Studia Anglica Posnaniensia 59 (2024): 221–232
doi: 10.14746/stap.2025.59.12

JAN KOTT'S LEGACY IN SHAKESPEARE STUDIES

KRYSTYNA KUJAWIŃSKA COURTNEY[1]

ABSTRACT

Jan Kott's *Shakespeare Our Contemporary*, which has been translated into 48 languages and has gone through many re-editions, has indeed revolutionised Shakespearean studies all over the world.[2] The title of his monograph, published in 1964, has become a keyword for the combination of often newly-discovered and constantly re-discovered theatrical, historical, aesthetic, philosophical, dramaturgical, linguistic, and modern concerns present in Shakespearean plays and poems. In the twenty-first century Shakespeare criticism and theatre studies are often divided into "before" and "after" the publication of Kott's famous work. The aim of my work is to briefly outline in what way Kott's *Shakespeare Our Contemporary* has contributed to the liberation of Shakespeare from the Romantic imperative of universality and transcendence as well as from dusty pedantry and artistic irrelevance, engaging, rather, with current epistemological and ontological questions about humanity.

Keywords: Jan Kott; William Shakespeare; legacy; Poland.

The legacy of Jan Kott covers primarily his many achievements in theatrical and literary study, which he revolutionised. My interest in his work was triggered by the theatrical staging which I saw as a child in Warsaw. My earliest childhood memories are inseparable from the theatre and the rituals my parents developed in anticipation of attending a performance. There was always an evening reading of the play we were to see. Then came the night itself – my Mum getting formally dressed and applying her makeup, and Dad's nervousness because Mum's preparations would make us late. I remember big theatre halls filled with people,

1 University of Lodz. E-mail: krystyna.kujawinska52@gmail.com.

2 The collection of essays was originally published in Polish as *Szkice o Szekspirze* (*Sketches on Shakespeare*) in 1961. Anna Posner's translation into French *Shakespeare notre contemporain* appeared a year later. In 1964 Boleslaw Taborski's translation into English was published. Kott revised and enlarged some of the essays which the volume contained.

and the excitement before the curtain went up. During the intermission and after the performance, there were discussions about the play, the actors, and the director.

My parents loved theatre. We went so frequently that some theatre people became my "aunts" and "uncles". In Communist Poland, going to the theatre was easy and cheap because the government policy encouraged attendance. Under the state-subsidised theatre system, trade unions bought blocks of tickets and distributed them among their members, which made theatre a regular entertainment. There were also special theatre trips from my hometown of Lodz to Warsaw, Cracow, and other cities. One of them took place in 1960.

Shakespeare's *Richard III* was so long and complicated that, to my parents' astonishment, I fell asleep when they were reading it aloud one night. A few days later my father went to Warsaw where he waited in line for many hours to purchase tickets. Though it was impossible for a child to understand and appreciate the theatrical feast my parents offered me that gloomy November evening, I still remember that I was flabbergasted not only by the performance but also by the enthusiasm of the audience and their numerous standing ovations, which repeatedly interrupted the performance.

Although the play was about a king, he did not look like a king, nor were there royal pageants, costumes, or a palace. The leading actor, Jacek Woszczerowicz, had a name I found difficult to pronounce. He wore a costume that looked like an oversized black sweater. He limped, laughed cruelly, and moved like a terrifying spider. The set was made up of huge stairs, and bars, which fell with a resounding rumble.

Though it definitely was one of the most significant theatrical productions I have ever seen, I do not have further specific recollections of that event. From a historical perspective it seems that my memory and the memory of many adults of that Warsaw performance will always be Jan Kott's memory, the reflection on his generation's experiences of the Nazi and Stalinist totalitarian regimes, their knowledge and their response to the immediate political, social, and cultural reality of Poland.

In this production all the theatre conventions – the performers, the rhythm, the lighting, the setting, and the costumes – contributed to Richard's easy cruelty, from his manipulation of his opponents and supporters, to his creation of his own image and charisma. Several years later, I read Kott's collection of essays *Shakespeare Our Contemporary*, where I absorbed his interpretation of Shakespeare's play and the production. According to Kott, Richard was nothing more than another member of a constant procession of rulers who climb to the top of the "grand staircase" only to fall into the abyss. "The Grand Mechanism of Power", cruel and absurd, crushed all attempts at individual freedom.

"The circle has closed, history has come back to its beginning", commented Kott (1965: 331) in his essay, and asked, "Is it going to repeat itself again?" As a

theatrical critic he presented many other productions of Shakespeare's plays (e.g. *Measure for Measure*, *Troilus and Cressida*, *King Lear*, *Coriolanus* and *The Tempest*), treating them as the epitome of incisive Polish commentary on the national political and social situation.[3] With time, as some critics claim, the "mutilation" of Shakespeare became a standard approach in Polish Communist theatre; the best productions showed that Shakespeare's texts supplied directors with relatively safe dramaturgical material. Unable to penetrate the political allusions and metaphors skilfully incorporated in the theatrical *mise en scène*, the censors usually treated them as the ultimate product of the Elizabethan era. Once the censor approved the text of a play and its general staging, the productions started their own life.[4]

In his collection of essays, Kott's critical approach was simple to follow. Capitalising on the concept of Shakespeare as a constant referent, Kott showed, consciously or unconsciously, his native Poland's significance to the world's cultural legacy. He took advantage of the universal knowledge of Shakespeare's texts and he treated them as the inspiration to interpret his own national history and literature by suiting, justifying and drawing attention to the culture of his motherland in the name of Shakespeare. He was, obviously, not the first to do so, but his method was challenging and original: his interpretation of Shakespeare was inseparable from the Polish context – he located it in the times of World War II, the Warsaw Uprising, and his own experience – and Kott never apologised for his subjectivity, which he treated seriously.

As Kott presented this approach to Shakespeare, Polish theatre at this time appropriated his synchronic readings of Shakespeare, which resulted from theatrical aesthetics, which manifested itself in the scenery, the use of space, costumes, movements, gestures, and voice. All these tightly bound theatrical sign systems worked effectively together to express the clearly articulated leading ideas of the productions. In other words, their theatrical sign system became concretised:

---

3 Of particular significance was the production of *Hamlet* staged in the Stary Teatr in Cracow in 1956, which after the publication of Kott's essay "Hamlet after the 20th Party Convention", a chapter of *Shakespeare Our Contemporary*, became internationally known.

4 Only if it evoked overt political demonstration, as it was the case with Kazimierz Dejmek's staging of *Dziady* (*A Forefathers' Eve*) written by Adam Mickiewicz, a leading Polish poet and playwright of the Romantic period, 1968, the censors banned it. Quite frequently the Polish public read definite subversive implications into performances which were apparently devoid of any political innuendoes. When for example Andrzej Wajda staged *Hamlet* on November 28th, 1981 in the Stary Theatre in Cracow, the play was originally produced without any political overtones. However, after the imposition of martial law (December 13th, 1981) and the violence, student strikes, and the imprisonment of Solidarity members that followed, a political "aura" arose in which both the audience and the critics alike found allusions to the political climate in Poland (Kujawińska Courtney, "Shakespeare in Poland", https://internetshakespeare.uvic.ca/Library/Criticism/shakespearein/poland1/index.html).

the gestural, rhythmical, dramaturgical and narrative systems built up a comprehensive representation of the totalitarian regime in the productions. Yet the meaning did not operate at the historical level, as the sign system became typologised, assuming a generalised dimension. Consequently, the interpretations of Shakespeare's plays, as Kott presented in his monograph, came out of a series of compound allusions and metaphors, which implied the *atmosphere* of violence, the secret police, and political despotism located in selected signs of redundancies or contradictions (Kujawińska Courtney 2006: 228–245).[5] The meanings of Shakespeare's plays, as Kott presented in his criticism, were conveyed not only by the texts, but also by the his own understanding of the texts: Kott's free floating associations and attitudes evoked by reading Shakespeare in a given time and space.

Though the term – postdramatic theatre – came into being only at the end of the twentieth century, in my opinion the appearance of Kott's criticism on the international arena played an important role in its emergence. He showed the possibility of interpreting Shakespeare's plays from his personal experience and sensitivity, but always located in a definite context. Later, his clear but never explicit political parallels, which he wrote about in *Shakespeare Our Contemporary*, between the totalitarian regimes and the War of the Roses, inspired such theatre directors as Peter Brook, Peter Hall, Michael Bogdanov Adriane Mnouchkine, Charles Marowitz and Giorgio Strehler to look for ways to fashion productions that highlighted the contemporary political situations and that allowed one to interpret Shakespeare's plays as allegories of modern times. It was through Brook, in fact, that Kott impacted the theatre most directly, especially in the famous RSC production of *King Lear* in 1962 and *A Midsummer Night's Dream* in 1970. In the last decades of the twentieth century, there were so many theatrical productions inspired by his interpretations that Kott once jokingly stated that these kinds of interpretations would be known in the annals of theatrical history as the "Kitten's approach", since "Kott" is Polish for "cat".

Another significant aspect of Kott's criticism was that he presented Shakespeare's texts speaking to the needs of the post-war generation. They allegedly revealed "the heroes" of that time, portraits of contemporary human beings crippled morally, and frequently physically, after the atrocities of World War II. His Shakespeare was that of Shakespeare an existentialist, almost nihilist, an exponent of inhumanness, and the philosophical condition of being "nothing". At the time when existentialism as a sign of Western decadence was not taught at

---

[5] Years later, while working on my dissertation, I wrote to Professor Kott, inquiring about his inspirations for the concept of political history as the ruthless operation of the "Grand Mechanism of Power". I thought that Woszczerowicz's interpretation of Richard constituted the immediate stimulus for Kott's thinking. "It might be so" (if not indicated otherwise, all translations are mine), Kott admitted in one of his letters. Later, I had the pleasure to meet Professor Kott several times in Poland and in the United States.

Polish universities, Kott presented Shakespeare as the father of the theatre of the absurd and an advocate of sexuality and bawdiness in literature and theatre (Kujawińska Courtney 2006). And I treat these phenomena as his legacy, which affected not only the theatre but also the cultural and literary reception of Shakespeare all over the world.

Yet at the time when Kott's monograph was published, adherents to traditional critical values, especially in academia, became severe critics. They usually claimed that there was an unbridged gulf between Shakespeare's vision of the world and their own, and that Kott overwhelmingly impoverished it with his political readings.[6] Even a cursory survey of their criticism demonstrates that Shakespearean traditionalists desired to control Kott's unconventional views by the systems and procedures linked to the exercise of power, as defined by Foucault (Ciglar-Žanić 1992: 52). Sir Frank Kermode stated, for example, that the most interesting value of Kott's book is its unoriginality. Since he treated Shakespeare as an unchanging value, Ciglar-Žanić (1992: 52) rightly indicated that this British critic "belittled Kott's text on ethical and ideological grounds: his ideas were regarded not only as 'useless' but also as 'harmful'".

This critical attitude toward Kott remained unchanged for decades. In the 1970's Harry Levin, in his monograph *Shakespeare and the Revolution of the Times*, enumerated Kott among some other Shakespeare critics, stating that there was also "Mr. Kott, a Polish dramatic critic who has lately been promulgating his interpretations in this country [the U.S.]" (Levin 1976: 32).[7] Levin's other references to Kott scattered throughout his monograph, are mostly *argumenta ad hominem*, and various rhetorical tropes of invective denigration: "Calmness and rationality are not among the attributes of Kott's approach. … Mr. Kott has ignored the intellectual context and has superimposed modish absurdism in presenting his *Shakespeare Our Contemporary*" (qtd. in Ciglar- Žanić 1992: 55). The critics ignored his knowledge of classical and modern texts, presented in the interdisciplinary contexts of music, paintings, history and politics.

In addition, by the time Levin wrote his criticism, Kott had already been a professor at some of the top American universities for ten years. Levin's references to Kott's experiences in Poland during and after World War II were to undermine his credibility as an interpreter of Shakespeare, as if nationality, personal experience, political affiliation, and by extension gender, sexual preferences, and religious beliefs, *a priori* eliminated some critics from reading and interpreting

---

6 See for example: Malgorzata Sugiera (1993: 150–157) and Przemyslaw Mroczkowski (1994: 54–61).

7 While teaching as a visiting professor in the United States, Kott was fired for political reasons from University of Warsaw, his main place of employment. Roman Taborski (2002: 174) cites one of the leading politicians of that time, who called Kott "an exceptionally negative person in the political and moral sense".

certain literary works adequately. Levin's own view was, however, hardly consistent, considering that he was a Shakespeare scholar who strongly defended the concept of the unchanging universality and transcendent referentiality of Shakespeare's texts. Generally, the claim implicit in the admonitions levelled against Kott's *Shakespeare Our Contemporary* reveal the aspiration to the possession of the "Right", the "True", the only valid epistemological and hermeneutical approaches and techniques in Shakespeare studies.

This vitriolic criticism was probably the reason why for some decades Kott was ignored by the new historicist, gender, postcolonial and multicultural studies instead of being acknowledged as one of their avant-garde precursors. After all it was Kott who did by implication, allusion and metaphor what the latest critics have been doing explicitly, programmatically and at length. Compare for example the critical practices in New Historicism, postcolonial, performance and gender studies. He was, as Zdenek Stribrny (2000: 105) notes, "a liberating incentive to overcome all forms of stagnation and dogmatism". Not only did his *Shakespeare Our Contemporary* make the first radical rupture in the institutionalised Shakespeare discourse, it was also instrumental in exposing the monopolistic position which traditional scholarship came to occupy in the Shakespearean critical discourse. The academic reception of Kott's later publications *The Bottom Translation* (1987) and *The Gender of Rosalind* (1992), performed the same function, despite the critic's modified theoretical and hermeneutical perspectives encountered there. Nowadays, we use his methods when we discuss sexuality and cross-dressing in an intersectional context of social, political, cultural and aesthetic discourses present in Shakespeare's texts.

In interaction with the well-established and generally accepted institutionalised paradigm of criticism of the sixties in the twentieth century, Kott's *Shakespeare Our Contemporary* really demonstrated a capacity for transforming itself into a genuine deconstructive instrument, because it sensitised its readers to the hidden, subtle, and complex ideological strategies behind the ostensibly "self-evident" truths and assumptions of the authority-governed practices of Shakespeare criticism based only on the texts.

The fact that he was a representative of the Eastern and Central European generation, which went through extended exposures to – Nazi and Stalinist – totalitarian regimes, seemed to be significant in the evaluation of his legacy. His childhood and youth in pre-war Poland were shaped under the terror oppression of brutal nationalistic officials, anti-Semitism, and extreme-right nationalistic thugs at the universities. During World War II, Kott experienced a dizzying world of violence, heroism, and betrayal. He joined both the communist-led underground and the nationalist partisan fighters. He often led a life on the run and skirted death. After the war, seeking firm ground, Kott became an active member of the Communist Party, where he became one of Poland's "cultural

tsars". Dealing out harsh Marxist polemics, Kott was in the middle of totalitarian orthodoxy; he was, in fact, the person, who weighed and measured the Polish cultural life according to the Communist dicta.[8] After the de-Stalinisation of the party's twentieth Congress, he left behind this orthodoxy, quitting the Polish party in 1957. It is not surprising that these experiences taught Kott to see the world as a place of "round-ups and summary executions" (Michnik 2000: 369).[9]

As a Shakespeare and theatre critic, Kott broke many cultural taboos. He was an outsider, a Pole from behind the Iron Curtain. He was not one of the established Anglo-Saxon academic establishment. Even in his obituary, Eric Bentley (2002: 15) noted that Kott was "not a regular Shakespeare scholar, and he did not know English well enough". Though he was surely a man of letters, he was not a typical academic, and what is more unusual, he was a theatre man, a personality, even a celebrity. He irritated, and teased his readers, provoking them to take definitive stands. His ideas became recognized by the most prominent directors. Kott received invitations from distinguished academic and theatrical institutions all over the world to deliver lectures or serve as a consultant. He became an internationally renowned expert on Shakespeare. Kott, the outsider, appropriated the archetypal symbol of Anglophone (read: British and American) cultural supremacy. Nowadays, it is not unusual that the most eminent works on Shakespeare are written by scholars from all over the world e.g. Portugal, India, France, and Brazil. His lack of English was a particular problem for many critics: he did not have direct access to Shakespeare's language, and all his works appeared in translations. Unwittingly, the worldwide presence of his criticism contributed to a subversion of Shakespeare's position as a proponent of English as an international language, and the post-World War II desire for universally acceptable icons.

Though Kott was never, to my knowledge, an adherent of poststructuralist theory, which delights in finding no fixed authority of texts, his essays drew attention to the multicultural indeterminacy and/or radical contingencies of

---

8 Roman Taborski demonstrated Kott's role in the cultural life of communist Poland. As one of the founders of the Instytut Badan Literackich (Institute of Literary Studies), and an active party member, Kott was in the position to exercise his power and revealed his ideological preferences for foreign and Polish writers. Some people still cannot forgive him for his attack on Conrad's works, which prohibited them from publication. At the same time, Kott revived the interest in the Polish Enlightenment, editing a series of works of the eminent writers of that period (Taborski 2002: 171–177).

9 Over the decades, many essays appeared, evaluating his life and critical achievements compare: Guczalska (1988), Michnik (2000), and Tighe (1996). In 2002, *New Theatre Quarterly* 18 was entirely devoted to Kott, see: Brustein (2002), Kuharski (2002), Marowitz (2002), Trussler (2002). Kott himself evaluated his life in *Footnote to the Biography. Heart Attack* (1991) which appeared in Polish as *Przyczynek do Biografi. Zawał Serca* (1991). Unfortunately, it is not a traditional autobiography, but, as Tadeusz Nyczek (1991: v) called it "a literary story, about the life of a certain author in a certain period". For more on Kott's work and legacy, see: Kott (1976, 2001), Kujawińska Courtney (2001), and Kujawińska Courtney & Mercer (2003).

meanings of Shakespeare's works. After all, the multicultural consumption of Shakespeare around the world means an overwhelming consumption in non-English languages. Dennis Kennedy (1995: 133–148) calls the phenomenon "Shakespeare without his language". At the same time, Kott was extremely conscious of Shakespeare's arcane language – in his critical texts, frequently a word becomes a critical pivot for his analysis and evaluation of its etymological meanings and translational incongruities.

Kott's criticism, especially on Shakespeare's theatrical renditions, drew attention to the perhaps obvious fact that not only a majority of Shakespeare readers but also actors know his texts mainly in translation, or in "foreign" English. Now no one questions the fact that his lines are delivered in unknown accents and languages, and his texts are frequently contemporised for cultural and political reasons. From the traditionalist point of view, this approach is heresy, undermining belief in authorised and therefore the "natural", universal, transcendent or representational mode of "doing" Shakespeare on page or on stage.

Kott's work, and especially the theatre productions he inspired, have up to now far-reaching ramifications in contemporary Shakespeare studies.[10] They helped to overstep cultural boundaries and inspired subversions of Shakespeare's original early modern text, which has become a language even to the native speakers of English. In the last decades, fresh translations of his works have inspired such directors as Giorgio Strehler, Yukio Nianagawa, and Tadashi Suzuki to explore the plays more freely. And it is generally accepted that their productions focus more imaginatively than their British and North American counterparts on visual elements of performance than on their verbal expression.

The question of Shakespeare's contemporaneity has been attracting critical attention for decades. Such works include John Elsom's *Is Shakespeare Still Our Contemporary?* (1989) and Marcus D. Gregio's *Contemporary Shakespeare: Exploring a Living Theatre in the 21st Century* (2003). In Kott's attitude to Shakespeare, "universality" neither equated with or opposed "contemporaneity", treating them as inseparable. On the one hand he presented a universal, canonised Shakespeare, who talks to us over the centuries as a unique phenomenon, a monolithic entity, a demi-god, and a privileged universal principle labelled as the creator of plays that both in print and in performance require extraordinary respect. On the other hand he dealt with Shakespeare our contemporary – who over the centuries has been "adapted and appropriated, performed, parodied, plagiarized, re-presented, re-produced, re-written, translated, transformed, transposed" (Matheson 1995: 114) in continuous processes of cultural exchanges, frequently without any veneration for his universality. Both aspects, by the way,

[10] In the eighties of the twentieth century, Charles Marowitz (2001: 17) rightly noticed that many of these productions even look ridiculous, and there was a great move to discredit them.

were already discovered by Ben Jonson, who in his ode "To The Memory of My Beloved, The Author, Mr. William Shakespeare: And What He Hath Left Us" (1623) praised his recently demised colleague both as the "Soul of the Age" and as "not of an Age, but for all time" (qtd. in *The Riverside Shakespeare*, 65–66).

"Shakespeare" – Kott wrote in one of his essays – "is like the world or, life itself. Every historical period finds in him what it is looking for and what it wants to see". "The important thing", the critic declared in a different context, "is reaching through Shakespeare's texts to our contemporary experience, to our apprehension and to our sensitivity" (Kott 1999: 225). He explained this further:

> When we want to 'open' a text as if it were a closed door, we need a key. This key is another text. For the interpretation of one sentence, we need another sentence, for a scene another scene, for a play another play. Even when history is the key, it is only another text that rubs against the other, and it unlocks the one we are trying to open.
> (Kott 1999: 225)

In his work, Kott draws attention to the constant change implicit in the concept of contemporising Shakespeare, which has always been visible especially in the response to Shakespeare in non-English speaking countries. In the past, the marginalised "foreign", non-Anglo-American countries propounded their heterogeneous national concerns by situating themselves against the global phenomena of the hegemony of the groups of "sameness" in English-speaking parts of the world.

In the sixties, Kott's work itself assumed a multicultural value in the form of translations, productions, and influences helping the right of nascent or revived cultures to justify their acknowledgment and/or esteem by the international community. When postmodernism strongly challenged the Truth of humanism, which interrogated the consensus of Shakespeare's contemporaneity, it did not , however, undermine it in its problematised political, social, and cultural discourses of various *petite* narratives. It was, I assume, the reason for an abundance of works devoted to Shakespeare's "life" in cultures around the world. The change of the critical paradigm facilitated the internationalisation of Shakespeare: world cultures became recognized as valid cultural forums, which constantly determine the identity, meaning and value of Shakespeare. Kottian criticism was crucial, from my point of view, for the dissemination of this paradigm. It made the theatre and literary critics aware not only of the existence, but first and foremost of the significance of the artistic and intellectual wealth offered by a global space in which diverse cultural voices can share their experience of local "Shakespeares".

Though in his works Kott is always concerned about the functioning of humans in the world, which he frequently presented through the prisms of nature/culture and human/non-human relationships, he also was interested in

abandoning human essentialism and re-conceptualising "a human" and/or "human nature". Some critics venture to claim that Kott provided us with a warning of a posthuman world. After all, his famous "grand mechanism of power" is a technological expression, suggesting that all things (literature, theatre, physics and mechanics) interconnect. An open-ended question remains unanswered – maybe posthumanist thinking also belongs to his legacy?

In addition, Kott, as Marowitz (2001; 2002) noted, was a great admirer of mass culture – popular appropriations, movies, creative writing, and political rhetoric. Currently, it is indeed a truism to say that any examination of any use of the Bard provides a window into the deep preoccupation of the world's cultural moment, showing, as Terence Hawkes (1993 [1992]: 3) says, not only what Shakespeare means but what we mean through Shakespeare.

Indeed, Kott's writing shows that constant local contemporisation of Shakespeare gives us a great opportunity to read, discuss and disseminate the information about and understanding of an ever-increasing colourful quilt of people, customs and beliefs. In other words, Kott's story of Shakespeare in totalitarian Poland made many worldwide Shakespeare scholars and theatre practitioners re-evaluate critical concerns, which for centuries had been taken for granted. It also helped to question common Western assumptions about the nature of performance in the context of the non-Western Shakespeare theatrical tradition. Kott was a zealous proponent of the Far East theatre tradition and culture, especially Kurosawa. He wrote essays on his cinematographic appropriation of Shakespeare and frequently referred to Japanese and Indian theatrical methods (Kott 1976: 99–109).

As theorists and critics point out, traditional assumptions about continuity in the literary and performance history of Shakespeare's plays are cultural constructs. In his Polish essay "Last Word", Kott (1998) deftly summed up his attitude to Shakespeare:

> What is it this contemporaneity, about which I have been so obsessively writing? My book in translations has always had the title *Shakespeare Our Contemporary*. But is he only ours? In Shakespeare maybe the most astounding dimension is his constant regeneration of contemporaneity, started with his First Folio, through Romanticism, Modernism and our times. It surely will be over many centuries to come in all languages and in all continents. But this contemporaneity is never given, it is assigned as our homework – it is assigned to us and to the theatres.
>
> [my translation, KKC]

Kott's legacy demonstrates that in any literary and performance/theatre criticism, it must be taken into consideration or at least recognized that we are bound by the perspectives of our own time, place, religion, age and gender. And these concerns are never given; they re-emerge in the workshop on the indeterminacy and

contingency of meanings. Yet, by anchoring them in Shakespeare, the cultural differences can be explored in a coherent fashion and opened to a wider group of general and professional readers and audiences than they would have under other circumstances. And maybe this is Kott's ultimate legacy?

REFERENCES

PRIMARY SOURCES

Kott, Jan. 1965. *Shakespeare our contemporary*. (Transl. by Boleslaw Taborski). Preface by Peter Brook. Methuen.

Kott, Jan. 1976. Bunraku and Kabuki, or, about imitation. *Salmagundi* 35. 99–109.

Kott, Jan. 1987. *The Bottom translation: Marlowe and Shakespeare and the carnival tradition.* Northwestern University Press.

Kott, Jan. 1991. *Footnote to the biography*. Aneks.

Kott, Jan. 1992. *Gender of Rosalind: Interpretations: Shakespeare, Buchner, and Gautier*. (Transl. by Mark Rosenweig). Northwestern University Press.

Kott, Jan. 1998. Ostatnie słowo. *Plus Minus* 52. 3.

Kott, Jan. 1999. *Szekspir wspolczesny 2: Plec Rozalindy i inne szkice*. (Selection, arrangement and introduction by Tadeusz Nyczek). Wydawnictwo Literackie.

Kott, Jan. 2001. Raised and written in contradictions: The final interview. Interviewer: Allen J. Kuharski. *New Theatre Quarterly* 18. 103–120.

SECONDARY SOURCES

Bentley, Eric. 2002. Jan Kott: 1914–2002. *American Theatre* 19(3). 14–15.

Brustein, Robert. 2002. The lived experience. *New Theatre Quarterly* 18. 101–101.

Ciglar-Žanić, Janja. 1992. Jan Kott and the Shakespearean order of discourse. In Marta Gibińska & Zygmunt Mazur, *New trends in English and American studies. Proceedings of the Fifth International Conference. Cracow 1990. April 2–7*, Universitas. 45–56.

Elsom, John (ed.). 1989. *Is Shakespeare still our contemporary?* Routledge.

Evans, Blakemore G. (ed.). 1974. *The Riverside Shakespeare*. Houghton Mifflin Company.

Gregio, Marcus D. 2003. *Contemporary Shakespeare: Exploring a living theatre in the 21st century*. (Forward by Peter Thomson). Xlibris Corporation.

Guczalska, Beata. 1988. Pisarz i krytyk. *Dialog* 5. 123–135.

Hawkes, Terence. 1993 [1992]. *Meaning by Shakespeare.* Routledge.

Kennedy, Dennis. 1995. Shakespeare without his language. In James C. Bulman (ed.), *Shakespeare, theory and performance*, Routledge. 133–148.

Kuharski, Allen J. 2002. Jan Kott in exile: Arden and absolute Milan. *New Theatre Quarterly* 18. 121–131.

Kujawińska Courtney, Krystyna. 2001. 'To interpret in the name of Shakespeare': National cultures and Polish sources of Shakespeare's plays. *Cuadernos de Filologia Inglesa* 7(2). 41–58.

Kujawińska Courtney, Krystyna. 2002–2004. Shakespeare in Poland: Selected issues. *Internet Shakespeare Editions*. University of Victoria, NaN. https://internetshakespeare.uvic.ca/Library/Criticism/shakespearein/poland1/index.html (accessed 14/09/2024).

Kujawińska Courtney, Krystyna. 2006. Krystyna Skuszanka's Shakespeare of political allusions and metaphors. In Irena R. Makaryk & Joseph C. Price (eds.), *Shakespeare in the worlds of communism and socialism*, University of Toronto Press. 228–245.

Kujawińska Courtney, Krystyna & John Mercer (eds.) 2003. *The globalization of Shakespeare in the nineteenth century*, 161–171. The Edwin Mellen Press.

Levin, Harry. 1976. *Shakespeare and the revolution of the times: Perspectives and commentaries*. Oxford University Press.

Marowitz, Charles. 2002. Remembering Jan. *New Theatre Quarterly* 18. 101–102.

Marowitz, Charles. 2001. *Roar of the canon: Kott and Marowitz on Shakespeare*. Preface by Robert Brustein. Applause Books.

Matheson, Tom. 1995. Hamlet's last words. *Shakespeare Quarterly* 48. 113–122.

Michnik, Adam. 2000. Gogol's Venom: A study in lost illusions. *Partisan Review* 67(3). 367–390.

Mroczkowski, Przemysław. 1994. *A midsummer night's dream* and common sense. In Irena Janicka-Swiderska (ed.), *Studies in Literature and Language in Honour of Adela Styczynska*, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Łódzkiego. 54–61.

Nyczek, Tadeusz. 1991. Jan Kott na wielkiej scenie. In Tadeusz Nyczek (ed.), Jan Kott *Pisma wybrane*. Vol. 1. Krąg.

Stribrny, Zdenek. 2000. *Shakespeare and Eastern Europe*. Oxford University Press.

Sugiera, Małgorzata. 1993. *Hamlet* współczesny. *Dialog* 3. 150–157.

Taborski, Roman. 2002. Jan Kott (1914–2001). *Rocznik Towarzystwa Literackiego im. Adama Mickiewicza* 37. 171–177.
https://bazhum.muzhp.pl/media//files/Rocznik_Towarzystwa_Literackiego_imienia_Adama_Mickiewicza/Rocznik_Towarzystwa_Literackiego_imienia_Adama_Mickiewicza-r2002-t37/Rocznik_Towarzystwa_Literackiego_imienia_Adama_Mickiewicza-r2002-t37-s171-177/Rocznik_Towarzystwa_Literackiego_imienia_Adama_Mickiewicza-r2002-t37-s171-177.pdf (accessed 22/11/24).

Tighe, Carl. 1996. Kott: The revisionist. 10.1177/004724419602600302 (accessed 22/11/24).

Trussler, Simon. 2002. Grieving. *New Theatre Quarterly* 18(2). 99–100.