

Sommersemester 2021

Zeno Ackermann / Catrin Gersdorf

Seminar (# WueOnline):

Transatlantic Shakespeares

Interpretations and Adaptations of 'the Bard' in between American and British Culture

Combining American and British Studies, the seminar will aim for a 'stereoscopic' investigation of 'Shakespeare's' shifting cultural, social and political positioning. We will discuss *The Tempest*, *Henry V*, a brief selection of sonnets, and *Romeo and Juliet*. Our main emphasis, however, will not be on close readings of the Shakespearean canon. Rather, we will focus on how that canon – and the figure of 'Shakespeare' in general – has come to be differently constructed, received and functionalized in or between American and British cultural contexts, from the beginning of the twentieth century until the present day.

The topics of discussion will include: the institutionalization of 'Shakespeare' as a mainstay of national culture and nationalist politics on both sides of the Atlantic; the mobilization of his works in times of war; their popularization or transformation on tv and in other commercial media; and the re-writing of Shakespearean plots in contemporary literature, especially in Margaret Atwood's 2016 novel *Hag Seed*, an adaptation of *The Tempest* set in present-day Canada and provocatively commenting on 'prison Shakespeare.' Seminar discussions will also provide insights into the ideological flexibility of academic Shakespeare scholarship. In these ways, we will set out to critically investigate both: partial appropriations of 'Shakespeare' and grand claims for his universal significance.

In the course of the seminar, participants will compile a portfolio (c. 20 pp.); apart from regular seminar contributions (reading responses etc.), each portfolio will include a short project-related scholarly essay.

GENERAL INTRODUCTORY READING

a) Please 'brush up your Shakespeare,' before the beginning of the seminar, here are some important suggestions:

- Plays and poems by Shakespeare, especially *The Tempest*
 - John Sutherland, "The Bard: Shakespeare," *A Little History of Literature* (New Haven, CT: Yale UP, 2013) 40-46. [Accessible online via UBW.]
 - Stephen Greenblatt, "General Introduction," *The Norton Shakespeare*, ed. Greenblatt et al. (New York: Norton, 1997) 1-76.
- ➔ This is probably still the best comprehensive introduction to 'Shakespeare.' If reading the entire text should be too much, certain sections can be picked according to special interests or requirements.

- b) *In addition, participants should do some introductory reading and browsing on the topic of 'Shakespeare' in Britain and the USA. To get started, please see the seminar plan as well as the selected bibliography.*
- c) Obtain a copy of Margaret Atwood, *Hag Seed* (2016), The Hogarth Shakespeare Series (please read until 15/06).

SEMINAR PLAN

AR = Assigned reading // FR = Further reading

20/04 Introduction:

Transatlantic Shakespeare

AR:

- Sujata Iyengar and Miriam Emma Jacobson, "Introduction," *The Routledge Handbook of Shakespeare and Global Appropriation*, ed. Christy Desmet, Sujata Iyengar and Miriam Emma Jacobson (Abingdon: Routledge, 2020) 1-11. [Available online.]
- Marx, Leo. "Shakespeare's American Fable," *The Machine in the Garden: Technology and the Pastoral Ideal in America* (1964; New York: Oxford UP, 2000) 34-72.

27/04 Shakespeare's 'transatlantic' (?) play and its reception:

The Tempest

AR:

- Shakespeare, *The Tempest*
(Any reliable edition of the text will do; the text in *The Norton Shakespeare* or in the respective volume of *The Arden Shakespeare* is recommended)
- Stephen Greenblatt, "The Tempest," introduction to the play in *The Norton Shakespeare*, ed. Greenblatt et al. (New York: Norton, 1997) 3047-3054.
- Hawkes, Terence. "Swisser Swatter: Making a Man of English Letters." *Alternative Shakespeares*. Ed. John Drakakis. 2nd ed. London: Routledge, 2002. 26–47.

04/05 Institutionalizing/Commercializing Shakespeare (On both sides of the pond)

AR:

- Advertising Shakespeare / Shakespearean advertising: Arts Council of Great Britain, ed., *The Shakespeare Exhibition: 1564 – 1964: Stratford-upon-Avon, Edinburgh, London* (London: Arts Council of Great Britain, 1964).
→ PRESENTATION
- Barbara Hodgdon and Jenny Whybrow. "The Stratford Shakespeare Trade." *The Cambridge Guide to the Worlds of Shakespeare*. Ed. Bruce R. Smith et al. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2016. 1241-1249.

- Michael D. Bristol, "The Folger Shakespeare Library," *The Cambridge Guide to the Worlds of Shakespeare*, ed. Bruce R. Smith et al. (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2016) 1207-1212.

FR:

- Yu Jin Ko, "American Shakespeare Festivals," *Shakespeare in American Life*, ed. Virginia Mason Vaughan (Washington, DC: Folger Shakespeare Library, 2007) 89-99.

18/05 **Shakespearean nationalisms**

AR:

- Walter Raleigh, "Shakespeare and England," British Academy Lecture, 1918.
- Alden T. Vaughan and Virginia Mason Vaughan, "Making Shakespeare American," *Shakespeare in America* (New York: Oxford UP, 2012).

FR:

- John J. Joughin, ed. *Shakespeare and National Culture* (Manchester: Manchester UP, 1997) – esp. "Shakespeare, National Culture and the Lure of Transnationalism" (269-294).
- Monika Smialkowska, "Tercentenary Shakespeare: Britain and the United States, 1916," *The Cambridge Guide to the Worlds of Shakespeare*, ed. Bruce R. Smith et al. (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2016) 1107-1114.

01/06 **New Shakespeares, new attitudes**

AR:

- Linda Colley, "Shakespeare and the Limits of National Culture," lecture presented at Royal Holloway, University of London, 3 March 1998, Hayes Robinson Lecture Series No.2 (Egham: Royal Holloway, 1999). [C. 20 pp.]
- Douglas Lanier, "Jazzing Up Shakespeare," *Shakespeare in American Life*, ed. Virginia Mason Vaughan and Alden T. Vaughan (Washington, DC: Folger Shakespeare Library, 2007) 77-87.

08/06 **Popularizing Shakespeare / Educating the audience?**

TV and the 'Shakespeare Code'

AR:

- ❖ Charles Palmer (dir.) and Gareth Roberts (script), "The Shakespeare Code", *Doctor Who*, 2007; *Doctor Who: The Complete Third Series*, BBC 2007, Disc 2, Episode 2.
→ PRESENTATION

FR:

- Susan Willis, *The BBC Shakespeare Plays: Making the Televised Canon* (Chapel Hill: U of North Carolina P, 1991) – see esp. "Transatlantic Shakespeare" (58-76).

15/06 **Retelling Shakespeare (on neutral territory?):
A Canadian *Tempest* in the Hogarth Shakespeare Series**

AR:

- Margaret Atwood, *Hag Seed* (2016), The Hogarth Shakespeare Series.

PRESENTATION on the Hogarth Shakespeare Series

22.06 **Love, after all? – *Romeo and Juliet***

AR:

- Shakespeare, *Romeo and Juliet*
- Stephen Greenblatt, "Romeo and Juliet," introduction to the play in *The Norton Shakespeare*, ed. Greenblatt et al. (New York: Norton, 1997) 865-871.

29.06 **Bringing it all back home:
Gender, Ethnicity (and popular music) in transatlantic Julias and Romeos**

→ Participants' project PRESENTATIONS on:

- ❖ *West Side Story* (first production of the musical: 1957 / film: 1961)
- ❖ Baz Luhrmann, dir., *William Shakespeare's Romeo + Juliet* (1996).
- ❖ John Madden, dir., *Shakespeare in Love* (1998)

FR:

- Irene G. Dash, "The Challenge of Tragedy: *West Side Story* and *Romeo and Juliet*." *Shakespeare in American Life*, ed. Virginia Mason Vaughan (Washington, DC: Folger Shakespeare Library, 2007) 63-74.

06/07 **Conclusion: (A new) Shakespearean universalism?**

AR:

- Jonathan Bate, "The Laws of the Shakespearean Universe," *The Genius of Shakespeare* (1998; London: Picador, 2008) 294-340.

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Bate, Jonathan. *The Genius of Shakespeare*. 1998. Second edition. London: Picador, 2008. Bristol, Michael D. *Shakespeare's America, America's Shakespeare*. London: Routledge, 1990.
- Bate, Jonathan, Dora Thornton and Becky Allen. *Shakespeare's Britain*. London: British Museum, 2012.
- Dash, Irene G. "The Challenge of Tragedy: *West Side Story* and *Romeo and Juliet*." *Shakespeare in American Life*. Ed. Virginia Mason Vaughan and Alden T. Vaughan. Washington, DC: Folger Shakespeare Library, 2007. 63-74.
- Della Gatta, Carla. "Shakespeare, Race and 'Other' Englishes: The Q Brothers' *Othello: The Remix*." *Shakespeare Survey* 71 (2018): 74-87.
- Desmet, Christy, Sujata Iyengar and Miriam Emma Jacobson, eds. *The Routledge Handbook of Shakespeare and Global Appropriation*. Abingdon: Routledge, 2020. [Available online through UBW.]
- Garber, Marjorie B. *Shakespeare and Modern Culture*. New York: Anchor Books, 2008.
- Joughin, John J., ed. *Shakespeare and National Culture*. Manchester: Manchester UP, 1997.
- Ko, Yu Jin. "American Shakespeare Festivals." *Shakespeare in American Life*. Ed. Virginia Mason Vaughan and Alden T. Vaughan. Washington, DC: Folger Shakespeare Library, 2007. 89-99.
- Lanier, Douglas M. "Jazzing Up Shakespeare." *Shakespeare in American Life*. Ed. Virginia Mason Vaughan and Alden T. Vaughan. Washington, DC: Folger Shakespeare Library, 2007. 77-87.
- Levine, Lawrence W. "William Shakespeare in America." *Highbrow / Lowbrow: The Emergence of Cultural Hierarchy in America*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1988. 11-81.
- Maley, Willy, and Margaret Tudeau-Clayton, eds. *This England, that Shakespeare: New Angles on Englishness and the Bard*. Farnham: Ashgate, 2010.
- Shapiro, James, ed. *Shakespeare in America: An Anthology from the Revolution to Now*. New York: The Library of America, 2013.
- Shapiro, James. *Shakespeare in a Divided America*. London: Faber & Faber, 2020.
- Smith, Bruce R., et al., eds. *The Cambridge Guide to the Worlds of Shakespeare*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2016.
- Sturgess, Kim C. *Shakespeare and the American Nation*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2004.
- Vaughan, Alden T., and Virginia Mason Vaughan, *Shakespeare in America*. New York: Oxford UP, 2012.
- Vaughan, Virginia Mason, and Alden T. Vaughan, eds., *Shakespeare in American Life*. Washington, DC: Folger Shakespeare Library, 2007.