

**Shakespeare and the Cultures of Commemoration**  
**Seminar Leaders: Ton Hoenselaars and Clara Calvo**

**ABSTRACTS**

Clara Calvo

Shakespeare Brought Up to Date: Commemorating the Bard in Cartoons

The Tercentenary of Shakespeare's death (1916) offered multiple opportunities for commemoration in different media. The official 'Shakespeare Week' in London, the homage of scholars and actors in speeches and plays, and the world-wide scope of the celebrations were often punctuated by the less reverential attention paid to Shakespeare in the popular press. Instead of celebrating the universal genius and the Bard of the English language unproblematically, cartoons in newspapers and weeklies questioned Shakespeare's popularity and cultural presence. In this paper, I will examine cartoons published on both sides of the Atlantic to show how in the midst of the Great War, and in the so-called 'Year of the Battles', Shakespeare was seen to be under pressure from a variety of cultural practices. Music-hall, the craving for light comedy, the fame of individual actors and actresses, the Bacon controversy, the relation between drama authors and theatre managers, and the technical advantages of the cinematograph over the limitation of the stage are all called upon to represent the diminished stature of Shakespeare. The 1916 Tercentenary provided thus an opportunity for cartoons to construe Shakespeare as a site of memory but also as a site of conflict. In the course of questioning Shakespeare's cultural value, cartoons also problematize the notion of authorship and present new technologies – and the moving image in particular – as a threat to the survival of drama. The construction of Shakespeare and his plays as a site of conflict during the 1916 Tercentenary reveals not only the complexity of the mechanisms that infuse the cultures of commemoration but also the contradictory impulses behind commemorative practices – such as, for instance, a desire to appropriate the past and an urge to see the present and the future as distinct from the same past that is being simultaneously commemorated and rejected.

Yu-Chun Chiang

Commemorating/-ed Shakespeare: Shakespeare's *Henry VIII* now and then

In this paper, I would like to use *Henry VIII* as an example to explore how remembering, forgetting, memory, oblivion, and commemoration were conceptualized and implemented by Shakespeare via theatre as one of the media in early modern England. In this seminar, our focus is how "Shakespeare" is remembered, celebrated in different contexts in histories; how Shakespeare accompanied people and culture through wars and times of peace. Instead of situating Shakespeare in the position of studied object, I would like to see how Shakespeare manages his objects, English history, in Tudor and Stuart contexts. Shakespeare's intention, whether fathomable or not, has been discussed by numerous critics. His attitudes, aims, and role of dramatizing English history are studied from perspectives and with theories, such as Revisionism, New Historicism, and Post-Structuralism. Instead of reiteration, this paper will start with a brief summary of how memory is conceptualized in medieval and early modern England, which constitutes the contexts that influence Shakespeare's and early modern English theatre's idea about remembering and forgetting, and the cultures of commemoration. In the second part, I will examine the texts of *Henry VIII* and the background of its performance in 1613. Constituting part of the celebrative activities for Prince Elizabeth's marriage with Frederick V, the Elector of the Palatinate in Germany, *Henry VIII* was staged in the Blackfriars Theatre, where the hearing of Henry VIII and Katherine of

Aragon's divorce trial took place, and in the first Globe Theatre, which was burned down due to a fire caused by a cannon seasoning the Cardinal Wolsey's party in the play. Therefore, where and how the play was staged entwines with history, space, and memory. Peter Holland in "On the gravy train: Shakespeare, Memory, and Forgetting" argues a case for "theatre as a site of memory" (*Shakespeare, Memory and Performance*. Cambridge: CUP, 2006. 207-236. p. 221). In this paper, I will make a retrospect to see how the idea of commemoration, the writing of history, the cultural, social, collective memories, and eventually the cultures of commemoration gradually come into being.

Michael Dobson

Statues, spouters, and snobs: Shakespeare in Cambridge, 1864

For those unwilling to undertake either regicide or usurpation, one principal position to adopt in relation to Shakespeare has been that of kingmaker. In several successive generations, public celebrities have offered to confer some of their own fame on a supposedly forgotten or misunderstood Shakespeare, frequently through ceremonies designed to mark an anniversary and/or install a statue: these apparent conferrals of authority on Shakespeare have invariably sought to naturalize and legitimize the interests of the conferrers. This paper will look briefly at the inchoate promptings of this practice within the Shakespeare canon itself and at its development during the Enlightenment before examining a case-history from nineteenth-century Britain, a row over how the 1864 tercentenary should be celebrated in Cambridge and whether the university or the city should take the lead. This dispute – finally resolved in favour of a production of *The Merchant of Venice* mounted by townspeople -- will be related to the period's conflicted attitudes towards non-professional participation in Shakespeare, by which the canon might variously be claimed for artisan self-improvement and empowerment, for elite connoisseurship, or for drawing-room burlesque.

David George

Commemorating War: The Roman Plays

*Julius Caesar*, *Antony and Cleopatra*, and *Coriolanus* all feature battles, but these had long faded into history even when the plays were new. Who now remembers Philippi or Actium? Who ever heard of Corioles? The only hope directors have is to convert these conflicts into memories of more contemporary wars, relying on the audience's experience. The usual choice is the most recent war, which generally means that Shakespeare's play is in danger of sounding anachronistic, specifically allusions to weapons.

The murder of Caesar in the Ashland, Oregon, production of *Julius Caesar* by Jerry Turner (1982) commemorated Anwar Sadat's assassination in 1978, but since Sadat was widely considered a pacifist, Caesar was otherwise Che Guevara. The latter had been executed in 1967 by the Bolivian government. John Barton (RSC, 1969) chose to commemorate Charles de Gaulle (1890-1970).

Modern directors of *Antony and Cleopatra* have found it hard to cast a suitable Cleopatra; there were a few good ones and one or two great ones (Janet Suzman for the RSC, 1972; Vanessa Redgrave for the Bankside Globe, 1973). It was not until Andrew Lloyd Webber and Tim Rice produced *Evita* in 1978 that Eva Perón (1919-52), the blonde and beautiful second wife of the Argentinian president Juan Perón, could become the commemorative model for Cleopatra. Thereafter blonde Cleopatras began to appear, notably Vanessa Redgrave (Haymarket, 1986) and Mark Rylance (Bankside Globe, 1999).

*Coriolanus* has proved the Roman play with the most to gain from wars. After WW1, Benson altered 5.3 to end with peace (1919). Brecht (1898-1956) adapted the play in 1951-2 to commemorate the East German Communist state; Wekwerth and Tenschert transformed it in 1964 into a triumph for the plebeians and a humiliation for Coriolanus.

Anita M. Hagerman

“Celebrations and Grand Designs: Reappraising the English History Cycles of the 1950s and 1960s”

This paper examines how the decisions that shaped English history cycles of the 1950s and 1960s launched a pattern that has affected our to approach Shakespeare’s histories ever since, up to and including the RSC’s “The Histories” cycles of 2008. Collectively, the productions of the postwar decades yoked together the perceived quality of the plays, their association with national identity, and the practices of the theatre establishment; moreover, the lasting effects that these cycles have had on the imagining of Shakespeare’s histories are as much a result of the occasions of their productions, which aligned the histories with commemoration and celebration, as of the gravitas or ingenuity of their interpretations. In 1951, Shakespeare’s history plays occupied a central place in the Festival of Britain, a nation-wide event ambiguously commemorative of both older and more recent pasts (specifically, the 1851 Exhibition and the end of the austerity of the postwar years) that also looked self-consciously ahead to an increasingly technological future. For the Festival, productions of histories were mounted by the major companies of the day, including the Old Vic Company, the Birmingham Repertory Theatre, and the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre. A decade later, the Royal Shakespeare Company staged their “Wars of the Roses,” a cycle often hailed for being theatrically revolutionary, but which is in fact a product of the same impulses that shaped the cycles of the Festival of Britain. Like those productions, the RSC’s “Wars” was mounted and marketed to coincide with a commemorative celebration, the quadcentennial of Shakespeare’s birth. Asking why the histories were appealing to these companies and how they fit—or failed to fit—into their commemorative, celebratory contexts elucidates how Shakespeare and his histories have been hailed as important to present-day experience as well as a site of exploring, shaping, and reshaping national identity.

Graham Holderness

Shakespeare Remembered

The continuous active presence within contemporary culture of a body of work such as Shakespeare’s induces that form of *amnesia* encapsulated in Ben Jonson’s phrase “not for an age, but for all time”: that the past may be eternally present. Rituals of commemoration, such as the annual “Shakespeare’s Birthday Celebrations” held in Stratford-upon-Avon, can operate to cultivate such obliviousness, as if the author were still alive and still piling on the years. A number of modern critical strategies in literary theory, historical analysis, textual editing and creative appropriation have offered ways of generating *anamnesia*, jolting the reader into *remembering* that the past and the present are radically discontinuous.

When Heminge and Condell introduced the First Folio, they explicitly connected the absence of the author, *by death departed*, with the posthumous reconstruction of his works. Their language mingles epitaph and preface, mourning and celebration. The plays, *maimed, and deformed*, dispersed like scattered body parts, are here restored and reanimated; but their completeness is haunted by the death

of their author. The edited plays now stand in for the Shakespearean body, pieced together and made whole, *cur'd, and perfect of their limbes*. A living monument, a resurrection of the dead, a corpse *re-membered*. But what is the relationship between memory and the reality it remembers? In the garden of the church of St Mary the Virgin in Aldermanbury a memorial plaque, dedicated in 1896 to Heminge and Condell, states that the world owes to them “all that it calls Shakespeare”; in other words, all that we have left. This monument ironically commemorates not Shakespeare, but Shakespeare’s first editors; memorialises not the author, but the process via which the author’s works are transmitted to the modern reader and playgoer. Shakespeare’s grave in Holy Trinity Church may also be, metaphorically and even perhaps literally, an empty tomb.

This paper examines the interactions of memory and commemoration, anamnesis and amnesia, in three case studies: the publication and history of the First Folio; the Shakespeare biography; and Shakespeare’s Globe Theatre.

Margaret Knapp

#### The 1916 Shakespeare Tercentenary in the United States: Beyond *Caliban*

The preponderance of scholarship on the 1916 Shakespeare Tercentenary celebrations in the United States focuses on Percy MacKaye’s masque *Caliban by the Yellow Sands*, produced at New York City’s Lewisohn Stadium in May and June 1916. MacKaye’s work is certainly a rich site for analysis from a number of viewpoints, but it was just the tip of the Tercentenary iceberg. Middle-class Americans, still free from involvement in the European war, and experiencing a prosperous economy in part based on selling arms to their future allies, took up the Tercentenary as an opportunity to construct and widely disseminate images of Shakespeare that served disparate ideological purposes. Because few scholars have extended their research on the Tercentenary beyond MacKaye’s masque, the enormous number and variety of commemorative events, and their influences on the continuing centrality of an iconic Shakespeare to American culture, have yet to be explored.

This paper explores both acts of memory and acts of forgetting: it examines the many sites of commemoration where “Shakespeare” was made to embody multiple and often conflicting cultural ideologies in the Progressive era; and it analyzes the disappearance of the Tercentenary in anything like its full range of activities and influences from the academic consideration of Shakespeare’s place in American culture. By expanding the archive of evidence on the Tercentenary beyond the few primarily high-culture sources ordinarily examined by researchers, I hope to restore a scholarly “memory” of this foundational moment of commemoration through which, for Americans, Shakespeare became our compatriot.

Adrian Poole

#### ‘The Disciplines of War and of Memory: Shakespeare’s *Henry V* and David Jones’s *In Parenthesis*’

One of the two masterpieces of the Anglo-Welsh modernist artist, David Jones, *In Parenthesis* (1937) is the most ambitious attempt in English literary writing to remember the experience of the Great War. Amidst the multitude of allusions to Malory, Coleridge, Lewis Carroll, medieval Welsh and Romano-British poetry and legend, Shakespeare’s *Henry V* plays a key role. Jones is not interested in the King but in the modern equivalents of Pistol, Nym, Bardolph, and especially of Llewellyn, or ‘Fluellen’ as he was generally known until recently. In particular, Llewellyn’s ingenuous loyalty to the ‘disciplines of war’ is explicitly remembered, though the comedy that surrounds their invocation in Shakespeare is endowed

with a graver irony in Jones. In Shakespeare's play much hangs on Llewellyn's loyalties. In so far as he provides an inverted substitute for Falstaff, he holds together the unstable formation of national identities swirling round the figure of the King, most notably the Anglo-Welsh 'union' that underwrites all the others. Llewellyn's 'disciplines' indicate a way of riding or overriding the chaos of origins, the chaos of war, the chaos of memory. (Patricia Parker points out the significance to this play of the word 'memorable'.) In focussing on Llewellyn, Jones is contesting the domination — in performance, interpretation and general cultural discourse — of Shakespeare's play by the figure of the King as the epitome of Englishness: the official establishment view promulgated in editions of the play, and in the 1916 *Homage to Shakespeare* edited by Israel Gollancz. Yet in fact the allusions of *In Parenthesis* to Shakespeare are less predictable than I have been suggesting, and this will be the burden of my paper's argument: that the official protocols of commemoration are continually assailed by the waywardness of memory. Or should be, as they are in *In Parenthesis*.

Robert Sawyer

From Jubilee to Royal Gala: Garrick, Kean, and the Form of Festive Commemoration

In 1769, David Garrick staged the first, and perhaps the most well known, of the many Stratford-based tributes to Shakespeare. Variouslly called the Shakespeare Jubilee on the one hand, or Garrick's Folly on the other, the event was highly publicized and parodied. Eye-witness accounts ranged widely, some calling it an awe-inspiring event, while others condemned the insipid revelry. Sixty one years later, the Royal Gala of 1830 was also held in Stratford. It too drew mixed reviews, and it was also soundly satirized. Although the events of the Jubilee have been fairly well recorded and examined, those of the Gala, and Charles Kean's role, require more consideration and research, particularly since this was the first Stratford celebration to actually include a Shakespearean dramatic performance.

This essay will attempt to distinguish the two events in function, festivity, and form. Both occasions, for instance, furthered Shakespeare's status as the national Bard, and both included processions and grand balls. But there were a number of striking differences in the format. Some of the divergences include issues of class (Kean's gala was open to a broader class of participants), while others echoed Shakespearean debates, such as the tension between page and stage Shakespeare (Garrick read aloud an Ode he had composed, while Kean portrayed Richard the Third and also Shylock). By looking at the commemorations side-by-side, we may be able to use the two gatherings as a microcosm in helping us chart the various changes in the cultural and theatrical climate in London vis-a-vis Shakespeare during the half-century that divided the festivities.

Katherine West Scheil

Shakespeare as Memoir

The "Shakespeare memoir" has become increasingly popular in recent years, both in print and on the stage. One-man memoir performances by actors such as Roger Rees (*What You Will*) and Michael Pennington (*Sweet William*) have used Shakespeare's works as structuring devices to tell a life story. Similarly, memoirs including Dominic Dromgoole's *Will & Me: How Shakespeare Took Over My Life* and Herman Gollob's *Me & Shakespeare* have employed Shakespeare's life, his plays, or both as venues for lifewriting. Dromgoole tells the story of "how I have stumbled, shambled and occasionally glided through a life with Shakespeare as a guide." Gollob describes his relationship with Shakespeare as "a mystical experience, a religious experience...not unlike my return to Judaism seven years previously,"

even referring to his new Shakespeare-inspired life as a “born again” experience and “a reinvention of myself.” My essay will explore how Shakespeare has been incorporated into what has been called “the signature literary genre of the age”: the memoir. If memoir is “our means of establishing and preserving cultural memory,” to use Fenton Johnson’s phrase, what “Shakespeare” is preserved and commemorated in these contemporary memoirs and for what end(s)?

Emily Shortslef

### Shakespeare’s Epitaphs

The epitaph is an important—perhaps even paradigmatic—textual form of commemoration, but in regard to both the commemoration of Shakespeare and Shakespeare’s own memorial practices, it is a site of contestation. The controversies around the epitaphs at different times attributed to Shakespeare and the one marking his grave in Stratford, as well as Shakespeare’s complex treatment of the form in his plays and non-dramatic verse, suggest some of the potentialities and problems the epitaph, in its supposed bridging of past, present, and future, might pose for commemorative projects. This paper explores Shakespeare’s epitaphs with an eye to the production of cultural memory. In Shakespeare’s history plays in particular, epitaphs perform an un-metaphoring of figurative language disruptive to or at cross-purposes with what might otherwise appear to be the commemorative impulses of those plays, interrogating and giving the lie to certain assertions regarding the demands of a national cultural memory. This paper juxtaposes the reception of Shakespeare’s own epitaph and those he may have written for others with the epitaphs embedded or invoked within his texts, and proposes that these epitaphs all bear a relation to cultural memory less straightforward than their traditional commemorative uses would suggest.

Monika Smialkowska

### Beyond the Yellow Sands: American Celebrations of the Shakespeare Tercentenary, 1916

This paper looks beyond Percy MacKaye’s *Caliban by the Yellow Sands* – the best known American contribution to the Shakespeare Tercentenary of 1916 – to reconsider the nature and the functions of the Tercentenary commemorations in the U.S.A. The recent, almost exclusive, critical focus on MacKaye’s New York centrepiece has produced a view of the jubilee as participating in ‘an internal or domestic colonizing venture that seeks to enlist the consent and participation of the masses in their enforced acculturation’ (Cartelli, 1999:75).

However, the celebrations throughout the U.S.A. were too widespread and popular to be dismissed offhand as an affair staged by the members of the elite in order to force the masses to accept their vision of culture. A stunning range of large and small-scale Tercentenary projects were carried out across the country, including plays, masques, pageants, festivals, musical and dance tributes, lectures, sermons, exhibitions, courses, tableaux, planting of trees, and developing of Shakespeare gardens. Using several case studies, this paper demonstrates that public interest and participation extended beyond the narrow circles of Anglo-Protestant elites. Moreover, most American Tercentenary initiatives did not originate from governmental institutions and bodies, but rather from the grassroots: members of the public, clubs and associations, individual educationalists, churches, schools and colleges. Consequently, the American Tercentenary celebrations acquired a strong local focus, engendering communal involvement and civic pride, rather than becoming a state-sponsored affair, an official ‘diet’ of Shakespeare fed to the populace by the central government.

Suzanne Stein

“What warlike noise is this?” - Cultivating Naivete: The Elsinore of *Hamlet*

While studies of *Hamlet* often deprecate as a subplot what befalls Denmark in the course of the play, Norway's belligerence, finessed both by the solipsistic Danish prince and the collusive nobles of Elsinore, actually represents the violation framing the drama. That violation of memory indicates the transpersonal dimensions of Shakespeare's tragic vision, for in *Hamlet* what is at stake is nothing less than Denmark's survival as a sovereign polity. We learn in the first scene that the Danes are vigorously arming to resist imminent invasion, in the third act that Fortinbras asks Claudius' permission to cross Denmark on his way to attack Polish territories, and in the last scene that he has beaten the Poles and now suddenly materialized in Elsinore to thank King Claudius “in his eye” (3.8.6). The ambience of national peril in *Hamlet*, moreover, as Andrew Hadfield has shown, bears a significant correspondence to internal machinations destabilizing Queen Elizabeth's court in the final years of her reign. The approach of Fortinbras's army, “shark'd up ... in the skirts of Norway,” is an instance of Shakespeare's characteristic practice of codification: a registering of anxiety that grew increasingly acute as Elizabeth aged, especially in her court, which Shakespeare, as a share-holder in one of the two companies of stage players licensed to perform before the Queen, had opportunity to observe (1.1.97-98). In light of the above, I read Norway's invasion and the disaster it portends for Denmark as Shakespeare's portrait of what befalls a people who chooses not to remember the function of war, or to commemorate its warrior king. The invasion, unfolding the tragic action in its majesty and pathos, brings our attention to the geopolitics of the play. That is my theme: how Shakespeare anatomizes in *Hamlet* the death, through convenient amnesia, of sovereignty.

Joyce Sutphen

“Not marble nor the gilded monuments”: Shakespeare's Anti-Commemorative Mode

I am going to take the title of this seminar —“Shakespeare and the Cultures of Commemoration” — and speculate (in a very plain sort of way) about what Shakespeare the poet (writer of the sonnets) has to say — indirectly, of course, since the word doesn't ever appear in the sonnets — about commemoration. As I have argued elsewhere, one of the main themes of Shakespeare's Sonnets (especially in the first 126) is the battle between Time and the poet's efforts to keep or preserve what he loves (beauty, the beloved, memory itself) — but there are many other patterns and arrangements within the larger framework. The constellation of sonnets I would like to talk about in this paper —55, 64 and 65 — are all sonnets that assert the memorializing powers of poetry over those of other sorts of memorials — but there are many other sonnets that further the argument and may come into the exploration. As for Shakespeare, writer of the plays, I suspect he could not keep himself quite so aloof from the project of commemoration and the creation of a national memory, though even in the history plays he celebrated the past in creations that are, by their dependence upon the circumstances of theatre and living breath, never something meant to last more than the performance itself.