

## Commemorating Shakespeare: Conflict, Cooperation, Capital Abstracts

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### **Westminster Abbey Milton and Shakespeare: Politics, Tourism, and the Expiration of Copyright**

The construction of and responses to the monuments to Milton (1737) and Shakespeare (1741) in Poet's Corner can be interpreted in context of three contemporary conflicts. The first conflict is that between Walpole's ministry and the Opposition of Lord Bolingbroke and his Patriot allies; the second, the development of the Abbey as a place of public resort through the imposition of controversial fines imposed by the deanship; and third, the wake of copyright expiration, after which the relatively inexpensive editions published by Walker and other newcomers were countered by Tonson house attempts to maintain control through flooding the market with even cheaper copies. Several publications reveal various appropriations of the monuments. Guides to the Abbey include *The Antiquities of St Peter's or the Abbey Church*, (1<sup>st</sup> edn. 1711), which was expanded and reprinted for F. Noble (4<sup>th</sup> edn. 1741, 5<sup>th</sup> edn. 1742) and *Westmonasterium or the History and Antiquities of the Abbey* (1<sup>st</sup> edn. 1723), reprinted for T. Bowles in 1742. Among the Miltonic and Shakespearean publications in the late 1730s and 1740s that are featured, three books using Milton's monument as an illustration were not Tonson publications, but rather those of his competitors: *A Complete Collection of the Historical Political and Miscellaneous Works...* for A. Millar (1738), *Paradise Lost...* for the Company of Stationers (1739), and *New Memoirs of the Life and Poetical Works of John Milton*, by Francis Peck (1740). The mid-eighteenth century contests over how Milton and Shakespeare were to serve as cultural representatives of English nationhood – and the means by which their works were secured in an English national canon – were part of a complex network comprised of the private and political interests represented in the monument construction, the institutional interests appealing for continued commemoration, and the commercial interests of the competing booksellers who published their works.

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### **“The Conceit of This Inconstant Stay”: Exhibiting Shakespeare(s) in Eugene, Oregon**

In January 2016, the University of Oregon will be hosting the Folger Shakespeare Library's First Folio! The Book that Gave Us Shakespeare exhibit as part of a month-long celebration of the 400th anniversary of Shakespeare's death. We'll be adding artifacts and interpretive content to the Folger's First Folio! exhibit materials and presenting a larger companion exhibit, *Time's Pencil: Shakespeare After the Folio*, in our Library's Special Collections Reading Room.

My essay takes up questions raised by implicit dialogue between the two exhibits – one which presents the Folio volume as the signal source of Shakespeare's enduring reputation and

one which illustrates and interprets changes in Shakespeare's texts' meanings over time as well as changes in how Shakespeare as an historical figure was imagined and valued. How do we present questions of historical value and change to a public that may prize nostalgia, celebration, and literary "genius" over more complex accounts of Shakespearean evolution? But: how do we know what the public does value? At the University of Oregon, we see our events as a key opportunity to publicize the contributions of the humanities to our state. What messages and stances best facilitate that timely and important work? Must these be at odds with study of Shakespeare that acknowledges complexities in his canonical status and in the events and movements that solidified it?

My analysis will draw on my observations of the unfolding events, as I run programming, give talks, and escort large numbers of visitors through the exhibits, including college students and community members, local high school teachers and far-flung donors visiting the campus. Their reactions to and opinions about the exhibits will help me think through the meaning and uses of different forms of Shakespearean commemoration in relation to the contemporary public university.

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### **Curating Shakespeare**

This paper aims to examine several Shakespearean exhibitions and offer some initial considerations on the intersection between exhibitions and commemoration. From the first substantial exhibition of 1864, Shakespearean exhibitions have often been primarily linked to anniversaries, centenaries and celebrations, such as those of 1864, 1916 and 1964, but they have also been linked to biographical interest or money-raising schemes. Temporary exhibitions, like conferences and symposia, are one of the means Western civilization has developed for the production and dissemination of knowledge. Unlike museums, which have been studied and theorized for some time now, the structure and socio-political implications of temporary exhibitions have not been the subject of much critical analysis. Only in the last decade or so has the history of curating itself received attention. Curators, emerging from invisibility, have now achieved recognition as artists and the task of curating has been conceptualised as a creation of 'junctions' and as a 'pollination of culture' (Obrist 2004). The recent interest in curating in current cultural studies contrasts with the sparse attention early modern scholars have paid to exhibitions on Shakespeare and his age, even though those who rarely attend a performance and never read a play (after leaving school), have probably become acquainted with Shakespeare, his biography, his world and his work through exhibitions at major cultural engines such as the Folger Shakespeare Library, the British Library, the British Museum, or the National Portrait Gallery. Shakespearean exhibitions in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries testify to the plurality of cultural formations that are present when we commemorate writers and artists. Exhibitions show how Shakespeare has contributed to the cultures of visual display that permeate contemporary global knowledge. They also show how Shakespeare is a barometer that registers conflicting views and changing curating styles as well as variations in the patterns of displaying cultural knowledge. The paper will therefore contextualise some Shakespearean

exhibitions and focus on how they are linked to commemorative practices through choice of exhibits, visual displays, and ideological implications.

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### **Commemorating Shakespeare: A Brief Memoir**

Everything about the Third World Shakespeare Congress in 1986 meeting was political, including the choice to meet in West Berlin. Three years before the collapse of the Soviet Union and the reunification of Germany, tension between East and West was high, and the decision to hold the Congress in West Berlin was itself a declaration of Western freedom. The conference made no concession to its location, which was not officially acknowledged. Two excursions into East Berlin were made possible by the conference, and I took advantage of both of them. A bus tour was scheduled for April 5<sup>th</sup>, the day Libyan agents planted a bomb in a West Berlin discotheque favored by American service personnel. Aside from a long delay at Check Point Charlie, the tour was not affected. *Bridge of Spies* brought back a lot of these memories.

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### **The Ruhleben Shakespeare Tercentenary (1916)**

In my paper, I study the Shakespeare Tercentenary of 1916 at the civilian internment camp of Ruhleben, Berlin. In my paper, using original materials, I seek to identify the event by contextualizing it within the context of a series of other cultures of commemoration at the time. By comparing the Shakespeare Tercentenary to a number of the other instances of commemorating matters literary, cultural, or political (both in Berlin itself and beyond, in Germany and abroad), I hope to define not only what was characteristic about the Ruhleben event but also what was unique about this instance of Shakespearean “commemoration” due to its wartime and barbed-wire setting.

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### **Commemoration as Time Travel**

Anthony Burgess’s novel *Enderby’s Dark Lady* concludes with a loosely related short story called ‘The Muse’. The mode of this tale is science fiction. It’s the 23rd century, and people can travel round in time and space, navigating by the use of musical instruments. But Time is ‘plastic’ and ‘curved’ and ‘warped’, there are innumerable parallel universes, and you can’t be sure where you’re going to end up. A literary historian called Paley is trying to get to

Shakespeare's time, taking a copy of the First Folio with him. He finds Shakespeare writing, laboriously and painfully, plays we've never heard of. Paley is then arrested as a madman, and Shakespeare left with the book, which he starts to copy out:

*The Merchant of Venice. A Comedy*

Then on he went, not blotting a line.

Apparently all Shakespeare's good plays have been smuggled from the future in the same way. Here Burgess uses sci-fi fantasy to explore the intricate and complex ways in which we reach out to history and to the writing of the past. How do we engage with the past without taking our own baggage with us? Do we not, when reading literature of the past, make up a lot of what we supposedly find?

This paper is an extension of a study published in Calvo and Kahn, eds. *Celebrating Shakespeare* (CUP, 2015) as 'Remembrance of things past: Shakespeare 1851, 1951, 2012', which takes the form of a cultural history of Shakespeare commemoration in three major national festivals: the Great Exhibition of 1851, the Festival of Britain in 1951, and the London Olympics of 2012. Simultaneously however I incorporated the same material into a short story, a pastiche of H.G. Wells's *The Time Machine*, entitled *The Seeds of Time*, and published in *Critical Survey*, 25.3 (2013).

In this paper I propose to explore the methodological differences between these two modes of presenting the same material, examining the role of the imagination in constructing history, assessing the degree of subjectivity inevitably involved in objective historical description, and probing the relations between historical memory and imaginative reconstruction.

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### **“To show our simple skill”: Shakespeare, Commemoration, Embodiment 1912-1916-1964**

In his famous extrapolation of memes that transmit data from organisms to human cultures, Richard Dawkins includes "...tunes, ideas, catch-phrases, clothes fashions, ways of making pots or of building arches. Just as genes propagate themselves in the gene pool by leaping from body to body via sperms or eggs," Dawkins suggests, "so memes propagate themselves in the meme pool by leaping from brain to brain via a process which, in the broad sense, can be called imitation".<sup>1</sup> Since his death in 1616 Shakespeare's works have functioned as just such a crucial "meme" in English speaking cultures across the globe. In evolutionary biology meme dispersal and adaptation occurs on a mass scale beyond the control of any specific organism. In the development of human cultures, in contrast, memes spread through processes of conscious adaptation, imitation and commemoration.

My paper will use this frame to build on recent work I have published in Christa Jansohn's *Shakespeare Jubilees* (2015) volume, and forthcoming in *Shakespeare and Antipodal Memory* (Bloomsbury 2016). In these chapters I use local New Zealand archives (diaries, letters, newspapers) to analyse the multiple ways New Zealanders, in acts of cultural memory and perpetuation, commemorated Shakespeare a hundred years ago. I will make further use of the

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<sup>1</sup> Richard Dawkins, *The Selfish Gene: 30th Anniversary Edition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989). Kobo e-book, chap. 11: "Memes: the New Replicators".

archive of soldiers' diaries from the First World War and compare these with local archives from 1912 and 1964 (the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Shakespeare's death). Through parades, concerts, lectures and of course performances we can see New Zealanders striving to ensure that Shakespeare remained a living strand in their cultural dna.

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**“Greetings from the Battle Field”: Fragmenting Shakespeare in Germany during WWI**

It is a well-known fact that Gollancz in his capacity as Honorary Secretary of the “Shakespeare Tercentenary Committee” excluded from his anthology *A Book of Homage to Shakespeare to Commemorate the Three Hundredth Anniversary of Shakespeare's Death* all contributions from Germany and its allies. Instead he included an article by Charles H. Herford on the topic of “The German Contribution to Shakespeare Criticism”, a piece in which the *German Shakespeare Yearbook* was described as an “imposing monument” and German scholars were singled out for praise on account of their painstaking attention to sources and their biographical and linguistic research. (p. 234) The opening statement cannot be misconstrued, though: “The War has made impracticable the co-operation of any German Shakespeare scholar in this collective tribute to his memory”. (p. 231)

The outbreak of war instantly transformed the mutual trust which had once characterized the artistic and scholarly cooperation between the English and German receptions of Shakespeare. This tragic rift is clearly documented in the first *Shakespeare Yearbook* of 1915, which included a “Greeting from the Field of Battle” (*ShJb*, 51 [1915], v-vi<sup>2</sup>) by faithful Society member and student of Brandl's, Hans Hecht (at the time senior lieutenant and battalion leader with 63<sup>rd</sup> Field Artillery Regiment), and to which, on account of its being a “war edition”, Gerhardt Hauptman “had donated free of charge a programmatic contribution”.

The paper explores the different ways Shakespeare was fragmented and newly appropriated in Germany (on page and stage) and German literature during WWI.

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**Shakespeare and Trench Culture during the First World War**

Over the past twenty years, earlier accounts of the First World War that emphasised the “separateness” of the trench experience from the home front have come increasingly under question. We now take it for granted that troops lived in a thriving “trench culture” made up of assembled fragments from “home.” Letters, parcels, and local newspapers sent by soldiers' families provided an ever-changing corpus of information that kept armies in the field up-to-date with family news and international developments. Trench newspapers and unit magazines as

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well as books bought or sent from home passed from hand to hand, providing a collective “library” of texts that kept soldiers in touch with both popular and literary culture. But what position did Shakespeare occupy in this textual traffic? Did Shakespeare have a place at the front corresponding to his ubiquity as a symbol of British literary supremacy in contemporary journalism and speeches? Did the 1916 tercentenary have any profile among those on the fighting fronts? Or was Shakespeare largely irrelevant to those who fought the war, eclipsed by other authors and other forms of popular culture? Contemporary evidence suggests that there were Shakespearean reading audiences wherever there were concentrations of soldiers, but that Shakespeare was subject to the same logic of fragmentation and dismemberment that governed other aspects of “trench culture.” While books were important as a source of morale and entertainment, soldiers preferred small, lightweight editions that would fit easily into haversacks or pockets. Similarly, the unpredictability of the front meant that something – like a play or collection of poems – that could be read in short bursts of attention during odd bits and pieces of spare time was most valued. Writing about the War Library scheme in 1917, volunteer administrator H. M. Gaskell wrote that “Shakespeare, greatest of patriots, visits the hospitals ... but we prefer him in single plays; a complete volume is too bulky, perhaps too formidable.” Drawing on Shakespearean references, quotations, and reading experiences recorded in trench journals and the letters and diaries of ordinary soldiers and sailors, this paper will seek to locate these fragments of Shakespearean presence on a micro-level, among the day-to-day experiences of individual ordinary-ranking British and Commonwealth service personnel at war.

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**Commemorating Shakespeare Through Dance: The 1964 Anniversary Festival at the Royal Ballet**

Dance adaptations of Shakespeare occupy a strange place in contemporary culture: while a wordless medium might seem incompatible with Shakespeare’s language, dance versions of the plays nonetheless abound. In particular, ballet companies in Britain and America commemorate Shakespeare through anniversary festivals. In 2014, a number of companies marked the 450<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Shakespeare’s birth with productions such as Alexei Ratmansky’s *The Tempest* (American Ballet Theatre), Christopher Wheeldon’s *The Winter’s Tale* (Royal Ballet), and Stanton Welch’s *Romeo and Juliet* (Houston Ballet). In 2016, the Birmingham Royal Ballet will celebrate the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Shakespeare’s death alongside many other arts organizations in the UK with a triple bill, including *Wink*, a new work by Jessica Lang that adapts the *Sonnets*. This paper will look at the 1964 Royal Ballet program that marked the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Shakespeare’s birth, which included Robert Helpmann’s 1942 *Hamlet*, as well as two newly-commissioned ballets: *Images of Love* by Kenneth MacMillan, and *The Dream* by Frederick Ashton. I will argue that, as with many commemorative festivals, the Royal Ballet program sought to remember Shakespeare as a cultural icon and timeless genius, and attempted to capitalize on his status and authority to bolster the idea of ballet as a relevant cultural form. Yet a close reading of MacMillan and Ashton’s ballets reveals a deeply fractured method of commemorating Shakespeare. While *The Dream* pays homage to Romantic ballet and invokes a traditional, aestheticized, and “legible” approach to Shakespeare’s play, *Images of Love* is far

more fragmented, drawing its subjects from various plays and poems. In particular, the casting of Rudolf Nureyev in the Sonnet 144 sequence (with Christopher Gable as the young man and Lynn Seymour as the “dark lady”) presented Shakespeare as homoerotic, highly sexual, and emotionally tortured, a far less romantic vision of his work than that offered by Ashton’s *Dream*.

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**Remembering the Future: Shakespeare and Irish Radicalism**

The three hundredth anniversary of Shakespeare's death coincided almost exactly with the outbreak of the Easter uprising against British rule in Ireland – a moment generally seen as foundational for Irish independence. Many of those who participated in the Rising were devoted Shakespeareans, with the leader of the Rising – Patrick Pearse – having acted out the plays with his family (including recording one performance on an early gramophone), recited speeches in public, and established a significant collection of editions of the plays. There had, in fact, been an extended tradition of Irish radicals having a particular interest in the work of Shakespeare, stretching back at least to the 1790s. My paper will look at the history of the interconnections between radicalism and Shakespeare in an Irish context, tracing how Shakespeare's work intertwined with radical imaginings in a variety of different ways. I will explore the manner in which Shakespeare allows for a cultural projection forward into an idealised Irish cultural future. But, additionally, I will look at the commemorative culture that attached itself to the Rising itself, examining the Shakespearean dimension of the relationship between present and idealised past in Ireland.

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**Hathaway Farm: Commemorating Warwickshire Will Between the Wars**

This essay examines a particular commemoration of Shakespeare between the two world wars, at Hathaway Farm, a tourist attraction next to the Anne Hathaway Cottage. Located at the former Burman’s Farm, the home of the long-standing family friends of the Hathaway family, Hathaway Farm was the third stop for visitors to Stratford in the 1930s, after the Birthplace and the Anne Hathaway Cottage. This site celebrated a version of Shakespeare embedded in rural Warwickshire life, designed for travelers and tourists in search of Shakespeare Country and “the days of Good Queen Bess.” Run by Midlands solicitor Philip Baker, Hathaway Farm claimed to be a “place of rare charm and antiquity which, through ancient oversight, for centuries has slept in strange oblivion.” This was far from the truth, however; Hathaway Farm was a carefully curated immersive tourist experience, where visitors could partake of a variety of faux Warwickshire experiences related to rural English life, alongside modern amenities designed to attract tourists. Hathaway Farm promoted its “old world atmosphere” through period displays, notably a Scolds’ Bridle and chair, ducking stool, whipping post, pillory, and stocks inscribed

with quotations from Shakespeare's plays. The site included a "more active amusement for visitors," including grounds of 30 acres with modern amenities of a golf course, café, and motor and aviation park. An outdoor stage allowed for open air plays and games, and a dance hall and lounge rounded out the modern tourist experience. Baker sought to recreate a period experience, commemorating a version of pastoral England in between the two world wars, linked to a mythical evocation of Shakespeare's Warwickshire life. As one visitor put it, the homestead "has been restored to a condition very much as it was when young Shakespeare skipped across the fields to Shottery to woo Anne, whose cottage, be it noted, is but a few yards away."

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**A Greenwich Night's Dream: Shakespeare, Empire, and the Royal Navy in post-Armistice Britain**

On the nights of 16-24 June 1933, the grounds of the Royal Naval College, Greenwich were the scene of a two-hour, open-air theatrical spectacle of unconcealed patriotism and nostalgia for Britain's heritage of naval power, a celebration arguably incongruous with the climate of post-Armistice Britain. More than 100,000 people, including prominent members of the royal family, the government, and the military witnessed the *Greenwich Night Pageant* produced by historian and journalist Arthur Bryant under the direction of the College's President, Admiral Barry Domvile, both of whom, though applauded for their efforts, would be criticized later for Nazi sympathies (Domvile was, in fact, interned during the Second World War). While naval heroes such as Sir Walter Raleigh, Sir Francis Drake, and Admiral Nelson predictably take center stage, it is Shakespeare who supplies the script at several key moments, including the opening scene of the christening of Elizabeth I. This paper will consider how and why Bryant relied heavily on Shakespeare's words and world; I hope to show, moreover, that Shakespeare's principal role in the pageant has as much to do with the twentieth century as it does with the sixteenth. For the celebration of British naval hegemony, rooted in Shakespeare and spanning four centuries, must ultimately confront—and poetically overcome—the inhuman face of modern technology and war, dramatized as a goose-stepping army of automata led by a figure of Death seated on horseback, in the pageant's ominous and surreal Epilogue. As one journalist later recalled, when the stirring chords of "Rule Britannia" marked the Grand Finale, "We felt that with any luck we might on the way home meet Shakespeare."

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**The 1916 Shakespeare Tercentenary and African Americans**

For African Americans, the 300th anniversary of Shakespeare's death coincided with the period of disenfranchisement, segregation, and persecution, which followed the end of the post-civil war Reconstruction in 1877. The US black population had to contend with poverty, exclusion

from mainstream society, and racially motivated violence, including the scourge of lynching. Under these circumstances, it would not have been surprising if commemorating Shakespeare were the last thing on African Americans' list of priorities. Perhaps surprisingly, however, there is evidence of their involvement in the occasion, including press reports of an amateur all-black production of Othello staged in New York, Boston, and Philadelphia, and a text of a Shakespearean pageant performed by the students of the 'coloured' schools of Washington, DC. This paper examines these events, enquiring into their participants' motivations, and exploring the ways in which they appropriated Shakespeare to make a case for equality in the face of marginalisation and persecution.

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**Shakespeare on the Prairie: ShakespeareFest 2016**

About a year ago, I was invited to serve on the organizing board for the newly created WinterArtsFest, a community-wide celebration of the arts and collaboration between the two neighboring towns of Fargo, ND, and Moorhead, MN. WinterArtsFest was to take place during the entire month of February, with various performing arts professionals from local music and theatre organizations, museums, libraries, and colleges rallying together to celebrate the work of a great artist. The festival commemorated the work of Ludwig van Beethoven in its first year and remained, in its celebration, decidedly apolitical, and that is despite Beethoven's tacit connection with the Third Reich and Hitler's approval of Beethoven as possessing "that great heroic German spirit." But it did raise questions with the academic community and perhaps led to a revised approach to celebrating Shakespeare in 2016. While many of the planned events are focused on "sharing and promoting" Shakespeare, NDSU has created a number of faculty-led events that showcase the various uses of Shakespeare in contemporary culture. History, Sociology, and Anthropology will look at the uses of Shakespeare during the American Revolutionary War, during colonization, and in Eastern Europe; faculty from English will look at the uses of Shakespeare in manga and anime, social media, fan fiction, and film adaptations; and faculty from English, Theatre Arts, and Communication—including invited scholars Douglas Lanier and Jennifer Roberts-Smith—will collaborate in events examining the uses of Shakespeare in advertising, social media, and live performances. While many of these events are still in the planning stages and some of them are scheduled for the second half of February, my essay will review and document some of the conversations and processes that went into organizing ShakespeareFest 2016 and then focus on one or two specific examples of events (presentation/audience) from the first half of the month.