

**2017 SAA Seminar: Diversifying the Field of Shakespeare Performance Abstracts**  
**Leaders: Ruben Espinosa, University of Texas, El Paso**  
**and Carla Della Gatta, University of Southern California 1**

**Tom Cartelli, Muhlenberg College [cartelli@muhlenberg.edu](mailto:cartelli@muhlenberg.edu)**

**Diversifying Conventions: Restyling *The Mousetrap* in Victor Bhardwaj's *Haider***

The last installment of Victor Bhardwaj's Shakespeare trilogy, *Haider* (2014) arguably constitutes the most historically and politically specific filmic restaging of *Hamlet* on record. Drawing broadly on Basharat Peer's memoir *Curfewed Night* (2010), *Haider* is set in the long divided state of Jammu and Kashmir in 1995 at the height of the Indian army's massive repression both of an expressly oppositional Muslim insurgency, parts of which were allied with and enabled by Pakistan's military, and of an almost entirely innocent private citizenry of Kashmiri Muslims. Though left unremarked in *Haider*, the brutality and aggressiveness of the army's counterinsurgency likely owed much to the earlier terrorizing of thousands of Kashmiri Hindus (*Pandits*) by Muslim militants, which led to the flight of over 100,000 *Pandits* from Kashmir in the early 1990s. Bhardwaj's failure to reference these events has made *Haider* even more controversial for its largely Indian audiences than it might otherwise have been, many of whom have stridently objected to *Haider's* continued circulation. In my paper, I intend to discuss the different responses *Haider* has elicited from diverse audiences in India, but to concentrate attention on two sequences in the film in which Bhardwaj diversifies established approaches to staging *Hamlet* in the form of mash-ups that mix, match, and collide performance practices rooted in ancient Kashmiri *Bhand Pather* traditions and contemporary hip-hop rhythms, stylings, and aggression.

The first, most expressly political of these sequences draws directly on the several displays of "antic disposition" Hamlet stages prior to the presentation of *The Mousetrap*, the play-within-the-play. The second is *Haider's* inspired substitution for *The Mousetrap* itself, whose choreographic and musical format mimics Bollywood conventions but whose lyrical content, costinguming, and setting on the stairs of an ancient Hindu temple evokes something more ancient, indigenous, and culturally authoritative. Both performances draw directly on *Bhand Pather*, though the first specifically isolates one set performer, the *maskhara* or jester, who appears for the first time in the film in full antic mode, with head shaved and deploying his boombox as a weapon (in the process referencing the addition of hip hop to the cultural mix).

**Drew Darr, University of Missouri Columbia [Amdfp9@mail.missouri.edu](mailto:Amdfp9@mail.missouri.edu)**

**The Games the Thing: The Present and Future of Video Game Adaptations of Shakespeare**

Shakespeare in the 21<sup>st</sup> century is no longer bound to the page or stage. In fact, Shakespeare is no longer bound to any non-interactive medium. After half a millennium on stage or in print and a century on film and television screens, Shakespeare has leapt to a new, adolescent art form: the video game. In the past five years a number of unique games have been lovingly crafted by independent developers that not only adapt Shakespeare to a video game, but push against hegemonic portrayals of gender and sexuality both in the plays and the video game industry as a whole. Game developers choose to work within the world of Shakespeare's plays because it offers well-known yet nuanced narratives that probe the boundaries of identity. Plays

**2017 SAA Seminar: Diversifying the Field of Shakespeare Performance Abstracts**  
**Leaders: Ruben Espinosa, University of Texas, El Paso**  
**and Carla Della Gatta, University of Southern California 2**

like *Midsummer Night's Dream* and *Hamlet* are reimagined as interactive narratives where the user can play as unconventional characters. Within this digital world passive characters like Ophelia and Hermia are reimagined as vibrant, active participants in narratives that previously limited their agency. Shakespeare's plays offer fertile ground to cultivate inclusive portrayals of non-normative gender identities.

In this essay I will analyze three independent games, *A Midsummer Night's Choice* by Choice of Games, *To Be or Not to Be* by Tin Man Games, and *Elsinore* by Golden Glitch. These independent games not only represent the future of video game adaptations of Shakespeare but also, potentially, Shakespeare studies itself. Video game studies and video game adaptation represent uncharted academic territory, despite the fact independent game developers like Golden Glitch regularly post pictures of book stacks of literary criticism on their development blog. Through the lens of gender studies and adaptation studies, I will examine the groundbreaking work in these projects, particularly in terms of gender identity and representation.

**Primary Texts:**

*A Midsummer Night's Choice*. Choice of Games. 2016. Video Game.  
*To Be or Not to Be*. Tin Man Games. 2015. Video Game  
*Elsinore*. Golden Glitch. 2017. Video Game.

**Secondary Texts:**

Hutcheon, Linda. *A Theory of Adaptation*. 2nd edition. London: Routledge, 2013. Print.  
Constandinides, Costas. *From Film Adaptation to Post-Celluloid Adaptation*. New York: Continuum, 2010. Print.

**Adrienne L. Eastwood**

**“Toward a Lesbian *Hamlet*”**

Over the course of fifteen years, I have seen two productions of *Hamlet* that cast the Danish prince as a princess.<sup>1</sup> These productions not only cast a woman as Hamlet, but they also changed the pronouns and kept Ophelia female, essentially making Hamlet a lesbian. My contribution to our panel will be to consider the choices made by these two directors in light of the idea of diversifying Shakespearean performance to test the limits of what makes sense when it comes to this sort of approach to queering *Hamlet*.

As we, in contemporary American culture, try to shed pre-and early-modern assumptions about the correspondence between gender and sex, and by extension, between sex and sexual desire or preference, we often seem to find ourselves stuck within the binary. Attempts to transcend gendered binaries are restricted by language, which is itself reliant on only the two possibilities

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<sup>1</sup> *Hamlet: Grove Theater Center*. Dir. Kevin Cochran. California, Fullerton. 17 September 2000; and *Hamlet: Santa Cruz Shakespeare*. Dir. Paul Mullins. California, Santa Cruz. 28 August 2016.

**2017 SAA Seminar: Diversifying the Field of Shakespeare Performance Abstracts**  
**Leaders: Ruben Espinosa, University of Texas, El Paso**  
**and Carla Della Gatta, University of Southern California 3**

of “masculinity” and “femininity,” male and female. While it is profoundly important for directors to continue to experiment with gender and sexuality in their casting choices, they should be encouraged to really think through the implications behind those choices. From large, thematic complications, to the inherent misogyny in Shakespeare’s language, the decision to make Hamlet a lesbian is a troubled one. In my work for the panel, I will discuss aspects of the text that both resist and support such a production concept.

Primary texts:

In addition to *Hamlet* (and I will use the Norton third edition, edited by Greenblatt) I will refer to my review of the Grove Theater performance I saw in 2000 (*Shakespeare Bulletin* 19.3. 2001, pages 25-26).

*Hamlet: Santa Cruz Shakespeare*. Dir. Paul Mullins. California, Santa Cruz. 28 August 2016. Performance.

Secondary texts:

So far, I have only referred to well-known secondary texts like Sigmund Freud, Judith Butler, and Elaine Showalter.

**Barbara Fuchs, UCLA**

**Spanish Shakespeares**

My essay explores the cultural politics of Shakespeare in Spanish via the *Enrique VIII* presented by the Spanish company Fundación Siglo de Oro/Rakatá at the 2012 Cultural Olympiad/ World Shakespeare Festival in London and subsequently in Los Angeles. I explore the complex negotiation of cultural capital that links the Hispanic classical canon to Shakespeare, and propose some alternatives to hispanized Shakespeares in the Hispanic corpus itself.

**Leticia Concepción García, MFA**

**Doctoral Candidate Drama and Theatre, University of California, Irvine**

**“Alternative Narratives: The Problem of the Archive and Shakespeare”**

This study probes the mechanisms of the deeply entrenched artistic, performative and literary archive/canon that have prevented other cultures from occupying their due place in the study of Shakespeare’s performative and cultural histories. It demonstrates that a substantially different kind of narrative emerges when one departs from the centrality of hegemonic methodologies and instead considers alternative methodologies to excavate alternate narratives. Writing against this organizing principle, I argue that the Eurocentric narrative has exhausted itself in Shakespeare Studies, and it is time to recognize the potential of other locales to the production of knowledge. The idea of authority embedded in the notion of the Eurocentric

**2017 SAA Seminar: Diversifying the Field of Shakespeare Performance Abstracts**  
**Leaders: Ruben Espinosa, University of Texas, El Paso**  
**and Carla Della Gatta, University of Southern California 4**

narrative and methodology has privileged its archives as *the* authoritative sources in understanding a specific history and approach to Shakespeare studies.

This paper addresses these relationships in a twofold fashion: first, and primarily, by understanding of the archive apart from its historical roots—gauging how Shakespeare studies has influenced the archive in its formation, content, and exclusion. Secondly, in analyzing how the archive has long represented a shared interest in the importance of specific institutions, a shared view of seminal events, and a shared sense of national boundaries and definitions. Once assembled and developed, the content of the “Shakespearean” archive in many ways defined the boundaries of a historical scholarship that focuses on a particular type of “Shakespeare.” By exploring the development of Shakespeare and Mexican theatrical pedagogies, I elucidate how and why we have misunderstood the relationship between performance and politics in México. Ignoring the politics of form as pedagogy is unwise when one writes Mexican theatre history. Whatever future scholars write about, they should not set theatre historiography apart from general historiography and political history—at least not in México, where theatre makes political discontent and reconciliation thinkable. Rather than trying to register political overtones in the hopes of ascertaining the political alignment of a given production, we must investigate theatrical methodologies as historically particularly and politically legible acts.

**Dr. Lori Leigh, Victoria University of Wellington**

**“Genderpucking”: Shakespeare-inspired Web series  
and Queering *A Midsummer Night’s Dream***

“Shakespeare, but gayer.” is how one online user describes the work of The Candle Wasters, a New Zealand youth creative who adapt Shakespeare plays into vlogs and web series hosted on the social media platform YouTube. Such commentary points to issues of identity and diversity with regards to gender and sexuality in Shakespeare and also new media’s specific ability to create rhizomatic connections and responses. As the proliferation and popularity of social media Shakespeares increase so does the critical attention by scholars interested in investigating such Shakespeare in its “own right” and questions around the appropriate – sometimes messy, complex, and limited—methodologies with which to view such creations. Specifically, scholars have called for a need to go beyond a concern with how the “new and old intersect to create particular meaning-making frameworks” but also “how the diffusion of the agency to generate these adaptations is experienced and articulated as a technologically and biologically embodied logic within that intersection”, or Shakespeare as a “trilogical technosocial communication process”.<sup>2</sup> This paper explores The Candle Wasters and their work, specifically their recent web series, “Bright Summer Night” inspired by *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*. Of particular interest is the way the work of this company—foregrounds gendered and sexual identities of youth through their adaptation of character and relationship. The meaning-making and conversations weave through a variety of platforms by both the producers and the

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<sup>2</sup> Jarret, K. and Naji, J. (2016). What Would Media Studies Do? Social Media Shakespeare as Technosocial Process. *Borrowers and Lenders*, [online] Vol. 10 (1). Available at: <http://www.borrowers.uga.edu/1794/show> [Accessed 1 Dec. 2016].

**2017 SAA Seminar: Diversifying the Field of Shakespeare Performance Abstracts**  
**Leaders: Ruben Espinosa, University of Texas, El Paso**  
**and Carla Della Gatta, University of Southern California 5**

active audiences, a “participatory culture” in not only YouTube but also other social media sites and the blogosphere at large. The platforms afford the “prosumers” agency to inscribe such questions and identities on Shakespeare’s text and characters. Furthermore, there is ample evidence of audiences/users’ emotional identifications and investments in the Shakespearean characters who feature in the series. What is the affective power of such interactions and identifications?

**Bryan D. Nakawaki**

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**Shakespeare on the Purdue University Stage: 1905 - 1965**

One topic of Shakespeare criticism only beginning to come into its own concerns the performance of Shakespeare’s drama on college and university campuses. Largely out of practical necessity, performance histories of Shakespeare’s plays tend to focus on examining large-scale productions put on at venues such as the Globe or the National Theatre. When university productions are discussed, it is usually in theatre reviews published in journals like *Shakespeare Bulletin*—reviews that are sometimes brief and often seem to be governed by a chronicling function as much as a scholarly one. This leaves unexamined a series of questions about university Shakespeare within the broader field of Shakespearean performance. Among them: What makes university Shakespeare different from other varieties of staged Shakespeare? How are university performances shaped by the unique pedagogical dimension of their academic context? What constitutes successful or unsuccessful university Shakespeare? This essay begins to address these questions by examining the early history of student-performed Shakespeare at Purdue University in West Lafayette, Indiana. Using the university’s 1951 production of *Macbeth* as a dominant case study, the essay aims to demonstrate how Purdue University Playshop (a student organization of immense importance to the university’s theatre history) conceived of and established Shakespearean performance as an invaluable method for students to acquire practical experience in their fields of study—regardless of major—in the years before Theatre became its own department. Ultimately, the essay hopes to promote further investigation of university Shakespeare and further consideration of its unique position within the broader field of Shakespearean performance as a whole.

Primary Text

G. Blakemore Evans, ed. *The Riverside Shakespeare*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn. (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1997).

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Andrew James Hartley, “A *Dream* of Campus”, *Shakespeare Survey* 65 (2012): 194-210.  
Andrew James Hartley, ed. *Shakespeare on the University Stage* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015).

**Robert Ormsby**

**Touring Shakespeare: Global Performance on “Canadian” Stages**

**2017 SAA Seminar: Diversifying the Field of Shakespeare Performance Abstracts**  
**Leaders: Ruben Espinosa, University of Texas, El Paso**  
**and Carla Della Gatta, University of Southern California 6**

Given the increased recognition of the diverse manifestations of Shakespeare, my paper will consider what we might achieve by diversifying Shakespeare and how to read across discrete forms of performance. Arguably, an already-diversified Shakespeare can be regarded as a widely shared medium through which individuals and groups can express themselves. Yet what local circumstances of production and reception influence the sharing of the Shakespearean medium, and how do such circumstances affect how diversity is construed? The paper's first part will treat twenty-first-century intercultural productions at Ontario's Stratford Festival. By considering how "non-Canadian" cultures were circulated through Shakespeare at Stratford, I will examine the extent to which intercultural performance diversified the Festival's supposed local/national identity. I will ask of these productions, which depicted intercultural Shakespeare as touristic journeys to exotic locales, the following: in such performance, are diverse cultures used to validate an institution's existing identity or do they alter that identity? The paper's second section will assess productions toured to Newfoundland, a place that historians have depicted through narratives of insularity, separation, and exclusion from central governments in London and (later) Ottawa. Specifically, I will examine performances in Newfoundland produced in the 1920s by the Old Bensonian Florence Glossop-Harris that were part of her company's touring of the western Atlantic. These productions illuminate the ways that a marginal dominion like Newfoundland connected to cosmopolitan culture centred in London. They can also reveal the intersections of gender and empire in considering how diversifying Shakespeare by touring his plays across the British Empire could sustain the career of an actress-manager like Glossop-Harris. I will draw conclusions about what analytical categories link the Stratford and Glossop-Harris productions and about what local, historically distinct details resist comparison in a growing awareness of diverse Shakespeares.

**John Ray Proctor**

**Romeo in Juliet: Negotiations of Race, Legitimacy, Civilization and Mastery**

*"Cultural appropriation is the adoption or use of elements of one culture by members of another culture. Cultural appropriation is seen as controversial, even harmful, notably when the cultural property of a minority group is used by members of the dominant culture without the consent of the members of the originating culture; this is seen as misappropriation and a violation of intellectual property rights. According to critics of the practice, cultural (mis)appropriation differs from acculturation, assimilation, or cultural exchange in that the "appropriation" or "misappropriation" refers to the adoption of these cultural elements in a colonial manner: elements are copied from a minority culture by members of the dominant culture, and these elements are used outside of their original cultural context—sometimes even against the expressed, stated wishes of representatives of the originating culture." – Matthes*

In April of 2016 I directed a production of *Romeo and Juliet* at Albany State University in Albany, GA. Albany, Georgia is (by and large) a segregated small city. There is a "black" half (East Albany) and a Westside, which is predominantly "white." Shakespeare is introduced to the public school children at different times and in different ways depending upon the "side" of town on which you live. The "black" side of town suffers higher unemployment rates, and is

**2017 SAA Seminar: Diversifying the Field of Shakespeare Performance Abstracts**  
**Leaders: Ruben Espinosa, University of Texas, El Paso**  
**and Carla Della Gatta, University of Southern California 7**

much more economically depressed than is the “white” side of Albany. The white students are sometimes introduced to *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* or *Hamlet*, while it is much more rare for the African-American residents of Albany, GA to be introduced in the programs in their secondary school systems to any Shakespeare, in any significant way. While it is not popular to express it as bluntly as I do here, this racially divided education continues on into their college and university experiences. There is a black university (*Albany State University*) and a white college (*Darton State College*).

The announcement that *Albany State University* would be producing *Romeo and Juliet* in recognition and acknowledgement of Shakespeare’s 400th birthday generated concerns about the theatre student’s mastery of language, certain publicly expressed expectations of failure. In other ways the university embraced a type of civic pride. There was a communal effort that went into producing this particular *Romeo and Juliet*, that involved the current and former Mayors of Albany, the university President’s wife being cast in the show, and media attention in ways that had not existed or developed prior to this production.

It is my intention for my paper for this conference to examine the ways in which African-American theatre can lay claim to Shakespeare in ways that are authentic, without divesting themselves of their own cultural identities, identity markers, languages and histories. One of the more important questions that I intend to consider has to do with – is it a form of cultural appropriation when “other” cultures and “othered” communities – lay claim to Shakespeare’s plays? Or is it some internalized remnant of colonial indoctrination that marginalized “others” and “othered cultures” lay claim to the statuses of equality and civilization by performing a “mastery” of Shakespeare.

**Kevin A. Quarmby**

**OP PC or PAR RIP?**

The termination of Emma Rice’s contract as Artistic Director of Shakespeare’s Globe Theatre London, announced less than a year after her benign accession to Dromgoole’s directorial throne, received as much international attention as her much-publicized production of *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*. Rice’s innovative modernization of *Dream*, with its regendering of roles, hypersexualized imagery, and twenty-first century lighting and sound technology, seemed to presage an exciting new era for Globe productions that explored fully the performative potential of this twenty-year-old institution. Those who knew Rice’s work from her Cornwall-based company, Kneehigh, must surely have realized the theatrical rebelliousness and inventiveness for which she is famous. Unfortunately, this same rebellious invention shocked certain commentators used to their “Original Practice” Shakespeare served with heaps of ersatz early modernism.

Faced with Rice’s creative talents, the Globe hierarchy decided to act incisively. With all the subtlety of a Tower of London executioner’s axe, the Globe’s announcement fell on Rice’s tenure. The excuse, that the Globe “was reconstructed as a radical experiment to explore the conditions within which Shakespeare and his contemporaries worked,” and the conclusion “that a predominant use of contemporary sound and lighting technology will not enable us to optimise further experimentation in our unique theatre spaces and the playing conditions which they offer,”

**2017 SAA Seminar: Diversifying the Field of Shakespeare Performance Abstracts**  
**Leaders: Ruben Espinosa, University of Texas, El Paso**  
**and Carla Della Gatta, University of Southern California 8**

severed Rice's experimental headship before it really began. Commenting on the news, *Guardian* correspondent Lauren Mooney claims that the Globe's "decision to oust" Rice looks "suspiciously like a panicked response to the reactionary criticism she has received in some corners of the press".

In the light of equally reactionary 2016 world politics, it is perhaps surprising that the Globe should seem so politically correct in its "unique theatre space" expectations. This paper interrogates the Globe's announcement about Rice's removal, and considers the extent to which "further experimentation" suggests the elevation of the theatre's OP educational materiality, to the exclusion of evolutionary "Performance As Research" (PAR) innovation, as the politically correct norm for future "radical" Shakespeare productions.

**Geoffrey Way, Washburn University**

**Considering Race in the Oregon Shakespeare Festival's Digital Outreach**

As the internet has provided numerous tools and platforms to engage audiences online, from institutional websites to media-sharing sites like YouTube to social media such as Facebook and Twitter, Shakespearean theaters and festivals have embraced these digital technologies and incorporated them into their audience outreach. While they do provide audiences increased access to institutions and their work and allow institutions to engage their audiences beyond their presence at the physical sites, often these digital tools and platforms are adopted without much thought or critique. Who are these technologies providing access for? What is it they are providing access to? How do these methods of engagement fit into the larger picture of audience-institution interactions? With these questions in mind, this paper considers the digital outreach of the Oregon Shakespeare Festival and the ways that race are and are not engaged with in that outreach. The OSF has made diversity and inclusion part of their guiding values, and while these values shape much of their work on and off the stage, there are questions whether they are also shaping the OSF's digital outreach, and if so, how. To delve into these questions, I will be considering performance in two ways. First, I will be addressing specific content (images, videos, links, etc.) that the OSF utilizes through their various digital presences to market their work in performance, whether through materials related to particular productions or the Festival's work in general. Second, I will discuss these materials within the larger context of the OSF's digital identity and look at the ways that the OSF performs their institutional identity through their presences on various digital platforms. Through a consideration of the OSF's digital identity, I will argue that we can gain a better understanding of how race factors into digital outreach, and what practices could be helpful in engaging more diverse audiences online in the future.

Primary Sources

Oregon Shakespeare Festival Website: <https://www.osfashland.org/>

OSF YouTube Channel: <https://www.youtube.com/user/orshakes/featured>

OSF Facebook Page: <https://www.facebook.com/osfashland/>

OSF Cultural Connections Facebook Page: <https://www.facebook.com/OSFCulturalConnections/>

**2017 SAA Seminar: Diversifying the Field of Shakespeare Performance Abstracts**  
**Leaders: Ruben Espinosa, University of Texas, El Paso**  
**and Carla Della Gatta, University of Southern California 9**

OSF FAIR Experience Facebook Page: <https://www.facebook.com/FAIROSF/>

OSF Twitter Account: <https://twitter.com/osfashland>

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