

SAA Seminar: Gender and Sexuality in Adaptations of Shakespeare
Organizer: Deanne Williams, York University.

1. The Fiendlike Queen: Recuperating the Feminine in Modern Adaptations of *Macbeth*
William C. Carroll
Boston University

Terry Eagleton's notorious comment – "To any unprejudiced reader – which would seem to exclude Shakespeare himself, his contemporary audiences and almost all literary critics – it is surely clear that positive value in *Macbeth* lies with the three witches. The witches are the heroines of the piece, however little the play itself recognizes the fact" (*William Shakespeare*, p. 2) – is just one of many attempts in recent decades to recast the witches in a more positive light, an effort that has had considerable success. Lady Macbeth has proven to be a harder case to rehabilitate, at least on the stage (as seen recently in Kate Fleetwood's harrowing depiction with Patrick Stewart in Rupert Goold's version). In adaptations of the past century, however, especially those written by women and those for younger readers, a very different picture of the "fiend-like queen" has emerged. These representations move far away from earlier texts in which "Lady Macbeth" is little more than a synonym for a murderous woman. Several recent works instead seek explanation or rationale for her participation in Duncan's murder through reference to her earlier marriage and son by that marriage (both suppressed in Shakespeare's play), to her situation as a woman in a culture of Celtic masculinity, and even to a supposed daughter (Klein) with whom Lady Macbeth (not dead in this version!) is ultimately reunited. The result is a repentant, heroic, even innocent– and above all, a maternal – Lady Macbeth. Among the works I will consider are Gordon Bottomley, *Gruach* (1919), Susan Fraser King, *Lady Macbeth: A Novel* (2008), Lisa M. Klein, *Lady Macbeth's Daughter* (2009), and A.J. Hartley and David Hewson, *Macbeth: A Novel* (2012). Such works construct narratives to supply the gaps (or 'lack') of the feminine as it appears in Shakespeare's play.

2. From *Titus* to *The Tempest*: Revising Women's Performance and Power in the Shakespeare Films of Julie Taymor

Peter Parolin

University of Wyoming

Given that Julie Taymor's 2010 version of *The Tempest* features Helen Mirren in the lead and changes the role of Prospero to Prospera, it is surprising that Taymor has repeatedly insisted that she intended no significant commentary on the play through the dramatic gender switching. She saw the casting of Mirren as an opportunity for a great actress to take on a major late-Shakespearean role rather than her own opportunity as director to reframe familiar understandings of the play. Yet the change in the conception of Prospero does scramble *The Tempest* and reorient the play's gendered relationships, especially the relationship between Taymor's Prospera and her daughter Miranda. This paper will explore the implications of the changes, asking to what degree the newly established mother-daughter relationship is central to the meanings of Taymor's *Tempest*. Further, given the longstanding understanding of Prospero as an artist/playwright figure, the paper will investigate the possibility of reading Prospera as a figure for Taymor and for reading the relationship between Prospera and the other characters as models for Taymor's relationship with her own company of assembled artists. As a context for analyzing Prospera as artist/mother, the paper will also consider another, very different, artist/mother, Tamora, from Taymor's first Shakespeare film, *Titus*, 1999. My hope, then, is that this seminar paper will show the significance of particular choices in Taymor's *Tempest* adaptation for the reconfiguration of gendered relationships while also charting this powerful director's variations on the figure and the theme of the artist/mother.

3. Twice-Told Tales: Approaches to Gender in Shakespeare's Histories and Transformative Works

Kavita Mudan Finn
University of Maryland

Academic discussions of fandom or fanfiction generally tend to make a clear distinction between "texts" valued by fans (e.g. film and television) and those with greater cultural capital (e.g. Shakespeare and Austen). Although this perception is gradually changing with the growing trend of fandom studies, discussions of "literary" fandoms largely remain on the sidelines. What I wish to explore here is the intersection of fan culture with not just Shakespeare, but with a particular subset of plays that have generally resisted integration into modern popular culture, especially in the United States: the eight plays designated "Histories" in the First Folio.

A notable aspect of fandom in general and Shakespeare fandom in particular is that it is almost exclusively female. Leaving aside for the moment the implications of a community of women reworking one of the bastions of literary canon, the small but prolific corner of the Internet devoted to Shakespeare's histories also contains a variety of stories focused on female characters--in many cases, women who do not appear in the plays, but were historically present for the events that occurred. This sort of reverse engineering allows the writer to broaden the world of the play to include what Shakespeare, presumably for casting reasons, could not, while still maintaining--arguably--the play's own integrity. Alongside these are the typical fandom explorations of genderswapping, alternate universes (setting the events of the plays in different time periods), and homoeroticism (known in fan circles as slash fiction), all of which interrogate both Elizabethan and modern gender norms in new and interesting ways. Feminist critics have often found the histories frustrating in their perceived lack of female agency, so what can a discussion of creative engagement tell us about female readers and their relationship with Shakespearean canon? If, as Sheenagh Pugh notes, "people wrote fanfic because they wanted either 'more of' their source material or 'more from' it," it is worth considering fanfiction based on Shakespeare's histories as a legitimate discourse generated by engagement with the plays' own gender politics.

4. "What's past is prologue": Dystopia, Queer Subjectivity and Heterotopic Space in
Derek Jarman's Shakespearean films
Kevin Murray
Queen's University Belfast

This paper argues that Derek Jarman's Shakespeare films desecralise the Bard by introducing into the framework of his dramas and poems aspects of Jarman's radical and self-consciously queer politics. Jarman held vigorously anti-establishment beliefs: in the 1970s he became interested in the punk movement and its exhortations to anarchy; in the 1980s and 1990s he collaborated with gay-rights pressure groups such as OutRage!. He loathed the Thatcherite brand of conservatism which held sway in the late 1970s and the 1980s, and which engineered homophobic legislation such as the infamous Section 28 of the Local Government Act, which mandated that local authorities 'shall not intentionally promote homosexuality'. Jarman's cinema stridently critiques the ideology of Thatcher's England and those Establishment figures whom Jarman grouped together under the sinister Orwellian coinage 'Heterosoc'.

Jarman discovered within the Bard's works a counter-hegemonic voice of dissent comparable to his own. His adaptations depart markedly from the reverential approach of his countryman Laurence Olivier by incorporating biting satire and raucously funny sequences of travesty and burlesque. Jarman produced two feature-length films which directly adapt Shakespeare (The Tempest [1979] and The Angelic Conversation [1985]), several films whose engagement with Shakespeare is more oblique (including Studio Bankside [1972]), and an adaptation of a Christopher Marlowe play (Edward II [1990]). Subject to Jarman's characteristic methods of rewriting, these texts mediate a newly founded idiom of auteurial queer self-representation which is concomitantly an urgent, astringent political treatise. The films continually stage a dialogue between dystopian and utopian representations of England, with the latter in evidence in garish depictions of deadening conurbations, institutional violence and vitriolic homophobia. Yet, conversely, Jarman's Shakespearean films construct images of queer-friendly utopian spaces, or heterotopias. Configuring the English landscape as an idyllic space emblematic of resistance and nonconformity, Jarman appropriates the discourse of 'naturalness' (and perversity) so prevalent to heterosexist thinking. Jarman's purpose in adapting Shakespeare is to contest conservatism's ownership of the mythology of the Bard, but beneath his (unashamedly Anglo-centric) films' agitprop trappings he embarks on an essentially conservative mission: that of reinventing Shakespeare for England.

Previous scholarship has sought to elucidate Jarman's methods, motivations and queer politics. Drawing on this useful prior work, I aim to follow a different trajectory by looking at the auteur's entire oeuvre (including his multiple published books and short films, in addition to the Shakespeare adaptations) in order to look anew at how Jarman's interactions with Shakespeare and Shakespearean subject matter imbricate with his queer politics.

5. Love Goes Toward Love as Schoolboys from their Books:
Private Romeo and the Cinematic Queering of *Romeo and Juliet*
Anthony Guy Patricia
University of Nevada, Las Vegas

In *Shakespeare: The Invention of the Human*, Harold Bloom describes *Romeo and Juliet* as a play that “is the largest and most persuasive celebration of romantic love in Western literature” (90). Considering the source, this is high praise, indeed; but, while arguably true, it is crucial to be aware of the fact that, within the space of a mere thirteen words, Bloom universalizes Shakespeare’s representation of romantic love in strictly heterosexual terms. Does this mean that *Romeo and Juliet* has nothing to offer homosexual audiences and their allies? My answer to that question is, of course not. Since the advent of gay and lesbian studies in the 1970s, and queer studies in the 1990s, a fair amount of critical attention from a non-heterosexist perspective has been directed to *Romeo and Juliet*. Two of the most prominent textual examples of gay and/or queer interest in *Romeo and Juliet* include Joseph A. Porter’s monograph, *Shakespeare’s Mercutio: His History and Drama* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1988), and Jonathan Goldberg’s later essay, “Romeo’s and Juliet’s Open R’s,” that appears in his groundbreaking edited collection, *Queering the Renaissance* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1994). Meanwhile, in the realm of mainstream cinema, *Romeo and Juliet* has been brought to the silver screen by at least two openly-gay directors in the previous century, including by George Cukor in 1936 and, perhaps even more famously, by Franco Zeffirelli in 1968. Peter S. Donaldson, in his *Shakespearean Films / Shakespearean Directors* (Boston: Unwin Hyman, 1990), includes an entire chapter on Zeffirelli’s *Romeo and Juliet* that uses Laura Mulvey’s concept of “to-be-looked-at-ness” to argue, in part, that Zeffirelli’s camera “displays the men’s bodies [of characters like Romeo and Mercutio, among others] as objects of an engrossed, sensual appreciation” that encourages a potentially homoerotic response (154). And, in keeping with this sustained attention on his character as the locus of non-normative sexuality, director Baz Luhrmann transformed Mercutio into a drug-addicted drag queen seething with barely repressed anger in *William Shakespeare’s Romeo + Juliet* (1996). But, despite these prominent critical and cinematic interventions, I would argue that *Romeo and Juliet* was not fully queered (with queered understood, as the editors of *The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism* put it, as the critique of “the dominant heterosexual binary, masculine/feminine, which enthrones ‘the’ two sexes and casts other sexualities as abnormal, illicit, or criminal” [25]) until the appearance, in 2011, of director Alan Brown’s independent feature film, *Private Romeo*. As such, the purpose of this essay is to show how Brown succeeds at re-visioning – using Adrienne Rich’s concept of re-vision, or “looking back, of seeing with fresh eyes, of entering a text from a new critical direction” (“When We Dead Awaken: Writing as Re-Vision” in *On Lies, Secrets, and Silence: Selected Prose* 35) – Shakespeare’s *Romeo and Juliet* as a powerful, historically-specific, gay love story that celebrates male same-sex love as the wonderful thing it is for two men to experience and to explore the larger implications of this success as the second decade of the twenty-first century continues to unfold.

6. "The Hurt Roman: Homoeroticism and Intimacy in Ralph Fiennes' *Coriolanus*."
Michael D. Friedman
University of Scranton

Ralph Fiennes' film adaptation of the *Coriolanus* (2011) suggests a homoerotic element in the protagonist's rivalry with Aufidius. However, at crucial moments, Fiennes shies away from depicting an overtly homosexual bond between Coriolanus and his Voscian enemy. Instead, Fiennes elects to represent certain homoerotic sequences as a result of Coriolanus's longing for intimacy, which, as a result of his military upbringing by his mother, Volumnia, he can only achieve with her (in response to his own martial exploits) or through physical contact with his comrades on the battlefield. The film employs three main strategies in its depiction of Coriolanus's yearning for intimate contact within a military context. First, Fiennes draws upon the conventions of the War on Terror movie, represented most prominently by *The Hurt Locker* (2009), to portray Coriolanus's homoerotic ties to his fellow soldiers as a type of coping mechanism to deal with the complex psychological toll that modern warfare takes upon young soldiers. Second, Fiennes expands the roles of two relatively minor characters, Coriolanus's wife Virgilia and their son Young Martius, as a means to explain how Coriolanus became indoctrinated into the Roman military ideology and why he cannot find the intimacy he seeks in his relationship with his spouse. Third, Fiennes focuses attention on the psychodrama of Coriolanus pulled in opposite directions by the two people with whom he achieves intimacy, his mother and his enemy. While Volumnia sacrifices her close relationship with her son to save Rome, Aufidius and Coriolanus reach an intimate union at the end of the film in a final erotic embrace that brings about Coriolanus's death.

7. The Problematics of Popularising: Updating Shakespeare's Women in Musical Theatre.

Christopher Innes
York University

Shakespeare's theatre automatically highlighted gender issues through the convention of boy actors playing female roles – with the artifice of this convention being made an explicit focus in the comedies, through cross-dressing characters: both female leads dressing as males (*As You Like It*, *Twelfth Night*) and (in the Prologue to *Taming of the Shrew*) a male dressing as female.

By contrast, in modern musical adaptations of Shakespeare, female sexuality is idealized and central. So in *West Side Story*, Maria (the Juliet figure) symbolizes the tragedy as a grieving bride, instead of dying with her lover – and in the film version the role was played by a leading star of the period, Natalie Wood. At the same time, the sheer energy of Jerome Robbins' dance choreography intertwined emotion and physicality. Parallel to this, female characters dominate *The Boys from Syracuse*, which becomes a satiric parody of love, and includes both courtesans ("Ladies of the Night") and a ballet sequence embodying a range of female ideals: Galatea, Fatima and Amazons. The reversal of Shakespeare's themes is most obvious in *Kiss Me Kate*, the Cole Porter version of *The Taming of the Shrew*, where extending the play-within-a-play format inter-cuts situations from Shakespeare's original with the offstage resolution of marital discord between the actors (Fred Graham and Lilli Vanessi) playing Petruccio and Kate in a Broadway revival.

Analysis of these adaptations not only shows the degree to which the original characterization and relations between the genders has been shifted to correspond with contemporary standards and popular expectations, simplifying through updating. It also helps to bring out the relative complexity in Shakespeare's treatment of gender issues, and indicates the degree to which his plays challenge the orthodoxies of the Elizabethan age.

8. Shakespeare and Vaudeville: Rape and Resolution in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*
Rachel Greenberg
Canisius College

The Two Gentlemen of Verona is perhaps best known and reviled for its controversial ending, which features Proteus's rape attempt on Silvia, her rescue by her betrothed Valentine—who is also Proteus's best friend--and then Valentine's forgiveness of Proteus by seeming to offer Silvia to him, remarking: "All that was mine in Silvia I give thee" (5.4.83).¹ Whether it is the near-rape, Valentine's offer, or Silvia's silence afterwards, the scene is jarring, especially in a romantic comedy, and directors as well as critics have therefore struggled to make sense of it in performance. In particular, quite a few directors have opted to stage the play through the lens of vaudeville, perhaps for its inherent theatricality—or at least, within the first three decades of the twentieth century; this includes director Dean Gabourie in his 2010 production of the play in Stratford, Ontario.

Choosing vaudeville and by extension, melodrama (styles that overlapped in late nineteenth and early twentieth century theater) seems to provide directors a way of handling the near-rape scene, to accommodate or even resolve the discrepancy it poses for the play. Defined primarily by its variety, for bringing together a mix of different entertainments without regard for a single, cohesive narrative, vaudeville is perhaps strangely suited to a play like *Two Gentlemen*, and to neutralizing the sort of narrative "break" the rape attempt produces. By the same token, melodrama creates a troublingly simplistic context for the play's most troubling moment, deploying tried and true formulas that maximize entertainment over dramatic depth, such as a range of stock character types and an equally predictable sense of resolution. As a result, Silvia's rape narrative—which is already occluded thanks to her silence for the rest of this scene and the rest of the play—is further elided, only perpetuating the difficulties that seem to come with representing rape, whether in performance or in critical discourse.

9. From R&B to Bollywood: Masculinity in Two Shakespearean Musical Adaptations
Dr. Edward Plough
Delta State University

This essay will explore how Shakespeare's concern with masculinity in *Richard III* and *A Winter's Tale* is given voice in two contemporary musical adaptations. Diedre Murray, Randy Weiner, and Diane Paulus' 2010 adaptation of *A Winter's Tale*, entitled *Best of Both Worlds*, uses R&B music to express the privileges and pressures of masculinity. Serge Tampalini's 2007 *Richard III: A Bollywood Musical*, as the title suggests, uses the erstwhile cinematic Bollywood format to refract masculinity issues in *Richard III*. *The Best of Both Worlds* (part of the same A.R.T Repertory Theatre "Shakespeare Exploded" series that introduced the gender-charged *The Donkey Show* to the world) uses R&B music, I argue, to aid in the expression of the male reaction to what Valerie Traub has called "the threat of female erotic power" in *A Winter's Tale* (120). R&B music, which has contemplated masculinity from countless approaches and with varied conclusions for seventy years, presents itself as a surprisingly germane musical choice for Murray, Weiner, and Paulus' adaptation. *Richard III: The Bollywood Musical*, performed at Murdoch University in Perth, Australia, uses Bollywood music, a form known for its unabashed hypermasculinity, to accentuate *Richard III's* gender crisis, which Ian Moulton has isolated as the "inversion of traditional gender values," in which "women appear as strong, masculine usurpers while men appear weakened (255)." My study, which will be part of a larger project dedicated to musical theatre adaptations of Shakespeare, will put the book, music, and lyrics of both musicals into critical dialogue with both Shakespeare and contemporary adaptation studies, such as those by Frances Teague, Margaret Jane Kidnie, Daniel Fischlin, and Mark Fortier. Both musicals use their respective musical genres to realign the racial and cultural landscapes of their source plays, so by studying the shifts these adaptive moves cause, we can gain insight into how Shakespeare's preoccupation with masculinity in these two plays resonates with contemporary audiences.

10. Shakespeare, Television, and Girl Culture
Ariane M. Balizet
Texas Christian University

Since the publication of Mary Pipher's 1994 bestseller *Reviving Ophelia*, the name "Ophelia" has become synonymous with adolescent girls today, linking a Shakespearean character to efforts to empower girls as well as an ideology that sees girlhood as characterized by crisis. As part of a larger project on the intersection of Shakespeare and Girl Culture, this essay examines representations of Shakespeare in television marketed towards teen girls, paying special attention to the way that studying Shakespeare's works is crucially associated with girls' intellectual inferiority and/or the threat of physical violence or sexual assault.

The teen heroines of *My So-Called Life*, *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, *Gilmore Girls*, and *Gossip Girl*—though not a racially, ethnically, or economically diverse group—nevertheless represent a useful snapshot of fictional girls on American television over the past 20 years. Although none of these televised series should be considered an adaptation in its entirety, individual episodes can be seen as "popular citations" which, according to Douglas Lanier, embrace "Shakespeare's privileged status and [seek] to use it to advantage, for example to substantiate artistic or moral respectability" (*Shakespeare and Modern Popular Culture*, 53). In the cases of these popular teen dramas, I argue, "Shakespeare's privileged status" is invoked as part of a classroom lesson that prefigures a narrative of the heroine's vulnerability. After encountering Shakespeare in the classroom, girls in these series are subject to drugging, violent accidents, and potent threats of physical or sexual assault—all of which are linked narratively to their English teachers' attempts to engage them and their peers with the works of Shakespeare. While male classmates are portrayed as excelling in the Shakespeare classroom, furthermore, girls' academic success is typically threatened by a Shakespeare class or exam. My essay examines this phenomenon and argues that this slice of contemporary pop culture employs Shakespeare's name to validate narratives of girls' physical and intellectual weakness. The larger aim of my project is to find ways to create and interpret contemporary Shakespearean adaptation that empower girls and young women instead of defining them as drowning, defenseless "Ophelias."

11. From Mary Cowden Clarke to Contemporary YA Novels: (Re)constructing Gender and Sexuality in Adaptations of *Twelfth Night*

Laurie Osborne

Colby College

In December of 1850, shortly after completing her twelve-year magnum opus, the first concordance of Shakespeare's work, Mary Cowden Clarke published the first novella in a series called *The Girlhood of Shakespeare's Heroines*. That "modest pamphlet" led to more than twenty-five different published editions of Cowden Clarke's tales from 1850 to 1925. Although Cowden Clarke's fictional prequels for Shakespeare's heroines are not the first novels that expand on Shakespeare's own life or those of his characters, these narratives are the literary foremothers for the recent burgeoning of Young Adult novels – almost 70 since 2000 – that re-imagine the lives of Shakespeare's female characters. As a result, *The Girlhood of Shakespeare's Heroines* provides crucial contexts for understanding current Shakespeare-inspired YA novels, especially those targeted at young women. For example, Cowden Clarke's tales direct our attention to important relationships between fictional time frame(s) and Shakespearean narrative time. Her vividly imagined childhoods of Viola and Olivia include as many striking invented occurrences for their female protagonists as any twenty-first century YA novel, but the experiences of Cowden Clarke's heroines stop when the plays start. In effect, Cowden Clarke celebrates Shakespeare as an artistic culmination, to be prepared for but not superceded or changed. However, recent Shakespearean novelists write within a cultural moment marked by four hundred years of Shakespearean texts and performances and awash in adaptations of all sorts, including Cowden Clarke's. As a result, YA Shakespeare novels from the last twenty years frequently offer sequels, blend prequel and concurrent alternate narratives, or incorporate multilevel narratives involving theatre.

Just as important, the contrast between what interested Cowden-Clarke about Shakespeare's women and what engages the imaginations of current writers for youthful audiences underscores how fictionalizing Shakespeare's works has changed and how current novelists identify and counter the heteronormative patriarchy in Shakespeare. In *The Girlhood of Shakespeare's Heroines*, *Twelfth Night* stands out as the only play that garnered two different tales, "Viola; the Twin" and "Olivia; the Lady of Illyria." While it may not be that unexpected that Cowden Clarke drew on this play twice since she treats a number of dual Shakespearean heroines together (the merry wives, Beatrice and Hero, Rosalind and Celia), the recent flurry of YA *Twelfth Night* novels is somewhat more surprising amidst the sea of adaptations of *Romeo and Juliet*, *Hamlet*, and *Macbeth*. Since the play itself has an unusually intense investment in gender with the male and female twins as well as an array of widely noted homosocial relationships, the correlations between gender and desire especially interest current YA fiction writers as they did Cowden Clarke. In fact, the five YA *Twelfth Night* novels published in the last several years -- Paula Boock's *Dare Truth or Promise* (1992), Sophie Masson's *Malvolio's Revenge* (2005), Elizabeth Hand's *Illyria* (May 2010), Celia Rees's *Fool's Girl* (July 2010), and Lev A. C. Rosen's *All Men of Genius* (2011) -- not only exemplify many features that appear in full range of YA Shakespeare but also explore

the challenges of gender performance and homosexual attraction that *Twelfth Night* itself evokes.

12. Gendered Dramatic Foils in the *Hamlet* Films of Olivier and Branagh

Laury Magnus, US Merchant Marine Academy

Hamlet's modest statement to Laertes in 5.2, "I'll be your foil, Laertes," makes metatheatrically explicit the structural idea of the dramatic foil in *Hamlet*, a motif that is overwhelmingly masculine (including Fortinbras, Horatio, Cornelius and Voltemand, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, Osric and, through Polonius, Reynaldo). This masculine pattern is, perhaps, a logical consequence of a revenge tragedy with fratricide at its heart. But Ophelia, who with her brother, welds the secondary plot line to the primary *Hamlet* story, is also Hamlet's foil. Together, Ophelia and Laertes mirror the division within Hamlet's psyche between action and sufferance, and they do so along traditional gender lines, Ophelia suffering the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune, and Laertes taking arms against them.

My paper explores the ways in which two iconic film performances develop this gender-differentiated triad of dramatic foils, creating character dynamics that make for different tragic effects. Laurence Olivier's *Hamlet*, with its vacant mise-en-scène, feminizes all three members of the triad: it plays down the masculine, revenge element in the play's finale and elevates the queen as a female embodiment both of sudden courage and of pity—standing in for the absent Ophelia and dominating the scene visually. Kenneth Branagh, on the other hand, creates an over-the-top machismo in its dramatization of the conflict between Laertes and Hamlet (heightened by an uber-macho Fortinbras), while its back story of Hamlet and Ophelia as lovers makes Ophelia a character initially much more forceful and independent but ultimately more vulnerable, as she has overstepped gender limitations as an obedient female. Though Branagh's back story delivers a much fuller picture of Hamlet as a lover, that story and its resonances are largely absent from the tragic finale of his *Hamlet*—whose dynamics are shock and awe, and whose hero is a fallen warrior.

13. Colonial Encounters of the Shakespearean Kind: The Politics of Race and Gender in *Manga Shakespeare King Lear*

Catherine Thomas

College of Charleston

In 2009, SelfMadeHero published *Manga Shakespeare King Lear*, a fairly radical adaptation that sets the play in eighteenth-century America at the time of the Seven Years' War (aka the French and Indian War). The struggles between Britain and France in *King Lear* translate into the warfare between England, France, and the Native American tribes occupying the lands of current-day New York. According to the manga's advertising summary on the back cover, the work "transfers the action to the violently disputed colonial frontiers of 18th-century America, where it is the last of the Mohicans who is bound upon a wheel of fire..." Invoking James Fenimore Cooper's popular 1826 novel, *The Last of the Mohicans*, the manga *King Lear* invites an intertextual reading, one which blends the style and modalities of both Shakespeare and Cooper.

The manga adaptation of the play moves beyond a simple citation of Cooper's novel in its treatment of the colonial conflict, however. This work raises a host of critical questions about how adaptations of the play can use historically-inflected ideas about gender and race to shape the politics of the plot. As the manga's press site explains, "[Lear's] elder daughters Regan and Goneril – the evil pairing– are more westernised in their looks. Lear's youngest daughter, Cordelia, with her Native American appearance, is the lone traditionalist who cleaves to the old ways." I argue that these visual differences do much more than assign the sisters to various sides of the conflict in a reflection of the play's familial tensions. Goneril and Regan are not only "westernized" in their dress; their skin color is significantly whiter than Cordelia's. This raises the question of their parentage—did they and Cordelia have the same mother?—and consequently places the charged issue of miscegenation at the center of the struggle between Lear and his daughters. Further, their dress and accessories pick up on verbal cues from the play to highlight dramatically the binaristic stereotypes of passionate, sexual, power-hungry women and demure, passive virgins. Goneril's wolfish representation and Regan's serpentine portrayal are set against Cordelia's corn goddess/Indian princess depiction.

How, then, are we to understand this adaptation's investment in the original play and its author? And what value does a cross-cultural, colonial rendition have on our interpretation of *Lear's* politics of gender and race? My paper will explore these questions through analyzing and theorizing the casting choices, artwork, textual samplings, and historical borrowings of the manga text. It also will gesture to the ways in which shifting *Lear* to colonial America imaginatively locates the play and Shakespeare's cultural presence in American (literary) history.

Manga Shakespeare King Lear site by SelfMadeHero:

http://www.mangashakespeare.com/titles/king_lear.html

14. Thou Comest In Such a Questionable Shape: Magical Characters in Shakespearean Adaptations

Annalisa Castaldo

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As part of a larger project, I am looking at the way magic on the early modern stage disrupts gender norms, queers understanding of what it means to be male or female. For this paper, I bring that investigation forward and look at whether or not the same disruption takes place in modern adaptation of Shakespeare.

Whether it is *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (where Bottom is not only made half animal, but also feminized in his relationship to Titania), *Macbeth* (where Banquo cannot call the Three Weird Sisters women because they have beards) or *The Tempest* (where Ariel's gender remains ambiguous), magic in Shakespeare tends to be presented as fluid and disruptive to gender norms. Characters that are magical or supernatural often seem both masculine and feminine at once, or even have multiple genders, suggesting that magic was a way for Shakespeare (and other early modern playwrights) to play with the already established gender blurring of their theatrical reality, where boys were girls on-stage.

But how do these ambiguously gendered characters play in modern adaptations, in a world that accepts (at least some of the time) gender fluidity and vastly expanded norms? Is magic still a way to authorize playing with gender norms? Does magic still inherently queer those gender norms? Do adaptations that change characters' gender, sexuality and behavior uncover something the Shakespeare original was gesturing towards all along? These are issues I hope to explore in this paper.

Because this is a seminar paper, I will not be able to talk about all three of the plays mentioned above and I certainly will not be able to talk about all the adaptations I would wish to. I have made the decision to deal with film, because the visual medium allows for the discussion of bodies as well as descriptions (there are some wonderful fictional adaptations of *Midsummer Night's Dream* for example), and because there it is much more likely people will have seen films than specific stage productions, I will look first at *Prospero's Books* and Julie Taymor's 2010 *Tempest* which casts Helen Mirrin as a female Prospero, because they make such an interesting pairing in terms of director's choices concerning physical bodies, what those bodies convey and how gender and sex are related. If I have time, I will go on to look at the supernatural elements of *Throne of Blood* and *Scotland PA*, both of which take as a cue Shakespeare's deliberate blurring of sexual characteristics. I know I will not have time for *A Midsummer Night's Dream* so I will just mention that if I had time I would want to talk about film versions rather than full blown adaptations, because every time actors embody the relationship between the transformed Bottom and the bewitched Titania, something very queer is going on.