and Juliet*. As well as young love, generational conflict, and death, both plays explore the boundaries of dreams and reality: Tang's characters' love originates in the dream-world and is made real, and the relationship between language and experience in Shakespeare's play makes Mercutio's 'Queen Mab' speech a framing device for many of Romeo and Juliet's exchanges, as Matthew Spellberg has shown: as well as making lovers dream of love the fairy has the power to make dreamers feel or smell real things.⁵⁶⁸ Likewise, throughout *Romeo and Juliet*'s verbal courtship, imagined things, like hand holding and kisses, are verbalised and then become real, including Romeo's dream (in Act Five Scene One) of Juliet finding him dead.⁵⁶⁹ Dreamed events – which become real to varying extents – provide refuge from restrictive lived realities for the lovers in both plays, therefore, although Tang's has a significantly happier ending: in his play, the power of their love brings about Du's resurrection and unites the lovers.

⁵⁶⁸ Matthew Spellberg, 'Feeling Dreams in *Romeo and Juliet*', *English Literary Renaissance*, 43.1 (2013) (p. 69)

⁵⁶⁹ *Ibid* (p. 72).

The colophon that follows the images on the handscroll is not translated, but the text and distinctive seal marks indicate that it follows the tradition of providing a final ‘signature’ to the piece, with information about the content, perhaps a summary of the story, and the marks of the painter and perhaps the commissioner of the piece. The colophon also provides space for viewers and collectors to make their mark as time goes on. As Dawn Delbanco explains, a handscroll is thus

both painted image and documentary history; past and present are in continuous dialogue. Looking at a scroll with colophons and inscriptions, a viewer sees not only a pictorial representation but witnesses the history of the painting as it is passed down from generation to generation.⁵⁷⁰

Although the seals have not been identified, Dai’s translation of the frontispiece named the donators as the Memorial Hall of Tang Xianzu. As there are memorial halls for Tang in both Suichang, where he was a magistrate, and Fuzhou, where he was born, this does not provide much more evidence for the provenance of the item, although Dai’s identification of the date 2014 suggests the likelihood of it corresponding with the visit from Suichang that year. Although this item potentially meets the SBT’s collecting policy – to accession items that represent Shakespeare’s global legacy – through connections between Shakespeare and Tang and *Romeo and Juliet* and the *Peony Pavilion* that are outlined above, it remains unaccessioned, possibly due to the number of gifts resulting from the repeated visits to and

⁵⁷⁰ Delbanco.

from China during this period. Nevertheless, the lack of documented provenance and statement of belonging to the collection confers a value status on the item. The decision to accession gifts is fraught, due to lack of museum and vault space and, often, a tenuous cohesion with the collecting policy, but the risk of conveying a sense that international items are not valued is clearly problematic and requires a collecting policy strategy as soon as possible.

A final item for this section that has full provenance provided is a gift that was presented by a visiting group from a Chinese newspaper, *Morning Herald*, who were conducting a tour of British cultural landmarks in the lead up to the 2012 London Olympics. They presented a paper cut-out portrait of Shakespeare in front of the Birthplace, in red paper with a white background (see figure 7). The group included the artist, who said that the portrait took three months to make, an Olympic record holding female weightlifter, and two women in traditional dress who were there to hold a banner for photographs of the presentation. The object history files contain Trust emails advising that they had been unable to get names from the visitors due to the language barrier and that copies of the photographs had not yet been received from the visitors as promised. The image of Shakespeare is a bust image based on the Chandos portrait, and the inclusion of the Birthplace grounds the image as a traditional representation of Shakespeare in a Chinese format. Crystal Hui-Shu Yang explains that paper-cutting was established as an art form in China almost as soon as paper was invented in the second century C.E., and that the oldest examples that have been found date to the sixth century C.E.. Although it remains unaccessioned, this item is a rewarding addition to the SBT's Chinese collection, as '[w]hile Chinese calligraphy reflects the intellectual culture, paternal tradition, and written history,

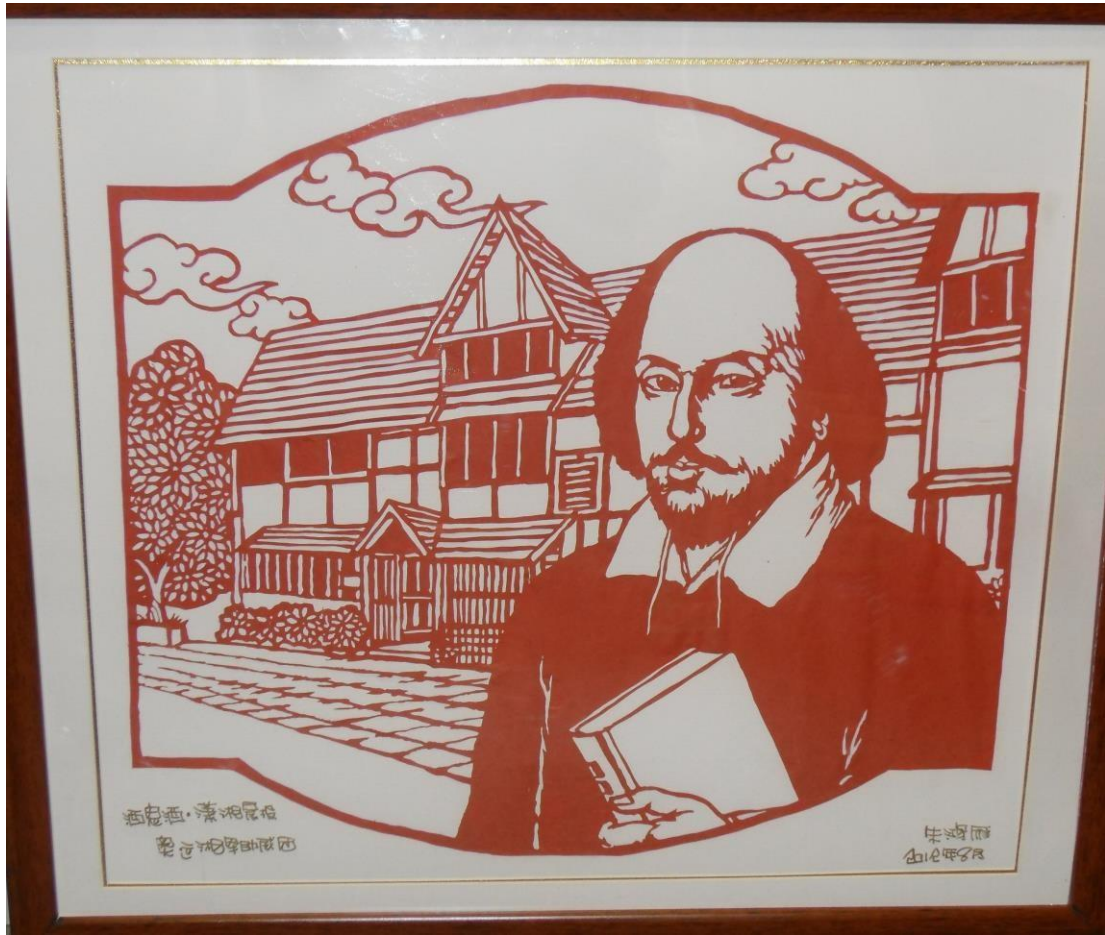


Figure 38: SBT UA2012-3 Paper cut-out Shakespeare in front of the Birthplace.

paper-cutting represents the illiterate culture, maternal tradition, and oral history'.⁵⁷¹ The form offers a perspective on historical restrictions placed on women and the ways in which creativity emerged and flourished nonetheless.

⁵⁷¹ Crystal Hui-Shu Yang, 'Cross-Cultural Experiences Through an Exhibition in China and Switzerland: "The Art of Paper-Cutting: East Meets West"', Source: *Notes in the History of Art*, 31.3 (2012), no pagination.

2016: Tang and Shakespeare Statue, San Weng

The quatercentenary of Shakespeare's death was jointly marked as the quatercentenary of Tang Xianzu's death by the presentation of a bronze statue of the two poets standing together (see figure 8). As a gift from the Municipal Government of Fuzhou, Tang's birthplace, the statue was the first step in the relationship between the city and the SBT, foreshadowing the cooperative construction of the replica of Shakespeare's Birthplace in Fuzhou (San Weng, which translates as 'Three Masters') scheduled for completion in 2022. The complex in Fuzhou will also include replicas of Miguel de Cervantes's and Tang Xianzu's birthplaces. Cervantes, Tang, and Shakespeare all died in 1616, thus, the 220-acre tourist attraction aims to connect their legacies through the recreation of their seventeenth-century homes.



Figure 39: Bronze Statue of Tang and Shakespeare in the Birthplace Gardens.

The statue of Tang and Shakespeare creates an imaginary conversation between the two men, who stand with their writing materials, pens, and parchment in hand to suggest that they are comparing either their tools or their work. This intimates the comparison that is often made between Tang's *Peony Pavilion* and Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*, as discussed earlier in this chapter. The desire to imagine a relationship between Shakespeare and Tang is indicative of the ways that culture, and perhaps literature and drama in particular, can foreground human connection and traverse national boundaries. It also represents a culmination of the efforts to appropriate Shakespeare into Chinese culture that are indicated in this collection narrative, and a continuation of a characteristically rigid interpretative stance. Although Shakespeare is not being directly aligned with any political ideology here, as in the text of the Liu portrait, he is yet presented as the Chinese donors desire to understand him: as a contemporary of Tang.

The way in which the statue makes an imagined circumstance or desire concrete (although it is technically bronze) gestures to an exciting correspondence with the central similarity that has been asserted to exist between *Peony Pavilion* and *Romeo and Juliet*: the idea of dreams becoming reality. The centrality of *Peony Pavilion* to the celebration of Tang in Britain in 2016 is signalled by the inclusion of a translation of the play in an exhibition space in the Birthplace.⁵⁷² The 'Visitors to Stratford-upon-Avon' room on the first floor features the graffitied window on which Shakespeare's worldwide renown is celebrated through the many signatures that have been inscribed on the glass. In 2016, display cases

⁵⁷² SBT 86.1 Chinese Tang *The Peony Pavilion: Mudan ting* Tang Xianzu, translated with a new preface by Cyril Birch; introduction to the second edition by Catherine Swatek (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2002).

dedicated to Tang and Cervantes, as Shakespeare's literary contemporaries, were added to the room, effectively making the space a microcosm for San Weng.

The unveiling ceremony for the statue that took place on 27th April 2017 was attended by the Chinese Ambassador, Liu Xiaoming, the VC of Chinese People's Association for Friendship with foreign countries, Hu Sishe, the Deputy Director of Jiangxi provincial foreign affairs & overseas Chinese Affairs, Li Yuqiang, the Mayor of Fuzhou City, Zhang Hongxing, Tang Xianzu expert Prof. Huang Zhenlin (East China Institute of Technology), and Shakespeare in China expert Dr Li Ruru. The importance of the event for diplomatic relations between China and the UK is thus indicated by the presence of so many high-ranking Chinese officials.

Conclusion

The Chinese collection narrative illuminates a connection to Shakespeare that is grounded in global politics and makes no effort to disguise the self-interested motivations for forging a relationship with the SBT in the various ways that are reflected on in this chapter. Nor should it need to; that self-interest is neither preclusive to a genuine interest in Shakespeare's works and legacy nor representative of the form of unethical cultural appropriation actuated by powerful cultures over less powerful ones, which has heavy connotations of usurpation, seizure, and theft.⁵⁷³ In fact, the evident machinations of soft power produce a narrative that is refreshing in its absence of bardolatry, especially so given the relative positions of Shakespeare and Chinese literary figures in the hierarchy of global culture. As Liu asserts, '[h]istorically, Shakespeare is at the center stage of the world

⁵⁷³ Jean I. Marsden, 'Introduction', in *The Appropriation of Shakespeare: Post-Renaissance Reconstructions of the Works and the Myth*, ed. by Jean I. Marsden (Hemel Hempstead: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1991), pp. 1–10 (p. 1).

literature, but Tang is in a peripheral position because of the inequality between the political, economic and diplomatic histories of China and the English-speaking countries'.⁵⁷⁴ Such inequality was no doubt the impetus for the emphasis placed on soft power in order to accomplish hard power goals: to create the opportunity to 'explain china to the world' and ultimately 'to see China return to great power status'.⁵⁷⁵

The specific and timely needs of Chinese culture relative to the specific cultural authority carried by Shakespeare and Shakespearean associations drives the mode of engagement between China and the SBT. As Liu explains, 'Shakespeare's early appearance in China was in response to the problems of the declining national culture, therefore his name had been used as a symbol before his works were properly interpreted'.⁵⁷⁶ Throughout this chapter the prioritisation of how Shakespeare's cultural capital could really benefit Chinese cultural development, and, through association, China's worth in the global cultural market, is extant. The collection narrative engenders a version of Shakespeare that is not universal or transcendent, but simply *useful*. This is most clearly suggested in the portraits that translate the recognisable figure into a clearly Chinese version of Shakespeare. By gifting these images to the SBT, the donors negotiate a finely balanced tribute to the Shakespeare of Stratford-upon-Avon and a simultaneous claim to the continued use of the Shakespeare of China, as the need arises, thus wresting a version of Shakespeare away from the authority of the SBT to dictate the terms of use or presentation. As such, if soft power works through 'persuasion, co-option or agenda-setting that makes one's interests pose as the interests of others', and it is true that 'contrary to the West's popular imagining, China's

⁵⁷⁴ Hao Liu (p. 22).

⁵⁷⁵ Wanning Sun, 'Slow Boat From China: Public Discourses Behind The "Going Global" Media Policy', *International Journal of Cultural Policy*, 21.4 (2015), 400–418 (p. 403).; Weihong Zhang (p. 397).

⁵⁷⁶ Hao Liu (p. 24).

current “going global” mission is motivated by a desire to free itself from the West’s discursive hegemony, not a desire to dominate it’, then this appropriation of Shakespeare is soft power in action and effect.⁵⁷⁷ Furthermore, it reveals the lengths to which other and Othered nations must go in order to access the supposed ‘universality’ of Shakespeare while he is so firmly anchored in Stratford-upon-Avon.

⁵⁷⁷ Yulia Kiseleva, ‘Russia’s Soft Power Discourse: Identity, Status and the Attraction of Power’, *Politics*, 35.3–4 (2015), 316–29 (p. 318).; Wanning Sun (p. 413).

General Conclusion

Summary

Through the creation of an international collection that encompasses objects relating to Germany, the US, India, Pakistan and Bangladesh, and China, this thesis has provided the SBT and the scholarly Shakespeare community with an original, object-based perspective on Shakespeare's importance to those places, what Shakespeare's cultural capital means in an international context, how Shakespearean diplomacy functions, how Shakespeare can be used as an international form of soft power, and how imperialism and white supremacist logic work through Shakespeare and Shakespearean institutions, including the SBT, through today.

This thesis reveals that the SBT's international collection is a vivid and diverse assemblage of archival, published, crafted, and manufactured items, with international gifts providing the momentum for each of the collection narratives. The object study and contextual research applied to each gift affirm both the donors' intentions to express admiration of Shakespeare and the cultural prowess that such admiration denotes, which prompts the conferral to themselves of a share in Shakespeare's cultural capital. The narratives indicate the varying success of such endeavours, as well as the SBT's contribution to that success, by acknowledging the authority that the SBT has been endowed with as a result of Shakespeare's establishment as the 'universal greatest', and by paying close attention to how it uses that authority. The thesis recognises the impact of the construction of Shakespeare's greatness and asserts a consistent critique of Anglo-centrism and

imperialist and white supremacist logic where it appears. In recognition of the ways in which Shakespeare's birthplace is understood as a 'world stage' for the global cultural marketplace, this thesis notes where international objects have potential to 're-set' that stage by usurping Anglo/Euro/West-centric hegemonies through the kind of syncretic cultural representations that were expounded by Rabindranath Tagore.

This conclusion is divided into three more sub-sections to summarise the findings of this project in terms of what is in the collection, to summarise the findings in terms of what the collection reveals, and to make recommendations for further research and for the SBT to consider in terms of its future collecting and interpretive practices.

Question one: what does the SBT's international collection look like?

This primary question was necessary because the SBT's international collection did not exist before this thesis. Answering what is in the SBT's collections in relation to Germany, the US, India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh, and China, required the creation of individualised collections for each place. I searched the digital catalogue (Qi) for key terms related to each place (country, states, cities, languages, artists/poets/thinkers/dramatists, present and historical political leaders), I made lists of the results within Qi, then I converted the lists – which contained hundreds of items – into datasheets. I worked through the datasheets, exploring and contextualising the items listed to determine which would be useful to a discussion of Shakespeare in that place. The result is not only the four collection narratives given in this thesis, which describe every item that it was possible to contextualise in some way in relation to Shakespeare in each place, but an international collection that is discernible as a discrete entity.

The datasheets showed that international objects are to be found in almost every sub-collection category – certainly in the library, museum, and archive collections, but also in the local history collections, the SBT’s organisational records, early modern objects, early printed books, and the Harvard House collections. The lists included a startling range of items, from the expected – translations, playbills, artistic representations of Shakespeare and his plays, records of visits and significant historical events – to the unexpected – ceramics dedicated to US patriotism; letters discussing the abolition of slavery, the cotton trade, and the Christian Missions in China; a Confederate walking stick; and a furnished tortoiseshell. Thus, delineating and interpreting the initial assemblages took this research not only into the cultural and political histories of the six nations discussed, but to early map making, travel writing, and collecting practices; the early nineteenth-century transatlantic ceramic industry; the uses of Sufism in modern diplomacy; and the context of social rituals like *keqi* and the handshake. Along with gift, relic, museum and object theory, the broad remit of the research acknowledges the expansive reach of Shakespeare’s affective power as well as the potential for further generative work on ‘Shakespeare and the world’ through the SBT’s collections.

In addition to revealing some of the ways in which Shakespeare has impacted on the places discussed, the international collection that has been created as a result of this project shows how international engagements with Shakespeare are woven through the SBT’s and Stratford-upon-Avon’s history. This affirms just how far Shakespeare’s legacy – which is to say, his afterlife, and how he has been used, appropriated, and marshalled by individuals and cultural or state agencies through today – was built on and by those international histories, as well as by British assertions of his ‘universal’ importance. The incidental citations of imperial misdeeds that are found in archival letters, as well as through the US

bowl and the Tagore tablet and bust, reflect on the allusions to the 'Anglo-Saxon race' that appear in the German chapter. These unsought references indicate how entwined Shakespeare is with the imperial histories of the past two centuries. Furthermore, the proto-imperialist items – the map of the Americas, the tortoiseshell, and *Coriate's Travels* – established through lines for the US and Indian, Pakistani, and Bangladeshi chapters. Through the connotations of historical European engagement with non-European Indigenous people and cultures that they embody, these items framed the enquiries that drove the narratives. Essentially, their inclusion in the narratives drew attention to the continuance through today of the Orientalist and imperialist narratives that such items helped to facilitate.

As such, my method – drawing the international collection from every potential connection to Shakespeare and each place that was available in the SBT's collection catalogue – revealed the ways in which narratives might be formed from the items on each datasheet without reverting to any predetermined sense of what such a narrative, of Shakespeare in the US, for example, should look like. All four narratives speak to the ways in which Shakespeare has been used in nations outside of Britain to address issues of cultural identity, at different moments, through different contexts, in different ways and with different results. Although translations were not studied in detail *as* translations in this study, the importance of having a version of Shakespeare in a native language is clear, from the ways in which German translations were politicised throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries – indicated especially by Hans Rothe's edition of Shakespeare's Comedies, which was banned by the Nazis – to the popularity and flexibility of the Indian Shakespeares represented in the collection narrative by V. V. Shirwadkar's legacy of Shakespeare in Marathi. In the Chinese chapter, Zhu Shenghao's extraordinary *Complete*

Works was produced in response to Japanese jibes about the absence of a Chinese Shakespeare indicating the absence of a Chinese culture. In the US collection narrative, the same emphasis, on a nation wanting to assert its cultural literacy through having its own version of Shakespeare, is found in the first American edition of Shakespeare: its illuminating preface insisting on the bonds of the English language as the basis for the US's annexation of Shakespeare. Indeed, the first two collection narratives in this thesis are particularly focused on concepts of cultural connection, as they trace the cultural unification of both nations through Shakespeare.

Cultural unification through and with Shakespeare is also in evidence in the India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh chapter, and the China chapter: the former seeking to assert its own cultural forms in defiance of the Raj, and the latter to negotiate the identity it wished to present on the 'world stage'. However, the final two narratives are less concerned with emphasising hereditary connections to Shakespeare than in the German and US narratives (itself an indication of the white supremacist ideology at the roots of such connections). Instead, the chapters indicate the ways in which the SBT can be used as a stage for cultural diplomacy, to perform for the world coherence with the hegemonically established cultural standards – essentially, their admiration of Shakespeare as 'the greatest'. Legacies of Orientalism and imperial marginalisation make such performances necessary to countermand the discourses of extreme and insurmountable difference that police the cultural boundaries between the global East and West. However, by emphasising their distinct cultural forms and modes, and foregrounding their own significant artists – Tagore, Iqbal, Cao, and Tang, in particular – the final two narratives demonstrate the use of international soft power through Shakespeare, and how Shakespeare can be used as a platform on which to 'speak back' to Western dominance over the global cultural

marketplace. Through the objects in chapters four and five, cultural difference is asserted and celebrated, and the ways in which cultures can ‘meet’ is summed up by the statue of Tang and Shakespeare side by side that closes the Chinese narrative, as well as by the emphasis on Tagore’s theory of cultural syncretism that naturally became a powerful thread throughout the fourth chapter.

The overwhelming revelation of all four collection narratives proceeds from the simple, obvious fact of the objects’ belonging to the SBT’s collections, and what is thus revealed about international perceptions of the affective power not only of Shakespeare, but of the SBT itself. The narratives could not represent every engagement with Shakespeare that relates to each place, only every engagement that is already represented in the SBT’s collections through gifts or active collecting on the SBT’s part. Actively, that is, *purposefully* collected items include articles, playbills, visitor or minute book records, photographs, local history archives, early modern museum objects, and translations – although there are also many translations that were gifted by the translators. Consequently, many of the actively collected items are most useful to the collection narratives as providers of context or narrative links for and between the ‘ceremonial’ gifts that tend to engender much richer interpretations when pressed by the questions asked of them by this project. As such, it is reasonable to propose that to a large extent, the collection narratives are essentially determined by the donors to those collections.

Asking what brings donors to present gifts to the SBT highlights the operation of Shakespeare’s cultural capital in the global cultural marketplace as a space in which nations exhibit their unique cultural identities as well as their common interests and values: a space for cultural diplomacy and the enhancement of soft power. This thesis asserts that, because

of the establishment of Shakespeare as one of the highest cultural standards, international engagement with Shakespeare makes cultures visible in that global cultural marketplace in specific and desirable ways. No longer simply a gesture of congruence with Shakespeare's 'greatness', such an engagement signals the cultural literacy and accomplishment of the respective nation according to the hegemonic terms set by that marketplace. Engagement with Shakespeare, performed on the 'world stage' of the SBT or Stratford-upon-Avon, enhances the attractiveness of the nation and becomes a form of their own soft power while also enhancing Britain's and the SBT's – by appearing to confirm Shakespeare's 'universality' and cultural worth.

Thus, the SBT's, and indeed, Stratford-upon-Avon's, establishment as Shakespeare's shrine and a place of pilgrimage has led to an international understanding of the primacy of place within Shakespeare's iconography. International collection items that emphasise the affective power of the Birthplace include the German wreath, with its explicit request that it be placed in the house and remain there; the first Visitors' Book, as it was gifted by Thomas Handysard Perkins in 1812, as well as all the US funded additions to the town, the wooden relics/souvenirs, and the ceremonial transferal of Stratfordian soil and water to Dallas in 1936. The memorials to Tagore, Iqbal, and Tang all signal the desire to see those nationally significant poets 'housed' alongside Shakespeare's memory at the Birthplace, and, furthermore, in 2019, in a pre-emptive reversal of the San Weng gesture, and an echo of the US 'flag-plantings' in the town, Fuzhou City erected a replica 'Peony Pavilion' in Stratford-upon-Avon in honour of Tang. These items all reference the significance of the 'umbilical' connection to Shakespeare that the Birthplace engenders, that which endows relics and souvenirs with their affective power. Gifts to the Birthplace, then, attempt first to reverse

that power, bringing the connection to the giver, rather than the taker, then to forge a two-way, ongoing relationship with the Birthplace as the source of the power.

The significance of Stratford-upon-Avon and the Birthplace as a space in which international cultural coherence, diplomacy, and soft power can be performed – the ‘world stage’ – was established through the annual Shakespeare birthday celebration events. Although the problematic concept of Shakespeare’s ‘universality’ is largely implied in this performed cultural cohesion, the potential of the SBT as a performative space makes it ideal for the practice of cultural diplomacy and soft power. In this sense, the SBT’s collections can be understood as a cultural repository, or a reliquary, for the remains of Shakespeare’s national and international significance. Because of the museum and digital search facility, such gestures are both visible and permanent – at least, their materiality forges and verifies the connection between the giver and Shakespeare’s legacy for as long as the collections are visible and the item remains in the collections.

This visibility, that which makes the gesture performative, allows the conferral of cultural capital that is more or less implicitly requested through many of the gifts; for example, in Ernst Rommel’s 1864 poem, the Goethe wreath, and the Chinese communications that request formal SBT acknowledgement of Chinese contributions to the material culture of Shakespeare’s legacy. Such gifts illustrate Marcel Mauss’s configuration of the ‘kula’ gift, which had the diplomatic intention of forging a relationship between communities that was strengthened and maintained by the exchanges of gifts. As such, we may consider the German Goethe wreath as an example of a kula-type exchange, as it sparked a custom in which wreaths have regularly been exchanged between the houses of Shakespeare and Goethe on the writers’ birthdays, excluding the World War years. These

periods caused an absolute rupture in the heavily mythologised 'cousin'-connection that was built on German appreciation of the contribution Shakespeare's works made to their efforts to create a unified national cultural identity. In a similar way to the Goethe wreath, the Tagore bust also sparked a tradition, the celebration of Tagore's birthday in the Birthplace gardens every year, and thus adheres not only to the 'kula'-style promotion of friendly relations and trust, but also to Tagore's vision of 'common spiritual engagement' in a global 'ethical community'.⁵⁷⁸ However, echoing the event of the presentation of the Tagore Tablet in 1964, the sense of genuine multicultural goodwill that is generated once a year by the performance of Tagore's music, dancing, and poetry in the Shakespeare Birthplace garden is ephemeral: what endures is the Anglo-centric interpretation panel that can be seen by visitors to the Birthplace Garden all year round. Any cultural power or status obtained through the giving of the wreath, tablet, or bust, then, is ultimately obscured by the SBT's demonstration of its cultural power as the authenticated custodian of Shakespeare's legacy. Likewise, the ten-year period in which Germany was uninvited to the Shakespeare birthday celebrations following the First World War reveals that despite the promulgation of Shakespeare's 'universality', British 'ownership' of Shakespeare can assert itself and undermine international claims at moments of political expediency.

In the case of the SBT's gifts from Germany and India, then, the implicitly understood terms of the gift exchange were that the gifts would bolster Shakespeare's cultural capital and that cultural capital would be conferred on the donors in return. However, it is vital to question how far the SBT engages with the expectations of the givers for some kind of reciprocity, and what the SBT's ethical responsibilities might be in the gift exchanges

⁵⁷⁸ Tagore, quoted in Saha (p. 16).

described throughout this thesis. Indeed, the SBT's reliance on the idea of Shakespeare's 'universality' is suggested through its interpretation of international items and gifts, most notably in the Anglo-centric interpretation of the Tagore tablet and bust. Such instances indicate that, despite the broadly understood terms of gift exchange, in too many cases the SBT appropriates both the gift and its cultural significance and reinscribes its cultural specificity and its 'difference' as just another aspect of Shakespeare's cultural capital. Thus, in order to evidence Shakespeare's 'universal' appeal, which justifies the Trust's endeavours, the Trust both relies on and maintains the hierarchies of power that determine cultural worth in the global cultural marketplace.

The SBT, it should be noted, does not court gifts, and is often persuaded by the eagerness of the giver to accept gifts that are far beyond the terms of its collecting policy. Also, it is appropriate that the Trust's value is determined in part by the interest shown in it by visitors. As an independent charity, largely funded by ticket sales, it is understandable that the SBT wants to promote Shakespeare's worldwide popularity. However, as this thesis affirms, the SBT cannot assume a position of neutrality in the acceptance and exhibition of all international gifts. The SBT is an institution that is concentrated on an icon of Britishness that has been used to assert cultural superiority over communities that have been established as Other through imperial discourses, and it is a museum that has followed the example of the larger British institutions that were built to prop up the devastating colonial efforts of the mid-nineteenth century. As such, the SBT must engage with the ethical implications of its role in the curation of Shakespeare's global cultural appeal and how it and 'others' appropriate Shakespeare's cultural capital. I contend that the ethics of appropriation can be determined through analysis of the weighting of profit or benefit towards the appropriator or the appropriated and that most of the gifts discussed in this

thesis can be understood as an exchange of cultural property for conferred cultural capital or recognition as part of Shakespeare's legacy. Analysis of who profits or benefits the most in each case discussed in the collection narratives finds that profit and power is unevenly weighted in favour of the SBT. Furthermore, in some cases, the SBT takes the proffered gift but also takes the unproffered cultural dignity of the givers. The choices that the SBT is empowered to make, therefore, are too often geared towards the maintenance of its own cultural value. This thesis illustrates the slippage from the demands of the Trust's charitable Deed – the Act of Parliament that requires it to 'promote in every part of the world the appreciation and study of plays and other works of William Shakespeare and the general advancement of Shakespearian knowledge' – to the cultural imperialism that can be found in the SBT's interpretation (for example, of the Tagore items).⁵⁷⁹

Question two: how can the SBT's international collection intervene in discourses of inclusion, representation, and decolonisation?

This thesis contends that Shakespeare's affective power can be understood as that which generates the desire for international agents to see their nations represented on the SBT's 'world stage'. The iconic status of the Birthplace invites gifts, which generate goodwill, present the opportunity for a display of soft power, and legitimise an international claim to Shakespeare through the material, site-specific connection they forge. The gifts discussed in the collection narratives perform the givers' specific desired cultural identities, and in their materiality they not only 'cement' diplomatic friendships but countermand the fleeting impermanence of alternative forms of cultural performance. Gifts are a gesture of goodwill

⁵⁷⁹ Anon., 'Shakespeare Birthplace Trust Acts 1891 and 1961', *UK Parliament*, 2020
 <<https://www.parliament.uk/about/living-heritage/transformingsociety/towncountry/towns/collections/collections-shakespeare/shakespeare-birthplace-trust-/>> [accessed 13 November 2020].

converted into a *lasting* material form, and donors can be reasonably assured that their tokens will become part of Shakespeare's enduring afterlife through the collections. The ritual of gift-giving as a performance of cultural cohesion that demands and receives the conferral of Shakespeare's cultural capital does not fade but is reasserted either through the collection catalogue or display, as in the case of the Tagore bust or the statue of Tang and Shakespeare that stand in the Birthplace Garden.

The suitability and usefulness of material objects for the transfer of cultural capital is indicated by Mary Stickney's reference to Washington Irving's visit to Stratford-upon-Avon, in the US chapter, and the aftermath of China's Premier Wen's visit to the Birthplace in 2011. In both cases, a material object – intriguingly, both are seats – became relics that simultaneously celebrate Shakespeare and the visitors, Washington and Wen. The bench that Wen sat on became a key attraction for Chinese visitors, and the chair in which Irving sat had to be encased in glass to protect it from damage from enthusiastic fans. Whether the fascination with Shakespeare's chair adds to the significance of these two seats is not clear, but certainly the association of 'great' works of literature with the chairs and desks at which they were produced has often been emphasised.⁵⁸⁰ What is certain is that Wen's bench and Irving's chair signal the ways in which the Birthplace can provide space for the representation of 'other' cultures, artists, and figures, as Shakespeare's cultural capital, that which is imbued in the soil of Stratford-upon-Avon, forms the stage but does not have to share the stage. These instances show that although Shakespeare's affective power and

⁵⁸⁰ This thesis acknowledges throughout that the concept of 'greatness' is usually hegemonically categorised and therefore contested, but see for example: Nicola J. Watson, 'Shakespeare's Chair and the Polish Princess', *European Romanticisms in Association*, 2019 <<https://www.euromanticism.org/shakespeares-chair-and-the-polish-princess/>> [accessed 26 July 2021]; Anon., 'Dickens' Desk Saved for Public Display Thanks to Grant', *BBC News*, 2015 <<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-london-32101255>> [accessed 26 July 2021]; Anon., 'Jane Austen's Writing Desk', *The British Library* <<https://www.bl.uk/collection-items/jane-austens-writing-desk#>> [accessed 26 July 2021].

cultural capital make the site significant, it need not overshadow the visitors' own cultural specificity and significance. In this way, the Birthplace can become one of Tagore's wished-for 'non-homogenised spaces', where cultural capital is shared and what is prioritised is connection rather than supremacy. Once again, the statue of Shakespeare and Tang provides a generative example: the two writers stand together in every sense, their relative writing implements in hand, at the same height, neither towering over the other, and appearing to be in conversation, which is to say that they are *sharing or exchanging* thoughts with one another. The notion of sharing and exchanging rather than lecturing and inculcating is important to this interpretation of the statue as a sort of antidote to the Orientalist maxims that were projected by Western institutions (particularly museums) onto the global East from the eighteenth century onwards, as well as an antidote to the sense of European cultural supremacy that such maxims supported.⁵⁸¹

As this statue, and indeed, this thesis demonstrates, the particular benefit of an object study is that objects can possess, yield, and wield manifold layers of meaning, and appreciation of this fact is crucial to disrupting hegemonic cultural practices through collections like the SBT's. Like poetry, the significations of an object are malleable and subjective and can be subverted by that object's inherent qualities or indeed, their 'thingly agency', in OOO terms. In the case of the German wreath in chapter two, the oak leaf (*corona civica*) construction muddles the intent of the gift as an honorific for Shakespeare and draws attention to the power struggle between Britain and Germany that became material rather than metaphoric during the wars of the twentieth century. Meanwhile, the ivory of the Tagore tablet interrupts the narrative of Shakespeare as the originator of

⁵⁸¹ Said, *Orientalism*, p. 52.

inspiration, indicating the rich legacy of centuries of South Asian artistry, while the Bengali script denotes pride in a more recent development in literature and art that came into being in defiance of British rule and destruction in India. By its very existence, the bearded head and chest of the bust of Rabindranath Tagore standing in the enclosed Shakespeare Birthplace Garden evokes, for anyone familiar with Tagore's biography, the enclosed garden of Jallianwala Bhag and the massacre that was enacted there by the Raj in 1919. The inherent meanings can be occluded but they cannot be erased. These 'alternative' stories are materially rather than textually present, their materiality lending them the permanence in the story of Shakespeare that was sought by their givers when they presented the items to the SBT.

Shakespeare's affective power not only encourages international donors to present objects to the Trust, in exchange for cultural capital, but also generates new connections and aspects of Shakespeare's legacy through objects that can disrupt hegemonic and hierarchical narratives. The ivory of the Tagore tablet, the introduction of George Phillips's letters and their discussion of slavery and the cotton trade at key moments in the US and China narratives, and the representation of the 'Chinese Shakespeares' in the papercut-out and the hanging scroll portrait all demonstrate the ways in which Shakespeare's affective power can be reconfigured through object studies, as well as providing a broader sense of the meanings that can be generated through a Shakespeare collection. In this way, the international collection demonstrates the usefulness of engaging with objects as 'accidental appropriations' of Shakespeare, in Desmet's terms, through the new directions in which such enquiries can take Shakespeare Studies.

Indeed, the process of bringing forward the occluded, alternative object narratives in this thesis suggests that, despite the ‘controversial’ items in the collections, like the lost Confederate walking stick, or the photograph of the Nazi flag, the real ‘skeletons’ in the SBT’s ‘closet’ are the stories it avoids telling. Through anticolonial engagement with its international collections and the range of accidental, incidental, and deliberate engagements with and appropriations of Shakespeare within, the Birthplace can be a space in which Shakespeare’s affective power can be re-set, along with the ‘scenery’ on its ‘world stage’. The critique of SBT accession and interpretation practices in this thesis not only highlights but begins to correct imperialist practices that are a principal means of inadvertently excluding minoritised communities. As a result of my research, and the close working relationship I have been able to foster with the Collections team through the collaborative aspect of this project, the Anglo-centric Tagore interpretation panel is being removed, to be replaced with new text as soon as funds allow for it; insensitive language in the description of an archival document in the Chinese chapter has been amended; and the Trust has begun to look into external funding for projects to revitalise and update its interpretation policy. As The Museum’s Association’s ‘Manifesto for Museum Learning and Engagement’ (2020) asserts, ‘[M]useums are a way of thinking, and these ways change over time. Research – purposeful, public-focused and meeting contemporary needs – is essential if museums are to be effective as centres of social justice and transformation’.⁵⁸² The SBT’s response to my findings so far assures an intention to become more social justice-minded in

⁵⁸² David Anderson, Dhikshana Pering, and Sharon Heal, ‘A Manifesto For Museum Learning and Engagement’, *Museums Association*, 2020 <<https://www.museumsassociation.org/campaigns/learning-and-engagement/manifesto/#>> [accessed 29 June 2021].

their practices, but, especially after the significant losses brought by the Covid-19 pandemic, much will be reliant on funding.

Recommendations

Further research is a key recommendation for the continuance of the work begun in this thesis. Future projects involving the SBT's international items might involve studies that echo this one but work on areas not covered here. The vast swathe of Asia, including Russia, has not yet been explored, nor any part of the continents of Australia, Africa, or South America. A translation project might continue the partial work of the SBT librarian and a team of volunteers and temporary staff (interns and students on placements) to explore the eighty-plus languages featured in the library collection, updating and correcting the catalogue descriptions of titles, bibliographic details, and inscriptions (ensuring all books are presented the correct way up, too). Given the insights revealed by such work in the China chapter, there will be many more physical and intellectual treasures to find in such a project.

The Trust must learn how socially engaged museums and cultural institutions can address and redress the perpetuation of damaging narratives in their cultural engagement practices. While it is essential that any future interpretation policy reflects on anticolonial knowledge and theory in order to ensure against the perpetuation of imperialist and white supremacist logic in the SBT's presentation of international collection items, it is equally important that the Trust's broader staff understand the implications of the notion of Shakespeare's 'universality', and what it means for a representation of an Indian poet, for example, to frame that poet's entire global significance in terms of one poem that was written in honour of Shakespeare. This means reconsidering training programmes for the

whole staff, and, perhaps especially, the board of Trustees, to ensure that the principals on which the SBT's 'world stage' are built are consistent throughout. As well as the Collections department, Education, Marketing, Public Relations, and the Front of House staff must all understand the exclusory implications of perpetuating the notion of Shakespeare's greatness and 'universality' if the SBT is to become a more generative and inclusive 'world stage'.

Specifically, the Trust's future programming should endeavour to ensure that projects, courses, and exhibitions that aim to platform marginalised communities, figures, and people do not exacerbate their marginalisation in the ways outlined in this thesis, especially in the US chapter, by bracketing off cultural difference and achievement as Other to a white Western hegemonic norm. Such engagements should not occur as part of temporary displays of virtue (on the part of the Trust) but should be emphasised as a permanent aspect of Shakespeare's afterlives. Such engagements should be advertised in a way that does not take for granted that everyone considers Shakespeare to be the greatest: thus, the marketing strategy will not echo colonial inculcation of Shakespeare's 'civilising' abilities and superiority over native cultural forms but will present Shakespeare as part of a community of equal and different writers and artists from around the world: as one of the greatest, perhaps, but not the single greatest. For example, the Chinese traditional art forms in the SBT's collections enrich it beyond measure, not least for their non-deferential approach to Shakespeare. An exhibition that showcases Liu's hanging scroll portrait of Shakespeare and the Peony Pavilion handscroll, for example, might be a pleasure for local visitors, who could learn about Chinese tradition while recognising the echoes of common themes in Tang's and Shakespeare's works, and for Chinese visitors, it might be a pleasure to see Chinese art forms celebrated on the 'world stage' in Stratford-upon-Avon.

A revitalised interpretation policy should emphasise cultural sensitivity in the ways outlined above but should also specifically target the ways in which information is recorded in the catalogue and on interpretation panels and labels. The German chapter revealed many spelling mistakes in the catalogue, and the China chapter especially highlighted a lack of sensitivity to cultural difference, with names spelt wrongly and arranged backwards and books presented upside down. The China chapter also highlighted the confusion that occurred over the expectations of the Liaoning International Cultural Exchange Promotion Association with regard to the Liu Bingliang portrait about how the SBT would acknowledge the gift. Given the role of the SBT as a 'world stage', the significance of which is a key thread in this thesis, researching cultural differences and expectations prior to entering into communications should be a priority.

For the Trust to find ways of acknowledging how the narrative of Shakespeare's greatness has caused harm – through the epistemic violence that is described in relation to colonial India in chapter four, for example – would allow the SBT to contribute in a meaningful and significant way to the structural changes that have been taking place in museums across the UK since the summer of 2020. In June of that year, the Black Lives Matter protests evolved into protests against the glorification of slavers and colonists in the form of statues in city centres, and the statue of Edward Colston was temporarily relocated into Bristol Harbour by activists. Since then, the museum industry has responded to demands to redress inequities and colonial logic within the national history many of them curate. Indeed, the journal of the Museums Association notes that the Imperial War Museum has launched access and inclusion training for all staff, and '[I]mplemented new collecting strategies that aim to diversify and broaden the stories it tells'; the Science Museum Group have developed 'an Inclusive Display and Interpretation Action Plan as part

of its commitment to working in a more inclusive way and its approach to collection and curation', as well as increasing 'its focus on growing a more diverse workforce and inclusive culture'; while Amgueddfa Cymru, National Museum Wales, have launched 'a project inviting Black artists to help reframe the colonial narrative around the portrait of lieutenant-general Thomas Picton'.⁵⁸³ Shakespeare is a significant element of British identity and pride, which is indicated in this thesis by the explanation of the impact of 'Garrick's Jubilee' and examples of Shakespeare's use as British soft power as well as in processes of cultural imperialism. Thus, the SBT also has a role to play in revising harmful narratives. As the Trust's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Charter states that '[w]e firmly believe that Shakespeare is for everyone', notwithstanding the emphasis on Shakespeare's 'universality' that has been critiqued throughout this thesis, it is vital that the SBT acknowledges how the perpetuation of imperialist narratives in its language and interpretation limit the sense of who Shakespeare is really 'for' and undermines the sense of welcome it intends to extend to all its visitors.⁵⁸⁴ A 'reframing' project like that launched by Amgueddfa Cymru, but for Shakespeare, could result in an exhibition that modelled an anticolonial engagement with Shakespeare and British imperial history. Such an exhibition could acknowledge the realities of Empire and Shakespeare's entwinement in its harmful ideologies without dismissing the generative affective power that remains in Shakespeare to work through such issues creatively. Shakespeare's affective power could be re-set through critical and creative engagement. Shakespeare need not be 'cancelled' to do such work, nor need he be lauded as a remedial force, which would reintroduce the notion of Shakespeare as a universal force

⁵⁸³ Geraldine Kendall Adams, 'Pushing for Change: What Actions Have Museums Taken in the Past 12 Months to Combat Racism?', *Museums Journal*, 121.3 (2021), 4–5 (p. 4).

⁵⁸⁴ SBT, 'Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Charter', *Shakespeare Birthplace Trust*, 2021

<<https://www.shakespeare.org.uk/about-us/work-with-us/working-sbt/equality-diversity-and-inclusion-charter/>>.

of goodness (per narratives of civilising colonial natives). With the affective power of Shakespeare and the SBT forming the stage, an anticolonial exhibition like this could convey and actually *generate* new ways of performing, thinking, talking, and writing about Shakespeare that the SBT could incorporate into their policies and permanent displays.

Before such a project would be possible, however, the Trust must decide if it is prepared to engage with such discourses at all. The removal of the Tagore panel and editing of the Tagore blog post (with the dubious, if not deceptive line about Tagore's 'protest at British policy in the Punjab') prompted debate in the Cultural Engagement Team about what to replace the panel and the sentence with: most pressing, about whether it is the SBT's responsibility to tell such stories as the Amritsar Massacre.⁵⁸⁵ This thesis makes my own perspective on this question clear: that neutrality on such issues benefits the status quo, which is to say, benefits those that would prefer those histories to remain unknown in order to perpetuate illusions of British greatness that are ultimately grounded in white supremacy and are therefore exclusionary. The SBT's responsibilities are surely to provide a space in which Shakespeare *can* be enjoyed by *everyone*, including those who would find the circumvention in Tagore's biography of his response to the atrocity at Amritsar insulting and harmful; as would, one suspects, Tagore himself.

As well as a revitalised interpretation policy, a revised collecting policy would benefit the Trust in several ways. First, should the Trust want to make more of its international collection items, it should ensure that an exhibition (for example) based on a specific nation is as inclusive to the people of that nation as possible. Not only should the project be designed and written in consultation with native representatives, but attention must be

⁵⁸⁵ Personal communication with SBT Joint Acting Head of Collections Rosalyn Sklar, July 21, 2021.

directed to precisely who is and is not represented in it. To illuminate this point, an exhibition based on the US collection as it is at the time of writing would find the representation of Indigenous Americans in the collection astonishing in its brevity: aside from the oblique reference in Moncure Conway's 'The Mythical Pallbearer' story, the only available item is the Visitors' Book record of the four men of the Ojibwa, or Cheppeway, Nation in 1848. Latin American representations are entirely absent, as noted in the US chapter conclusion. Therefore, in order to stage this sort of exhibition, and avoid the implication that Shakespeare in the US is an almost entirely white affair, the SBT would need to engage with the Indigenous and Latin American communities and ascertain first, whether they would like to be represented, and second, in what ways.

The emphasis on gifts throughout this thesis, and the striking moments in which the SBT's responses to those gifts has fallen short of the givers' expectations, suggests that a specific policy for gifts would benefit the Trust in not only managing gifts in terms of record-keeping and accessioning, but also in managing the expectations of the donors. Because of the ways in which Shakespeare and the Birthplace have been culturally constructed – as universal greatest, shrine, and world stage – and the consequences of those constructions, it is the unique situation of the SBT that specifically ceremonial gifts are such a large part of its international collecting. This fact is what makes it so important that the Trust realises that it does have a role in international diplomacy, whether it intends to or not.

With no comparative collecting policies available at alternative museums, where gifts would be accepted only if they adhered to the collecting policy, the Royal Gift Policy (2003) provides a useful starting point for a new approach to ceremonial gifts to the SBT. The key relevant emphases of the Royal Gift Policy are that no gift should be accepted if

there is any implication that accepting the gift places the family member under any obligation to the giver; gifts should not be accepted if they are 'controversial'; and that no offense should be caused by refusing a gift.⁵⁸⁶ Each of these points translates more or less roughly into a useful framework for the SBT to think about how it might receive international gifts – as items that do not adhere to the collecting policy – in the future to avoid the awkwardness of my own conversations with representatives from donor nations who were disappointed by the Trust's responses. Such a framework would also ensure that proper processes are followed when items enter the building as collection-adjacent items (as we might refer to unaccessioned items). The first priority of a proposed gift policy would be that gifts should be received with a specific form that records the details of the donor, of the maker/writer/publisher/artist, and that records any text that is part of the object, in translation if not in English (for books that would mean the title, bibliographic detail, and any inscriptions). Any further provenance of the item would also be recorded, along with the circumstances of the donation: a special occasion or anniversary, a bequest, or a connection to a cultural event, perhaps. Such processes are already well established for items that are to be accessioned, but if every item encountered in this study had been processed with such a form this thesis might be twice as long. The second priority of a gift policy would be to communicate to donors that all gifts should be given with the understanding that the SBT may not be able to display the item in the museum and will be under no obligation to do so. Furthermore, that while the SBT welcomes consultation on the display and labelling of items that have been gifted, all interpretation must accord with the value system and ethics of the Trust itself (once those have been firmly established, of

⁵⁸⁶ The Royal Family, 'Gift Policy 2003', *Royal.Uk*, 2003 <<https://www.royal.uk/gift-policy-2003>> [accessed 28 August 2021].

course). In this way, the Trust could welcome a broader range of donations into its collections, including 'controversial' items, which might challenge imperialistic ideologies, for example, and it could engage with such objects without deference to the position of the donor, should that position not accord with the SBT's commitment to equality, diversity, and inclusion.⁵⁸⁷

By determining how gifts like the silver bowl from Pakistan, or the *Peony Pavilion* scroll from Suichang, China, should be accessioned – as an item that accords with the current collection policy, or as an item for a specific gift collection, perhaps – the Trust can ensure that the cataloguing process is detailed and accurate, that donors' expectations are managed, and that the items are at least available as representations of the donor nation in the digital catalogue. As this thesis demonstrates, the desire for representation is, after all, what compels, and makes compelling, the SBT's newly created and contextualised international collection.

⁵⁸⁷ SBT, 'Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Charter'.

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