

**2019 Seminar Abstracts: Provincial Shakespeare**  
**Katherine Gillen, Texas A&M University-San Antonio**  
**Marissa Greenberg, University of New Mexico**

**Provincialism, post-colonialism, patriarchy? Auckland's Pop-up Globe**  
**Hannah August, Massey University, New Zealand**

In February 2016, theatre-going residents of New Zealand's largest city were able to experience Shakespeare performance in a new space. Auckland's "Pop-up Globe", erected initially in a carpark in the city's theatre precinct, claimed to "replicate exactly the dimensions of Shakespeare's second Globe Theatre". Artistic Director Miles Gregory's stated aim was to enable "Pop-up Globe's audience [to] enjoy the remarkable experience of Shakespeare's own audience 400 years ago."<sup>1</sup> Three years on, this project has proved so successful that the Auckland theatre has embarked upon its fourth season, and Globes have 'popped up' under Gregory's direction in both Melbourne and Sydney.

If "Shakespeare's Globe" on London's Bankside is at the centre of supposedly 'historically faithful' reconstructions of early modern theatrical performance, Auckland's Pop-up Globe is at the periphery. Yet Gregory's project has arguably shown insufficient regard for its local, peripheral context: while the Pop-up Globe has paid lip service to post-colonial New Zealand's indigenous culture, it has failed to fully engage with another crucial aspect of the country's contemporary self-fashioning, its commitment towards gender equality. This paper examines the lead-up to the moment in mid-2018 when public backlash forced Gregory to abandon his practice of mounting productions with adult all-male casts. In doing so, it draws on the opposition between "provincialism" and "regionalism" developed by Allen Tate in a seminal 1945 essay, in order to argue that it is the Pop-up Globe's disregard for its regional context that means it should be understood as an example of provincial Shakespeare.<sup>2</sup>

**Provincializing Urban Shakespeare**  
**Jonathan Burton, Whittier College**

My project urges us to extend the location of provincial Shakespeare to within American cities. Not unlike the pastoral, the term "provincial" tends to draw our attention away from metropolitan spaces in search of something more authentic, traditional, or resistant of a cosmopolitan norm. The notion of the provincial therefore has the effect of rendering monolithic metropolitan experience where diversity regularly contracts into segregation and inequity. Therefore, I am interested in provincializing Shakespearean educations in America not by turning to the rural but rather by attending to demographics

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<sup>1</sup> Pop-up Globe, "Pop Up Globe, 15,000 tickets sold already," *Scoop: Independent News*, press release, October 15, 2015, <http://www.scoop.co.nz/stories/CU1510/S00092/pop-up-globe-15000-tickets-sold-already.htm>.

<sup>2</sup> Allen Tate, "The New Provincialism: With an Epilogue on the Southern Novel," *Virginia Quarterly Review* 21, no. 2, (Spring 1945), <https://www.vqronline.org/essay/new-provincialism-epilogue-southern-novel>.

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and resource availability in one of America's largest metropolitan areas, Los Angeles County. The varying ways in which students and teachers in LA County experience a Shakespearean education unsettle three deeply-held and interrelated myths. First, Americans tend to think of the experience of studying Shakespeare, and particularly *Romeo and Juliet* or *Hamlet*, as an experience common to all American high schoolers. But the truth is that these experiences vary so widely that they say more about the ways in which our educations are profoundly local, shaped by community expectations about educational achievement and beliefs about who belongs at the table with Shakespeare. Second, the inequities revealed in Shakespearean educations give the lie to one of our most cherished myths, that of a meritocratic education system where meeting common standards will "prepare all students for success in college, career, and life." The very terms "common" and "standards" paper over structural inequities that standards do not even begin to address: class size, teacher training, per-pupil spending, and community poverty. Finally, as Ayanna Thompson and Laura Turchi have argued, the "cultural capital" associated with Shakespeare is not enough to raise students out of challenging environments. If education continues to be conceived as the best way to pass through class barriers, it also needs to be recognized that our curricula are themselves studded with class barriers. Shakespeare's works, in particular, can police those barriers in urban areas, but they can just as soon be harnessed to culturally sustaining pedagogy that empowers students of any background.

**Home-Keeping and Shakespearean Comedy**  
**Andrew Carlson, Rutgers University**

I argue for the intimacy of the provincial and the domestic, especially in the context of Shakespearean comedy. The keyword I use for the purposes of this exercise is "home-keeping," a concept that frames two of Shakespeare's comedies in particular—*The Two Gentlemen of Verona* and *As You Like It*. The phrase suggests both domestic labor and an aversion to certain kinds of mobility, including geographical and social mobility. My attempt to excavate this term and its relation to Shakespearean comedy is motivated by a sense that the recent tendency to favor the global over the local in Shakespeare studies risks assuming historical inevitability. We know new world encounters and global trade expanded the horizons of the English cultural imaginary over the course of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries; we know the development of Shakespearean drama will, in the Jacobean years, stretch techniques of dramatic representation to accommodate expansive geographies and temporalities. But if the global view seems both historically and aesthetically unavoidable, what interests me most about the place of "home-keeping" in these comedies is the way in which they preserve the idea primarily in the form of the counterfactual. If the global view seems both historically and aesthetically unavoidable, the plays seem to account for this fact in the way they frame what it might mean to keep at home instead—or to be home-kept.

**Nation, metropolis, province**

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**Michael Dobson, The Shakespeare Institute and Birmingham University**

‘National without being metropolitan’ has become one slogan of the Royal Shakespeare Company, an organization based in the small market town where Shakespeare was born, where he first saw theatre, and where he died. How far is this formulation a euphemism for ‘provincial’? What was Shakespeare’s own sense of the relations between province, metropolis and nation, and how far did these correspond with the understandings of place and collective identity enacted by the Elizabethan theatre business, both on tour and in London? This short paper will consider the Shakespearean theatre’s credentials as a non-metropolitan national institution, both in Shakespeare’s time and since.

**Panhandle Shakespeare**  
**Jeff Doty, University of North Texas**

My first academic position was as the Wendy and Stanley Marsh 3 Assistant Professor of Shakespeare studies at West Texas A&M, a small regional college in the Texas panhandle. Gifted in the late 1990s, the purpose of this endowment was to secure the place of teaching Shakespeare within the university itself and to promote Shakespeare within the region. One way of reading the endowment documents is that they treat Shakespeare as an instrument for conferring cultural capital in a place of intellectual and cultural deprivation. Pierre Bourdieu’s concept of cultural capital might help explain why, as the donor put it to me in 2009, “Having Shakespeare makes the community feel good about itself.” From Bourdieu’s perspective – especially as adapted by John Guillory in his influential *Cultural Capital* – the study of Shakespeare should be not be understood as the result of the aesthetic merit of his plays or because they may be intellectually or ethically formative in unique ways. Rather, the value of Shakespeare’s plays has been determined by an economy of cultural goods, and the purpose of higher education is to distribute to students this symbolic capital and its social benefits. This model maps onto a cosmopolitan/provincial binary, where those terms are at once spatial and personal characteristics related to cultural capital. But this analysis flattens the distinctiveness of student, place, and Shakespeare in equal measure. My paper aims to show how, in particular places, the study of Shakespeare has a dynamism that exceeds the language of symbolic capital.

**The Sound of Shakespeare in *La Frontera***  
**Ruben Espinosa, University of Texas, El Paso**

When linguistic barriers arise in Shakespeare, the primacy of the English language is often emphasized. How one speaks English within his plays is often directly correlated to perceptions of an individual’s worth (think Fluellen in *Henry V*). In our present moment, and within the popular imagination, Shakespeare undeniably registers the richness of English linguistic identity. To that end, how one speaks Shakespeare is often imagined to be a barometer for one’s legitimate understanding and access to his works. Those whose

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elocution of Shakespeare deviates from the expected conventions of his language are often deemed outliers. In this way, Shakespeare becomes a tool of linguistic violence. But when we consider the provincial – that is, both in its sense of geographic setting and as a term meant to signal a lack of sophistication – we find that the perceived value of Shakespeare and the cultural capital he holds warrant scrutiny. This paper considers the linguistic landscape of the borderlands as a means not only of offering an entry point to Chicana understandings of Shakespeare, but also of scrutinizing the relevance of this iconic and elite literary figure on the U.S. Mexico border. Drawing on Arturo Islas' keen appropriation of Shakespeare in *La Mollie and the King of Tears*, I seek to interrogate how acceptable standards of pronunciation are, in no uncertain terms, a means of privileging whiteness when it comes to the ongoing making of Shakespeare in our time.

**Shakespeare the Playwright as a Commoner, Popular Politics, and Beyond**  
**Hyosik Hwang, Chungbuk National University, Korea**

More often than not, we hear words of contempt for the commoners in Shakespeare's plays. Those words are mostly spoken by the proud noble characters who are highly critical of them. Traditional critics have supposed that Shakespeare shared this anti-populist sentiment with his social betters. Conversely, we also often hear articulate voices of commoners in the socio-politically significant scenes of his plays, based on which a group of critics argue that Shakespeare was a champion of the people and popular government. One recent critic says that although Shakespeare did not know the modern concept of democracy, he made a great contribution to making the culture that underlies it.

Given the two opposite interpretive poles, I would like to adopt a method of studies suggested by the new social history in an effort to closely measure Shakespeare's posture in this matter. Popular politics will be discussed in terms of Shakespeare's application of it in his plays. Shakespeare was a populist playwright who had sympathy for the poor people. He knew popular politics very well, but the range of his political thought sometimes went beyond the boundaries. This is what made Shakespeare ahead of his time. I will also investigate the implications of this study in terms of the present state of Shakespeare scholarship and day-to-day lives of commoners today. Select English and Roman history plays including *King Lear* will be considered for this discussion.

**Prince Hal in the Provinces**  
**Catherine Loomis, Rochester Institute of Technology**

In the late 1870's, John Jack (1836-1913), an American actor whose Falstaff was widely lauded, launched a world tour of his production of *1 Henry IV*. Hoping to perform in "almost every English-speaking community in the world," Jack worked his way from Philadelphia to the west coast of the United States before leaving for Australia and New Zealand, proceeding from there to Asia and Europe. For the duration of this production,

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Prince Hal was played by Jack's wife, the highly-talented American actress Annie Firmin. Although Hal would become a common trouser role later in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Firmin appears to have been a princely pioneer. In this essay, I will discuss what we know about her performance of the role in provincial US productions and on the world tour. I will also consider the implications of gender-blind casting in what may have been a provincial audience's first and perhaps only encounter with a professional production of Shakespeare.

**The Country Cozens: Unsophisticated Urbanites in City Comedies**  
**Rory McKeown, University of Toronto**

The term "provincial" implies a binary between provincial and metropolitan, with the latter usually being the favoured half of the pair. The sophistications of the Île de France or Rome are opposed to rural backwaters. But in England, to a greater degree than many European nations, ownership of country land has remained the *sine qua non* of blue blood. It's a cultural phenomenon that leaves *Eastward Ho's* Gertrude vulnerable to Sir Petronel Flash's claims to unreal estate, that spawned the country house poem, and that keeps the National Trust in business today.

So how do the provinces relate to London, when Londoners yearn for an old pile they can deprecate, while lording it over the neighbours? As Duncan Salkeld points out, in a 1612 court case, Shakespeare represented himself as being from Stratford (10). Given the shifting demographics of the city, large numbers of Londoners were not "from" London, in any meaningful sense, and may have shared Shakespeare's ambivalence to their adopted home.

In this paper, I will argue that city comedies from *Three Ladies of London* through *Michaelmas Term* and *A Chaste Maid in Cheapside* use visitors from the country, and country estates – real and imagined – to show up the pretensions of city dwellers to sophistication.

**Shakespeare's radical provinciality and the problem of race**  
**Sandra Young, University of Cape Town**

The seminar's invitation to contemplate a 'provincial Shakespeare' offers an opportunity to reflect on the field's anxieties about race and racism. Imagined as 'provincial', Shakespeare is denied the elevation that accrues to the 'universal' and the 'cosmopolitan'. The refusal to shelter Shakespeare from universalist claims might help to bring into view racist erasures, as is evident in an exchange between Amitav Ghosh and Dipesh Chakrabarty regarding the racist occlusions that lie behind cultural universalisms. Ghosh's observation that there is a silence around race in Chakrabarty's appreciation of aspects of humanism's ideals generates a response from Chakrabarty that is instructive for an inquiry into the revisionist possibilities that accompany the recognition of

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Shakespeare's provinciality. In a genial written exchange between the two writers, Ghosh seeks Chakrabarty's acknowledgement of the racism that lay at the heart of the humanism celebrated in the Enlightenment and the liberalism it yielded. But for Chakrabarty the ambivalence surrounding Enlightenment humanism derives from the 'tension between the universal applicability that it claims for itself and the unacknowledged racism that runs through it'. It is this relationship between the claim of universality and the silent racism it shields that Chakrabarty's project seeks to correct, in its call for the 'provincializing' of Europe. Though Ghosh would seek a more forthright analytic that names racist strands within intellectual history, Chakrabarty's approach locates the deleterious effects of Enlightenment humanism in the universality it claims, which renders Europe's racialized 'elsewheres' outside of humanism's field of vision. Given the historical association of Shakespeare with a partisan notion of 'universality', Shakespeare studies has much to gain from expanding the vocabulary with which to examine the politics of these inheritances and their relations of scale.