

The Romanian Bard: Translating Shakespeare for a Post-Communist Nation

Ingrid Radulescu | Dr. L. Monique Pittman | English Department | J.N. Andrews Honors Program

Abstract:

New Romanian translations of William Shakespeare's works, known as the Opere series, emerged leading up to the 400th anniversary of Shakespeare's death in 2016. As Romania stands on the margins of Western civilization and culture, so it stands on the sidelines of European political and economic partnership. Romania's fight on a micro level to be accepted in Western culture through Shakespeare is only a battle for the larger macro war the nation fights to be fully accepted in the European Union. In this manner, Romanian scholars use Shakespeare as high cultural capital in hopes of becoming an equal economic and political partner. Through examination of the Opere series' aims, close textual analysis of the Opere's *Hamlet* (2016), and investigation of the Craiova International Shakespeare Festival, this project theorizes the nationhood and cultural identity of Romania in relationship to its Shakespearean enterprises.

Presentation Outline:

1. Introduction
2. Research Question
3. Methods
4. Theorizing Romanian Culture and Nationhood
5. Close Textual Analysis
6. Epilogue
7. Dedication
8. Acknowledgements
9. Questions

Sample:

Arden	2016	1959
By Gis and by Saint Charity, A lack and f ie for shame, Young men will do't if they come to t't: By Cock , they are to blame.	Pe Crist și Sfântă Caritate, Vai, vai și ce rușine, O fac băieții, nu le scapă, Zău ne le șade bine.	Pe domnul nostru Isus Hristos, E vai și-amar de mine, Băieții toți sînt niște hoți, Zău, fie-le rușine.
Quoth she, 'Before you tumbled me, You promis'd me to wed.'	Ea zice: Pân' să mă pui jos, De nuntă mi-ai vorbit.	Mi-a spus nevastă c-am să fiu Și m-a pus jos, și-i prea tîrziu
He answers: 'So would I ha' done by yonder sun An thou hadst not come to my bed.' (4.5.58-66)	Iar el: Zau, nu mă răzgândeam, Da-n pat mi te-ai suit (277)	Iar el îi răspunde : Pe soare jur că te-aș fi luat De nu veneai la mine-n pat. (663)

Arden	2016	1959
Affection? Pooh, you speak like a green girl Unsifted in such perilous circumstance. Do you believe his 'tenders', as you call them? (1.3.100-102)	Ca o fetița Ce n-a fost încercată de primejdii Chiar Crezi, cum zici, în ale lui dovezi? (185)	De dragoste? Vorbești ca o fetiță Ce n-a trecut prin sitele ispitei. Crezi oare-n ceea ce numești zăloage? (544)



Selected Annotated Bibliography:

Anderson, Benedict. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism.* Verso, 2006.

Benedict Anderson defines nations as an imagined political community wherein nations are simple constructs of imagined borders. He articulates the problematic roots of constructing nations based on different strands of nationalism. Anderson's theoretical definition of nationhood provides insight into my examination of Romanian national and cultural identity.

Bakic-Hayden, Milica. "Nesting Orientalism: The Case of Former Yugoslavia." *Slavic Review*, vol. 54, no. 4, Winter 1995, pp. 917-931.

Milica Bakic-Hayden's article explores nested orientalism as seen in Eastern Europe. She examines how since the Ottoman Empire, Eastern Europe, specifically the Balkans, has been pushed aside and categorized as "other" in Europe and often seen as backwards compared to Western Europe. Bakic-Hayden brings forth the questions of cultural and ethnic identity throughout former Yugoslavia and argues it will be always subject to a redefinition. This article serves as relevant because Romania also suffers from nested orientalism and ultimately is the cause of its desire to gain Western cultural affirmation.

Cinpoes, Nicoleta. *Shakespeare's Hamlet in Romania 1778-2008: A Study in Translation, Performance and Cultural Adaptation.* The Edwin Mellen Press, 2010.

Nicoleta Cinpoes catalogs the history and significance of Shakespeare's crown jewel play, *Hamlet*. She traces the history of its translation, performance and cultural adaptation. Her book acts as especially vital to understand the rich history of *Hamlet*, and ultimately Shakespeare, in Romania.

Hanna, Sameh. *Bourdieu in Translation Studies: The Socio-cultural Dynamics of Shakespeare Translation in Egypt.* Routledge, 2016.

This resource attempts to utilize Pierre Bourdieu's sociology of cultural production as a lens to evaluate drama translations. Hanna examines four of Shakespeare's most translated tragedies in Arabic to demonstrate how translation studies intersects with cultural studies. A chapter specifically explores drama translations as cultural capital and acts as the foundation to examine the New Romanian Shakespeare translations as cultural capital and the Shakespeare Festival as social capital.

Kaplan, Robert D. *In Europe's Shadow.* Random House, 2016.

Robert Kaplan documents Romania's journey from a Communist backwater country to a tourist hotspot in Eastern Europe. He scrutinizes the methods by which imperialism, geography, and history all shape a nation and ultimately foreshadow its future. Kaplan's book supports my understanding of contemporary Romania through its political, national, and historical identity.

Matei-Chesnoiu, Monica. *Shakespeare in the Romanian Cultural Memory,* Fairleigh Dickinson UP, 2006.

Monica Matei-Chesnoiu's book considers Shakespeare as an integral part of Romanian cultural memory. She argues its marginalization in Europe caused its desire to adopt, adapt, and appropriate Shakespeare in order to emerge from the cultural shadows of Europe. This resource is useful to the larger discourse of Romania and Shakespeare studies as Matei-Chesnoiu traces the importance of Shakespearean theater in Romania from its usage as tool of dissent against the Communist regime to a cultural marker for integration into Western Europe.

Nye, Joseph S., Jr. *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics.* Public Affairs, 2004.

Joseph Nye's book advances his term "soft power". He defines soft power as using the economic interdependence, institutional power, and attractiveness of culture as a means to influence other nations. This source is useful in revealing how Romania strives towards producing cultural festivals and Western ideals in order to achieve partnership on an economic level.

Volceanov, George. "Un altfel de Shakespeare – unul fără perdea." *Dilema Veche*, April 2016, <http://dilemaveche.ro/sectiune/tema-saptamanii/articol/un-altfel-de-shakespeare-unul-fara-perdea>

George Volceanov's essay provides the claims and reasons behind the New Romanian Shakespeare translations. Volceanov, the main editor, argues his main goal and purpose for the translations is to revive Shakespeare's relevance within the Romanian public and distance from the previously communist censored translations. This resource is useful in the larger discussion and assessment of the translations. *This source is in Romanian.*

