

3rd World Conference on

ARTS, HUMANITIES, SOCIAL SCIENCES, AND EDUCATION

October 16-17, 2023 | Paris, France



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Performing Shakespeare in the UAE

This paper addresses the ways in which Shakespeare is performed, adapted and translated for performance in the UAE. It teases out some of the cultural implications of live Shakespearean performance in the UAE as a relatively neglected area of Shakespeare reception study globally. The objective is to understand how performing Shakespeare in this country is shaped in relation to the figure of Shakespeare within elite culture in English as well as how productions might contest or interrogate his position. The paper takes the form of some initial findings regarding a production of *Richard III* that took place at Al Jahili Fort in Al Ain (2009). Qualitative interviews have been used as a way of discovering the issues and challenges faced by the production and how they were solved. A simple scheme was devised to help frame the conversation, with the intention of establishing any assumptions that underpinned the production; how these were carried out in practice; and whether or not they had to be changed due to production circumstances. It has been difficult at this distance to engage with audience members, but this paper presents the first attempt at doing so in a way that should inform the remainder of an ongoing project that includes another two, relatively more recent, sets of performances.

Keywords: Shakespeare; performance; UAE productions; translation; adaptation.

Biography:

Paul Innes is Professor of English at the United Arab Emirates University at Al Ain, Abu Dhabi. He has published widely on Shakespeare and Critical Theory, and has worked at the Universities of Warsaw, Edinburgh, Strathclyde and Glasgow. His primary academic interests are in Shakespeare Studies and Critical Theory. His published books are *Shakespeare's Roman Plays* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2015); *Epic* (Routledge, 2013); *Class and Society in Shakespeare* (Bloomsbury, 2007); *Shakespeare: The Barriers Removed* (StudyMates, 2005); and *Shakespeare and the English Renaissance Sonnet: Verses of Feigning Love* (Palgrave Macmillan, 1997).