Changing Policies in Media Ecology: The Case of East European Digital Shakespeare

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Due to the physical distancing measures implemented by various countries around the world, Shakespeare has recently been produced and consumed almost exclusively online, in a medium where global, regional and local actors compete for audiences. This has confirmed Stephen O'Neill's critical paradigm of "sow and scatter" (2018) that aims to cover the multiple and diverse presence of Shakespeare in the new media, which, however, could receive further inflections so as to include linguistic and cultural differences of the less researched East European region.

The present effort of rethinking academic, pedagogical and creative work for the digital sphere in Eastern Europe can be turned into an opportunity to increase the region's participation and visibility in a pre-existing global digital Shakespeare. The aim of this seminar **is to map the ground for valuing and circulating different iterations of Shakespeare online produced in Eastern Europe**.

More specifically, we open a conversation which includes but is not restricted to the following clusters of questions and possible practices:

A.   - initiating discussions on a possible regional curatorship endeavour that starts with mapping the domain: pooling and structuring information on the different iterations of Shakespeare online, from performances to more radical appropriations on YouTube and social media, with a focus on regional/national specificities;

- initiating preliminary discussions on how to create a common archive or access point to Eastern European Shakespeare online productions, in different national languages – Romanian, Russian, Bulgarian, Serbian, Greek, Ukrainian, Hungarian as well as Polish, Czech and Slovak); how to ensure the preservation not only of old performances, but particularly the most recent ones which are easily disposed of social networking platforms. The "move online" has created an incredibly high expectation of performances being easily available - where do we go from here?

- identifying structural problems in producing digital Shakespeare in the region, in particular in the following fields: academic (scholarly work, reviewing, online journals, open access), performance (online streaming, platforms), cultural memory (institutions, funding), appropriation (curators, online magazines, communities to pick up and discuss YouTube, Instagram, Twitter iterations).

B.   - How have local, vernacular theatre environments in the region been impacted by the recent relocation online of Shakespeare-related products? What effects on Shakespeare performances in the region can be expected from the online viewing of productions in the Anglophone centers (National Theater Live, RSC, Shakespeare's Globe)? What differences have been identified between witnessing performances live and experiencing them online?

- How has the increase in inclusivity achieved by online viewing of lectures, events, debates originally intended for a smaller and more exclusive group (e.g., Alexei Bartoshevich's lectures for troupes and theater schools in Russia) impacted the critical discussion on Shakespeare as well theatrical practices?

C.   With respect to vernacular Shakespeare appropriations on YouTube or other digital platforms, what differences can be identified between these productions and those in the Anglophone space? Are there any differences in content, the construction of identities, genres and

styles employed? Are there differences in the tastes and interests of the audience targeted? What kind of translations (intermedial, intercultural, between old and new media) are affected in these productions?