Iyengar, Adaptation, Appropriation, or What You Will:

Abstracts for SAA 2015, combined in one document

Dianne Elizabeth Berg

Tufts University

SAA 2015

Abstract

Bologna's Bridegroom: Meat and Murder in *Scotland PA*

This paper examines how the black comedy *Scotland, PA* interrogates issues of subjectivity, agency, and exploitation through tropes of food, meat, and "butchery." The transposition of *Macbeth* to a rural 1970s American diner highlights the moral, ethical, and social tensions between mass-produced and homemade, consumer and consumed, and a system of brutal instrumentality that reduces living subjects to objectified commodities. In reinventing the play as the tragedy of a deposed burger king, his rapacious usurpers, and the vegetarian who exposes them, *Scotland, PA* repackages Shakespeare's themes of power and ambition in a form palatable and consumable in a fast-food nation.

Gina Bloom

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Adapting Shakespearean Theater in Analog and Digital Games

This paper explores the way Shakespeare is being adapted in analog and digital games, focusing on a subgenre of games that aim to build players' theatrical competencies by having them pretend to be producers of Shakespearean theater (actors, dramatists, theater managers, or designers). I consider the failure of these games to translate the experience of theater-making, however, arguing that the presumably distinct physical experiences of theater-making and game play can productively be brought to bear on each other if game designers take advantage of new technologies in immersive gaming. As a case in point, I discuss a Shakespeare motion-capture videogame that I am currently helping to design. The game engages players' bodies in a simulation of theatrical production and, in the process, turns players into adapters, who participate in the creation of Shakespearean works.

Brooke A. Carlson

Chaminade University

Selling Shakespeare's S(e)oul:

Korean Shakespeare, Adaptation, and the Question of Theory

Contemporary Korean Shakespeare performance in Seoul– specifically Park Jung

E's *One-man show: Macbeth*, along with Yang Jung Ung's *W. Shakespeare The Twelfth Night* and his *A Midsummer Night's Dream* – challenges the notion that Shakespeare supersedes foreign culture, or that Shakespeare comes first. Exploring the memetic moments and cross cultural meanderings through stage, page, place, culture, and time, I argue these plays are neither translations, adaptations, nor appropriations, but rather, Korean Shakespeare.

Brandon Christopher, University of Winnipeg

Mixed With Baser Matter: Manga Shakespeare as Cultural Trojan Horse

Like any transmediation, Richard Appignanesi and Emma Vieceli's manga adaptation of Hamlet, one of the first texts to be produced by SelfMadeHero's Manga Shakespeare line (the other was Romeo and Juliet), is characterized by a give and take between competing influences, most prominent among them the textual imperative of Shakespeare's play and the generic demands of the manga form. This paper analyzes the ways in which *Manga Shakespeare: Hamlet* navigates common concerns about the content of manga as they were presented in Anglo-American news media in the late 1990s and the early 2000s. This paper traces the waysthat Manga Shakespeare: Hamlet works to circumvent these sorts of criticisms by foregrounding Shakespeare's authorship (and thus the comics' implicit educational and social value), even as it deploys precisely the sorts of sexual and violent imagery for which manga was being condemned.

Jake Claflin

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Abstract

Sleepwalking: the Multimodal Poetics of *Sleep No More*

"Sleepwalking: the Multimodal Poetics of *Sleep No More*," which develops from a
chapter in my dissertation, examines Punchdrunk's translation of *Macbeth* into an
immersive experience that tells the story of *Macbeth* without the spoken word. Drawing
on multimodal theory, I argue that this production accesses methods, other than language,
for creating narrative—methods that are common in films and video games. Where other
modern appropriations of Shakespeare, like *Ten Things I Hate About You* or *Scotland, PA*
reinterpret the content of Shakespeare, *Sleep No More* adapts distinctly modern media
forms to make a unique, twenty-first century appropriation of Shakespeare's *Macbeth*.

Christy Desmet

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Commonplace People, Then and Now

Appropriation studies evolved to explain how what came after Shakespeare relates to
"Shakespeare." Did early modern appropriation exist, and if so, what would forms would
it have taken? And what parallels might be drawn between early modern and new media
appropriations? Addressing these questions, this paper considers the relationship between
early modern commonplaces and commonplacing (sententious sayings and the rhetorical

exercise of analyzing them) as forms of knowing and being in the world. It concludes by comparing this form of early modern appropriation to its descendants in new media and Web 2.0 applications: texting and Twitter.

Alexa Huang

SAA 2015 abstract (*draft*; to be updated)

George Washington University

 "Speak what we feel, not what we ought to say":

The Rise of Boomerang Shakespeare in the UK

Shakespeare has become a boomerang business in the UK in the twenty-first century. Boomerang Shakespeare encompasses a range of events, including non-Anglophone productions, co-productions by British and foreign artists, local events celebrating Shakespeare's global afterlife, and British productions that incorporate elements from more than one culture in its cast, style, or set. Appropriation, understood in the cultural studies context, is an act of building a self, an identity, a brand. Tours to the U.K. have come to define some of the most memorable productions today. Over the past few years, global Shakespeare has reached a critical mass of participants, and the term "global Shakespeare" has suddenly become a journalistic and academic buzzword in the UK after the 2012 London Olympics and the World Shakespeare Festival. Notably at the core of the British conception of "global Shakespeare" is boomerang Shakespeare. It is an exercise in cultural importation.

How does Shakespeare make other cultures legible to British audiences? What does it entail for the British media to judge touring productions of Shakespeare from around the world? What roles do non-Western identities, aesthetics, and idioms play in the rise of Shakespearean cinema and theater as global genres? Does boomerang Shakespeare, a phenomenon anchored on the notion of a form of "homecoming," complicate or reaffirm the notion of globalization as necessarily just "global Westernization"?

This paper suggests that boomerang Shakespeare is politically expedient and palatable, because it is a branch of global Shakespeare that is conveniently located and offered in consumable chunks in the UK. Boomerang Shakespeare in Britain has a unique dynamic because of his canonicity, connection to Englishness, and a history of worldwide performance that is longer and richer than that of any other dramatist.

Boomerang Shakespeares have appeared in Britain through three inter-connected channels. The first channel is intercultural borrowings. A second avenue led to surtitled touring productions. The selling point is not necessarily exoticism but rarity—new works or what is not otherwise unavailable. The third trajectory of boomerang Shakespeare is shaped by co-productions between U.K. and foreign artists or companies, a growth area of theatre practice. At the core of the boomerang phenomenon is the idea of returning to Britain as a geocultural site of origin, as an imaginary site of authenticity, and as a privileged site for performative acts.

Sujata Iyengar

University of Georgia

Have His Carcase: Skin, Media, Documents, and the missing Magna Carta

in *King John*

(draft only, please do not quote)

With the 800th anniversary of Magna Carta coming up this June, Shakespeare's *King John* (*KJ*) is receiving more attention than usual, even though, famously, neither Shakespeare's play nor its (debated) source, *The Troublesome Reign of King John* (*TR*, convincingly attributed to Peele by Charles Forker), mention what for most present-day readers and viewers is the *only* memorable fact about the historical King John: his signing of the treaty of Magna Carta at Runnymede after the baronial rebellion in 1215 and the subsequent enshrining of important legal rights such as *habeas corpus* in English law. While Magna Carta itself doesn't appear in *King John*, I suggest that what we see instead are traces of documentation, references to abstracts, chronicles, parchments, and written records -- a meta-commentary on the emerging belief that Magna Carta enshrined an ancient oral tradition or unwritten English constitution that had been suppressed by later monarchs. John dies "a scribbled parchment," burning from fever like a document destroyed in a fire. I suggest that taking the metaphors of skin, hides, parchment, and writing together as a related image-cluster in *King John* can explain why Shakespeare's appropriation of history appears to ignore Magna Carta. The play dramatizes not only the failure of "constitutional means" to control flawed human will (as Tim Spiekerman suggests) but also the impossibility of trusting documentation, precedent, writing, and

recording as mechanisms for consistency or control: the immediate and continuous obsolescence of "new" media even as they emerge.

Jeffrey Kahan

University of LaVerne

CSI 1595: The Case of the Stiletto Kid

At the end of the last millennium, Gary Taylor argued that Shakespeare's cultural impact was in steep decline. Since then, a new generation of academics has revitalized Shakespeare through new media forms. I would argue that in 2014 a hybrid of essay and creative project is (or should be) acceptable for many high school, college, and university classes. As a model for this new form of hybridity, I will argue that traditional criticism, or at least the critical essay, can serve as plinth for creative projects. As an example, I will illustrate how a reading of *Romeo and Juliet* can open the play up to creative reinterpretation.

Douglas M. Lanier, University of New Hampshire

The Bard is Dead, Long Live the Bard: *Kill Shakespeare* and the Popular Death of the Author (abstract)

Conor McCreery and Anthony del Col's fantasy comic book series *Kill Shakespeare* wittily imagines Shakespeare characters inhabiting a shared realm where populist rebels, the Prodigals, led by Juliet, Othello and Falstaff, stage an insurrection

against the tyrannical regime of Richard III and his ally Lady Macbeth. At the heart of the adventure is Richard's plot to coax Hamlet into finding and killing Shakespeare, the demi-god of the realm who has retreated from view, and stealing his all-powerful quill. This trope of killing the author-god Shakespeare allegorizes in revealing ways some central issues in recent Shakespearean criticism regarding the place of Shakespeare-the-author. How might (or should) Shakespearean criticism engage the Barthesian notion of the death of the author? How to understand the recent resurgence of Shakespearean biography in light of accelerated media adaptation of Shakespeare in the last twenty years? What is ideologically distinctive (in addition to formally distinctive) about reformatting Shakespeare in terms of the graphic novel? How are the cultural politics of freely appropriating Shakespeare's work or "killing" off a bardic conception of Shakespeare understood from a popular culture perspective? How exactly might Shakespeare's cultural authority function in the absence of the author? *Kill Shakespeare*, I argue, addresses an ideological crisis in the conception of Shakespeare's cultural authority brought on by his (re) popularization in mass media in the past two decades. The series engages the "death of the author" from a popular perspective both in its conception of Shakespeare within the narrative as a flawed demi-god and in protagonist Hamlet's struggle with dead and surrogate fathers. The result is an inconsistent and at times incoherent reconceptualization of Shakespeare-as-author, but one that forcefully reveals the multiple, competing ideological commitments that remain attached to Shakespeare in popular culture, even in so fully a postmodern production as *Kill Shakespeare*.

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SAA 2015

The Play's The Thing: Revering as Forgetting, Adaptation as Remembering

ABSTRACT

Acknowledging that what is revered, and even regarded as iconic, in Shakespeare's oeuvre may be entirely an invention of later generations, my paper examines how forgetting and remembering become inextricably linked processes that shape how we engage with Shakespeare. Through readings of two recent adaptations of *Romeo and Juliet*—the post-modern theatrical production Nature Theatre of Oklahoma's *Romeo and Juliet* (2009/2010) and the novel *Juliet's Nurse* (Simon & Schuster 2014)—I explore how revising "Shakespeare" (i.e., the Bard's work as it is popularly remembered) can involve a self-conscious play that ultimately turns on the desire for fidelity to Shakespeare.

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Where's Shakespeare? Appropriation and Hybridity

In his "Foreword" to the volume *Philosophical Shakespeares* (2000), Stanley Cavell points to Shakespeare's "appropriability" as a potential explanation for his uniqueness.

For Cavell, "the idea of appropriability is not meant to prejudge the degree to which lines, scenes, plays may resist certain appropriations less or more than others;" instead, it helps in "assessing cultural position."1 The starting point of my paper is that Shakespeare is not an inherent attribute of any text or production but a marker of "appropriability" resulting from a cultural consensus in every age: author Shakespeare and his works continuously reemerge as they are re-iterated, reproduced, and reassessed. They are the results of academic and artistic deliberations; they are not clear-cut, immutable, finalized units. With the aid of a specific understanding of the concept of appropriation that suggests that appropriations are reciprocal maneuvers of hybridization that negotiate and construct both their subjects and their objects at the same time, the paper imagines Shakespeare as a cultural hybrid in the new millennium. It accepts the view that Shakespeare's works have no immediate, unmediated presence; they are always already displaced. Moreover, it also maintains that historical approaches as vehicles of authentication in search of an 'original Shakespeare' are problematic and unhelpful. In the end, following Peter Burke, it offers the scenarios of homogenization, resistance, 'cultural diglossia,' and new syntheses as helpful concepts for understanding Shakespeare appropriations in a g/local context.

Sharon O'Dair

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Abstract: Cursing the Queer Family: Shakespeare, Psychoanalysis, and *My Own Private Idaho*

Though seemingly its aim, *My Own Private Idaho* doesn't collapse the distinction between legitimate and illegitimate kinship structures. Van Sant begs the question about kinship and the queer subject—"*why* Mike's on the street"—because the only answer he can provide is one offered not by Shakespeare but by another progenitor, Freud. Van Sant fails to imagine an alternative to the incest taboo, the Oedipus complex, and the symbolic law of the father, thus reaffirming the psychoanalytic dictum that, as Butler explains, "alternative kinship arrangements attempt to revise psychic structures in ways lead to tragedy."

L. Monique Pittman

SAA 2015

Abstract for "Appropriation, Adaptation, or What You Will"

The Badge of Adaptation: Cinematic Knowing in the Theater of *Hamlet*

Hamlet's advice to the players and *The Mousetrap* function as sites for adaptors to explore the way film intervenes in and overgoes theater as an art form capable of uncovering truth, "representing" accurately, and holding the mirror up to nature. This project considers how adaptative treatments of Hamlet's advice to the players and *The Mousetrap* constitute a theory of film representation embedded within the adapted Shakespeare of Laurence Olivier and Kenneth Branagh. While Olivier's playlet manifests a residual uncertainty about the efficacy of cinematic mimesis, Branagh's *Mousetrap* filters the theatrical through heavy-handed cinematic techniques that claim a superior truth-telling capacity.

M. Tyler Sasser

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Shakespeare and Historical Boy's Fiction

Historical fiction has long been a staple in the social studies, history, and English curricula of primary and secondary education. Such commercial and critical successes might be linked to the genre's unique ability to blend educational, didactic, historical, and aesthetic concerns in children's literature, aspects that are heightened considerably when authors elect to appropriate Shakespeare in their historical fiction. While some critics suggest that the genre of Shakespeare-for-children advocates discourses of normative gender, identity, and behavior, I suggest that the ongoing cultural capital of the Bard in the classroom and on the bookshelf permits authors the opportunity to consider unconventional expressions of gender. More specifically, I argue that authors of late-twentieth century historical fiction about Shakespeare turn to the early modern tradition of boy players performing as women in order to embrace alternative gender identities and models of maturation, particularly as they regard boys and boyhood. By employing this particular setting, historical novels such as Gary Blackman's *The Shakespeare Stealer* (1998), Susan Cooper's *King of Shadows* (1999), and J.B. Cheaney's *The Playmaker* (2000) and *The True Prince* (2000) reveal how children's authors use Shakespeare's canon and Shakespeare as a historical person to address contemporary issues relating to boyhood.