

2018 SAA Seminar: Scrapbook Shakespeare 1

Leaders: Rob Conkie, La Trobe University

Paul Salzman, La Trobe University

Whitney Sperrazza

Dusty Death: Anne Sexton's Scrapbook *Macbeth*

My paper's central inquiry confronts the entanglement of gender, materiality, and memory conjured by the scrapbook genre. In particular, I explore Anne Sexton's mid-twentieth century poem, "All My Pretty Ones," as a kind of "scrapbook response" to Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, an encounter introduced in the poem's title and increasingly palpable in its content. "All My Pretty Ones," I argue, stages Sexton's engagement with a male-dominated literary tradition exemplified by the figure of Shakespeare. The poem follows the female poet as she moves around the home of her dead father, inviting its reader into a memory scene that is at once intimate and estranged. In Sexton's movement around her dead father's space and her direct, tactile engagement with his personal archive, I find a broader exploration of a male-dominated literary tradition that turns on the questions: what is a usable past and whose usable past is this?

James Loehlin

Stoppard's Scrapbook Shakespeare

Few writers have done more with a scrapbook approach to Shakespeare than Tom Stoppard. Beginning with the early one-act *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Meet King Lear* and its better-known descendant, Stoppard has engaged with Shakespeare for more than half a century of stage and film work. Stoppard's Shakespeare is sometimes literally cut up and reassembled in surprising ways, as when Tristan Tzara and Gwendolen, in *Travesties*, flirt by pulling random words from Sonnet 18 out of a hat. In *Arcadia* the barge speech from *Antony and Cleopatra* is reinvented as a Latin translation exercise, and in *Dogg's Hamlet* the Shakespearean text anchors a baffling Wittgensteinian language game. *Shakespeare in Love*, of course, is a tissue of cheeky Shakespeare borrowings. This essay looks at some of the ways Stoppard uses Shakespearean fragments, echoes, and allusions to enliven the intellectual and aesthetic experience of his own works.

Stoppard has himself become strongly associated with Shakespeare in the popular imagination. The British press has often linked the two in terms of their high-culture status and the presumed difficulty of their plays. Stoppard's fullest repurposing of a Shakespearean text was the play that launched his career, *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead* (1966). Successive drafts at the University of Texas Harry Ransom Center reveal how Stoppard backed away from writing new dialogue for the Shakespearean characters and shifted the play's focus to the existential predicament of its Beckettian protagonists. The hybrid play *Dogg's Hamlet, Cahoot's Macbeth* reveals Stoppard's own scrapbook method, combining three distinct plays by Stoppard with substantial chunks of two by Shakespeare. The first half examines the cultural authority of the Shakespeare text, the second its potential for political resistance. Stoppard also alludes extensively to *Macbeth* in *Jumpers*, a play examining morality and murder in a political and philosophical framework. Most of Stoppard's plays include at least passing allusions to

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Shakespeare, though he has remarked that audiences seem increasingly unable to recognize these. Nonetheless, his association with Shakespeare was firmly established by the film *Shakespeare in Love*, which can be seen as reinforcing the parallel between the two writers.

Clare McManus

Scrappy dramaturgy and feigned improvisation in Fletcher and Massinger's *Custom of the Country* (1619)

The scraps I bring to our seminar table are fragments of performance and, in light of the emphasis on 'parts' in the work of Tiffany Stern, Sonia Massai and William N. West, a fragmented approach to the structure and performance of the early modern play. My paper takes the role of Hippolyta in Fletcher and Massinger's *Custom of the Country* (1619) – a reworking of Cervantes's posthumously published romance *Persiles y Sigismunda* (1617) – as a test case to explore what a playwright might do with dramatic fragments in light of what actors do with them elsewhere. In considering the movement of such fragments between plays, and their combinations and recombinations, I draw on the architectural concept of the 'adaptive reuse of structures inherited from earlier builders', invoked by Mary Malcolm Gaylord in her work on Cervantes, to explain how such theatrical elements are taken up and reconstituted to construct discrete new plays and as a way, as West puts it, of 'understanding theatre as made out of other performances'.

John Fletcher's career is a fine example of this compositional model. Reading his 1620s plays – e.g. *The Island Princess* (c. 1621), *The Sea Voyage* (1622), *The Wild-Goose Chase* (1621) and the collaborative *Custom of the Country* (1619) – is an exercise in spotting his reuse and reordering of fragments and set pieces. Analysing *Custom of the Country*, I examine English dramatic composition and actorly improvisation, both of which work with pre-existing structures and materials and are valued for their skilful recombination of theatrical scraps into something new. In particular, I argue that the manipulation of the structures of female roles and the convergence of English and continental improvisational traditions can shape a form of feigned or scripted improvisation (the latter phrase is borrowed from Karen Kettlich). Italian *commedia* actresses, whose presence on stage throughout Europe radically altered the plays in which they performed, were adept in improvisation and I propose that the virtuosic performance of English boy-actresses emulated their charismatic Italian counterparts, seeking both to 'over-go' and, in the words of Quintilian, to 'rival and vie with the original in expressing the same thoughts' (Book 10, 5). Like composition and improvisation, then, emulation is in the business of taking and transforming existing materials into something new. The effects of such transnational emulation on dramatic composition are structural, part of Fletcher's experiments with romantic tragicomedy and the hypertheatrical female roles common to early 1620s English theatre, and – in part – the virtuosic, changeable roles of the Italian *commedia* diva.

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Kat Hipkiss

The Job That Ate My Brain

When entering the archive, the researcher often has an idea of what they are looking for. However due to the very nature of the archive, that role is transformed from ‘researcher’ to ‘detective’, as a narrative is pieced together from scraps found at the bottom of boxes, or between the leaves of a book.

A first hand account of that transformation, this paper reflects the process through the exploration of show reports from the 1988-91 Royal Shakespeare Company cycle *The Plantagenets*. The paper uses show reports, actors accounts, and other archival scraps to try and decipher a cryptic mock-poster found at the back of a blank copy of *Edward IV*, called ‘The Job That Ate My Brain!’

Callan Davies

Archive Scrap

This paper dwells in the sewers of sixteenth-century Southwark and the records of the City of London Corporation, where it seeks to restore the “scrap” as a central essence of many of the most important surviving sources of Elizabethan theatre history. I argue that many Elizabethan bureaucratic records have an organic “scrapbook” form, and I consequently draw connections between early modern memoranda-style recordkeeping and modern theories of the scrapbook. The paper accordingly reads the surviving archival repositories of the SKCS and Corporation records as “scrapbooks.” Such an approach opens up valuable wider contexts, from Henslowe’s diary and related recreational activity to commercial regulation and apprentices’ apparel, and helps to avoid anachronistically bracketing off theatrical performance as a uniquely distinct activity. Embracing the random scrappiness of these records in their totality crucially encourages theatre history to incorporate obscure or overlooked records into its many possible narratives.

Rosemary Kegl

Scrapbook Shakespeare at the 1934 Chicago World’s Fair

In 1934, during the second year of the Chicago World’s Fair, fair organizers introduced to their Street of Villages a concession variously entitled the English Village, Old England, and Merrie England. Throughout the five months of the 1934 season, Merrie England advertised among its attractions 40-minute productions of Shakespeare’s plays staged throughout the afternoon and evening in the village’s reconstructed Globe Theatre. My seminar paper is an extended outline of my book project, *Tabloid Shakespeare at the 1934 Chicago World’s Fair*.

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I trace what this seminar might term the ‘scrapbook’ quality of Shakespeare’s appearance in the 1934 Chicago World’s Fair in the archives that I consulted and in the project’s design. Although the English Village, the reconstructed Globe Theatre, and the abbreviated plays are not particularly prominent in any individual archive, together the archives provide a range of materials -- scrapbooks, photographs, postcards, tickets, menus, fair publications, play programs, French’s editions of the plays, letters, telegrams, inter-office memos, press releases, financial reports, blueprints, high school yearbooks, minutes from Chicago Board of Education meetings, memoirs, speeches, interviews, and newspaper articles – that bring into focus for me the texture of Shakespeare’s role in the fair. Tabloid Shakespeare identifies and analyzes fair experiences generated in consonance if not in coordination across a series of otherwise disparate exhibits. By helping to generate the fair’s aesthetics, Shakespeare’s abbreviated plays, Merrie England, and the village’s reconstructed Globe Theatre were surprisingly well-suited to a fair more commonly known as the Century of Progress Exposition. In each of the book’s chapters, I tease out one variation of the elusive and enduring experiences to which fairgoers and fair organizers so often allude. In the final chapter, I circle back to the earlier chapters’ emphases on history, education, and labor by tracing the afterlife of the now-dispersed Century of Progress in the first few years after the fair’s closing.

Bryan D. Nakawaki

Land-Grant Shakespeare: *Macbeth* on the 1951 Purdue University Stage

This paper examines the early history of student-performed Shakespeare at Purdue University, primarily seeking to answer the questions of why and how early generations of students, faculty, and administrators came to see Shakespearean performance as in line with the university’s broader, Morrill Land Grant-inspired goals. (According to the grant, universities are asked to emphasize “agriculture and the mechanic arts”—a phrase that does not immediately bring Shakespeare to mind, except possibly, as Rob Conkie pointed out to me, as a definition for *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*.) Using Purdue’s 1951 production of *Macbeth* as a dominant case study, the paper demonstrates 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.

As Andrew Hartley has observed, a key challenge in studying university performance is that most student organizations have no archives, “no carefully preserved prompt books, no institutional memory of the kind one would expect of even the most amateur of community theatres.”¹ Indeed, acquiring evidence for this paper felt very much like an exercise in scrapbooking: arranging tiny bits of material taken from the archives of two local newspapers, the Purdue University yearbook, a set of photographs from Archives and Special Collections, an old Master’s thesis, a collection of theatre programs—even a postcard sold in the Purdue gift shop in the 1940s. When this was complete, however, what emerged was a unique piece of local history that highlighted the tremendous

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importance of students in establishing the value of performed Shakespeare at Purdue University.

¹ See Andrew James Hartley, "Introduction: Tragedians of the City, Little Eyases, or Rude Mechanicals?" in Hartley's edited collection *Shakespeare on the University Stage* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 1.

M. Stephanie Murray

Distracted Shakespeare

The internet is a giant scrapbook of pieces of Shakespeariana: slapped together, faked, weirdly attributed, reimagined, and remixed. The content remains fairly consistent--lines are quoted, the general personalities of characters are maintained, plots are loosely sketched--but the form is distorted and adapted to fit a constantly changing pop culture.

The robust aesthetic economy of Internet Shakespeare may explain why attempts at digital re-enactments of the plays come across as the Mom Jeans of the 21st century. They fail to live and evolve because they maintain fidelity to the basic structures of the original texts. Internet Shx, however, claims the ideas and rejects the structure, allowing for a broader range of reinterpretations. This flexibility, in turn, reflects how early modern drama itself exploded earlier forms while maintaining the ideas they contained.

Ian De Jong

All is One: Controversial Editorial Practices as Degrees of Scrapbooking

Since the publication of *The Division of the Kingdoms* in 1983, the editorial practice of textual conflation has come under attack. That attack has borne fruit, as subsequent Complete Works and single-play volumes have turned to printing multiple versions of variant texts, in response to this trend in textual scholarship. Editorial and theoretical condemnations of conflation focus on conflated texts' historical artificiality, as well as the New Bibliographers' untenable rationale for conflation. Yet anti-conflationism often ignores, and sometimes embraces, the artificiality produced by thoroughgoing editorial emendation. My paper will examine moments when editors have adopted emendations of cruxes which may certainly be confusing but are not necessarily erroneous (such as, among others, Rowe's widely-used emendation of "morality" to "mortality" in *Measure for Measure* TLN 225, or Pope's influential rejection of F's "place" in favor of "plate" in *King Lear* TLN 2608). In such situations, either emending or adopting emendations yields readings neither warranted by copy-text nor strictly necessary for sense. I will thus argue that to adopt unnecessary emendations is to participate, in microcosm, in the ahistoricity which characterizes the practice of conflation. If, as modern editions make clear, large-scale conflation is unacceptable, why is the small-scale conflation inherent in adopting emendations so blithely practiced? In response, my paper will re-examine this

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tacit discursive acceptance of emendation in order to revisit the legitimacy of editorial rationales for conflation.

Paul Edmondson

**Scrapbook Shakespeare:
Some Insights via the archives of The Shakespeare Birthplace Trust**

We are scrapbooks. The images of our minds, the words and voices of our experience, are bound, like leaves into a book, by our brain and memory. We are all of us magpie-myriad-minded, snappers up, like Shakespeare's Autolycus (and his father) in *The Winter's Tale*, 'of unconsidered trifles'.

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One working definition of a scrapbook is
that it must present itself as a book:
boxes or envelopes of unbound papers,
notebooks,
or commonplace books full of manuscript
do not qualify.

Marianne Montgomery East Carolina University

Unbinding Illustration: The Shakespeare Rare Print Collection (1900)

Critics and historians of Shakespeare's reception in the nineteenth century, in both Britain and America, emphasize the centrality of the visual arts to the Victorian experience of Shakespeare. Souvenirs and illustrated editions proliferated, and images, many from the eighteenth century, circulated transatlantically and became a familiar part of the visual field of Shakespeare. If, as Thomas Schereth has argued, "the creation, manipulation, and consumption of images is an important premise in Victorian America" then one material object, the *Shakespeare Rare Print Collection*, published in Philadelphia in 1900, provides an interesting exhibit of this premise. This collection of plates reproducing a range of Shakespeareana belongs to several overlapping contexts of Shakespearean reception history in America. It reflects the Victorian interest in material objects and is a product of advances in the technologies of reproduction that made illustrations cheaper and more common. It also reflects the transatlanticism of Shakespeare in nineteenth century America, when English actors touring regularly in the States and American actors appeared in London. Finally, it reflects the continued circulation of eighteenth-century Shakespearean images in the late Victorian period, even as the nineteenth century generated many more.