

# The Mental and Theatrical Maps of Shakespeare's Romances: a Romanian Perspective

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## ABSTRACT

*The paper surveys the spatial co-ordinates that frame the imaginary geography of Shakespeare's romances, which map out a conventionalised visual representation of an increasingly fragmented world, torn apart by religious, political, linguistic, social, and cultural differences. How do these particular plays address and paraphrase the English Renaissance drama's interpretation of the world beyond English shores and of the others that inhabited those spaces? If the romances emphasise final union through initial dislocation and dissension, do they typify a particular Jacobean interpretation of topography and stage world? Inspecting briefly the reception of Shakespeare's romances in Romania during the past decades, the focus will shift on the reversed cultural perspective, by examining the way these plays contributed to the formation of individual and group identities in an equally antagonistic social and political milieu. (KEYWORDS: geography, space, stage history, Romanian productions).*

## RESUMEN

*El artículo examina los componentes relativos al espacio propio de una geografía imaginaria de los romances de Shakespeare, que trazan la representación de un mundo fragmentado por diferencias religiosas, políticas, lingüísticas, sociales y culturales. ¿De qué manera estas funciones parafrasean y se acercan a una interpretación de un mundo detrás de las costas inglesas y de los "otros" que habitaban estos lugares? Si los romances apuntan hacia una reunión final a través de la dislocación inicial y las disensiones, ¿de qué manera éstos tipifican una interpretación particularmente jacobea de la topografía y del mundo escénico? Aunque trata principalmente de la recepción de los romances de Shakespeare en Rumanía durante las*

*últimas décadas, el argumento parte también de una perspectiva cultural inversa, explorando las maneras en que los romances contribuyeron a la formación de las identidades individuales y de grupo dentro de un ambiente político y social igualmente antagónico. (PALABRAS CLAVE: geografía, espacio, historia teatral, representaciones rumanas).*

## I. STAGE SPACE AND TOPOGRAPHY

In an increasingly fragmented world, only apparently united by administrative measures or sophisticated means of communication, there seems to be less room for words, and a greater need for factual and visual representation. The sixteenth-century Western Europeans could find the world delineated spatially in the first systematic atlas ever published the Latin text of Abraham Ortelius's *Theatrum Orbis Terrarum* (1570).<sup>1</sup> The title of the atlas, like all the subsequent English editions, suggests the implied link between spectacle, drama, and geographic space assumed in Ortelius's title. *Orbis Terrarum* reflects the Roman view of the world as a circular disk: *Theatrum* poses the world as a stage, a setting for human action. Recent criticism has already delineated a Shakespearean "geography of difference"<sup>2</sup> where geographic discourse has been submitted to "poetic" or phenomenological analysis. Assuming for a moment that a dramaturgical version of the ancient poetic geographic economy and the "new" geography is to be found in Shakespeare – what *significance* would such a finding have for our understanding of his theatre? More particularly, how do the romances address and paraphrase the English Renaissance drama's interpretation of the world beyond English shores and of the others that inhabited those spaces? If the romances emphasise final union through initial dislocation and dissension, do they typify a particular interpretation of territory and stage world?

If the literate part of the Elizabethan public learned to trace unknown regions through the mediation of cartographic materials and travel narratives, for a large majority of people such

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<sup>1</sup>Unsurpassed until Mercator's atlas appeared twenty-five years later, Ortelius's *Theatrum* went through twenty-four editions during his lifetime. It circulated widely in Europe and remained in print until 1612. The late Elizabethan and Jacobean editions are: Abraham Ortelius, *His Epitome of the Theatre of the Worlde*, London, 1603; *Theatrum Orbis Terrarum. The theatre of the whole world*, London: S. Norton, 1606; *Ortelius his epitome of the theater of the worlde: Now lately renewed and augmented by M. Coignet... Amplified with new mappes wanting in the Latin edition*, London: S. Norton 1610.

John Gillies, in *Shakespeare and the Geography of Difference* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), explores Shakespeare's use of the received geographic traditions, primarily the way geography negotiates moralized conceptions of otherness; more recently, a collection of essays, edited by John Gillies and Virginia Mason Vaughan, *Playing the Globe, Genre and Geography in English Renaissance Drama* (Madison: Farleigh Dickinson University Press; London: Associated University Presses, 1998), considers the mental maps of English Renaissance drama and the way human communities have defined themselves in contrast to outsiders.

spaces did not exit at all, except for the dramatic negotiations to be seen at the Globe. There was an "umbilical" (14) relationship, in Simon Palfrey's coinage, between the political constructs of legitimacy in the romances and the "mouldy" tales they drew on.

Translating into romance's always-creative engagement with beginnings, one finds myth interlacing with history, fantasy transforming allegorical satire... Accordingly, Shakespeare enjoys the mode's sometimes extravagant liberties, but always ballasts any flightiness with classical or contemporary contextualization. In *Pericles*, ancient Athens and Jacobean London underlie the story's oceanic itinerance; *Cymbeline* filters Roman and British mytographies; *The Winter's Tale* reworks Ovid and secular analogy; while *The Tempest*'s multiple utopias juggle Virgilian, Ovidian, and various topical New World discourses. (Palfrey: 15)

Boika Sokolova explains the inconsistency of the romance mode in terms of ideological mediation: "... the antiquated, far-off flavour of the romances, so much deplored by critics and variously explained as the consequence of old age, generic specificity, or the change of theatrical taste, can also be seen as an expression of ideology which posited certain social beliefs as 'true,' and pitted them against the others which seemed questionable or downright objectionable." (Sokolova: 3). In addition to the ideological and topical dimensions that translate the vague romance mode into the definite form of Shakespeare's theatre, I suggest that an understanding of topography and stage space may be equally relevant for the bizarre dynamics of the romances. This particular theatre generates, at once, an act of "knowing" and "doing" within the concrete confines of the spectacle.

In order to set boundaries to their empire and to claim to have reached those that were inarked out, the ancient Romans needed a certain perception of geographical space, of its dimensions, and of the area they occupied. The necessities of conquest and government require an understanding of the physical space that one hopes to dominate.<sup>3</sup> There was a similar attempt to inap the cosmos, to stabilise it, in the period of Tudor and Stuart England. In Arthur F. Kinney's opinion, the complex semiological system released through the abundance of maps, atlases and chorographies had, in fact, destabilised the cosmos, had unmapped it (Kinney: 182). The large assortment of diagrams and visual semiotic codes cancelled any notion of fixed eternal truth or the idea that there was a prevailing image of the universe in the Renaissance. Instead, a welter of differing images was formed, none convincingly authoritative. The artist, therefore, assumed the license to create his own spatial narrative. How do topographical descriptions and terms function in Shakespeare's romances? Just what is the geographic component, and how

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<sup>3</sup> For a study of the perceptioii of space in aicieit times, see Claude Nicolet, *Space, Geography and Politics in the Early Roman Empire* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1991): 2.

does it operate? These are questions critics have tried to answer ever since Ben Jonson's famous commentary on the inaccuracy related to the coast of Bohemia,<sup>4</sup> and in more recent studies.<sup>5</sup>

I will examine the dialectic of the romances between dramatic texts and the geographic and physical spaces they negotiate, and the way they lead to the charting of a different topology of the imaginary. My suggestion is that, in exploring how identity is constructed and reconstructed through space, Shakespeare models space in a pattern of concentric circles, the centre of which is the body on stage. We witness the subversion of space and its transformation into a presupposed conceptual landscape. The play becomes a virtual hypertext, and the audience is invited to find the atypical in each referential topography. In this way, the dramatist is able to distance the story and to convey a continual reminder that each play is after all only a play, reinforcing the duality of the play world and the real world. In the second part of this study, I will consider the effects of reading such cartographically explicit plays from the eastern geographic margins of the European regions they inscribe in their imaginative territory. Considering the recent reception of Shakespeare's romances in Romania, I will focus on the 1994 production of *The Winter's Tale*, a 1995 version of *Pericles*, and a recent multi-cultural interpretation of *The Tempest* in 1997. Inspecting briefly the way the directors chose to relate to geographic areas and stage space in their productions, I will focus on a different cultural perspective, by examining the manner in which these plays might have contributed to the formation of individual and group identities within the Romanian theatrical atmosphere.

## II. TOPOGRAPHY IN THE ROMANCES

Real places were described by travellers and adventurers, codified by cartographers, and systematically explained by geographers. Drama is a different way to talk about space, which

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<sup>4</sup> Ben Jonson [as reported by William Drummond], in an extract from *The Shakespeare Allusion-Book: A Collection of Allusions to Shakespeare from 1591 to 1700*. Vol., ed. by John Muni-o, revised edition, 1932. Reprinted by Books for Libraries Press, 1970. Inc., p.274.

<sup>5</sup>For the contrasting moral values of the pastoral scenes in *The Winter's Tale* see Richard Studing, "Shakespeare's Bohemia Revisited: A Caveat," *Shakespeare Studies* XV (1981): 217-16; for Renaissance notions of space and ethnicity see R.W. Desai, "What means Sicilia? He something seems unsettled": Sicily, Kussia and Bohemia in *The Winter's Tale*," *Comparative Drama* 30 (1996-97): 311-24; Daryl Palmer, in "Jacobean Muscovites: Winter, Tyranny, and Knowledge in *The Winter's Tale*," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 46 (1995): 323-39, documents the major points of contact between Shakespeare's *The Winter's Tale* and Jacobean narratives of Muscovy; Khonda Lemke Sanford maps out the image of the land gendered as feminine and the explorer-cartographer as masculine, in "A Koom Not One's Own: Feminine Geography in *Cymbeline*," *Playing the Globe*: 63-85; Glenn Clark maintains that the play dramatically highlights the relation between geography and a Jacobean sense of identity and of otherness, in "The 'Strange' Geographies of *Cymbeline*," *Playing the Globe*: 230-59.

means personifying it. Such personifications are both a form of knowledge and potent speech acts. They deal with "knowing" and "doing" simultaneously. What we know about Bohemia, Sicilia, Eastern Mediterranean locations, or a desert island somewhere between Tunis and Naples is irreversibly modified by the concrete contact with a Shakespeare play, be it *The Winter's Tale*, *Pericles* or *The Tempest*. A limited number of people among the Jacobean audience could read in the large printed English versions of Ortelius' *Theatrum Orbis Terrarum*<sup>7</sup> about Bohemia: "This kingdome lying in Germany, is compassed about with hilles & woods, it hath on the north syde Silesia, on the west Fraiconia, on the south Austria & Bavaria, & on the east Moravia" (53). Of Sicilia they would know that "This Island and kingdome lieth in the Mediterranean sea, & at the northeast end thereof it is nere unto the southeast end of Italy" (81). About the Dukedom of Milan they find out that "The cite of Milan is the chief of all the cities of this duchie, & hath bene even the balke of fortune to be tossed and transposed to & from so many commaunders" (65). The "Kingdome of Naples" was similarly torn by political disputes, according to Ortelius: "If we look into the histories of former ages we shall not see any knowne kingdome in the world, that hath seemed more unfortunate then this, having bene as it were the very butte whereat fortune hath shot her sharpest-hedded arrowes..." (79). These tests, and many others, can only be in circumstantial relation to the theatrical reality. Most theatregoers devised their own regional and cultural boundaries with reference to these places according to one performance or other.

"Doing" implies movement, and the Latin prefix "trans-", signifying "across, beyond, through," indicates a transaction, negotiation, performance. I notice three directions of spatial progress inscribed in the dynamics of the Shakespearean spectacle in the romances: *transmutation*, in its concrete form of banishment, *translation*, or the representation of space through travel and shifting spatial references, and *transgression*, the dissolution of the ethical space. To many people, Pericles's peregrinations seem a singular form of self-banishment, such as Thaisa's monastic retreat in the improbable pagan-Christian space of Ephesus. Being born at sea, Marina belongs to nowhere, but she is a virtuous exile in the morally corrupted world of Mytilene<sup>7</sup> on the island of Lesbos. In *Cymbeline*, Posthumus is banished to an implausible Renaissance Rome, and the two lost princes are innocent exiles taken secretly away from their father by Belarius, a banished lord. Innogen is temporarily and unwittingly banished to Wales by her husband's misguided rape. Even the word "Wales" is from an Old English term meaning "foreigner" (Asimov 67). In *The Winter's Tale* the audiences are confronted with Perdita's

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<sup>7</sup> My reference is to the microfilm copy of the 1610 edition: *Ortelius his epitome of the Theater of the worlde Now lately renewed and augmented by M. Coignet. Amplified with new mappes wanting in the Latin edition* (J. Norton, 1610). STC 18857, pp. 53, 81, 65.

For a discussion of Marina's position in the brothel scene, the Senecan motif of the Prostitute Princess and its continuation in the figure of the Virgin Martyr from Christian hagiography see Lorraine Helms, "The Saint in the Brothel: Or Eloquence Rewarded," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 41 (1990): 319-332.

faultless banishment due to her father's insane passion, Camillo's enforced exile to Bohemia, and Hermione's retreat in the secret seclusion of her quarters. Nothing more can be said about Prospero's expulsion from Milan and its socio-political implications, the banishment of books, the alienation of the shipwrecked, or about Caliban's social ostracism as a slave. From my perspective of the negotiations of space in the romances, these erratic displacements and spatial transmutations through exclusion and estrangement contribute to the special dynamics involved in this theatre.

The brothel in Mytilene can host, according to the Bawd, "of every nation a traveller" (Pericles, 16.99).<sup>8</sup> The dramatic ramifications of travel, geography and politics in *Pericles* have been repeatedly analysed.<sup>9</sup> I want to point out that the multiple and often-discordant shifts of locale in this play, like in the other romances, account for a potent energy that centres on the stage. In *Cymbeline* there is permanent motion in space and in time. The play's casual anachronisms<sup>10</sup> are an ingenious form of putting to good dramatic use the need for a constant dynamic of *translation* in both space and time. Travel is effected between ancient Britain and Renaissance Rome, or between "Lud's town" (3.1.32) and Milford Haven. Giacomo is an Italian Machiavellian personality. A definitely Renaissance Frenchman attests that he met Posthumus in "Orléans" (1.4.29), while the Britons expect the Roman troupes to move on them from ancient "Gallia" (3.5.24). These techniques of spatio-temporal ambivalence and discrepancy create a general confusion. They produce a bizarre and active notion of space and time, adequate to the romances' indefiniteness. *The Winter's Tale* shifts from Sicilia to Bohemia, in a disturbance of temporal deficits and anatopical surface features.<sup>11</sup> These incongruities have often been

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<sup>8</sup> References to the Shakespeare text are keyed to *The Norton Shakespeare*, gen. ed. Stephen Greenblatt (New York: Norton, 1997).

<sup>9</sup> See Constance Relihan, "Liminal Geography: *Pericles* and the Politics of Place," *Philological Quarterly* 71, no.3 (1992): 281-99. Linda McJannet attempts to recover the symbolic geography and history of the period, in "Genre and Geography: The Eastern Mediterranean in *Pericles* and *The Comedy of Errors*," *Playing the Globe*: 86-106.

<sup>10</sup> Jonas Barish discusses this topic in "Hats, Clocks, and Doublets: Some Shakespearean Anachronisms," John M. Mucciolo (ed.), *Shakespeare's Universe: Renaissance Ideas and Conventions, Essays in Honour of W. R. Elton* (Aldershot: Scholar Press, 1996): 29-36. He comments that *Cymbeline* "provides a kind of total immersion in anachronism, since it seems to be set simultaneously in Renaissance Italy and the Rome of classical antiquity, as well as in ancient Britain. Yet this logical absurdity ... is in fact negotiated so as not to abuse our credulity" (p.34).

<sup>11</sup> Michael Bristol, in "In Search of the Bear: Spatiotemporal Foini and the Heterogeneity of Economies in *The Winter's Tale*," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 42 (1991): 145-67, discusses the play's many well-known anachronisms, particularly the haphazard geography and the chaotic temporality.

explained as a privilege of representation within certain genres.<sup>12</sup> *The Tempest* makes progress horizontally, through narrative space, between Prospero's island, Milan, Naples, and Tunis, but mostly in the vertical intensity and inconsistency of psychological amplitude. Space and geography act as symbolic triggers of mental animation in this play's diverse dramatic topography. These theatrical techniques of rapid progress in time and space create only apparent confusion. In fact, they help the audience produce their own mental geography, in close relation to the theatre they see.

A third spatial co-ordinate, which potentially defines the dynamics of the stage world in the romances, can be termed as *transgression*. Moral codes signify differently in the ambivalent brothel space in *Pericles*, where the Pander, the Bawd and Boult are no better nor worse than their clients of various nationalities, a Transylvanian, a Spaniard and a Frenchman, or the governor Lysimachus. The revelations of incest<sup>13</sup> at the court of Antiochus and the strange gamble of marriage and death riding on a iiddle's answer make the play's ethical movement go distressingly haywire. Gower's placid interventions in the order of moral judgement only extend the discrepancy between the slow-moving distancing narrative of the chorus and the dynamic multiple moral violations in this play. Giacomo's amorality in *Cymbeline*, as well as the Queen's needless wickedness and Cloten's fury generate the direction of moral transgression on stage, building an actual space of evil. Similarly, Leontes's anomalous rage dominates the stage world in *The Winter's Tale*, imposing a fiery Sicilia to the audience, in contrast to an apparently pastoral Bohemia. What the audience will never know about *The Tempest* is whether Antonio clearly repents in the end, or his silence is merely a measure of the disproportionate depth of evil. The stage space opens amply in this play, generating a dialectic of movement which forces the audience to travel from an initial dislocation away from native places, as experienced by Prospero in his self-reflective narrative of exile, through various actual and mental geographies disclosed in the play, to the final deduction that ethics provides the only individual space that counts.

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<sup>12</sup> See Northrop Frye, *A Natural Perspective: The Development of Shakespearean Comedy and Romance* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1965); Charles Frey, *Shakespeare's Last Romance: A Study of The Winter's Tale* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1980), p. 114ff; Howard Felperin, *Shakespearean Romance* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1972).

<sup>13</sup> Anthony J. Lewis, in "'I Feed on Mother's Flesh': Incest and Eating in *Pericles*," *Essays in Literature* 15 (1998): 147-63, reads the play's persistent analogy between sexuality and eating habits as a vivid and terrifying illustration of the ways in which human beings respond to the need to sustain themselves.

### III. ROMANIAN PRODUCTIONS OF THE ROMANCES

The 1994 production of *The Winter's Tale* at the *Bulandra Theatre* in Bucharest,<sup>14</sup> translated and adapted by the director, Alexandru Darie, plays freely with the notions of space and character in the play. Starting from the play's title, the entire plot is constructed as a premonitory vision, which Mamillus recounts to his mother, in the form of a tale or like a dream on a cold winter night. This strategy opens the possibility of productive significations in terms of the relation between real and imaginary spaces. The fantastic, the improbable, the implausible become naturally accepted by the audience. Leontes's fiery and illogical passion develops in a supposedly cold Sicilia, an image that is totally inadequate in terms of the stereotypical construction of Sicily, in Jacobean and in modern times as a warm and richly fruitful country. The pictorial sets evoke discreetly a number of famous wintry paintings, such as Breugel's "Winter". The music by Henry Purcell is part of the structural unity of the spectacle, marking the moments of dramatic intensity. The stage space is locked in these tu-Oforms of artistic representation, music and painting, in order to highlight the quality of artefact manifested by drama itself, suspended midway between an imagined narrative of a dream, and a fictive reality of representation.

Mamillus's transitory scenic presence is assimilated to that of Time, an equally ephemeral *raisonneur* of the play. The translocations of imaginary spaces are harmonised with variable alterations in time in order to synthesise the vacuum of the theatrical representation, which absorbs any attempt at definite determinations or realistic geography. The fact that the same actress who plays Mamillus narrating the story is cast in the role of Perdita closes the circle of significations. Like any individual conception of time or space, our notions of identity are equally elusive. The dream-like quality of this particular production and the blank images of frozen spaces tend to slow down the motions of the spectacle. Dynamism is suppressed, giving way to the inert confusion of dreams. By contrast, the lively Bohemia at the sheep-shearing feast discloses a different dramatic space, punctuated with a distinctly warmer music and an altered pictorial setting. Shakespeare rewrote the story of Robert Greene's *Pandosto* by reversing the positions of the two kingdoms, making Sicily rather than Bohemia the locus of the initiating action, and by changing the names of the characters. In the same way, the director of this Romanian production alters the audience's expectations of a warm and summery Sicilia, in contrast to a wintry Northern Bohemia. Space, duration, and individuality are never what the audience might expect them to be.

A radically innovative Romanian production of *Pericles*, at the *Odeon Theatre*, Bucharest 1995, admits no boundaries to the tangible and ethical space on stage. The title announces

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<sup>14</sup> See Alice Georgescu, "Povestea din Poveste" [The Tale Within the Tale], *Teatrul*, 47: 7-9 (1994): 7



prudently *Pericles after William Shakespeare*.<sup>15</sup> The director, Alexandru Hausvater, plays on the intervention of the everyday irrational situations in the workings of individual destiny. When confronted with incest and moral dissolution, Pericles is not amazed, he does not try to fight evil according to the common moral expectations of a hero. He thinks he can devise a stratagem of retreat and subversive containment, but the audience sees that he is not the author of his own plan. This particular Pericles is the actor of a multifaceted cosmic scenario, according to which all individual actions and projects are clearly defined. Gower is the tyrannical "Commanditore", a cruel and fantasising director, who orders actions and emotions according to his own hallucinating games of evil. The stage space and audience space become one, and all are forced to obey the compelling script. In an authoritarian voice, Gower orders the audience to enter and take their seats. He directs waves of noisy music towards them, and orders the movement of the numbered bodies on stage, selecting the numbers that are allowed to become names. More and also less like a god Gower confuses the time scheme and changes the sex of his characters as he pleases. He shows that he belongs to an eternity of violence that cannot be hindered by individual details.

Number 5, Pericles, is a betrayed king, an exiled vagrant, and a hopeful pilgrim in search of happiness. He cruises an eternally ambivalent European space where nothing is stable. The cheering crowds of carefree tourists around the Eiffel Tower alternate with film sequences showing the ruins in Sarajevo. The significant sets and the rapidly moving succession of film images give surprising amplitude to the scenic space. Pericles travels almost incessantly, and he stops to rest only in certain anonymous places, where he finds a wife or distributes humanitarian aid. Tyrants are the same everywhere in his peregrinations, whether they are heads of state like Cleon, the Governor of Tarsus, or brothel masters. Ordinary people are visibly similar in cowardice and moral degradation: they are mere interchangeable numbers, objects animated by the imperious voice that determines their fragmented existence. Ultimately, these theatrical slaves free themselves from Gower's irrational authorial tyranny, but this is done in such a frenzy of jarring music and noise that the moment of supposed emancipation can only increase the general discord and irritation.

Hausvater aims to disturb the audience's passive condition of viewers of the spectacle from their comfortable velvet seats. He extends the stage space aggressively, by shocking the spectators with the grating intensity of the noise, the harsh and turbulent scenic movement, and the pinching difficulty of the riddles. However, by invading the viewer's personal space through the assault on their senses, little is accomplished in point of intense participation. Aggressed on all sides, the spectator experiences the rejection of the whole. After seeing productions such as this one, the audience needs to be reminded of the distance between stage and seats. In truth, this

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<sup>15</sup> *Pericles după William Shakespeare*, director Alexandru Hausvater, *Odeon Theatre*, Bucharest, 24 November 1995. Review: Magdalena Boiangiu, *Teatrul azi* 3 (1996):17.

is only a play, as Shakespeare invariably helps us to understand. Sometimes he uses the space of his stage to show that this is a small world after all.

4 multicultural 1997 production of *The Tempest*<sup>16</sup> at the National Theatre Bucharest, directed by Karin Beier, is an attempt at domesticating the Babel language anarchy through the theatre. The twelve actors speak eight languages (French, English, Croat, Polish, Romanian, Finnish, Italian, and German), and they seem to communicate excellently through the Shakespearean common language of theatrical space and rhythm. Prospero and Miranda are the only characters who speak the same language – Romanian – throughout the spectacle. Their identity is unaltered by formal topographical and linguistic conventions. The shipwrecked politicians dispute their useless and ephemeral power in various languages. Regardless of sex, they wear modern suits and ties, parading the sterile political hypocrisy. When they are starving, Alonso, Sebastian, and the lot auction the few tomatoes one of them keeps in her briefcase. They hold grandiloquent speeches, engineer obscure *coups d'état*, and in general argue constantly.

The German director's *The Tempest* starts with a European summit. Antonio, Alonso, Sebastian, Gonzalo, and Francisco discuss about a tomato, the symbol of a united Europe. Their verbose orations include several European languages in a single utterance. The parody applies to the pretentious rhetoric used on such official occasions, and the actors employ significant gestures relating to national and relational specificity. For instance, Alonso embraces Ferdinand, a Polish actor, in the Slav fashion, and Sebastian kisses Alonso's hands, in the manner of the Sicilian Mafia. During the convivial banquet offered by Ariel, hidden resentments and nationalistic prejudices become open outrageous verbal assaults, directed at the former allies. Alonso, a Finnish actor, is told that the Finns are no better than the Russians are, and they drink too much. Sebastian, an Italian actor, tells Antonio, an English actress, that Englishwomen are sexually inhibited. Antonio and Gonzalo, a French actress, tell Sebastian that Italian men think only with what they have below their belts. The affronted Sebastian gets back at Gonzalo with the malicious observation that French women use too much perfume because they do not like to wash themselves. This is Karin Beier's version of a united Europe. As for Shakespeare...

Caliban speaks the twelfth-century Upper Middle German, an archaic form of modern German, and this linguistic individuality places him in the space of myth and legend. The primitive and deposed former king of the island inhabited a land that is no more, and the only idiom he learned from the colonising Prospero is the abusive language. We know this from Shakespeare himself, but Karin Beier's Caliban curses loudly and clearly, using the richest Romanian oaths. His abusive and aggressive attitude jolts the audience out of their snug and

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<sup>16</sup> *Furtuna*, directed by Karin Beier. Co-production by the European Theatres Union, Bühnen der Stadt, Köln, WDR Television and Theaterformen Festival 1998. Produced at the National Theatre Bucharest in September 1997. Producer: Volker Canaris. Reviews: Saviana Stanescu, "Euro-Furtuna" [The Euro-Tempest], *Adevărul Literar și Artistic* 387 (1097):7; Ionela Liță, "Integrarea României în Shakespeare" [Romania's Integration in Shakespeare], *Adevărul Literar și Artistic* 387 (1997): 7.

precarious conceptions about master and slave, questioning Prospero's right to invade his land and personality. With Ferdinand and Miranda words do not matter, but it is not certain how the self-absorbed space of their love is going to change when they are transported into the real world. The symbolic game of chess paraphrasing the love venture is made of much giving and taking, insolent cheating, and it is eloquently open-ended. Prospero, the apparent master and all-powerful magus, is exiled in his own utopia, like the other characters. He is neither the victorious hero, nor the director-conquistador of a magical theatre-island. In the end, life is accepted as it is – be it a deceptive dream or an absurd conflict of power.

Ariel is the authentic hero in Karin Beier's conception. He is the master of the universal language of music, and the only source of peaceful harmony in the discordant multilingual insanity. Only seraphic sounds emerge from this airy spirit, the voice of pure art. He remains free to roam the island, away from the expropriating and polluting presence of humans. The abstract space of music confers a necessary refuge of peace and truth. The director of this multinational production in Romania may have intended – and succeeded – to shrink the illusory spatial elements of the stage-island to an abstraction. From the incoherent cacophony of political power and ambiguous rhetoric that dominated the initial scenes, the imaginative space on stage shrinks drastically, no longer an inchoate dream, but a melodious form of perfect art.

The Romanian productions of the Shakespearean romances mentioned above deal with the concept of space and movement from their directors' perspectives. What they have in common, however, is the assumption that this theatre is concerned with doing things not only with words, but also with people and their understanding of the spaces they inhabit, or imagine that the others live in. Whether the audience are aggressed and forced to accept that there is a conflicting world out there, like in Hausvater's offensive production of *Pericles*, or they are lulled to a final acceptance of harmony after the harsh movement of power, like in Beier's interpretation of *The Tempest*, in all situations they could create their own emotional image of the real world beyond stage, which Shakespeare's theatre only triggered into being.

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