

'Unser Shakespeare'? The Tercentenary and Germany

It may seem odd to start the investigation of the worldwide Tercentenary celebrations in Germany instead of the land of Shakespeare's birth. However, as Werner Habicht argues, Shakespeare's 'domestication' abroad, 'his global impact and national appropriation became a curiously simultaneous if not dialectical process that determined the Bard's reception in Britain and elsewhere'.¹ In other words, Britain's engagement with Shakespeare often responded to and was shaped by that of other nations. Chief among those nations was Germany. Indeed, research by Habicht, Wilhelm Hortmann, and Christa Jansohn, among others, indicates that Germany's credentials in Shakespearean performance and scholarship in the period leading to the Tercentenary were arguably stronger than Britain's.² In the five years before the war, there were more Shakespearean productions per annum in German theatres than in British ones.³ The Deutsche Shakespeare-Gesellschaft (German Shakespeare Society), established in 1864, was not only one of the first Shakespeare societies in the world but also the founder of the first academic journal devoted to him, *Shakespeare Jahrbuch* (*Shakespeare Yearbook*).⁴ Through the stage

¹ Werner Habicht, 'Shakespeare Celebrations in Times of War', *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 52.4 (2001), 441–55 (p. 441).

² See Werner Habicht, *Shakespeare and the German Imagination*, International Shakespeare Association Occasional Paper 5 (Hertford: International Shakespeare Association, 1995); Wilhelm Hortmann, *Shakespeare on the German Stage, Volume 2: The Twentieth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998); Christa Jansohn, 'The German Shakespeare Society from the Turn of the Century until 1914', *Archiv für das Studium der neueren Sprachen und Literaturen*, 252.1 (2015), 55–82.

³ Nicholas Martin, 'The Reluctant Recruit? Schiller in the Trenches, 1914–1918', in *Who Is This Schiller Now?: Essays on His Reception and Significance*, ed. by Jeffrey L. High, Nicholas Martin and Norbert Oellers (Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2011), pp. 351–66 (p. 352).

⁴ Andrew Dickson, 'Shakespeare: Reading On', in *The New Cambridge Companion to Shakespeare*, ed. by Margreta de Grazia and Stanley Wells, 2nd edn (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), pp. 325–42 (p. 340). The Shakespeare Club of Stratford-upon-Avon (est. 1824) and the Shakspeare Society of Philadelphia (est. 1851 under the name of 'Shakspeare's Apostles') predate the Deutsche Shakespeare-Gesellschaft, but neither issued a scholarly journal.

and scholarly publications, Germans became intimately familiar with Shakespeare's work.

The history of Shakespeare's reception in Germany, from his 'discovery' in the eighteenth century, is marked by the desire to 'naturalise' or 'nostrify' him.⁵ In the second volume of the *Shakespeare Jahrbuch* (1867), the first president of the Deutsche Shakespeare-Gesellschaft, Hermann Ulrici, explains: 'We want to de-Anglicize the Englishman Shakespeare, to Germanize him in the widest and deepest sense of the word; we want to do everything in our power to make him even more and in the truest and fullest sense what he already is – a German poet.'⁶ This impulse to 'Germanise' Shakespeare was a response to 'the growing national consciousness' in Germany from the Romantic period onwards.⁷ In 1916, Germany was a young nation-state, dating back to 1871. From the Middle Ages until the early nineteenth century, German territories belonged to the Holy Roman Empire, 'a collection of over 390 semi-independent states, ... loosely united under the nominal rule of the Holy Roman Emperor, who was also Emperor of Austria'.⁸ Following that empire's collapse, the German Confederation (*Deutscher Bund*) was formed in 1815. It consisted of nearly forty independent states, chief among them Austria and Prussia.⁹ The rivalry between the two led to the Austro-Prussian war of 1866 and the establishment of the German Empire (1871), which was headed by Prussia and excluded Austria.¹⁰ However, strong links remained between the German Empire and Austrians, some of whom identified as German in the ethno-cultural sense.¹¹ Meanwhile, unity within the Empire itself was far from cemented, as some Germans resented Prussian domination.¹² In effect, early twentieth-century Germany was still in the process of consolidation and self-definition.

As Germany sought to formulate a distinct national culture, Shakespeare proved a useful counterbalance to the entrenched neoclassical standards,

⁵ Alois Brandl, *Shakespeare and Germany. The British Academy Third Annual Shakespeare Lecture* (New York: Oxford University Press American Branch; London: Humphrey Milford, 1913), p. 6; Franz Dingelstedt, *Studien und Copien nach Shakespeare* (1858), quoted in Habicht, *Shakespeare and the German Imagination*, p. 11.

⁶ Quoted in Habicht, *Shakespeare and the German Imagination*, p. 11.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 8.

⁸ Andrina Stiles, *The Unification of Germany, 1815–90* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1989), p. 6.

⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 6–7.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 52–62, 85–88.

¹¹ See Jan Vermeiren, 'Germany, Austria, and the Idea of the German Nation, 1871–1914', *History Compass*, 9.3 (2011), 200–14.

¹² See Ann Taylor Allen, *Satire and Society in Wilhelmine Germany: Kladderadatsch and Simplicissimus, 1890–1914* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1986), pp. 48–53, and Vermeiren, 'Germany, Austria, and the Idea of the German Nation', p. 201.

which many Germans regarded as alien and restrictive. The *Sturm und Drang* thinkers revered Shakespeare 'because his plays seemed to defy neoclassical forms and violate tastes for whatever was French in literature and theatre', and their followers came to see Shakespeare as the writer encapsulating 'the German spirit'.¹³ This telling phrase appeared in the title of Friedrich Gundolf's 1911 'monumental and best-selling study' *Shakespeare und der deutsche Geist* (*Shakespeare and the German Spirit*).¹⁴ Gundolf's book played a key role in establishing what Habicht calls 'the myth' of German ('*unser*', our) Shakespeare.¹⁵ By 1916 Shakespeare had become 'a timeless German classic', positioned 'not only alongside Goethe and Schiller, but ... alongside Luther and Bismarck as well'.¹⁶ This interpretation allowed some German commentators to use Shakespeare for political purposes, in the ways that cultural saints are appropriated to help forge national identities. Firstly, they could claim him as a unifying icon for those who identified with German culture, no matter whether they lived in the German Reich or Austria-Hungary. Secondly, they could appropriate him to distinguish Germans from other nations that allegedly did not possess equal Shakespearean appreciation. As recent scholarship demonstrates, amplified nationalist sentiments under wartime conditions led to such nationalist uses of Shakespeare dominating German responses to the 1916 Tercentenary.¹⁷ This chapter builds on and expands this research, revisiting the key German tributes discussed by other critics alongside some previously unknown archival material. In doing so, it discovers significant internal contradictions undermining dominant, ultra-patriotic uses of Shakespeare, as well as some dissenting voices that evoked him to challenge official policies and ideologies.

The Calm before the Storm

Before discussing 1916, it is worth looking at the pre-war attitudes, to situate the Tercentenary in a context wider than the extreme sentiments of wartime. While Germans were 'naturalising' Shakespeare in the early

¹³ Simon Williams, *Shakespeare on the German Stage, Volume 1: 1586–1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), p. 14.

¹⁴ Hortmann, *Shakespeare on the German Stage*, p. 5.

¹⁵ Habicht, *Shakespeare and the German Imagination*, p. 3.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 3, 18.

¹⁷ See, among others, Balz Engler, 'Shakespeare in the Trenches', in *Shakespeare Survey, Volume 44: Shakespeare and Politics*, ed. by Stanley Wells (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), pp. 105–11; Habicht, 'Shakespeare Celebrations in Times of War'; and Clara Calvo, 'Fighting over Shakespeare: Commemorating the 1916 Tercentenary in Wartime', *Critical Survey*, 24.3 (2012), 48–72.

twentieth century, this appropriation did not necessarily signal hostility to Britain. Indeed, German and British Shakespeareans collaborated peacefully until the outbreak of the First World War. In 1913, Professor Alois Brandl of Berlin University, then president of the Deutsche Shakespeare-Gesellschaft, delivered the British Academy's Annual Shakespeare Lecture.¹⁸ His speech addresses its predominantly British audience in a friendly manner, expressing 'profound reverence and gratitude' and anticipating joint 1916 Tercentenary celebrations.¹⁹ However, the text also reveals latent divisions between British and German Shakespeareans, which would become open hostility after the war's outbreak. This makes it worth examining Brandl's lecture in some detail, as a prologue to the German commemorations of the 1916 Tercentenary.

At the beginning of his address, entitled *Shakespeare and Germany*, Brandl states that 'the greatest boon which has ever come from England to Germany is the supreme and permeating influence of William Shakespeare', identifying Britain as Germany's cultural benefactor.²⁰ He adds that, when 'Shakespeare conquered Germany with his word and his thought' in the late eighteenth century, 'England ... became a force in the growth of German culture'.²¹ While acknowledging Britain's contribution to Germany's cultural development, these words introduce a hint of potential discord, by describing the spread of Shakespeare's influence as a conquest. Here, the use of the militaristic metaphor is innocuous but during the war, bellicose vocabulary would permeate German and British references to Shakespeare in strikingly aggressive ways. In 1913 a German lecturer had no problem with describing the Englishman Shakespeare as having 'conquered Germany', but later the question of

¹⁸ Brandl was born in Austria (1855), but he seems to have identified with German politics and culture. See Holger Klein, 'Austrian (and Some German) Scholars of English and the First World War', in *The First World War as a Clash of Cultures*, ed. by Fred Bridgham (Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2006), pp. 245–80 (pp. 247, 267).

¹⁹ Brandl, *Shakespeare and Germany*, pp. 3, 15.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 3. Brandl uses the term 'England' for what we would refer to as 'Britain'. He includes Walter Scott and Thomas Carlyle, together with Byron, Dickens, and Thackeray, among 'English writers', and he calls George Bernard Shaw an 'Englishman' (Brandl, *Shakespeare and Germany*, pp. 3, 13). This conflation of England and Britain was widespread in the early twentieth century and is still not uncommon now. As Willy Maley argues, 'England and English have long functioned as metonymies for Britain and British', which reflects the Anglocentric concept of British culture developed during the time of the British Empire. Willy Maley, "'This Sceptred Isle': Shakespeare and the British Problem", in *Shakespeare and National Culture*, ed. by John J. Joughin (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1997), pp. 83–108 (p. 85). While quoting Brandl's original phrasing, I am changing England/English to Britain/British in my commentary, to reflect the modern understanding of the concepts.

²¹ Brandl, *Shakespeare and Germany*, p. 4.

who triumphed in the two countries' cultural battle would become the subject of heated debate.

In his 1913 address, Brandl does not dwell on the victors and the vanquished. Instead, as Jansohn points out, he places 'more emphasis on the similarities than on the differences between the two nations in the relationship to Shakespeare'.²² Brandl argues that Germans' love of Shakespeare 'has helped to promote ... those Early English studies which ... impress the student with the original identity of English and German language, poetry, folklore, custom, and law'.²³ His identification of an affinity – even an 'original identity' – of British and German cultures indicates that, in 1913, Germans could view the two countries as close relatives and natural allies.²⁴ As Matthew Stibbe demonstrates, until the last moment, many German commentators did not believe that Britain would join forces with Russia and France, trusting not only in the shared political and commercial interests but also in the perceived Anglo-German 'common blood' and 'common codes of honour'.²⁵ Consequently, Britain's declaration of war caused all the more outrage, leading the *Alldeutsche Blätter* (*Pan-German Pages*) to call England a 'betrayed of its own race'.²⁶ In 1913, however, Brandl could still believe in Anglo-German kinship and co-operation. Thus, maintaining his conciliatory tone, he modifies Shakespeare's status from a conqueror to a more diplomatic 'permanent ambassador of England in Germany', whose language, 'though always impressive, is never provocative'.²⁷

Nevertheless, Brandl's lecture contains pronouncements that foreshadow the bitter disputes in which British and German Shakespeareans would soon engage. When pointing out that the German affection for Shakespeare had led to the development of numerous local repertory theatres (a tradition absent in Britain at the time), Brandl offers a peculiar comparison between British and German literatures. He claims that 'modern English literature ... can be enjoyed on the banks of the Nile or on an ostrich farm in South Africa almost as well as in London; but if you mean to do justice to the best modern German literature, you must

²² Jansohn, 'The German Shakespeare Society', p. 76.

²³ Brandl, *Shakespeare and Germany*, p. 9.

²⁴ Peter Firchow argues that this sentiment was also common in Britain. See Peter Edgerly Firchow, *The Death of the German Cousin: Variations on a Literary Stereotype, 1890–1920* (Cranbury, NJ: Associated University Presses, 1986), p. 10.

²⁵ Matthew Stibbe, *German Anglophobia and the Great War, 1914–1918* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), p. 14.

²⁶ Quoted in *ibid.*, p. 14.

²⁷ Brandl, *Shakespeare and Germany*, p. 10.

go to the theatre and hear it'.²⁸ This unexpected reference to the spread of the British Empire would be echoed in more confrontational ways by German wartime commentators, who accused Britain of imperialistic aggression and cultural degeneration caused by mingling with colonised peoples. Furthermore, Brandl lists the reasons why Germans might appreciate Shakespeare better than Englishmen: modern, accessible German translations; 'differences in national custom', which make twentieth-century Germans more similar than twentieth-century Englishmen to Shakespeare's contemporaries; greater familiarity because of well-established German Shakespearean criticism and literary imitation; and the two nations' different 'general expectations' when approaching literature (the English seeking didactic benefits and Germans viewing literature in 'more disinterested' and open-minded ways).²⁹ In 1913 such comparisons could signal a friendly rivalry in Shakespearean appreciation, but during the war, they would be used to support the German side in vicious quarrels over Shakespeare. For the time being, Brandl does not turn against his British colleagues. Instead, he proposes that there 'exist two Shakespeares, one on this, one on the other side of the North Sea'.³⁰ The existence of these two Shakespeares is not yet a cause for concern, but rather 'proof that the Shakespearean spirit is alive and active in both countries'.³¹ Brandl realises that British and German appropriations of Shakespeare might result in competition and even 'strife', but he thinks that this competition will be amicable.³² In what now seems a darkly ironic turn of phrase, he proclaims: 'there is no fear that the two Shakespearean parties will do any harm to each other'.³³ He concludes with the hope that, in 1916, 'both nations ... will stand up like one man' to celebrate Shakespeare, demonstrating 'the harmonizing power of poetry over distinctions of race', and confirming that 'humanity is larger than nationality'.³⁴

History would prove these optimistic predictions wrong: in 1916, many within 'the two Shakespearean parties' – including Brandl – would indeed seek 'to do harm to each other', at least verbally if not physically. However, Brandl's 1913 address should not be dismissed as naïvely idealistic. Instead, it indicates that early twentieth-century debates over

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 12–13.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 12.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 14.

³² *Ibid.*

³³ *Ibid.*

³⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 14–15.

appropriating Shakespeare had other potential outcomes than a 'culture war', most notably a recognition of the coexistence of multiple yet equally acceptable versions of Shakespeare in different national contexts. After the outbreak of the war, this remained the 'road not taken' for many years to come. The following chapters discuss the directions that British and German Shakespearians took instead. Brandl's lecture signals the key issues, already latent in 1913, that came to dominate their disputes in the Tercentenary year. Central among them was the question of the 'ownership' of Shakespeare: who was entitled to consider him part of their national culture. In 1913, Brandl countered the hypothetical British objection to the German appropriation of Shakespeare by arguing 'that genius ... never belongs to [a] nation exclusively, but to the whole of mankind; and that there is no divine or human law which forbids foreigners to penetrate into the genius of such a man, to amalgamate themselves with him, until he becomes to them ... almost one of their own'.³⁵ As we shall see, during the war the idea that Shakespeare belongs 'to the whole of mankind' would sit uneasily with those who felt the need to assert that he belonged exclusively to them. Simultaneously, the subtlety of seeing Shakespeare as '*almost* one of their own' would be counteracted by more direct claims of Germany's right to own him.

Claiming Shakespeare for Germany

The war's outbreak ended Brandl's hopes of Germany joining Britain in collaborative 1916 celebrations. However, Germans did not forget Shakespeare and his anniversary, even though some questioned whether it was still appropriate to stage an English author's plays. In September 1914 Max Reinhardt's Deutsches Theater in Berlin consulted some key political figures on the matter. The response was unequivocally affirmative. Chancellor Theobald von Bethmann-Hollweg argued that 'Shakespeare belongs to the whole world', and the former Chancellor Bernhard von Bülow pronounced that Shakespeare was 'among the oldest and most beautiful conquests of the German mind, which we shall defend against all the world, like our other spiritual and material possessions'.³⁶

Bethmann-Hollweg's and von Bülow's statements encapsulate one strand of the German wartime approach to Shakespeare: the insistence that Germany had the right to claim the playwright as its own. As Engler

³⁵ Ibid., p. 14.

³⁶ Quoted in Engler, 'Shakespeare in the Trenches', p. 108.

argues, three key strategies were used to demonstrate this right: emphasising Shakespeare's universalism while downplaying his English birth as a 'mere coincidence'; arguing that Shakespeare was 'one of the geniuses of the Germanic North, as against those of the Romance South'; and, finally, postulating that Britain no longer upheld Shakespeare's values, but Germany had internalised them 'in a long effort of appropriation'.³⁷ Brandl's British Academy lecture had already made some of these arguments, but during the war, their use became more militant. While in 1913 Brandl was happy to concede the conquest of Germany to Shakespeare, von Bülow now claimed the opposite: that Shakespeare was one of the 'conquests of the German mind', a hard-won possession to be defended from potential rivals. This trend was part of German intellectuals' wider effort to demonstrate the superiority of German over British culture, an effort to which their British counterparts responded with equally aggressive rebuttals. As Nicholas Martin summarises, the result was a veritable "Krieg der Geister" (war of the intellectuals) between British and German academics and cultural figures'.³⁸ Shakespeare, whom Brandl had previously called an 'ambassador', now became what Habicht aptly names 'a cultural weapon' for both sides of the conflict.³⁹

Nicolas Detering argues that German Shakespeareans were particularly pugnacious in their anti-English sentiments during the first two years of the war.⁴⁰ For example, in September 1914, the playwright and critic Herbert Ihering starkly claimed that Shakespeare 'is no Englishman'.⁴¹ Escalating the war of words, in the 1915 issue of the *Shakespeare Jahrbuch*, Brandl employed explicitly military discourse, declaring that 'Shakespeare belongs to our spiritual armament'.⁴² His address also included an adapted war cry

³⁷ Ibid., p. 109.

³⁸ Martin, 'The Reluctant Recruit', p. 351.

³⁹ Habicht, 'Shakespeare Celebrations in Times of War', p. 449. Other authorities, such as Schiller, Handel, and Luther, were also appropriated for these purposes. See Martin, 'The Reluctant Recruit', for Schiller; Calvo, 'Fighting over Shakespeare', for Handel; and Ton Hoenselaars, 'British Civilian Internees Commemorate Shakespeare in Ruhleben, Germany (1914–1918)', *Shakespeare Jahrbuch*, 151 (2015), 51–67, for Luther. Calvo calls these appropriations 'part of the struggle between England and Germany over cultural icons' (Calvo, 'Fighting over Shakespeare', p. 63).

⁴⁰ Nicolas Detering, 'Shakespeare im Ersten Weltkrieg', in *Shakespeare unter den Deutschen: Vorträge des Symposiums vom 15. bis 17. Mai 2014 in der Akademie der Wissenschaften und der Literatur, Mainz*, ed. by Christa Jansohn in collaboration with Werner Habicht, Dieter Mehl and Philipp Redl, *Abhandlungen der Geistes- und sozialwissenschaftlichen Klasse 2015,2* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2015), pp. 175–96 (pp. 177–84).

⁴¹ Quoted in Andrew G. Bonnell, *Shylock in Germany: Antisemitism and the German Theatre from the Enlightenment to the Nazis* (London: Tauris Academic Studies, 2008), p. 65.

⁴² Alois Brandl, 'Jahresbericht für 1914/15', *Jahrbuch der Deutschen Shakespeare-Gesellschaft*, 51 (1915), v–vi (p. v). Translations of the material of which no English version has been published were made with the kind help of the following German speakers, to whom I wish to extend heartfelt

from *Henry V*: 'O Gott der Schlachten, stähle unsre Krieger!'⁴³ By 1916, some commentators made their pronouncements slightly milder, partly in response to the British backlash, discussed in Chapter 2, and partly out of distaste for the excessively propagandistic language employed previously.⁴⁴ Nevertheless, the Shakespeare Tercentenary was still inextricably entangled in the heated debates arising from the ongoing political crisis.⁴⁵

How, then, were those debates addressed through the German observances of the Shakespeare Tercentenary? On the whole, Germany did not commemorate the occasion with special events of the type that dominated the British and American celebrations: pageants, large-scale festivities, or exhibitions. Instead, 1916 witnessed an increased number of Shakespearean productions across Germany: 1,179 performances in 108 theatres, as compared to 675 performances in 1915, and exceeding the pre-war number of 1,133 performances in 1913.⁴⁶ The Tercentenary was also marked by speeches by prominent German Shakespearians, as well as publications in both the highbrow and the popular press. This focus on the theatre and the written word, rather than on hybrid entertainments such as pageants or festivals, reflects one significant feature of the German response to the Tercentenary: its involvement in cultural competition with Britain, in which both nations, in the spirit of the 'Krieg der Geister', aimed to demonstrate the superiority of their own artistic and intellectual achievement.

The competitive edge of the 1916 German Shakespearean commentary is evident in the snide comment published in one of Cologne's newspapers, whose mocking report on the British Tercentenary preparations was quoted in *The Times*:

All Germany will contemplate this celebration with amused expectation and the utmost satisfaction. The English could give us no greater pleasure. The music-hall and cinematograph spirit of the England of to-day will make such a mess of it that unquenchable laughter will run through the whole of Europe. The Quadruple Entente Shakespeare will be fêted with

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⁴³ Brandl, 'Jahresbericht für 1914/15', p. v. Literally, Brandl's quotation translates as 'O God of battles, steel our warriors'. Shakespeare's original line reads: 'O God of battles, steel my soldiers' hearts' (*Henry V*, IV.1.245).

⁴⁴ Detering, 'Shakespeare im Ersten Weltkrieg', pp. 177–78, 184–96.

⁴⁵ For the German uses of Shakespeare during the entire First World War and its aftermath, see Detering, 'Shakespeare im Ersten Weltkrieg'; Engler, 'Shakespeare in the Trenches'; and Lynne Walkhour Hinojosa, *The Renaissance, English Cultural Nationalism, and Modernism, 1860–1920* (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), pp. 165–78. My focus is predominantly on the Tercentenary year.

⁴⁶ Bonnell, *Shylock in Germany*, p. 66.

Maori dances, Japanese acrobats' tricks, and Italian Tarantella leaps. To complete the festival only one thing is lacking – that the dead Shakespeare should express his opinion of the living England.⁴⁷

This article attacks England (for which, as in most cases in 1916, we can read 'Britain') on two fronts. Firstly, it mocks the allegedly low-brow British culture, which expresses itself in the popular forms of the music-hall and the cinema. The article implies that Germans can snigger at this lack of sophistication because their own culture is of a higher calibre, honouring Shakespeare through serious theatre and scholarship. Secondly, the newspaper insults Britain in ethnic and racial terms, insinuating that it no longer has anything English to offer and will instead import its Shakespearean tributes from the colonies (Maori dances) and allied countries. Those countries notably include Japan, which was associated with the 'Yellow Peril', and Italy, which, according to the period's racial theories, was populated by a people inferior to the 'Nordic' race to which Germany and Britain allegedly belonged.⁴⁸ In this, the article is in line with the contemporaneous German propaganda, which accused Britain of betraying 'the white race' by pursuing pro-Jewish and pro-Oriental policies and by deploying black colonial troops.⁴⁹ The article thus validates German cultural achievements by contrasting them with the English ones, which it presents in denigrating, racially inflected terms.

The same desire to demonstrate the superiority of German over British culture animates Rudolph Fürst's article in the special Shakespeare supplement of the Berlin newspaper *Vossische Zeitung*, published on 16 April 1916 and subsequently quoted in the *New York Times*. Fürst claims that Shakespeare had been 'brought by an absent-minded stork to cold hearted parents ... , Father John Bull and Mother Britannia', who are not cultivated enough to honour the playwright appropriately:

[They] cherish the memory of their greatest son as devotedly as they are capable of doing: display in the house of his birth many reverential objects along with all sorts of trash; garland Stratford-on-Avon on his birthday with banners and wreaths, and produce as 'memorial plays' certain works

⁴⁷ 'Through German Eyes', *The Times*, 2 March 1916, p. 7. The newspaper was most probably the *Kölnische Zeitung*, national-liberal (centre-right) in orientation.

⁴⁸ For the German criticism of the British alliance with Japan in the context of the 'Yellow Peril', see Stibbe, *German Anglophobia and the Great War*, pp. 18–21. Madison Grant's contemporaneous pseudo-scientific racial theory placed most inhabitants of southern Italy among the 'dark Mediterranean or Iberian subspecies', distinct from 'the *Homo europæus*, the white man par excellence'. Madison Grant, *The Passing of the Great Race, or The Racial Basis of European History* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1916), pp. 17–18, 150.

⁴⁹ Stibbe, *German Anglophobia and the Great War*, pp. 18–44.

of the favorite in a manner which would not discredit a third-rate German provincial theatre. A great West End London theatre, moreover, labors successfully to clothe the masterpieces of the great national bard with all the trappings of the reigning taste for circus effects.⁵⁰

Like the Cologne newspaper, Fürst alleges that Britain lacks cultural sophistication, which manifests itself in the nation's liking for 'trash' and low-brow entertainment. He also accuses the enemy of theatrical backwardness, placing British Shakespearean productions (presumably those staged at Stratford's Shakespeare Memorial Theatre) on par with those of 'a third-rate German provincial theatre'. He goes on to include a racial insult, pointing out that the British are fighting the war with colonial troops:

Had the Gurkhas [*sic*], in realization of the wishes of the maddest English lords, succeeded in breaking into the parks of Potsdam, they would have needed only the culture of a few hundred years to enjoy Shakespeare in at least one Berlin theatre every evening of the week or at this moment of the tercentenary to attend the entire cycle of his works.⁵¹

This description paints a picture of a horde of uncouth colonials invading a civilised European country at the bidding of their crazed British masters. In effect, Fürst implies that Britain is a culturally backward and racially degenerate nation.

Similar sentiments are evident in much of the material published in the 1916 issue of the *Shakespeare Jahrbuch*. Brandl's presidential address starts by comparing two recent commemorative occasions: the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of the Deutsche Shakespeare-Gesellschaft, celebrated a few months before the outbreak of the war, and the current Shakespeare Tercentenary. Brandl notes that the overseas perception of the German Shakespeareans had changed dramatically in the intervening period: in 1914, the international community honoured and appreciated them, but now it accuses them of inhumanity. 'Are we no longer the same people?', asks Brandl rhetorically.⁵² He responds to the perceived vilifications with an attempt to show how favourably Germany compares to its accusers, while emphasising that the German Shakespeare scholars' wartime priority is to serve their Fatherland. He argues that the best way to do so is to maintain calm and dignity, assuring his listeners: 'We don't need to encourage

⁵⁰ Rudolph Fürst, quoted in 'Shakespeare in Germany', *New York Times*, 4 June 1916, p. xii.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

⁵² Alois Brandl, 'Ansprache und Jahresbericht', *Jahrbuch der Deutschen Shakespeare-Gesellschaft*, 52 (1916), v–xv (p. v).

our nation to fight through ridiculous stories of crucified prisoners and children's severed hands', stories that the enemies spread about German soldiers.⁵³ Rather than employing such devious tactics, the members of the Deutsche Shakespeare-Gesellschaft should showcase their country's cultural excellence: 'Let them call us barbarians – we still aim to practise the cult of the beautiful in a beautiful way and to spare our people the worst of all evils, which is spiritual/intellectual decline and deterioration.'⁵⁴ Thus, in contrast to the enemies' propagandistic ploys, German Shakespeareans will engage in positive actions, enriching their nation's cultural life.

Key among these actions was the promotion of Shakespearean appreciation through high-quality theatre productions. Brandl announces that this activity has been vibrant 'in different parts of the world where Germans live' during the Tercentenary year, adding that 'this demonstrates most clearly that Shakespeare continues to live with us as before, despite the most adverse circumstances'.⁵⁵ Here, Brandl avoids making confrontational comparisons with Britain, focusing instead on Germany's own devotion to Shakespeare. However, he soon moves into politicised territory, stating that 'the Shakespearean legacy of Goethe and Schiller must not be given up because the rulers and the deluded people in today's England want to change us from free men into slaves'.⁵⁶ He argues that 'national self-determination' is necessary for maintaining a country's spiritual and intellectual development.⁵⁷ Consequently, he sees the German Shakespeareans' professional efforts as subordinate to the political interests of their country: 'For all of us, the nation is more important than our subject [our research field]; we serve scholarship in order to serve Germany.'⁵⁸

This overtly patriotic position made it difficult for the wartime German Shakespeare experts to remain secluded within the aesthetic realm, away from the conflict raging around them, and drove them to join the 'war of the intellectuals'. As a result, when discussing the flourishing of drama in Germany, Brandl cannot resist a favourable comparison with Britain. He politely acknowledges that 'in England there are theatre connoisseurs who are striving to bring a similar blessing to their nation', commending Sir Beerbohm Tree, Henry Arthur Jones, William Archer, and George

⁵³ Ibid., p. v. For wartime reports of German atrocities, including crucifying prisoners and severing children's hands, see John Horne and Alan Kramer, *German Atrocities, 1914: A History of Denial* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2001).

⁵⁴ Brandl, 'Ansprache und Jahresbericht', p. v.

⁵⁵ Ibid., p. vii.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

Bernard Shaw for their efforts to establish a National Theatre in Britain.⁵⁹ However, the fact that these efforts have so far been unsuccessful leads Brandl to conclude: 'Had England accepted such an artistic ennobling of life, it would better understand much of our German psyche.'⁶⁰ In effect, Britain's cultural underdevelopment, manifesting itself in the lack of theatrical appreciation, has caused Shakespeare's compatriots to misunderstand Germany (a misunderstanding that, Brandl hints, has contributed to the two countries' political differences). Ironically, though, Germany's cultural achievements – among them the ability to engage with Shakespeare – have now become weapons to be used against Britain, rather than tools for promoting mutual understanding. Thus, after listing numerous intellectual developments of which Germans should be proud, Brandl states: 'These are also areas where we can gain victory over England.'⁶¹ His address finishes with an outpouring of patriotic fervour. After paying tribute to one of the German Shakespeare Society's members, teacher and editor Dr Neuendorff, who died in action on the Eastern front, Brandl declares: 'We are all willing to sacrifice our lives and possessions for the Emperor and the Empire. Precisely because Shakespeare's spirit is alive in it, our Society cannot be surpassed in its devotion to the homeland and the firm resolve, not only to persevere, but to triumph.'⁶² Appreciating Shakespeare has become, for Brandl, the foundation of staunch German patriotism: the members of the Deutsche Shakespeare-Gesellschaft are ready to serve their emperor and empire not *despite*, but *because of* being true disciples of the English poet.

The other items in the 1916 issue of the *Shakespeare Jahrbuch* that comment on the wartime situation echo Brandl's opinions. One of them is Rudolf Brotanek's keynote lecture, entitled 'Shakespeare über den Krieg' ('Shakespeare upon the War'). Brotanek, then professor of English at the German University of Prague, opens with hard-hitting references to the current political crisis.⁶³ He explains that his invitation to address the German Shakespeare Society has arrived 'in the midst of the most

⁵⁹ Ibid., p. xii. For the fruitless pre-war campaigns to establish a National Theatre in Britain, see Hinojosa, *The Renaissance*, pp. 157–65.

⁶⁰ Brandl, 'Ansprache und Jahresbericht', p. xii.

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Ibid., p. xiv.

⁶³ At the time, Charles University in Prague was divided into two separate colleges: German and Czech. Prague belonged to the Austro-Hungarian Empire, which, together with Germany, the Ottoman Empire, and Bulgaria, formed the Central Powers. Brotanek was born in Austria-Hungary (Troppau, now Opava, Czech Republic) but, like Brandl, he wrote in German and seems to have identified with German culture.

immense national struggle of all times', a conflict 'sparked by foreign presumption', in which 'an empire, [and] British world domination' are at stake.⁶⁴ Unlike Brandl, who started by advocating a calm, neutral attitude, Brotanek does not shy away from a combative tone, immediately identifying Britain as the enemy, whose imperialistic ambitions have caused the world to erupt in an unprecedented 'conflagration'.⁶⁵ To address the current issues, he uses Shakespearean references, linking the battlefields of the First World War to those on which Brutus and Antony fought, and stating: 'From the steeled knights of King John and Henry V, my thoughts very often wandered to the simple hero in field-grey [Feldgrau], now "stretching out the righteous arm" on the soil of northern France for a nobler cause.'⁶⁶ Through such comparisons, Brotanek enlists Shakespeare on the Central Powers' side, elevating German and Austro-Hungarian soldiers to the status of Shakespearean heroes, but with an even 'nobler cause' to fight. As Feldgrau was the colour of the uniform of both the German and the Austro-Hungarian armies at the time, Brotanek is also making a case for the unity of the two nations, fighting side by side 'in a true brotherhood of arms'.⁶⁷ Indeed, the German Shakespeare Society's decision to invite a scholar from Austria-Hungary to deliver that year's keynote lecture was probably strategic, aiming to strengthen the bonds between the two allied powers. In his opening address, Brandl welcomed Brotanek as a 'well-known friend from Austria', representing 'the ancient German university' in Prague.⁶⁸ He extended a similar, special welcome to another Austro-Hungarian delegate, Albert von Berzeviczy from Budapest, who in his turn declared that Hungary was following Germany's pioneering example in establishing the European cult of Shakespeare.⁶⁹ In these cases, Shakespeare was being used to establish not only an opposition between Germany and Britain, but also an affinity between those who identified with the German cause within and outside the political boundaries of the *Kaiserreich*.⁷⁰

Like Brandl, Brotanek implies that it is Germans, not the British, who embrace Shakespeare's moral teachings: 'The present-day compatriots of

⁶⁴ Rudolf Brotanek, 'Shakespeare über den Krieg', *Jahrbuch der Deutschen Shakespeare-Gesellschaft*, 52 (1916), xvi–xlvi (p. xvi).

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

⁶⁸ Brandl, 'Ansprache und Jahresbericht', p. v.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p. vi.

⁷⁰ Chapters 2 and 3 discuss British uses of analogous strategies to distance themselves from their enemies and strengthen the ties with their allies.

the Master may reconcile themselves with the principles of their most illustrious moralist as they wish. We are satisfied with committing ourselves to those key tenets that Shakespeare laid down in his works three hundred years ago, in his code for free and proud humanity.⁷¹ Crucially, though, in order to feel satisfied that Germans followed Shakespeare's moral tenets, it was necessary to define these tenets in a way that would suit the Central Powers' politics. To achieve this goal, Brotanek offers a lengthy interpretation of Shakespeare's attitudes to war, concluding not only that 'Shakespeare ... at no point questions the legitimacy of war', but also that 'the Old-Germanic joy in combat and conflict erupts in the heart of this most peace-loving man of petit bourgeois extraction at every opportunity'.⁷² The notion that the Englishman Shakespeare displayed deep-seated 'Old-Germanic' sentiments echoes Brandl's 1913 comment on 'the original identity of English and German language, poetry, folklore, custom, and law'.⁷³ However, during the intervening three years, the focus had shifted: Brotanek no longer aligns British and German cultures by stressing their 'original identity'. Instead, he is at pains to detect an essentially Germanic component 'erupting' in Shakespeare's heart *despite* his English background. For Brotanek, this component is characterised by a martial, heroic disposition, which he attributes to Shakespeare: 'the man with the heroic name had a heroic streak'.⁷⁴ This interpretation fits with the contemporaneous German argument that Britain was a nation of shopkeepers and Germany a nation of heroes, expounded in the influential 1915 book *Händler und Helden (Shopkeepers and Heroes)* by the sociologist Werner Sombart.⁷⁵ By detecting in Shakespeare an innate 'Old-Germanic' character, Brotanek claims him for the German cause, while at the same time discrediting his modern compatriots, who allegedly no longer possess the valiant traits of their forefathers.

Brotanek's approach to Shakespeare is developed further in two poems that follow his address in the *Shakespeare Jahrbuch*: Paul Wolf's 'William Shakespeare' and Ernst Hardt's 'Prolog zu einer Shakespeare-Aufführung im Herbste de Jahres 1914' ('Prologue to a Performance of Shakespeare in the Autumn of 1914'). Both identify Germany as Shakespeare's second, true homeland and enlist him in the nation's cause. Wolf's poem does so not only through the main body of its text, but also through the postscript,

⁷¹ Brotanek, 'Shakespeare über den Krieg', p. xlviii.

⁷² *Ibid.*, pp. xxv, xxii.

⁷³ Brandl, *Shakespeare and Germany*, p. 9.

⁷⁴ Brotanek, 'Shakespeare über den Krieg', p. xx.

⁷⁵ See Stibbe, *German Anglophobia and the Great War*, pp. 12, 76–78.

which pointedly identifies the place of its composition as ‘a battlefield in the Balkans’, and its author as a corporal in the German army.⁷⁶ In this way, the postscript aligns Shakespeare with the German soldiers currently serving at the front. Meanwhile, the poem’s main body argues that Shakespeare belongs to Germany, since it was Germans who saved his name from the oblivion into which it had begun to sink after his death. The verse addresses Shakespeare:

... it was not the sons of your own land
 Who carried away the stone from your tomb:
 A country fought for the honour of your name,
 [A country] which had always boldly struggled for light and truth,
 Where once a king’s son defeated a dragon,
 And a monk swung a hammer with a strong hand.⁷⁷

Wolf affiliates Shakespeare’s German admirers with their mythical and historical heroic compatriots: Siegfried the dragon-slayer from the Nibelung cycle and Martin Luther, nailing his Ninety-Five Theses to the Wittenberg church door. By doing so, he not only elevates the Germans who have preserved Shakespeare’s memory to a nearly superhuman stature, but also immerses them – and, by extension, Shakespeare – in German national history and mythology.⁷⁸ From this, it is only a small step to naturalising Shakespeare fully, by addressing him as not merely remembered, but in fact born (again) in Germany:

In the company of Germania’s best sons,
 Saved for posterity forever,
 Before the whole world you now belong
 To the country which gave you the second birth!⁷⁹

Since Germans recovered (the word that Wolf uses, ‘unverloren’, literally means ‘unlost’) Shakespeare, whom the British had allowed to fade away, Germany can now claim not only the ownership, but also a genuine family kinship with him, becoming his second mother.

⁷⁶ Paul Wolf, ‘William Shakespeare’, *Jahrbuch der Deutschen Shakespeare-Gesellschaft*, 52 (1916), p. 1.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Ruth Freifrau von Ledebur explores the implications of Wolf’s poem being quoted twenty years later, at the 1936 Annual Meeting of the German Shakespeare Society, arguing that its use at that time ‘implies sympathy for the Nazi ideology’. 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 Twenty-First Century*, ed. by Christa Jansohn (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2006), pp. 255–71 (p. 256). However, von Ledebur does not discuss the poem in the context of its original publication.

⁷⁹ Wolf, ‘William Shakespeare’, p. 1.

Hardt's 'Prolog' goes even further in transferring the rights of Shakespeare's birth compatriots to his adoptive relatives. The poem's speaker, Olivia's Fool from *Twelfth Night*, claims that his creator commanded him to declare the following to his German audience:

Ye unto him have been until to-day
 His second home; his first and native home
 Was England; but this England of the present
 Is so contrarious in her acts and feelings,
 Yea, so abhorred of his pure majesty
 And the proud spirit of his free-born being,
 That he doth find himself quite homeless there.
 A fugitive he seeks his second home,
 This Germany, that loves him most of all,
 To whom before all others he gives thanks,
 And says: Thou wonderful and noble land,
 Remain thou Shakespeare's one and only home,
 So that he wander not, uncomprehended,
 Without a shelter in the barren world.⁸⁰

Here, Shakespeare recognises that he has been made 'homeless' and a 'fugitive' from his native land because of his modern compatriots' perverseness. As a result, Germany becomes his refuge and indeed his 'one and only home', while Britain loses the right to that title. It should be noted that this speech was originally composed in the autumn of 1914, at the height of anti-British propaganda that followed Britain's declaration of war.⁸¹ However, the fact that the editors of the *Shakespeare Jahrbuch* reprinted it in 1916, adding that the piece was 'spoken in the Municipal Theatre in Leipzig and on other stages', indicates that its sentiment was still shared in the Tercentenary year.⁸² Apparently, Germans' need to own Shakespeare and validate this ownership was as strong in 1916 as it had been in 1914.

As demonstrated above, some German commentators substantiated their claims to Shakespeare through the evocation of his 'Old-Germanic' roots, arguing for an inborn affinity between his spirit and the spirit of

⁸⁰ Ernst Hardt, 'Prolog zu einer Shakespeare-Aufführung im Herbste de Jahres 1914', *Jahrbuch der Deutschen Shakespeare-Gesellschaft*, 52 (1916), p. 2.

⁸¹ *The Times* printed an English translation on 10 November 1914, prefaced by the following explanation: 'According to the *Leipziger Neueste Nachrichten*, *Twelfth Night* was produced on October 20 at the Altes Theater there, with a special prologue, written by Ernst Hardt, of Weimar'. 'Shakespeare's Second Home', *The Times*, 10 November 1914, p. 9. Above, I am using the translation published in *The Times*. See also the discussion of the poem in Engler, 'Shakespeare in the Trenches', p. 108.

⁸² Hardt, 'Prolog', p. 2.

modern Germany. Others saw the right to own Shakespeare as earned through adhering to his moral precepts – earned so convincingly that Shakespeare himself became a willing exile from Britain and adopted Germany as his true home. Yet others chose to use a more aggressive image of seizing Shakespeare through a forcible takeover and treating him, like von Bülow, as one of the ‘conquests of the German mind’.⁸³ One of the most striking examples of this attitude can be found in Ludwig Fulda’s pamphlet *Deutsche Kultur und Ausländerei* (*German Culture and Foreigners*), published in Leipzig in January 1916.⁸⁴ After rehearsing the argument of Shakespeare being staged more often and better in Germany than in Britain, Fulda declares:

Our Shakespeare! Thus we may call him, even if he happened to be born in England by mistake. Thus we may call him by right of spiritual conquest. And should we succeed in vanquishing England in the field, we should, I think, insert a clause into the peace treaty stipulating the formal surrender of William Shakespeare to Germany.⁸⁵

Fulda does not only proclaim Germany’s ownership of Shakespeare, gained through a triumphant ‘spiritual conquest’. He also links this conquest to the current political crisis, proposing that Germany’s anticipated military victory should lead to an official confirmation of its acquisition of Shakespeare, ratified by a formal settlement.

While Fulda may not have been entirely serious in suggesting the addition of a ‘Shakespeare clause’ to the prospective peace treaty, his pronouncement, especially when considered in conjunction with those of other commentators, reveals a significant feature of the German thinking about Shakespeare in 1916: the ambivalence as to whether the right to claim him was inherited or earned. Ostensibly, Fulda argues for the latter: Germany has acquired Shakespeare not through family inheritance, but through active conquest, which should be confirmed by an official, signed contract. Nevertheless, he still feels compelled to mention Shakespeare’s biological birth in England, even if he does so only to discount this occurrence as a

⁸³ Quoted in Engler, ‘Shakespeare in the Trenches’, p. 108.

⁸⁴ Fulda’s case embodies the complex negotiations involved in defining ‘German culture’ in the early twentieth century. Fulda was German-Jewish, but in *Deutsche Kultur und Ausländerei* he seems to identify fully with German culture, seeing it as inclusive and universal. Tragically, this optimistic view was shattered in the 1930s, when he faced discrimination because of his Jewish background. He committed suicide when he was denied entry to the USA in 1939. See David Lester, *Suicide and the Holocaust* (New York: Nova Science Publishers, 2015), p. 73.

⁸⁵ Ludwig Fulda, *Deutsche Kultur und Ausländerei*, *Zwischen Krieg und Frieden* 31 (Leipzig: S. Hirzel, 1916), pp. 13–14. Above, I am quoting the translation of this passage provided in Hortmann, *Shakespeare on the German Stage*, p. 4.

'mistake'. Similarly, Fürst's article in the *Vossische Zeitung* comments on Shakespeare's English parentage, only to blame it on 'an absent-minded stork' bringing the baby genius to the wrong, 'cold-hearted' parents, John Bull and Britannia. Fürst proceeds to argue that Shakespeare had been saved from the adverse consequences of this mistake by the nurturing care of foreign foster parents: '[W]ho can say whether the young giant would have attained to the superhuman stature of world supremacy if endlessly solicitous alien hands had not liberated Shakespeare from his cold parental home? That is what Germania, the foster-mother, who is today so gratefully [*sic*] besmirched, did for him in her boundless unselfishness.'⁸⁶ Fürst admits that, by usual standards, Germany might be seen as an 'alien' nation to Shakespeare. However, he repudiates this line of thinking by calling Shakespeare's original parental home 'cold' and implying that it had in fact been a prison, from which he had to be 'liberated'. By doing this, Fürst inverts customary logic, which associates one's birthplace and family with natural affection, and attributes this affection to the 'endlessly solicitous' foster parent. The next step of his argument is to progress from the metaphor of fostering to that of adoption:

And later she [Germania] did so much for her adopted son that there was nothing more for her to do. What preferential place near her fireside, even better than that allotted her own dearest and greatest children, has she not assigned him! How has she not battled, as if for her own flesh and blood, against those who have even combated his very existence?⁸⁷ To preserve his work in all its purity, Germania has mobilized an army of her greatest thinkers! From the soul of his Hamlet and of his Shylock Germans have extracted the deepest meaning – heritages which his homeland could never divine!⁸⁸

It is the adoptive mother who displays nurturing warmth, placing Shakespeare by her fireside, a traditional centre of family life. Moreover, Germania's connection to Shakespeare is nearly naturalised, since she cares for him 'as if for her own flesh and blood'. It should be noted that Fürst does not mention a blood tie in relation to Britain, opting instead to couch Shakespeare's English birth in terms of a folk superstition of being brought in by a stork (a confused one at that). By doing this, he makes Shakespeare's tie with Britain sound less real and more akin to a fantastic fable. Meanwhile, he credits Germany with access to the 'soul', 'purity',

⁸⁶ Fürst, quoted in 'Shakespeare in Germany', p. xii.

⁸⁷ This is most likely a reference to the Baconian controversy, popular at the time.

⁸⁸ Fürst, quoted in 'Shakespeare in Germany', p. xii.

and ‘deepest meaning’ of Shakespearean work – profound and unquestionable spiritual truths.

For Fürst, Germany has achieved a more genuine connection with Shakespeare and can claim a truer Shakespearean heritage than Britain. Nevertheless, he stops short of claiming a direct bloodline between Shakespeare and Germany, calling Germania a foster or adoptive mother and classifying the ‘flesh and blood’ link with the subordinating conjunction ‘as if’. Rather than declaring biological kinship with Shakespeare, Fürst argues that spiritual, intellectual, and emotional kinship outweighs traditional blood ties. Other contemporary commentators, however, tried to make Shakespeare’s connection to Germany seem natural, rather than man-made. Brotanek does so by identifying an allegedly innate ‘Old Germanic’ quality (‘joy in combat’) spontaneously erupting in Shakespeare’s heart despite his English background, and Wolf through couching the naturalisation of Shakespeare in the bodily image of Germany giving a ‘second birth’ to the poet. It is as though it was not quite enough to claim intellectual mastery and cultural affinity with Shakespeare, but it was also desirable to show that modern Germany had a blood kinship with him, while at the same time underplaying the importance of this type of kinship when talking about Shakespeare and Britain. This created a paradoxical situation, in which bloodlines simultaneously mattered and did not matter, and in which the criteria for determining who was the ‘true heir’ to Shakespeare remained opaque.

Monopoly or Universality?

Similar ambiguity surrounded the issue of Shakespeare’s universality. Shakespeare’s universal status was one of the key German counterarguments to potential British claims to the exclusive ownership of the poet, as demonstrated by Brandl’s 1913 statement that genius ‘never belongs to [a] nation exclusively, but to the whole of mankind’.⁸⁹ However, during the war, it became expedient for German commentators to move away from this view towards arguing that, in fact, Shakespeare belonged more rightfully to Germany than to other nations (Britain in particular). Thus, in the keynote lecture delivered at the Deutsche Shakespeare-Gesellschaft’s annual meeting in 1915, Gerhart Hauptmann proclaimed: ‘There is no nation, not even the British, which is more entitled to call Shakespeare

⁸⁹ Brandl, *Shakespeare and Germany*, p. 14.

its own than Germany.⁹⁰ Hardt's 'Prolog' goes even further in localising Shakespeare and excluding others from owning him, by calling Germany 'Shakespeare's one and *only* home'.⁹¹ The contention that Germany had more right to own Shakespeare than anybody else served the purpose of justifying the nation's cultural superiority, but it did not sit well with the equally useful argument that Shakespeare was a universal property of 'the whole of mankind'. If both propositions were to be maintained, the logical outcome would be an oxymoronic statement that Germany had an exclusive right to something universal. Amazingly, at least one commentator did indeed articulate such a statement. When discussing Germany's capacity to assimilate the cultural riches of other nations, Fulda pronounced: 'Universality – here we have the distinguishing feature of the German spirit. Here we have the one characteristic that is its monopoly.'⁹² The fact that the idea of having a monopoly on universality did not strike Fulda as absurd shows how tangled the discussions of global versus local entitlement to cultural goods such as Shakespeare had become by the time of the 1916 Tercentenary.

As Clara Calvo demonstrates, this paradox was equally evident on the British side: '[The] desire to repossess Shakespeare for England, and deprive the Germans of a foreign bard they had supposedly appropriated, clashes with the also widespread desire to see in Shakespeare a universal genius for humankind. He belonged to humanity, but not to Germany.' Calvo concludes that this situation 'exposed a fault-line between Shakespeare the national poet and the universal genius'.⁹³ The fact that Germans were similarly caught in the contradictions of local and universal Shakespeare bears out Coppélia Kahn's argument that 'the paradox of the local and the universal' was at the heart of the Shakespeare Tercentenary.⁹⁴ In Dović and Helgason's terms, Britain and Germany were caught between treating Shakespeare as a national and a transnational cultural saint. While both options offered tangible rewards, employing them simultaneously could produce significant contradictions that undermined their users' arguments.

The contradictions arising from declaring Shakespeare's universality while simultaneously claiming his exclusive ownership are embodied in

⁹⁰ Quoted in Hortmann, *Shakespeare on the German Stage*, p. 5. See Detering, 'Shakespeare im Ersten Weltkrieg', for a fuller discussion of Hauptmann's lecture.

⁹¹ Hardt, 'Prolog', p. 2, emphasis added.

⁹² Fulda, *Deutsche Kultur und Ausländerei*, p. 10.

⁹³ Calvo, 'Fighting over Shakespeare', p. 55.

⁹⁴ Coppélia Kahn, 'Remembering Shakespeare Imperially: The 1916 Tercentenary', *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 52.4 (2001), 456–78.

the issue of the German satirical magazine *Simplicissimus* published on 18 April 1916.⁹⁵ The issue commemorates the three-hundredth anniversary of the deaths of Shakespeare and Cervantes, with the caption ‘Shakespeare und Cervantes’ printed in red letters on top of the front page (Figure 1.1).⁹⁶ Apart from the caption, the page contains a large, coloured picture by Wilhelm Schulz (a regular contributor to the magazine), representing the two poets’ apotheosis, preceded with the title ‘Zum 300. Todestag’ (‘On the occasion of the 300th Anniversary of Death’). Underneath the image appears the following poem by Dr. Owlglafß:

Among all the immeasurable horror
 We should not forget:
 Way above fire and gunpowder dust,
 Way above hatred, envy, and deceit,
 There is the wonderful realm of art,
 As a blue bridge,
 Which extends from one end of the world to the other
 As the heavenly tent,
 Across which – a small flock of white doves –
 Shine hope, love, and faith.⁹⁷

The poem presents a vision of Shakespeare and Cervantes residing ‘way above’ the horrors of war. The ‘realm of art’ to which they belong transcends the everyday world of ‘fire and gunpowder dust’. Indeed, in the accompanying illustration, this realm of art all but replaces the real world. The picture accords only the most marginal space to war: a glimpse of a ruined and smouldering house barely discernible in the bottom right-hand corner. The rest of the image is dominated by serene, conventional beauty, with the two writers standing on top of white clouds, framed by a row of classical columns and a red curtain, while little putti shower them with roses. The message could not be clearer: no matter how ugly the wartime reality is, aesthetic values persist and remain safely removed from it. Moreover, those values appear universal: they extend ‘from one end of the world to the other’, providing a bridge between cultures, and allowing

⁹⁵ For more information on *Simplicissimus* and another German satirical magazine, *Kladderadatsch*, see Allen, *Satire and Society in Wilhelmine Germany*.

⁹⁶ As many 1916 commentators noted, both Shakespeare and Cervantes died on 23 April 1616, though actually not on the same day, since England and Spain were using different calendars at the time.

⁹⁷ Dr. Owlglafß, ‘Zum 300. Todestag’, *Simplicissimus*, 21.3, 18 April 1916, p. 29. Dr. Owlglafß was the pseudonym of Hans Erich Blaich, medical doctor, writer, and regular contributor to *Simplicissimus* between 1896–1944. See Volker Hoffmann, ‘Dr. Owlglass’, *New German Biography*, 19 (1999), 731–32 [online version], www.deutsche-biographie.de/pnd118591029.html [accessed 26 October 2015].

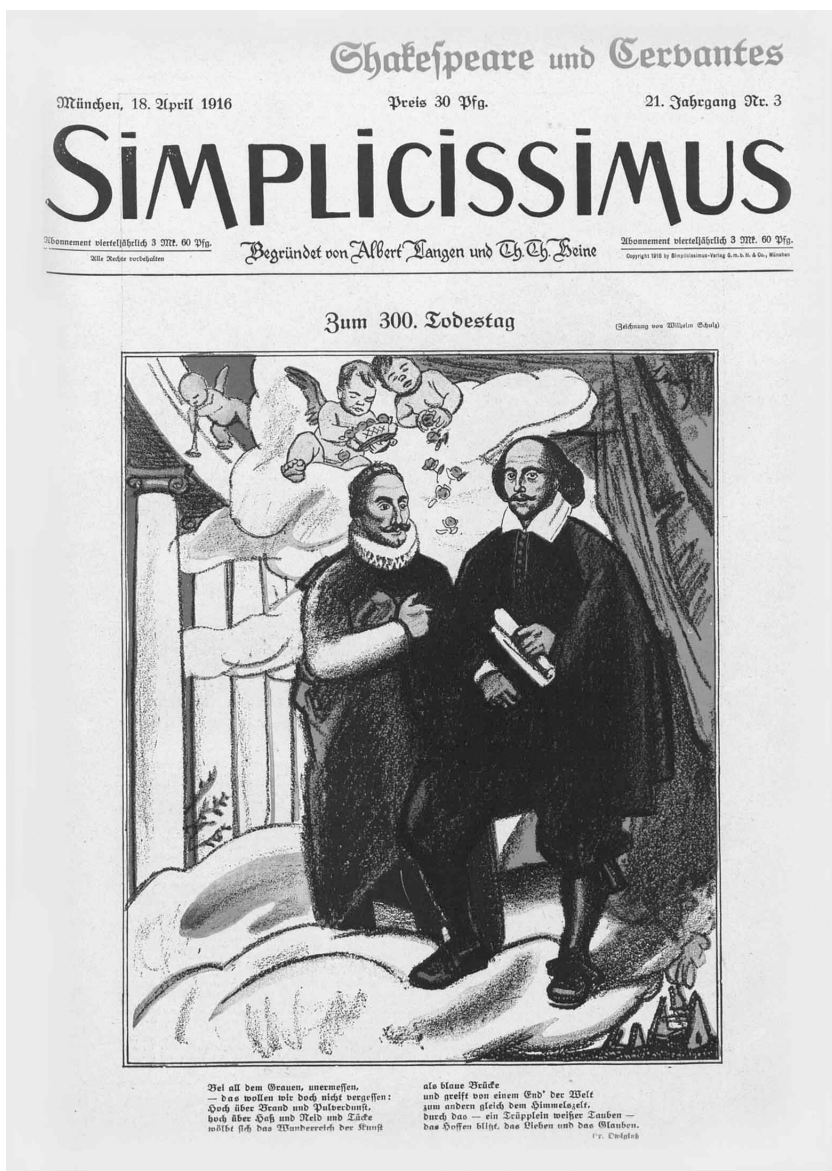


Figure 1.1 The cover page of *Simplicissimus*, 18 April 1916. Herzogin Anna Amalia Bibliothek, www.simplicissimus.info.

German readers to appreciate British and Spanish literature in a disinterested way, regardless of the current political crisis.

Thus, the magazine's cover signals that its contents will promote a universalist and conciliatory image of Shakespeare, transcending the grim realities of war and politics. Indeed, one contribution to the magazine, Bruno Frank's poem 'Shakespeare', echoes such an image. Frank, who had volunteered to serve in the army but was discharged in December 1914 due to ill health, hails Shakespeare as the author of 'great human songs' that endure forever, while 'nations rise and fall'.⁹⁸ Moreover, addressing Shakespeare directly, he argues that the playwright's art rises above war and division, providing comfort to the whole world:

Above the deserted sea
 You stretch out your crystal tent,
 Above the opposing armies
 You sound, as the true glory
 Of your people, a comfort of the world.⁹⁹

Like Dr. Owlgläß, Frank repeats the word 'above', emphasising that Shakespeare's art transcends the everyday world. Moreover, he too refers directly to the dreadful realities of war: while Dr. Owlgläß mentions 'immeasurable horrors' and 'fire and gunpowder smoke', Frank writes about 'the opposing armies' and 'the deserted sea'.¹⁰⁰ Finally, both poets imagine the realm of Shakespeare's art as a heavenly tent, stretching out over the whole world and uniting it in a conciliatory embrace. Thus, Frank's vision fits perfectly with the approach that the magazine's cover announces.¹⁰¹

However, Frank's short poem appears on the thirteenth page of the issue, tucked away among several large and visually striking contributions that display a very different attitude. Straight after turning the cover page, the reader encounters three half-page size cartoons, which use Shakespeare

⁹⁸ Bruno Frank, 'Shakespeare', *Simplicissimus*, 21.3, 18 April 1916, p. 42.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁰ The adjective 'verwaisten', which Frank applies to the sea, can also be translated as 'orphaned', a poignant word considering the ferocity of the contemporaneous sea warfare and the scale of casualties.

¹⁰¹ For a fuller discussion of Frank's poem's pacifism, see Detering, 'Shakespeare im Ersten Weltkrieg', pp. 195–96. However, Detering works with a later reprint of the poem, in the 11th volume of the collection of war poems edited by Julius Bab, entitled 1914. *Der Deutsche Krieg im Deutschen Gedicht*. Detering dates it as [1916], but the catalogue of the Deutsche National Bibliothek has [1918]. Considering the poem in its original context, among other contributions to the Tercentenary issue of *Simplicissimus*, brings out the contradictions in the German treatments of Shakespeare that are not evident in the reprint.



Figure 1.2 Olaf Gulbransson, 'Hamlet, König von Belgien', *Simplicissimus*, 18 April 1916, p. 30. Herzogin Anna Amalia Bibliothek, www.simplicissimus.info.

to comment on contemporaneous political figures and events. The first, drawn by the Norwegian-born regular contributor to *Simplicissimus*, Olaf Gulbransson, is entitled 'Hamlet, König von Belgien' ('Hamlet, the King of Belgium') (Figure 1.2).¹⁰² It depicts a chinless caricature of the Belgian King Albert, dressed as Hamlet, in black tights and a cape-like tunic with white ruffs at the neck and the sleeves. In his right hand he holds a skull, striking the pose typical of the famous 'Alas, poor Yorick' speech (*Hamlet*, v.1.141). From his left hand, bent behind his back, hangs a dandy-like

¹⁰² Olaf Gulbransson, 'Hamlet, König von Belgien', *Simplicissimus*, 21.3, 18 April 1916, p. 30.

cane and an upside-down crown on a piece of elastic, looking more like a theatre prop than a real piece of regalia. He is surrounded by a desolate landscape, evocative of the First World War battlefields, dotted with broken trees and empty of life, and he is standing above a large, freshly dug hole in the ground, from which a spade sticks out. This image obviously alludes to the Gravediggers scene from *Hamlet*, but also to the images of trench warfare and countless graves appearing along the First World War frontlines. The caption below the cartoon ventriloquises Albert's thoughts, apparently reflecting on the origin of the skull in his hand: 'The bones of a subject – one of the many thousand who died because of me. – Or is it the head of a politician who had convinced stupid me to do this – ?' Here, the cartoonist appropriates the familiar image of Hamlet addressing Yorick's skull to make a hard-hitting political point: blaming the Belgian King and his advisers for the war's carnage.

This image evokes Shakespeare through its title and unmistakable visual clues: the character's costume, scenery, and props. On the opposite page, however, the cartoonist appropriates not the appearance of Shakespeare's famous characters or scenes, but rather direct quotations from his plays (Figure 1.3).¹⁰³ The top picture, entitled 'Churchill', represents the British military leader in an ornate uniform, striking a proud pose while delivering a harangue to a solemn audience (perhaps signifying the Parliament). The caption below reads: 'Why, 'tis a gull, a fool, a rogue, that now and then goes to the wars to grace himself at his return into London under the form of a soldier (*King Henry V*, III, 6).'¹⁰⁴ This is Captain Gower's description of Pistol (*Henry V*, III.6.54–55). By applying it to Winston Churchill, the cartoon portrays him as a braggart and buffoon, who puts on the airs of a soldier for vanity and self-advancement. The bottom image, entitled 'Wilson', is a caricature of then US President Woodrow Wilson. He is depicted slumped, his head propped up with his hand and his face wrinkled with worry, at a table on which stands a large globe. The following caption appears underneath: "'The time is out of joint: O, cursed spite / That ever I was born to set it right!' (*Hamlet*, I, 5).'¹⁰⁵ The cartoon thus represents Wilson as an indecisive and weak leader, unable to 'set right' the evils of the times, and ultimately responsible for aiding Britain by turning a blind eye to the Transatlantic arms trade. In both the Churchill and the Wilson cartoons, Shakespeare's words are taken out of context and applied

¹⁰³ These drawings are by Ragnvald Blix, another Norwegian-born artist, whose work appeared in *Simplicissimus* between 1908 and 1918.

¹⁰⁴ Ragnvald Blix, 'Churchill', *Simplicissimus*, 21.3, 18 April 1916, p. 31.

¹⁰⁵ Ragnvald Blix, 'Wilson', *Simplicissimus*, 21.3, 18 April 1916, p. 31.

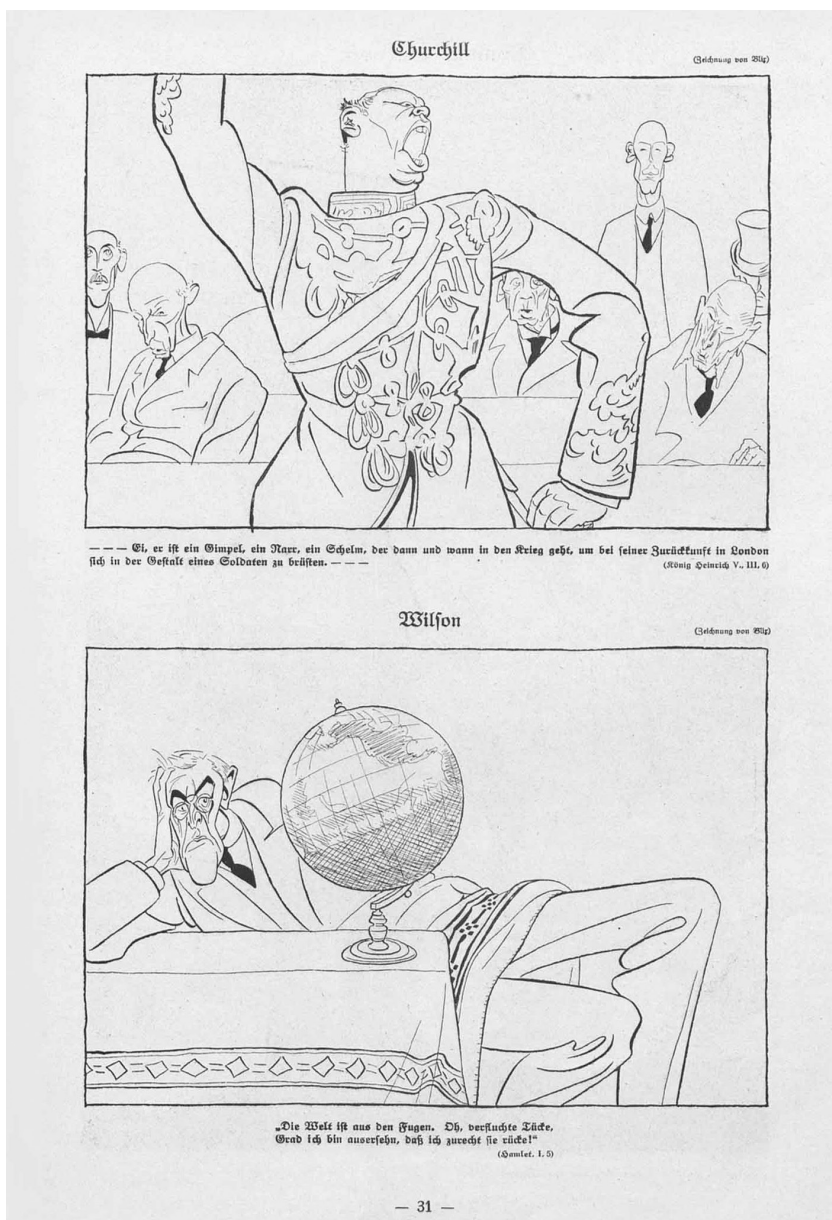


Figure 1.3 Ragnvald Blix, 'Churchill' and 'Wilson', *Simplicissimus*, 18 April 1916, p. 31. Herzogin Anna Amalia Bibliothek, www.simplicissimus.info. Reproduced by permission of the Ragnvald and Ida Blix Foundation.

to pictorial caricatures to satirise contemporary political figures. The fun arises mainly from the disparity between the comically exaggerated images of familiar politicians and the fact that the captions come from serious, authoritative, and scrupulously acknowledged sources: Shakespeare's texts.

While these two cartoons target political leaders, Eduard Thöny's picture on the following page of the issue uses Shakespeare to comment on the enemy army.¹⁰⁶ It presents a vision of an evening in the British military camp, with some soldiers wearily congregating around the fire, while one, seen in black silhouette, is standing guard, gun rested by his feet and pipe raised to his lips (Figure 1.4). This could be seen as a fairly sympathetic image of the enemy, if not for the picture's Shakespearean title and caption. The title is 'Tommy Bardolph', combining the contemporary colloquial name for a British soldier, Tommy Atkins, with the character from *Henry V*. Anybody familiar with the play would recognise Bardolph as a coward, drunkard, and thief, hanged at Harfleur for looting a church. The phrase 'Tommy Bardolph' thus insinuates that modern British soldiers are equally corrupt. The caption underneath consists of a quotation from *Henry V*: 'Would I were in an ale-house in London: I would give all my fame for a pot of ale and safety' (III.2.10–11).¹⁰⁷ These words imply low morale in the British camp, with soldiers uninterested in military glory and wishing to be safely back home, with easy access to alcohol. Interestingly, however, in *Henry V* this speech is delivered not by Bardolph but by the nameless Boy, formerly Falstaff's page and later in the service of Bardolph, Pistol, and Nym. The Boy recognises his masters' corruption and wishes to abandon them: 'I must leave them, and seek some better service: their villainy goes against my weak stomach' (III.2.41–42). Tragically, before he has a chance to turn his life around, he is killed by the marauding French. The fact that *Simplicissimus* only mentions Bardolph, while quoting the Boy, could be a deliberate omission of a reference to the play's relatively innocent character, in order to cast aspersions on the entire British army. This would have the added advantage of eliminating a problematic link to underage war casualties (as we have seen before, Germans were being accused of committing atrocities, including severing children's hands). By taking the Boy's words out of context, Thöny used Shakespeare in a sophisticated way, combining a well-known character who would evoke unpleasant connotations with a quotation suggesting the cowardliness and dissatisfaction of the enemy army.

¹⁰⁶ Thöny was a regular contributor to *Simplicissimus* until the magazine's closure in 1944.

¹⁰⁷ Eduard Thöny, 'Tommy Bardolph', *Simplicissimus*, 21.3, 18 April 1916, p. 32.

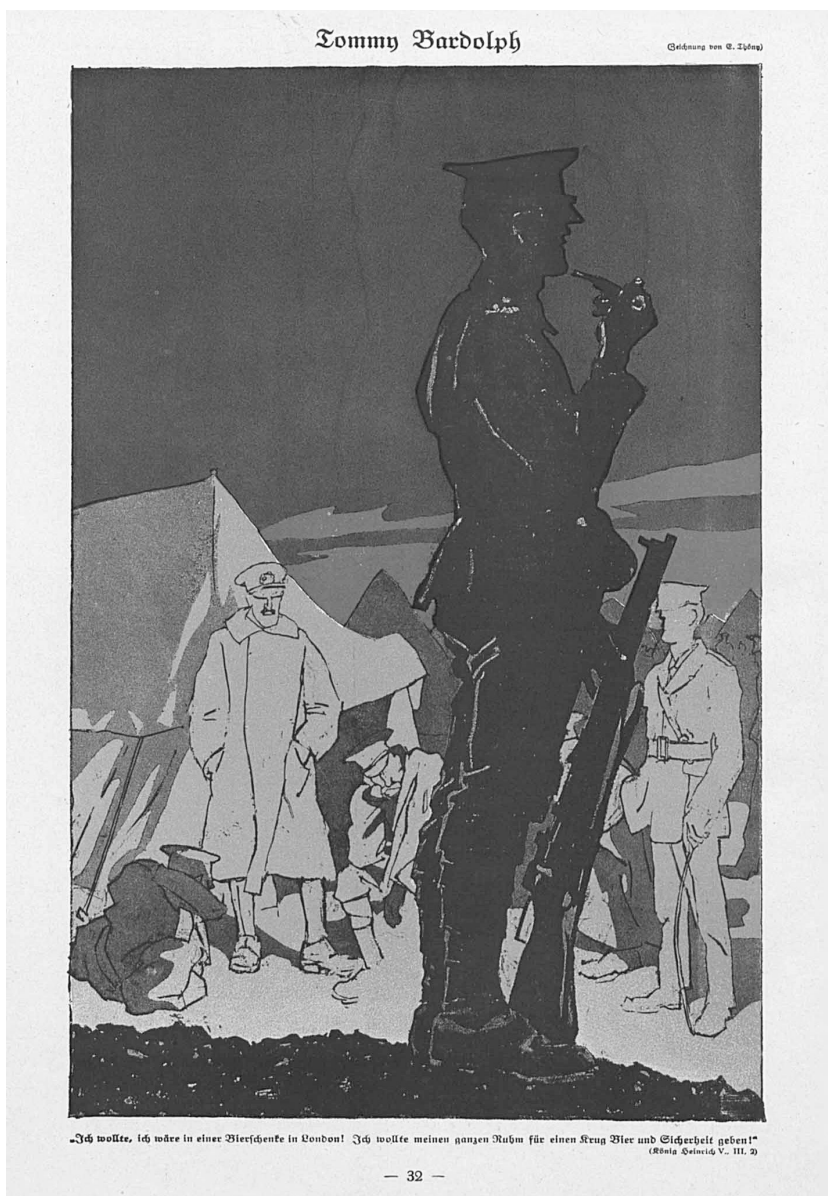


Figure 1.4 Eduard Thöny, 'Tommy Bardolph', *Simplicissimus*, 18 April 1916, p. 32.
Herzogin Anna Amalia Bibliothek, www.simplicissimus.info.

Thus, between the universalising cover of the magazine and Frank's pacifist poem, the reader encounters several highly partisan uses of Shakespeare. Moreover, on the same page as Frank's verse, the magazine published a cartoon using Shakespeare to poke fun at British culture. It is entitled 'Golf-Horizont' ('Golf Horizon'), and it depicts an imaginary scene of several British ladies and gentlemen engaging in their nation's typical pastimes: golf and tennis. Two ladies in the foreground, sporting golf clubs, seem to be commenting on a gentleman in the background, who carries a couple of tennis rackets. The cartoon's caption represents the ladies' assessment of the man: 'This Mr. Brown is a very educated gentleman. He knows his Shakespeare just as well as any German.'¹⁰⁸ The implication is that the British are shallow and uneducated people, more interested in sport than in high culture. An average British person (a Mr Brown) demonstrating knowledge of Shakespeare is a rarity worth commenting on, while familiarity with the playwright is allegedly common among Germans.

The motif of criticising Germany's foes for their lack of Shakespearean appreciation is continued on the following page, which contains a four-part cartoon by Thomas Theodor Heine, a regular contributor to *Simplicissimus*, entitled 'Shakespeare bei unseren Feinden' ('Shakespeare among our Enemies') (Figure 1.5). It presents snapshots of Shakespeare's alleged treatment in Britain, Russia, Italy, and France. The part devoted to Britain depicts a modified façade of Shakespeare's Birthplace, with added industrial chimneys, engines, and fan belts. In front of the building, two workmen are dragging a trolley full of cannon missiles, to add to the store of ammunition on the ground. The caption reads: 'The English have turned Shakespeare's house in Stratford-upon-Avon into a munitions factory.'¹⁰⁹ Since even a hostile caricaturist could not make this claim in earnest, what Heine probably means is that the British have subordinated ideals and culture to materialist pursuits (industrial-scale arms production), a common German charge at the time.¹¹⁰ Alternatively, he may be applying the metaphor of Shakespeare's house converted to a munitions factory to criticise the British for using Shakespeare for propagandistic purposes. This would be ironic, since Heine's cartoon and other contributions in *Simplicissimus* were doing exactly the same. The next snapshot depicts a Russian censor blacking out whole lines from Shakespeare's works, accompanied by the

¹⁰⁸ Ragnvald Blix, 'Golf-Horizont', *Simplicissimus*, 21.3, 18 April 1916, p. 42.

¹⁰⁹ Th. Th. [Thomas Theodor] Heine, 'Shakespeare bei unseren Feinden', *Simplicissimus*, 21.3, 18 April 1916, p. 43.

¹¹⁰ Stibbe, *German Anglophobia and the Great War*, pp. 72–79.

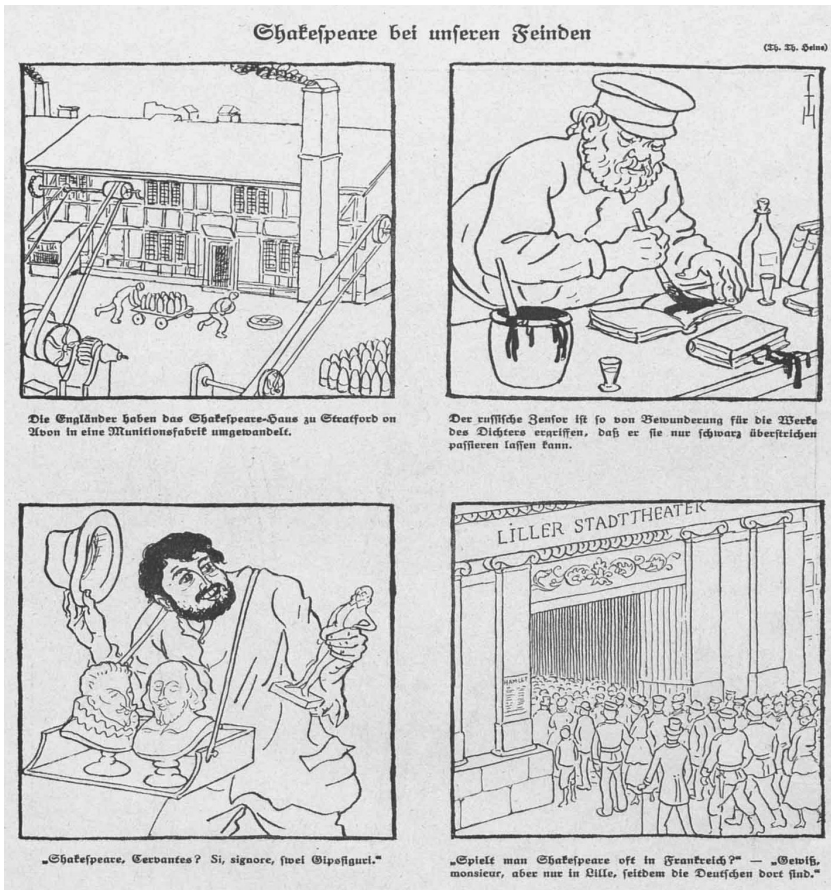


Figure 1.5 Thomas Theodor Heine, 'Shakespeare bei unseren Feinden', *Simplicissimus*, 18 April 1916, p. 43. Herzogin Anna Amalia Bibliothek, www.simplicissimus.info.

sarcastic comment: 'The Russian censor is so seized by admiration for the works of the poet that he can only let them pass covered in black.' The cartoonist does not only utter a damning judgement on the Russian treatment of Shakespeare, but he also adds a visual comment on the stereotypical Russian propensity for drunkenness, by including a bottle and two shot glasses in the frame. In the next panel, Italians are criticised for approaching Shakespeare and Cervantes as nothing but cheap trinkets to be bought and sold. The drawing shows an Italian street vendor with a tray containing the poets' busts, ventriloquised in the caption below: 'Shakespeare, Cervantes?

Si, signore, two plaster busts.’ The cartoon’s final section, devoted to the French, depicts a crowd of people flocking to see *Hamlet* at the Lille City Theatre. The commentary runs: “Is Shakespeare performed often in France?” – “Certainly, monsieur, but only in Lille, since the Germans are there.”¹¹¹ This explicit contrast between the alleged French indifference and German love for Shakespeare concludes the cartoon’s indictment of the intellectual and spiritual state of the enemy nations. Ostensibly, Heine makes this indictment on the grounds of the enemies’ lack of appreciation of high culture, epitomised by Shakespeare. However, the cartoon is equally concerned with national stereotypes, such as Russian drunkenness, French insularity, and British preference for business over culture, indicating that the author is not above bringing popular prejudice into a seemingly high-cultural debate.

Apart from the Shakespeare-informed visual attacks on the enemies, the magazine published some verbal contributions of a similar nature. For example, it contains an article quoting George Bernard Shaw’s letter to the *Westminster Gazette*, in which he criticises the British indifference to Shakespeare and sarcastically proposes that the Tercentenary celebrations should be left to the Germans, who genuinely care about him.¹¹² The issue also includes a short section entitled ‘Shakespeare als Prophet’ (‘Shakespeare as a Prophet’), which interprets two snippets from Shakespeare’s plays in light of current events. The first, from *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, consists of the lines spoken by Snug to explain to the audience of *Pyramus and Thisbe* that he is not really a lion but only plays one on stage (v.1.215–18). The article’s comment on the speech is: ‘It seems beyond doubt that the farsighted poet had in mind none other than the British Lion of today.’¹¹³ This explanation connects the British Empire, often symbolised by a lion, with the foolish mechanicals in *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, who fear that they might be executed if their representation of the beast scares the ladies. In this way, the article implies that the British are only pretending to be brave lions, while at heart remaining cowardly and ludicrous impersonators. The second extract is Pistol’s speech from *Henry V*:

Yoke-fellows in arms,
Let us to France, like horse-leeches, my boys,
To suck, to suck, the very blood to suck! (II.3.40–42)

¹¹¹ Lille was occupied by the German forces throughout most of the First World War.

¹¹² Wunnigel [Wilhelm Raabe], ‘Also sprach Ssasonow’, *Simplicissimus*, 21.3, 18 April 1916, p. 39.

¹¹³ ‘Shakespeare als Prophet’, *Simplicissimus*, 21.3, 18 April 1916, p. 41.

The only comment on this quote is a terse statement that Pistol's words are 'genuinely prophetic', insinuating that the modern British troops in France, like Pistol and his low-life companions, are just blood-sucking leeches. The strategy that 'Shakespeare als Prophet' employs is to create a parallel between out-of-context Shakespearean quotations and contemporary world affairs to produce an anti-British political commentary.¹¹⁴ By doing so, it demonstrates that Germans are indeed well versed in the Shakespearean canon and can cite and apply it at will, which gives further backing to the claim that they are best qualified to celebrate the Tercentenary.

Overall, belligerent appropriations of Shakespeare in the 18 April 1916 issue of *Simplicissimus* outnumber those that project pacifist or universalising messages. Nevertheless, it is significant that the conciliatory poems by Dr. Owlgläß and Bruno Frank, which go against the prevalent tenor of wartime German Shakespearean commentary, are published there at all. Even more remarkable is the prominent position accorded Dr. Owlgläß's contribution: on the magazine's cover page, accompanied by a large, striking image reinforcing its message.¹¹⁵ Such foregrounding of a non-aggressive use of Shakespeare indicates that more than one interpretation was possible, even at the height of military hostilities.¹¹⁶ This multiplicity of viewpoints may reflect the position in which *Simplicissimus* found itself during the First World War: the formerly radical, anti-establishment magazine rapidly veered towards toeing the mainstream, militantly nationalistic line.¹¹⁷ It is not inconceivable, however, that some of the regular contributors, such as Dr. Owlgläß, did not fully subscribe to this new stance and retained some of their pre-war views. The April 1916 issue of *Simplicissimus* thus hints that German attitudes to war were not uniform and that Shakespeare could become a vehicle for expressing dissenting opinions. Moreover, the fact that much of the magazine's contents contradict the position signalled by the cover page exposes a significant blind

¹¹⁴ As the next chapter illustrates, British commentators employed the same tactic for anti-German purposes.

¹¹⁵ This peaceful image was a rarity among the wartime covers of *Simplicissimus*, which usually contained venomous political cartoons, often with military themes.

¹¹⁶ The magazine also presented a third option: using Shakespeare in a politically neutral (neither pacifist nor belligerent) way. It did so by publishing another contribution by Dr. Owlgläß, a humorous fantasy in which Falstaff tricks Don Quixote into helping him to swindle a wine merchant out of his payment. This short story does not seem to have any overt political application. Dr. Owlgläß [Hans Erich Blaich], 'Wie Falstaff mit Hilfe des Ritters von der traurigen Gestalt den Hexenmeister Kichwabugzegro überlistete', *Simplicissimus*, 21.3, 18 April 1916, pp. 30, 38–39.

¹¹⁷ Allen, *Satire and Society in Wilhelmine Germany*, p. 135.

spot in the wartime propagandistic uses of Shakespeare: the uncomfortable paradox inherent in the claim that Shakespeare is universal and above the divisions caused by the war while, at the same time, constituting a uniquely German property, available for political appropriations.

Germany and Radical Shakespeare, 1916

While *Simplicissimus* vacillated between jingoistic and pacifist uses of Shakespeare, one German-language writer directly opposed the mainstream, pro-war appropriations of the playwright, issuing astonishingly countercultural pronouncements. This was the Viennese satirist Karl Kraus, now best known for his semi-documentary play about the First World War, *The Last Days of Mankind*.¹¹⁸ There are good reasons for considering Kraus's writings in this chapter, despite him being Austrian and not German.¹¹⁹ Firstly, at the turn of the twentieth century, Austria-Hungary and the German Reich were bound by many cultural, economic, and political ties. Jan Vermeiren argues that 'after Vienna's exclusion from German affairs in 1866/71, a certain sense of togetherness with Austrian Germandom remained, fostered by a common language, shared historical memories, and close ties in cultural and socio-economic fields'.¹²⁰ Many Austrians not only maintained professional and cultural ties with Germany, but also 'cherished their Germanness and looked up to the German Reich as a leading industrial and colonial power, a ... well-managed unitary nation-state'.¹²¹ While the extreme ideas of Pan-Germanism were not widespread in Austria-Hungary, there was a feeling of 'ethnic allegiance' to Germany among German-speaking Austrians. Consequently, '[t]he ethno-cultural community stood in a complementary relationship to the nation-state, and national sentiments were easily mobilised whenever Austro-German political supremacy was perceived as threatened'.¹²² Secondly, Austria-Hungary was in a military alliance with the German Reich throughout the First World War, with patriotic and anti-British feelings shared across the two countries. As Timms demonstrates, 'in Austria-Hungary too all

¹¹⁸ For a comprehensive account of Kraus's life and work, see Edward Timms, *Karl Kraus: Apocalyptic Satirist. Culture and Catastrophe in Habsburg Vienna* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1986).

¹¹⁹ Kraus was born to Jewish parents in 1874 in Bohemia, but his family moved to Vienna when he was three and he remained attached to the city for the rest of his life. See Timms, *Karl Kraus*, p. 3.

¹²⁰ Vermeiren, 'Germany, Austria, and the Idea of the German Nation', p. 200.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 203.

¹²² *Ibid.*, p. 200.

political and ideological divisions were swept away by the patriotic euphoria' and most writers 'proclaim[ed] solidarity with Germany'.¹²³ He points out that 'The "Ideas of 1914" became a catch-phrase', which 'identified a transcendent German patriotism which linked the Habsburg territories with the German Reich'.¹²⁴ Thus, it is not always possible to make a sharp distinction between Austrian and German attitudes at the time: as we have seen, Austro-German Shakespeareans such as Brandl and Brotanek were unequivocal in expressing their loyalty to the German cause. Finally, Kraus was immersed not only in Austro-Hungarian, but also in German cultural developments: he frequently commented on German affairs and, through readings, publications, and personal contacts, he influenced the intellectual scene in, among other centres, Berlin, Munich, and Leipzig.¹²⁵ This position gave him a unique perspective on the German attitudes to Shakespeare in 1916: a perspective of somebody who was steeped in German culture across the *Kaiserreich* and the Habsburg Empire, while remaining critical of aspects of both countries' establishments.

Kraus was a life-long Shakespeare enthusiast. He translated Shakespeare's sonnets into German and gave numerous public recitations of his and other writers' plays.¹²⁶ Moreover, as Timms notes, the imagery and vocabulary of the theatre saturate Kraus's own texts, and 'it was Shakespeare whose writings shaped [his] histrionic imagination'.¹²⁷ Kraus often drew on Shakespeare in his journalism, displaying 'a tendency to interpret contemporary social issues in terms of Shakespearean analogies'.¹²⁸ His most extensive Shakespearean commentary in the Tercentenary year is the article 'Shakespeare und die Berliner' ('Shakespeare and the Berliners'), published in his satirical magazine *Die Fackel* (*The Torch*) in April 1916.¹²⁹ In it, he uses Max Reinhardt's sumptuous production of *Macbeth* at Berlin's Deutsches Theater as the starting point for a searing critique of

¹²³ Timms, *Karl Kraus*, p. 286.

¹²⁴ Ibid. See also Klein, 'Austrian (and Some German) Scholars of English and the First World War', pp. 246–47.

¹²⁵ Timms, *Karl Kraus*, pp. 199–201. Among other engagements beyond Vienna, Kraus contributed to Munich-based *Simplicissimus* between 1908 and 1910 (Timms, *Karl Kraus*, pp. 129–30).

¹²⁶ Christa Jansohn, 'Glocal Shakespeare: Shakespeare's Poems in Germany', in *The Oxford Handbook of Shakespeare's Poetry*, ed. by Jonathan F. S. Post (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), pp. 671–88 (p. 683); Timms, *Karl Kraus*, pp. 176–77.

¹²⁷ Timms, *Karl Kraus*, p. 56.

¹²⁸ Ibid., p. 48.

¹²⁹ Kraus established *Die Fackel* in 1899. Because of his private income, he was always able to maintain the magazine's independent stance. As Timms points out, '*Die Fackel* was the only German-language journal to adopt a critical view of the war in 1914 and to sustain that attitude with increasing vehemence to the bitter end' (Timms, *Karl Kraus*, p. 273).

contemporary theatrical tastes and practices and of their political and ideological underpinnings.¹³⁰

While Kraus and Reinhardt shared a Jewish-Viennese background and an interest in the theatre, their aesthetic and political convictions differed considerably. Reinhardt, one of the most influential German-speaking theatre directors of the time, promoted a celebratory, spectacular, and sensual type of theatre, in which ‘participation did not mean the movement of art into life but rather its opposite: the spectator was taken up into the broader viewpoint of the theater, into the dream and reality of great masterpieces’.¹³¹ As Frederick Tollini points out, this vision of the theatre did not encourage radical political action: ‘Reinhardt’s ideal of theatre included the tradition of spectacle associated with ecclesiastical and civic celebration, but not concepts of political revolt.’¹³² More radical thinkers of the time disdained such an attitude as the epitome of bourgeois self-indulgence and materialism. According to Herbert Poetzl, Kraus was ‘Reinhardt’s harshest critic’.¹³³ For Kraus, Reinhardt’s ‘synthesis of perfect illusionism and business [was] an expression of an apolitical consciousness’, incompatible with Kraus’s own social commitment.¹³⁴

Accordingly, in his attack on Reinhardt’s 1916 *Macbeth* Kraus relates the director’s artistic choices to wider political issues of the time. Among the attitudes he criticises are the aggressive German claims to the exclusive ownership of Shakespeare. He sarcastically dismisses the assertion that Berlin is the only fitting place to honour the Shakespeare Tercentenary: ‘Only the Berliners are worthy to celebrate Shakespeare; when they perform him, he dies for the three-hundredth time.’¹³⁵ Kraus accuses Reinhardt of ‘murdering’ Shakespeare partly for aesthetic reasons: he objects to the symbolism of blood being laboured through the ‘decorative’ theatrical

¹³⁰ Reinhardt’s theatrical career spanned both Austria-Hungary and Germany, but at that time he worked in Berlin. *Macbeth* was part of the ‘Shakespeare-Zyklus’ (‘Shakespeare Cycle’) that he put on at the Deutsches Theater between 4 and 20 April 1916, to mark the Shakespeare Tercentenary (Hortmann, *Shakespeare on the German Stage*, p. 43).

¹³¹ Frederick Tollini, *The Shakespeare Productions of Max Reinhardt* (Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen Press, 2004), p. 146.

¹³² *Ibid.*, p. 13.

¹³³ Herbert Poetzl, ‘Preface’, in Tollini, *The Shakespeare Productions*, pp. i–x (p. v).

¹³⁴ Paul Stefanek, ‘Karl Kraus versus Max Reinhardt oder: Kraus als Schauspieler unter Reinhardt’, in *Max Reinhardt: The Oxford Symposium*, ed. by Margaret Jacobs and John Warren (Oxford: Oxford Polytechnic, 1986), pp. 112–23 (p. 122).

¹³⁵ Karl Kraus, ‘Shakespeare und die Berliner’, *Die Fackel*, 418–22, 8 April 1916, pp. 95–98 (p. 97). While not following it entirely, I am indebted to the online translation of Kraus’s article, Karl Kraus, ‘Shakespeare and the Berliners’, *Die Weltbühne in English Translation: Translation of Journalism and Feuilleton in the Weimar Republic and Austria* (13 May 2013), <https://weltbuehneenglishtranslation.wordpress.com> [accessed 15 December 2015].

gimmicks of projecting red stripes onto the Macbeths' necks and lowering a blood-stained curtain.¹³⁶ Strikingly, however, he connects these aesthetic shortcomings to contemporary society's ideological flaws and political failings. He opens his attack with the hard-hitting words: 'The question when Herr Reinhardt would be excluded, not from some theatrical society, but from every middle-class living room, is unfortunately not on the agenda as long as the world war lasts. Neither was it before the world war, otherwise it would not have broken out.'¹³⁷ This astonishing statement establishes a direct link between German society's admiration of Reinhardt's theatrical style and the outbreak of the war. For readers who might be tempted to discount such a link as an outrageous exaggeration, Kraus explains: 'The connection is obvious. Only a political eye could be blind to the spiritual/intellectual prospects of a nation whose *ludi magister* is a failed bank manager, and whose high aristocracy are just extras at the private balls of the bloated theatre entrepreneur who has become a dictator.'¹³⁸ In Ancient Rome, the *ludi magister* was an elementary-level schoolteacher. Part of the reason Kraus uses this term may be to insult Reinhardt, as the Roman *ludi magister* had a low social status: 'many were ex-slaves and had only a small and hazardous income'.¹³⁹ However, the word '*ludi*' also means festivals and games, including those of theatrical nature.¹⁴⁰ This makes the phrase particularly apt for describing somebody in charge of a theatrical enterprise, especially since in the late nineteenth and early twentieth-century Germany the theatre was seen as an important educational institution.¹⁴¹ Kraus's witty combination of these associations throws into satirical contrast Reinhardt's exalted standing as one of the period's leading men of the theatre and his alleged mercenary and self-serving motives. At the same time, Kraus extends his vicious criticism of Reinhardt, who had indeed been apprenticed at a bank in his youth, to include the entire German nation. He implies that a people who accept a banker as their teacher are bound to subordinate their spiritual and intellectual development to

¹³⁶ Kraus, 'Shakespeare und die Berliner', pp. 96–97.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 95.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*

¹³⁹ J. V. Muir, 'Education, Roman', in *The Oxford Classical Dictionary*, ed. by Simon Hornblower and Antony Spawforth, 3rd edn (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), online edn, www.oxfordreference.com [accessed 19 June 2020], n.p.

¹⁴⁰ Albert William Van Buren, William Beare, and Simon R. F. Price, 'Ludi (including ludi scaenici)', in *The Oxford Classical Dictionary*, ed. by Simon Hornblower and Antony Spawforth, 3rd edn (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), online edn, www.oxfordreference.com [accessed 19 June 2020], n.p.

¹⁴¹ See Brandl, 'Ansprache und Jahresbericht', pp. xi–xii.

purely commercial interests, which in turn will lead to international conflict, culminating in war.

Moreover, it is possible to interpret Kraus's caricature of the nation's elite as 'extras at the private balls of the bloated theatre entrepreneur who has become a dictator' as an attack on the German ruler and his entourage. As Allen demonstrates, the theatre was one of the common images through which German satirists criticised Wilhelm II and his closest circles before the First World War, exposing 'the contrast ... between the world of reality and that of illusion, in both of which the royal actor lived'.¹⁴² By including in his article a phrase that can be read as referring to the Kaiser, Kraus makes his criticism of Germany even more radical, targeting not only the nation's cultural tastes, but also its political establishment. At the same time, by not mentioning Wilhelm II explicitly, he leaves himself a possible line of defence should the Austrian censor argue that the article insults the allied nation's leader. If the objection arose, Kraus could claim that he meant only a 'dictator' in the field of theatrical taste – Reinhardt – and not a political one, the Kaiser.¹⁴³

Whether or not an allusion to the Kaiser was intended, Kraus's main point is unmissable: he argues that a nation's cultural attitudes (represented by its theatrical tastes) and its politics are inextricably linked. Accordingly, he claims that there is a connection between Reinhardt's theatre and current German state affairs in that they both rely on illusion and deception, aided by modern technology: 'There is a relationship between vivid pieces of scenery in contemporary German theatre and the surrogates of contemporary German life, which is as little embarrassed with ersatz meat as with fake intellect, and whose science, if necessary, will also supply homunculus [army] reserves.'¹⁴⁴ For Kraus, phoney art and intellectual dishonesty go hand in hand with political manipulation, leading to the nation's collective blindness. He reiterates this point towards the end of his article: 'The uncanny similarity between a Reinhardt stage production and the way the current real blood-letting is being directed cannot be overlooked. Don't both draw on quantity and technology, on extras and pretence?'¹⁴⁵ Thus, according to Kraus, Germany's key flaws are its obsession with magnitude (be it theatrical opulence, imperial pomp, or territorial expansion), its tendency to be taken in by make-belief, and its uncritical reliance on

¹⁴² Allen, *Satire and Society in Wilhelmine Germany*, p. 54.

¹⁴³ For Kraus's complex relationship with the censor during the First World War, see Timms, *Karl Kraus*, pp. 352–56.

¹⁴⁴ Kraus, 'Shakespeare und die Berliner', p. 96.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 97.

technological advances and propaganda to provide material and human resources needed to fuel its militaristic policies.

However, Kraus's identification of these German shortcomings did not make him join the 'war of the intellectuals' on the British side. Instead, his voice remains unique in that he looks beyond national divisions and recognises ideological and political failings shared by both countries. For example, Kraus accuses George Bernard Shaw of providing the philosophical underpinnings of the flawed worldview that he himself opposes: 'From time to time consoling himself that his compatriots are the true trading nation, [Shaw] wholly belongs to the cultural cauldron out of whose awful mixture, prepared by Reinhardt's witches, soon the idea may emerge of successfully making sandwiches with bombs.'¹⁴⁶ Here, Kraus attacks what he sees as the inevitable link between militarism and 'economic imperialism', which he attributes to both Britain and Germany.¹⁴⁷ As Timms demonstrates, unlike most of his contemporaries, Kraus did not believe that the First World War was the result of a clash of cultures between British materialism and German idealism: 'He never makes the slightest concession to the theory that the Germans are fighting a war of heroes against shopkeepers. The altar of consumerism is visible behind the flags of *every* fatherland.'¹⁴⁸ Thus, to Kraus, the witches' cauldron is an ideology built on commercial interests, which not only subjugates culture to profit, but also regards military aggression as a legitimate way of underpinning a nation's economic prosperity ('making sandwiches with bombs'). He believes that both Britain and Germany are guilty of espousing this ideology.¹⁴⁹

Thus, Kraus uses the Shakespeare Tercentenary as a springboard to conduct a far-reaching criticism of contemporary politics, both in Germany and beyond. He employs the same strategy in another article, 's ist etwas faul im Staate Dänemark' ('Something is Rotten in the State of Denmark').¹⁵⁰ Here, he comments on the open-air production of *Hamlet* that was put on in Helsingør in celebration of the Tercentenary. Having described the lavish and atmospheric performance, which attracted 3,000 spectators, Kraus uses the event to comment on Denmark's wartime shortcomings, particularly its profiteering. To establish the connection, he points out that a

¹⁴⁶ Like Brandl, Kraus disregards Shaw's Irish roots, identifying him with English/British culture.

¹⁴⁷ Timms, *Karl Kraus*, p. 313.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 313–314.

¹⁴⁹ It is puzzling that Kraus associated this world view with Shaw, a socialist and outspoken opponent of the war. Perhaps he interpreted Shaw's pragmatism and wry irony as symptoms of the materialist outlook that he himself despised.

¹⁵⁰ Karl Kraus, 's ist etwas faul im Staate Dänemark', *Die Fackel*, 431–36, 2 August 1916, p. 102.

prologue to the production, which argues that Shakespeare had conceived of the idea of *Hamlet* upon visiting Helsingør, was written and delivered by Helge Rode, the brother of the then Danish Minister of Interior Affairs. Consequently, the Tercentenary event was tainted by the association with those who were responsible for Denmark's questionable politics, which allowed the nominally neutral (though German-sympathising) country to conduct profitable business with both Germany and Britain.¹⁵¹ Ostensibly, Kraus blames unscrupulous individuals – war profiteers and smugglers – but he implies that Denmark has become an obvious place for such shady dealings because of its ruling elites' complicity: 'It is entirely natural that the "goulash barons" [war profiteers] have established their headquarters here.'¹⁵² In effect, like Reinhardt's *Macbeth*, a Shakespeare Tercentenary event offers Kraus a starting point for political commentary that moves beyond the partisan binaries of us/them, ally/enemy. Kraus grounds this commentary in the framework of Shakespeare as the standard of ethical behaviour applicable to those on both sides of the conflict.

As the examples above demonstrate, during the Tercentenary year Shakespeare was used in politically loaded ways by commentators within Germany and its ally, Austria-Hungary. Some writers, like Fürst, Hardt, and Wolf, appropriated him to proclaim the superiority of German over British culture. Some, like Brotanek and Brandl, added an extra dimension: not only did they treat Shakespeare as a marker of Germany's difference from Britain, but also as a proof of the internal unity of German speakers across the *Kaiserreich* and Austria-Hungary. The situation was even more complex for the Shakespeare enthusiasts of German-Jewish or Austro-Jewish origin, like Fulda and Reinhardt: consciously or not, they may have expressed their loyalty to Germany more vociferously than people of 'unhyphenated' German ethnic background, as if to prove it to themselves and to others.¹⁵³ However, appropriating Shakespeare as

¹⁵¹ See Bent Blüdnikow, 'Denmark during the First World War', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 24 (1989), 683–703 (pp. 683–84).

¹⁵² Kraus, 's ist etwas faul im Staate Dänemark', p. 102.

¹⁵³ Both Fulda and Reinhardt signed the *Aufruf an die Kulturwelt* (known in English as the 'Manifesto of the Ninety-Three'), as did the Austro-German Brandl. This document, issued on 4 October 1914 and signed by ninety-three German-speaking intellectuals, protested Germany's innocence and integrity in the face of international outrage at the invasion of Belgium. It supported the official image of the nation as the victim of foreign machinations, determined to 'fight this battle to the end as a cultured people'. Iain Boyd Whyte, 'Anglo German Conflict in Popular Fiction 1870–1914', in *The First World War as a Clash of Cultures*, ed. by Fred Bridgman (Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2006), pp. 43–99 (pp. 43–44); Peter Edgerly Firchow, *Strange Meetings: Anglo-German Literary Encounters from 1910 to 1960* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2008), p. 62.

a symbol of Germany's internal cohesion and distinction from its enemies entailed irresolvable internal contradictions. Most importantly, it required claiming simultaneously that Shakespeare was universal (belonging to everybody and transcending national divisions) *and* that he was a uniquely German possession. These contradictions surface strikingly in the Shakespeare/Cervantes issue of *Simplicissimus*. Finally, some 1916 German-language commentators used Shakespeare in more radical ways, either by publications displaying pacifist undertones, like Frank's poem 'Shakespeare', or, in Kraus's case, by employing him as a vehicle for criticising the prevalent militaristic policies in Germany and beyond. These dissenting voices, however, went by and large unheard in Britain, which focused chiefly on the mainstream, nationalistic German appropriations of Shakespeare. The next chapter discusses British responses to these appropriations and discovers the ambiguities arising from treating Shakespeare as a British national poet and cultural saint.