

“Audience vs. Fans: The Facebook *Romeo & Juliet*”

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On 4 February 2013 a Facebook page appeared “Romeo and Juliet: A Social Summary The Greatest Love Story Ever Told.” On the 5<sup>th</sup>, Romeo Montague’s page appeared. Born, 9 February 1577, from Verona, Italy, Son at House of Montague. He added the life event “first time in love,” with Rosalind. On the 7<sup>th</sup>, Juliet Capulet’s page appeared. The story unfold on Facebook, concluding on Valentine’s Day. The work of the Stratford Festival (formerly the Stratford Shakespeare Festival) of Canada, the Facebook adaptation was designed to promote the upcoming production of *Romeo and Juliet*. The photos were of the actors cast in the various roles. The event was cleverly executed and attracted anywhere from a handful to fifty-odd likes per post. Comments were fewer, ranging from none to a dozen or so.

The roots of this publicity exercise can be found in a speech by Artistic Director Antoni Cimolino in June 2010. Cimolino addresses the changes in audiences since the Festival began in 1953. He was especially interested in digital and social media, how they have transformed audience expectations, and how the Festival could embrace the transformations. As a result, the Festival maintains a blog, a Twitter feed, a Facebook page, a Pinterest Page, a YouTube and a Livestream channel.

Rather than measure the effectiveness of such endeavors, which would be difficult in any case, I am interested in how the adaptation of *Romeo and Juliet* for a social media platform in the service of a destination theater festival pushes Shakespeare across a line from, in the words of John Fiske “official culture” to “popular culture.” This transgression occurs when the intended audience, theater goers, are invited to become fans. Rather than passive consumers of Shakespeare whose attendance at the Festival is part of their investment in their own cultural capital, they are encouraged to a level, however proscribed by Facebook, of semiotic productivity.

I have not yet sorted out the nuances of this argument, but I will hypothesize that the shift in audience construction from theater-goer to fan can be seen in other aspects of the Festival’s promotion and might trace a similar shift in the cultural understanding of Shakespeare.

Rebekah Bale                      Contending with Shakespeare through Adaptation                      SAA 2014  
Abstract: “‘Un Theatre d’ Intervention”’: Sony Labou Tansi’s ‘The Red and White Revival of Romeo and Juliet’.

Sony Labou Tansi is one of the key figures in post-colonial Francophone literature, known for both his novels and plays. His hyper-textual style and innovative use of the French language make for a powerful, political critique of the post-independence era. His adaptation of *Romeo and Juliet* is one in which the tragedy is intrinsically bound up with civil unrest and the lack of a functioning state system. My paper examines why and how a contemporary Congolese writer adapts a canonical Western text to create a compelling and urgent ‘theatre of intervention’.

### Bibliography

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Mbembe, J.A. «Necropolitics.» *Public Culture* 15, no. 1 (2003): 11-40.

Miller, Judith G. «Is There a Specifically Francophone African Stage Textuality?» *Yale French Studies*, 2007: 131-144.

Ngal, Georges. «"La Dramatisation De L'écriture Chez Sony Labou Tansi.".» *Presence Francophone*, 2009: 152-163.

Tansi, Sony Labou. «La Resurrection Rouge et Blanche de Romeo et Juliette.» *Auteurs*, 1990.

Taoua, Phyllis. «Performing Identity: Nations, Cultures and African Experimental Novels.» *Journal of African Cultural Studies* 14, no. 2 (2001): 193-219.

Lara Bovilsky

Abstract

My paper revisits Mary Cowden Clarke's often-villified novellas which project *The Girlhood of Shakespeare's Heroines*. I argue that Cowden Clarke in fact uses her adaptations to perform stealth criticism of the novellas' source plays at both interpretive and textual levels (she also produced an edition of Shakespeare). I'm interested in the avenues open to Cowden Clarke as a female critic in the 19th Century and in how her work models an experimental criticism.

Useful reading:

Linda Hutcheon, *A Theory of Adaptation*

Diane Henderson, *Collaborations with the Past*

Jennifer Drouin  
University of Alabama

The *Student Adaptations of Shakespeare and Early Modern Dramatists* Website:  
A Pedagogical Approach to Critical Engagement through Creative Writing

Like many academic collaborations these days, the *Student Adaptations of Shakespeare and Early Modern Dramatists* website came to life because of a conversation via students' medium of choice: *Facebook*. Liz Pentland (York University, Toronto) wrote a status update about the adaptations her students had written: "a very clever prequel to *Othello* written from Desdemona's perspective, and 'Hujjat,' a *Hamlet* set in present day Balochistan, a province of Pakistan." After remarking that she too had received some good adaptations from her students that semester, Joyce Boro (Université de Montréal) tagged me into the conversation, and this summer we built a quick and dirty WordPress site, which currently hosts adaptations from Joyce's and Liz's classes (and we would welcome others if anyone has any to contribute). This semester I required my students to write an adaptation of at least 500 words based upon one of the plays we're studying in my fourth-year undergraduate course on *Gender and Sexuality in Renaissance Drama*: either *A Chaste Maid in Cheapside*, *The Changeling*, *The Duchess of Malfi*, *Edward II*, *The Two Noble Kinsmen*, *Gallathea*, *The Roaring Girl*, or *The Convent of Pleasure*. Students could also do a mash-up of a couple texts. I will be posting some of the best adaptations from my class to the website (with the students' consent) by the time we submit our seminar papers. I'll also be posting student writing from my third-year *Shakespeare* course in which the students write *Facebook* timelines for four characters in *Measure for Measure*. At the very least, we think that a) having students write their own adaptations is a way to make writing enjoyable for the more creatively-inclined students; b) the adaptations reveal how contemporary students receive and process early modern texts; and c) having their texts posted online so that they enter a public conversation with other online adaptations (like those on the *CASP* site) inspires the students to write for a broader audience than just the professor. I also hope to be able to argue that d) an adaptation-writing exercise forces students to engage more seriously in a critical close reading of the text since adaptation relies upon a relationship between source text and adapted text (or hypotext and hypertext in Genette's terms). In order to produce a creative hypertext, students must study its hypotext(s) with an attention to detail that they might not expend otherwise.

*Canadian Adaptations of Shakespeares Project*. Ed. Daniel Fishlin.

<<http://www.canadianshakespeares.ca/>>

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Genette, Gérard. *Palimpsestes: La littérature au second degré*. Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1982.  
Trans. *Palimpsests: Literature in the Second Degree*. Channa Newman and Claude Doubinsky. Lincoln: U of Nebraska P, 1997.

*Student Adaptations of Shakespeare and Early Modern Dramatists*. Eds. Joyce Boro, Jennifer Drouin, and Elizabeth Pentland. <<http://shakespeareadaptations.wordpress.com/>>

Keith Jones

Adam Kitzes

Shakespeare Association of America

10-12 April 2014

“In a sieve I'll thither sail”: *Macbeth* Comes to Madagascar

Preliminary Abstract:

My essay will focus on *Makibefo*, a version of *Macbeth* filmed in Madagascar, though it will also bring in the two better-known non-western film versions of *Macbeth*, namely *Maqbool* and *Throne of Blood*. I intend to approach the film from the direction of the elements of Malagasy culture that fit into this production of a Shakespeare play rather than on the elements of Shakespeare that fit Malagasy culture. To do so, I will explore the culture of the Antandroy, the people group who participated in the film.

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- Perullo, Alex. “Recollecting From the Past: Musical Practice and Spirit Possession on the East Coast of Madagascar.” *Ethnomusicology* 48.3 (2004): 453-55.
- Sharp, Lesley A. “Wayward Pastoral Ghosts and Regional Xenophobia in a Northern Madagascar Town.” *Africa* 71.1 (2001): 38-81.
- Throne of Blood* [*Kumonosu jô* (a.k.a. *The Castle of the Spider's Web*)]. Dir. Akira Kurosawa. Perf. Toshirô Mifune and Isuzu Yamada. 1957. DVD. Criterion, 2003.

Therapeutic Shakespeare and Metadrama:

Phyllida Lloyd's *Julius Caesar* and the Taviani Brothers' *Cesare Deve Morire*

Douglas M. Lanier, University of New Hampshire

My overarching interest in this paper will be with several recent stage and film productions that enact Shakespeare performances in institutional situations—prisons, schools, nursing homes. These productions offer a novel variation on the familiar trope of metadramatic Shakespeare (productions about a production of Shakespeare). Situating themselves in a curiously unstable space between documentary and fictionalization, they provide interesting and sometimes deeply ambivalent perspectives on the phenomenon of therapeutic Shakespeare, the notion that amateur performance of Shakespeare can be educational, ameliorative, transformative, or spiritually uplifting. I will be focusing on two study examples, both prison-house *Julius Caesars*: the 2013 all-women Donmar Warehouse stage production directed by Phyllida Lloyd (also performed at St. Ann's Warehouse in Brooklyn), and the film *Cesare Deve Morire* directed by the Taviani Brothers and released in 2012.

Albanese, Denise. "Social Dreaming and Making Shakespeare Matter." In *Extramural Shakespeare*. Palgrave, 2010. 119-43.

de Botton, Alain, and John Armstrong. *Art as Therapy*. Phaidon, 2013.

Rogerson, Hank, dir. *Shakespeare Behind Bars*. Shout Factory Theatre, 2006. Film.

Scott-Douglass, Amy. *Shakespeare Inside: The Bard Behind Bars*. Continuum, 2007.

Walsh, Fintan. *Theater and Therapy*. Palgrave, 2013.

SAA 2014

Seminar 6: "Contending with Shakespeare through Adaptation"

Appropriating Shakespeare

Zoltan Markus  
Vassar College

"Appropriation" was a frequently used critical term in Shakespeare studies in the 1980s and 1990s, but it has been out of favor for some time now. The meanings of this concept are usually taken for granted, even if they are often significantly different from, or even contradictory with, one another. The word can be used both as a neutral and as a loaded term. This paper revisits the problem of "appropriating Shakespeare." It invites us to reassess some important uses of this term and offers a specific understanding of the concept, a particular kind of appropriation of "appropriation."

Select Bibliography

Burnett, Mark Thornton. "Chapter 4: Appropriation." Ewan Fernie, Ramona Wray, Mark Thornton Burnett, Clare McManus. Eds. *Reconceiving the Renaissance: A Critical Reader*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2005. 145-210.

Desmet, Christy, and Robert Sawyer. Eds. *Shakespeare and Appropriation*. New York: Routledge, 1999.

Fischlin, Daniel, and Mark Fortier. Eds.. *Adaptations of Shakespeare: A Critical Anthology of Plays from the Seventeenth Century to the Present*. New York: Routledge, 2000.

Huang, Alexander C. Y. *Chinese Shakespeares: Two Centuries of Cultural Exchange*. New York: Columbia UP, 2009.

Hedrick, Donald, and Bryan Reynolds. Eds. *Shakespeare Without Class: Misappropriations of Cultural Capital*. Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2000.

Kidnie, Margaret J. *Shakespeare and the Problem of Adaptation*. New York: Routledge, 2008.

Lanier, Douglas. *Shakespeare and Modern Popular Culture*. Oxford Shakespeare Topics. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2002.

Marsden, Jean I. Ed. *The Appropriation of Shakespeare: Post-Renaissance Reconstructions of the Works and the Myth*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1992

Massai, Sonia. Ed. *World-Wide Shakespeares: Local Appropriations in Film and Performance*. New York: Routledge, 2005.

Sanders, Julie. *Adaptation and Appropriation*. The New Critical Idiom. New York: Routledge, 2006.

“*Private Romeo, Queer Theory, and Masculinity*”  
William Rampone – South Carolina State University

This essay examines Alan Brown’s 2011 film adaptation, *Private Romeo*, in relation to Shakespeare’s *Romeo and Juliet* in terms of desire, masculinity, and eroticism. Secondly, this paper attempts to determine how the power dynamics differ between the same-sex male couple and the differently sexed couple of Shakespeare’s play.

Brown, Alan. *Private Romeo*. 2011. Film.

Greer, Michael and Toby Widdicombe. *Screening Shakespeare: Understanding the Plays through Film*. New York: Longman, 2009. Print.

Menon, Madhavi. *Unhistorical Shakespeare: Queer Theory in Shakespearean Literature and Film*. New York; Palgrave Macmillan. 2008. Print.

Shakespeare. William. *Romeo and Juliet*. New York: Signet Classics, 1963. Print.



Elizabeth Rivlin  
Clemson University

In this paper I'm looking at several recent (published within the last five years) American novels that have a few things in common: they were all published by mainstream trade publishers and designed to achieve commercial success; they could all be categorized loosely as chick lit with a heavy dose of domestic drama; and they all adapt or thematize Shakespeare. I'm interested in the economics and marketing behind the decisions of big trade publishing houses to continue producing a steady flow of such mainstream Shakespeare novelizations. I'm also, and perhaps more fundamentally for this paper, interested in what these particular novels have to say about how Americans understand and receive Shakespeare today. What does it signify, for instance, that Shakespeare is used to psychoanalyze family dynamics? How is Shakespeare invoked in the cause of romantic fantasy? What visions of America do these novels enlist Shakespeare to depict?

Lanier, Douglas. *Shakespeare and Modern Popular Culture*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002.

Rubin, Rachel Lee. *Well Met: Renaissance Faires and the American Counterculture*. New York: New York University Press, 2012.

Vaughan, Alden T. and Virginia Mason, *Shakespeare in America*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012.

My paper will examine how Anne Hathaway's cottage has been adapted at several sites worldwide, from North Carolina to Australia. I am interested in questions including the following:

What were these cottages actually commemorating? How are the spaces and associations of AH's cottage adapted to reinforce/underline/support various causes? And how do these versions in turn reflect back on, inform, and circulate various conceptions about Shakespeare?

Key readings:

Irena R. Makaryk and Marissa McHugh, eds. *Shakespeare and the Second World War: Memory, Culture, Identity* (2012)

Julia Thomas, *Shakespeare's Shrine: The Bard's Birthplace and the Invention of Stratford-upon-Avon* (2012)

Nicola Watson, "Shakespeare on the Tourist Trail," in *The Cambridge Companion to Shakespeare and Popular Culture* (2007)

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My seminar paper investigates a growing trend within Shakespeare adaptation: the Margaret play. Currently at least seventeen adaptations of *Henry VI* exist which turn Margaret of Anjou into the protagonist of the Wars of the Roses. Though “adaptation” is a nebulous word, its range of definitions are found within these Margaret plays. Some are single-evening cuts of the *Henry VI* plays, some are re-arrangements of Shakespeare’s text, and some contain large percentages of new text. Though Shakespeare’s history plays as a whole are more likely to be produced in England, these adaptations are nearly entirely an American phenomenon.

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Hampton-Reeves, Stuart, and Carol Chillington Rutter. *The Henry VI Plays*. Manchester: Manchester UP, 2006. Print.

Pendleton, Thomas A., ed. *Henry VI: Critical Essays*. New York: Routledge, 2001. Print.

Potter, Robert. “The Rediscovery of Queen Margaret: ‘The Wars of the Roses’, 1963.” *New Theatre Quarterly* 4.14 (May 1988): 105-19. Print.

Popular Shakespeare and the Kitchen Sink  
Verena Theile – North Dakota State University

My paper will focus on *Much Ado* (Whedon, 2013) and *Macbeth* (Goold, 2010) and analyze how these recent adaptations of Shakespearean plays toy with the banality of life. Stephen Greenblatt reads Whedon's suburban mansion as the central character in his *Much Ado* and marvels at the film's emphasis on domesticity; and Marguerite Tassi argues that *Macbeth*'s kitchen emerges as the governing metaphor in a play that wilfully domesticates evil.

Not sure where I will go with this, but I'm struck by the focus on kitchens in both productions, and the way they are emphasized to such entirely different ends. I wonder what that focus does to the genre or in the context of the genre of the two plays. If the kitchen is traditionally a symbol of home and domesticity, it's also a site of social tension, of strife, and claustrophobia. As a stylistic device it seems to accommodate and challenge both interpretations.

Bibliography

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French, Philip. "Coriolanus-review." *The Observer* (Jan. 21, 2012)  
Greenblatt, Stephen. "On the Edge of Slander." *NYT Review of Books* (Sept. 26, 2013)  
J. W. M. "The Elevator and the Smoke." *Shakespeare Newsletter* 57.3 (2007/8): 118.  
Tassi, Marguerite A. "Arrestingly Contemporary." *Shakespeare Newsletter* 57.3 (2007/8): 81-82, 118-120.

*The Tempest Tamed: John Fletcher and Philip Massinger's The Sea Voyage (1622)*

Virginia Mason Vaughan

My seminar paper will examine John Fletcher and Philip Massinger's *The Sea Voyage*, outlining the elements they borrowed from Shakespeare and the alterations they made. I will look at its text as a script for performance and, in the process, establish an intertextual framework from which we can tease out insights about the early seventeenth-century audience's response to both the original and the imitation.

Bibliography:

Feerick, Jean, "'Divided in Soyle': Plantations and Degeneracy in *The Tempest* and *The Sea Voyage*," *Renaissance Drama* 35 (2006): 26-54.

Fletcher, John and Philip Massinger, *The Sea voyage*, ed. Anthony Parr (Manchester, UK, 1995).

McMullan, Gordon, *The Politics of Unease in the Plays of John Fletcher* (Amherst, MA, 1994).

Shahani, Gitanjali, "Of 'Barren Islands' and 'Cursèd Gold': Worth, Value, and Womanhood in *The Sea Voyage*," *Journal of Early Modern Cultural Studies* 12 (2012), 5-27.