

<b>Institution:</b> University of Worcester
<b>Unit of Assessment:</b> 29 - English Language & Literature
<b>Title of case study:</b> Bridging the Gap between Academic and Professional Theatre Discourses in the Reception of Shakespeare's Plays on Stage and in Translation – A Romanian Case Study
<p><b>1. Summary of the impact</b></p> <p>Dr Nicoleta Cinpoeş's research played an instrumental role in opening up a 'cultural space' in Romania for revised public understanding of, and engagement with, Shakespeare's plays, through: (i) dismantling formerly entrenched distinctions, in Romania, between academic scholars' engagement with Shakespeare and the engagement of professional theatre makers and critics; (ii) seeding discussion and consideration amongst theatre makers, young people in formal education and the general public, of recuperation of Shakespeare in Romania through achievement of an uncensored history of appropriation and, within that project, of new, 'clean' translations of the plays; (iii) supporting new translations of Shakespeare's plays directly, by providing rigorous, non-specialist, reader-friendly introductions that trace individual plays' stage and textual histories, as well as provide an up-to-date survey of their reception in criticism, stage practice and film adaptation.</p>
<p><b>2. Underpinning research</b></p> <p>Cinpoeş's underpinning insight was to identify that there was no comprehensive and up to date study of <i>Hamlet</i> in Romania. Her research proposed a study in cultural memory that explored <i>Hamlet</i> as a locus for understanding the synergy between translation, performance and appropriation, and as an instrument for recovering past and censored history. This addressed two old yet pressing issues confronting the approach to <i>Hamlet</i>/Shakespeare in Romania and Romanian (and in all countries and languages where Shakespeare has been co-opted for political purposes): it placed into dialogue the page, the stage and critical reception of Shakespeare, and it legitimised these approaches to understanding Shakespeare within the wider subject of Shakespeare Studies. An account of the naturalisation of <i>Hamlet</i> within Romanian language and culture, it examined how <i>Hamlet</i> in performance was recruited to do political work (an established practice in the East European Bloc) while simultaneously, in literary and critical circles, being considered solely in terms of the Englishness of the text - a strategy, Cinpoeş suggested, to avoid censorship. She argued that, if the first instinct was to use <i>Hamlet</i> as a way of establishing Shakespeare in Romania as the 'great Brit', and the second was to canonise the play in order to suit Romanian purposes, the third, and latest, has been to see <i>Hamlet</i> as a theatre event in its own right.</p> <p>Cinpoeş built on earlier studies of <i>Hamlet</i> in translation (1938; 1971) and reclaimed <i>Hamlet</i> from literary, scientific and cultural appropriations as it continued to play a covert political role during communism. She proposed that <i>Hamlet</i> in Romania (translated, performed or debated in criticism) was a political story, both effecting and reflecting political change. Any <i>Hamlet</i> on the English stage represents a negotiated settlement between text and performers – between actors and directors on the one hand and Shakespeare's massively over-endowed playtext on the other. <i>Hamlet</i> on the contemporary Romanian stage must also negotiate a settlement with the complicated issue of translation – linguistic, cultural, and theatrical – in a Post-Eastern Bloc milieu.</p> <p>By analysing the several stages of estrangement that occur in the process of translating <i>Hamlet</i> onto the Romanian stage, Cinpoeş explored how <i>Hamlet</i> had intervened in the cultural politics of Romania from the beginning of the nineteenth century. Concerning literary translations, she addressed issues that preoccupied Romanian academics. Turning to theatrical, published translations intended primarily for staging, she focussed on the largely neglected double nature of the translation project – translating the playtext and translating the performance text. The research's novelty lay in its open discussion of problems habitually obscured: it pieced together the play's history from scattered sources (poems, newspapers, journals, memoirs, censored reviews, hand-written surveys, photographs and live theatre productions), retrieving material that risked disappearance through political change, accidents of time, improper archiving, and wear and tear.</p> <p>In discussing recent Romanian <i>Hamlets</i> Cinpoeş argued that they proposed <i>Hamlet</i> as a kind of</p>

## Impact case study (REF3b)

stranger, estranged by a form of political exile - but she also credited them with recovering the past, liberated from heavily political encoding and struggling in complex ways to rediscover theatre and history. These productions refused to tie *Hamlet* to the past (stories, histories, theatrics), posing anew the urgent question 'Who's there?' to Romania and a world of shifting borders, wars, 'thriff' times and theatre in which multi- and inter-mediality are the norm.

The project's broader academic import lay in helping to complete the picture of Shakespeare in Europe alongside recent studies on Shakespeare in Germany, Bulgaria, Poland, Hungary and Spain. It informed the continuous debate on Shakespeare's role in shaping Europe, especially in light of 2004 and 2007 remapping, providing a model of practice for Shakespeare story telling that is global and urgent.

Cinpoeş carried out the research between 2008 and 2010, while employed by the University of Worcester (as Lecturer, and subsequently Senior Lecturer in English).

## 2. References to the research

Nicoleta Cinpoeş, 'The Born-again Socialist Bard: *Hamlet* in Romania', in *The Hamlet Zone: Reworking Hamlet for European Cultures*, ed. Ruth Owen (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Press, 2012), pp91-104.

Nicoleta Cinpoeş and Lawrence Guntner, 'Relocating *Hamlet* in European Performances in the New Millennium' in *Academic Annals of University of Iaşi*, vol. XIV supplement, In Honorem Odette Blumenfeld (Iaşi: Editura Universităţii „Al. I. Cuza”, 2012), pp5-24.

Nicoleta Cinpoeş, 'The (inter)play's the thing': *Hamlet*, Sibiu, 2008', in *Theatrical Blends: Art in the Theatre / Theatre in the Arts*, ed. Jerzy Limon and Agnieszka Zukowska (Gdansk: Slowo/Obraz Terytoria, 2010), pp184-194.

Nicoleta Cinpoeş, *Shakespeare's Hamlet in Romania: 1778 and 2008. A Study in Translation, Performance and Cultural Adaptation* (Lewinston: Edwin Mellen Press, 2010).

Nicoleta Cinpoeş and George Volceanov, 'Prefaţă: De trei ori *Hamlet*', in *Hamlet Q1, Q2 și F1* (Bucureşti: Paralela 45, 2010), pp 1-61 (introductory study to volume of translations).

Nicoleta Cinpoeş, 'The Long Night's Journey into Today: The Romanian *Hamlet* of the '80s', in *Shakespeare in Romania: 1950 to the Present*, ed. Monica Matei Chesnoiu (Bucharest: Humanitas, 2008), pp140-69.

Nicoleta Cinpoeş, 'Stillness in *Hamlet*', in *Shakespeare in Europe: History and Memory*, ed. Marta Gibinska and Agnieszka Romanowska (Krakow: Jagiellonian University Press, 2008), pp291-301.

## 4. Details of the impact

Cinpoeş' research took her to the archives of the Craiova National Theatre, one of Romania's most distinguished theatres, whose ground-breaking work was facilitated, under communism, by its geographical distance from Bucharest and frequent, politically-motivated transfer of Romania's most radical and imaginative theatre makers away from Bucharest to a less 'visible' location. In 2008, Cinpoeş began ongoing professional collaboration with the Theatre's then Director, actor Emil Boroghină, who is also Director of the William Shakespeare Foundation and organiser of the International Craiova Shakespeare Festival which brings together theatre makers, critics and Shakespeare productions from across the world. Strongly public-facing, with an extensive local as well as international following, each Festival attracts audiences of around 35,000, hosting some 20 productions, 15 workshops, several exhibitions and book launches, and an extensive community programme. Active participants include school children and students, actors, directors, and critics. It is funded by the Romanian Ministry of Culture, the Craiova Municipal Council, the General Council of Bucharest, the Romanian Cultural Institute and the Romania Theatre Union, and others. Despite encouragement to relocate the William Shakespeare Foundation to Bucharest, Boroghină has chosen to remain in Craiova, building the Foundation and Festival and creating an associated Shakespeare Centre. To promote interchange between theatre makers, the theatre-going public and academics, Cinpoeş has forged links between the Centre, the Festival, the University of Craiova and the European Shakespeare Research Association. (The latter formalised in 2011

when the Festival became the alternating venue for ESRA's 'Shakespeare in Performance Seminar').

In 2008 Boroghină had expressed interest in Cinpoeş's research and forthcoming book, noting his aspiration to dedicate a Craiova Shakespeare Festival entirely to *Hamlet*. *Hamlet*, in Romania, occupies a particularly 'charged' position, with its history of co-option for propagandist purposes of the state: since the fall of communism, there have been few home-grown productions of it, and none in the past three years. Simultaneously, Cinpoeş had begun working with George Volceanov on new Shakespeare translations into Romanian: translations were urgently needed that were fit for the purposes of *staging* Shakespeare; there was a moral and political imperative to correct the many mistranslations that had occurred under communism and upon which public and cultural understanding of them still rested; translations were needed that were 'true' to the language and theatre tradition of Shakespeare and capable of introducing the public of Romania to the 'shock' of Shakespeare's thought and language. Cinpoeş undertook to provide introductions to some of the plays, beginning with *Hamlet*, and Volceanov to bring together translators with a common sense of project (some of whom, ground-breakingly, were writers and theatre directors themselves). Introductions were to be written for a general public, providing brief synopses of each play, locating them historically and providing a context of their histories in world criticism and in Romanian translation and performance.

Cinpoeş brought these two projects (new translations and the Festival) together as part of a joint effort to update and open up the dialogue on Shakespeare in Romania. In 2010 (the two-hundredth anniversary of *Hamlet* in Romania) the Festival was unprecedentedly given over to a single play and focussed on consideration of translation alongside performance – through a two-day conference, 'Worldwide *Hamlet*', launch of the first two volumes of Volceanov's new, *Complete Works* (with 150 copies of the new *Hamlet* translation sold in the course of the Festival) and launch of Cinpoeş's book, *Shakespeare's Hamlet in Romania: 1778 and 2008. A Study in Translation, Performance and Cultural Adaptation*. The conference (involving 25 speakers) was the Festival's first to be open to all *Hamlet* aficionados (the interested public, professional and amateur theatre makers, archivists, translators, critics and scholars), while simultaneously to give voice, at home, to Romanian academics long since known internationally for their work in Shakespeare Studies. It attracted 350 participants. The 200 people attending Cinpoeş's book launch included members of the general public, publishers, journalists, dramaturgs, translators of Shakespeare, actors, directors and staff of the National Theatre of Craiova.

The *Hamlet* of the *Complete Works* comprised translations of all three 17<sup>th</sup> century versions, only otherwise provided by the recent Arden edition in English. Cinpoeş saw the new translation as providing an authoritative text for use in schools with the equivalent of A-level students, in drama schools, and in professional contexts as well as in universities (where she envisaged their becoming key texts for translation studies). Her introduction was the first occasion upon which she had drawn on the outcomes of her research for the purposes of writing a text in Romanian – an unforeseen consequence of the sense of moral and political project that had stimulated her collaboration with Volceanov. The *Hamlet* translation was one of five shortlisted titles for the Romanian Writers Association Book of the Year award in 2010 – the first time that a translation had been put forward for the prize.

The 2010 *Hamlet*-dedicated Festival was instrumental to development of broader projects. One result was that, in 2012, the ESRA/Festival two-day conference, 'Shakespeare and Performing Places' occurred with 'open doors', its debates expanded to include Shakespeare in education, in prison, and in Manga books and to consider the spaces that professional, amateur and school productions inhabit and transform. Cinpoeş's close collaboration with Profs Michael Dobson (Director of the Shakespeare Institute), Boika Sokolova (Notre Dame in London) and Lawrence Guntner (Poznan University) ensured the event's success, which has since become a regular Festival attraction.

The 2014 Festival will host a four-day conference, 'Everyman's Studies', open to *all* Shakespeare makers (actors and directors professional and amateur, teachers, translators, critics and academics). The *Complete Works* translations project (due from completion in 2016) has entered

## Impact case study (REF3b)

a new phase: in 2012 the five published translations and their companion introductions were not only acknowledged as the space for dialogue in action between stage, philological and academic practice, but also as seminal to extending dialogue to wider learning, reading and theatre-going communities in Romania. Cinpoeş's continuing involvement as an advisor had supported the development of subsequent introductions (*Titus Andronicus*, *Measure for Measure* and *The Comedy of Errors*) and the participation of growing numbers of translators, poets, actors and scholars in their realisation.

## 5. Sources to corroborate the impact

### Reports

Festival Programme 2012 <http://www.scribd.com/doc/90229505/Program-Festivalul-Shakespeare-2012> (the programme is printed for wide distribution to Festival audiences throughout its duration).  
Festival Programme 2010 (hard copy).

### Interviews

'Nicoleta Cinpoeş: *Hamlet* în România. Interviu de Mariana Ciolan', Series: Teatrul – o istorie vie. *Radio Romania Cultural*, 11 July 2010, 22.10 (20.10 GMT), also available on *Radio Romania Cultural live* (public national radio station, comparable in status and coverage to BBC Radio 4).

'Nicoleta Cinpoeş: *Hamlet* în traduceri și spectacole. Interviu de Mariana Ciolan', *Scrisul Românesc*, 5 (2010): 27 [http://www.revistascrisulromanesc.ro/work/reviste/sr\\_5\\_2010.pdf](http://www.revistascrisulromanesc.ro/work/reviste/sr_5_2010.pdf) (periodical launched in 1927; comparable in status and distribution to the *TLS*).

### Reviews

Howard, Tony, 'Romanian Danes'. *Around the Globe*, 47 (2011): 44 (the magazine of The Globe Theatre, London).

Sîrbulescu, Emil, 'Hamlet – o perspectivă istorică', *Scrisul Românesc*, 5 (2010): 25. [http://www.revistascrisulromanesc.ro/work/reviste/sr\\_5\\_2010.pdf](http://www.revistascrisulromanesc.ro/work/reviste/sr_5_2010.pdf) (book review).

Sîrbulescu, Emil, 'Dimensiunea globală a europeanului Shakespeare', *Scrisul Românesc*, 5 (2010): 11-12 (review of the seminar 'Worldwide Hamlet on the Stage and in Translation').

Militaru, Petrişor, 'Cele trei versiuni textuale ale piesei *Hamlet*', *Scrisul Românesc*, 5 (2010): 19 (review of the new translation of the play by George Volceanov, introduction Nicoleta Cinpoeş and George Volceanov).

'Shakespeare's *Hamlet* in Romania – cu Dan Mihăilescu la ProTV', [http://www.protv.ro/video/omul-care-duce-cartea\\_322\\_nicoleta-cinpoes-shakespeare-s-hamlet-in-romania\\_8879.html](http://www.protv.ro/video/omul-care-duce-cartea_322_nicoleta-cinpoes-shakespeare-s-hamlet-in-romania_8879.html) (comparable to ITV, ProTV is the most popular commercial TV channel in Romania; Dan Mihăilescu's 'The man who brings the book' is a live book review show that brings to the general reading public's attention the latest releases; the eclectic choices reflect the show's wide and diverse audiences, including philosophy, history, literature, critical theory, dictionaries, popular guides, cooking, and self-help books).

### Individual users/beneficiaries

**Mr Emil Boroghină**, Director, Shakespeare International Festival, Craiova, Romania (impact, on public understanding of Shakespeare in Romania, of effecting dialogue and a sense of shared project amongst professional and amateur theatre makers, actors, critics, audiences and academics, and of contribution to the Festival; impact on contemporary Romanian approaches to the staging and performance of Shakespeare).

**Prof George Volceanov**, Chief Editor of new series of Shakespeare's *Complete Works* in Romanian (impact of achieving modern translations of the plays available to many different constituencies and of extending the work of translation to non-academic constituencies; impact of the new *Hamlet* translation and Cinpoeş's introduction).

**Prof Michael Dobson**, Director, The Shakespeare Institute, Stratford-on-Avon (impact of Cinpoeş's bringing together academic and non-academic constituencies in 21<sup>st</sup> century exploration, understanding and enjoyment of Shakespeare in Romania; importance and impact of the Craiova Shakespeare Festival in Romanian cultural life).