Keynotes

K.01
Macbeth Visits Manipur: Merging of Politics and Indigenous Performance Traditions in Manipuri Shakespeare

Shormishtha Panja

This presentation deals with two *Macbeth* performances in the north-eastern state of Manipur in India, one by Ratan Thiyam, the other by Lokendra Arambam. The discussion of these performances is embedded in an analysis of the rich and complex indigenous pre-colonial, pre -Hindu and Hindu myths and performance protocols of Manipur. The myths encompass a circular rather than linear view of history and foreground a close relation between nature and human beings. The performance protocols of Lai Haraoba (worship of ancestors), Nata Sankirtana (musical and dramatic performances about the Hindu God Krishna and his paramour Radha), Shumang Leela (politically charged dramatic performance by cross-dressed men) and the martial art of Thang Ta establish a completely new language and emotional choreography for the Shakespeare text. Thiyam and Arambam express political criticism of the neo-colonial energies of the Indian state through their interpretation of *Macbeth* and break out of the shackles of the western proscenium stage by staging a play, magically, on water.

K.02
Oceanic Fathers: Othello and the Work of Voice

Jason Allen-Paisant

In “Oceanic Fathers: Othello and the Work of Voice”, Jason Allen-Paisant will bring together psychoanalytic and critical theory, and lived artistic practice, to rethink what it means to inhabit Shakespeare’s most charged role. Drawing on *Self-Portrait as Othello*, he explores how Othello has functioned not only as a theatrical character but as a symbolic demand placed on Black performance: a role asked to stabilize European ideas of law, authority, masculinity, and coherence. Against psychoanalytic traditions that presume a universal paternal order, the lecture asks what happens when that symbolic anchor is historically absent or violently foreclosed, as it has been for Black life shaped by slavery, colonial rupture, and diasporic dislocation. Returning to Othello through this lens, the lecture traces how Black performance invents other ways of organizing meaning and survival: through sound, breath, prayer, song, mysticism, and what Allen-Paisant calls a *training of feeling*. Looking at Shakeskeare’s play through these alternative epistemologies, the talk reframes performance not as representation alone, but as endurance under pressure — a mode of self-making and speaking that comes to life when inherited grammars fail.

K.03
Stellar Shakespeare

Piero Boitani

We begin with the discovery of Uranus in 1781 and of its (so far) twenty-nine moons in the period of time between 1786 and 2025. Six of these were named after characters in Pope’s

Rape of the Lock; but the remaining twenty-three after characters in Shakespeare's plays, from Miranda to Juliet, Portia, and Rosalind. What does this shift from classical mythology (dominating up to the names of Saturn's satellites) to the Shakespearean imaginaire mean? Instead of answering this question I move via Hamlet, who becomes a star only in the twentieth century, to stars in some of Shakespeare's plays, namely in Hamlet, Romeo and Juliet, and The Merchant of Venice, and explore the way in which astronomy and astrology – in the form of a cosmic view, a topos and the paradigm of human destiny, finally a Nocturne and the music of the spheres, determine the ultimate direction and meaning of a play. This constitutes a first, more traditional way, in which Shakespeare is stellar. But there may be a second, more innovative, one – that of applying astro-criticism to the study of his plays and his characters. I pick up the question left unanswered earlier and make a few suggestions, ending with a German surprise.

Planetary Roundtables

L.01
Expending Spirit: Energy and Waste

Dympna Callaghan, Todd Andrew Borlik, Sophie Chiari, Chloe Preedy, Charlotte Scott

This plenary roundtable addresses ecologically dynamic relationship between energy and waste suggested, for example, by Shakespeare's Sonnet 129 : "Th'expense of spirit in a waste of shame." There, spirit or energia is spent without any hope of a (re)productive outcome, while in the wake of this morally bankrupt expenditure of energy, shame paradoxically constitutes the "waste" product of this activity, the discernable trace of what has been squandered. Waste sometimes bespeaks moral recklessness, but it can also register a system of value, whereby what is despised and discarded may fuel new poetic and material energies. At the intersection of Shakespeare studies and climate criticism, we explore multiple ideas of "waste" from the toxic emotional consequences of coitus to the environmental waste and degradation, the fog and filth, of willfully ravaged landscapes to the aporia and void of "the dead waste and middle of the night" (Hamlet) – all of which are key dimensions of the Shakespearean ecosystem.

L.02
From Fair Verona to the Great Globe Itself: Romeo and Juliet and the Reformation of Cultural Traditions

Mark Bayer, Carla Della Gatta, Taarini Mookherjee, Jyotsna G. Singh, Mark Thornton Burnett, Yukari Yoshihara

At the end of the play, the Prince holds out some meagre hope that the death of the young lovers might prove an impetus to repair Verona's social institutions—the same ossified traditions and grudges that led to the tragedy. The widely diverse productions canvassed in this roundtable are perhaps more auspicious about the play's ability to foment amelioratory cultural change. Our papers suggest that adaptations of what is likely Shakespeare's most familiar play in very distinct regions have served a recuperative function throughout the world, that there is something about the story of this localized ancient grudge that resonates with global audiences

and serves as a catalyst to develop, reimagine, or reform cultural traditions and institutions, whether theatrical, cinematic, national, or social. Many of the adaptations addressed in this panel retell the story through the innovative interplay of image, music, and text. How do these forms of representation converse and cross-fertilize? How can we ethically register site-specific adaptations that traverse digital, multimedia, and acoustic categories? What is the effect of such generic crossings, and how do they bear witness to the leverage of Shakespearean adaptation across time and space? In addressing these issues, we demonstrate the valences of a work which, in its myriad iterations, has consistently shown itself hospitable to speaking to social responsibility, the institutional faces of sexuality, identity formation, civic behaviors, commercial enterprise, confessional differences, and intra-ethnic conflicts. Our papers suggest that there is indeed something prescient about the story of Verona's tragic lovers, capable of producing tangible reform not within the world of the play, but in real-world environments, but only after it is transplanted and transformed into vastly different indigenous settings. This roundtable, therefore, is not just about some compelling adaptions of Romeo and Juliet, but more importantly about what these adaptations have wrought: whether a durable set of commercial theatrical institutions in Cairo; consternation over nationally-driven technology in Japan; alteration in the heavy classical theatre training of actors in Puerto Rico and Cuba; a conduit for social commentary in Indian films; or imagining new possibilities for female same-sex desire in the Philippine cinema. Theorizing adaptation practices, problematizing Shakespeare's hegemony in non-white cultures, and attending to the nuances of translation in foreign Shakespeares are all conversations that have contributed greatly to our field. This roundtable wishes to shift the focus away from what it means to adapt Shakespeare to advance a conversation on what adaptation of Shakespeare means for planetary cultural traditions, especially as these institutions develop and take on a life of their own, their Shakespearean progeny gradually falling away. By placing these discrete locations in conversation, we seek to interrogate how a play that is premised on division has served as a stimulus for reform—and perhaps, healing—within each culture. Limiting the scope to Romeo and Juliet, a singular play with a rich production history, facilitates a methodology that enables a tighter focus not usually available in broader studies of Shakespearean adaptation, and one that aligns with sociological and anthropological practices of cultural comparison.

L.03
Thinking through Shakespeare: Rethinking Shakespeare's (Re)sources

Silvia Bigliazzi, Sukanta Chaudhuri, Tania Demetriou, Hannibal Hamlin, Rob Henke, Atsuhiko Hirota, Jason Lawrence, Sonia Massai, Peter G. Platt, Janice Valls-Russell

Shakespeare's Sources: Texts, Ideas, Horizons is a large-scale, collaborative research project that reimagines how we understand Shakespeare's engagement with the textual and cultural worlds of early modern Europe. Moving beyond traditional models of source study that privilege linear influence or direct textual borrowing, the project investigates the wide and often unpredictable circulation of stories, ideas, genres, and discourses that shaped Shakespeare and his contemporaries. It approaches "sources" not as fixed points of origin but as part of a dynamic field of cultural memory, mediation, and reception. At the heart of the project is a fifteen-volume book series, each volume devoted to a specific literary, intellectual, or cultural domain—from classical drama, epic, and historiography to law, religion, philosophy, geography, and the arts. Across the series, carefully selected texts are presented in accessible modern English and framed by detailed introductions, annotations, and newly commissioned

critical essays by leading international scholars. Rather than isolating texts as Shakespeare's direct precursors, the volumes reconstruct the broader horizons of expectation within which Shakespeare read, wrote, and transformed inherited materials. Complementing the print series is an integrated digital platform that extends the project's reach and flexibility. This online resource offers expanded textual archives, cross-searchable metadata, and tools for comparative and interdisciplinary research, allowing the project to remain open, evolving, and responsive to new scholarship. Together, the project's print and digital components invite readers to encounter Shakespeare as a cultural participant embedded in a richly interconnected textual ecosystem—one defined not by singular origins, but by circulation, adaptation, and creative exchange.

Panels

P01.
Asian Shakespeares

Organisers: Vanessa Lim, Yilin Chen, Yi-Hsin Hsu

This session is a joint proposal for WSC by the "Taiwan Shakespeare Association" (TSA) and the "Shakespeare Association of Korea" (SAK). This session aims to contribute to WSC's "Planetary Shakespeares" project by discussing how Shakespeare's plays are explored from Asian perspectives. The (South)-Eastern Asian nations have been heavily contested loci of colonial politics—their languages, histories, and cultural translations are always matters of political negotiations and adaptations. This session explores how Shakespeare in cultural translation ignited cultural debates in Asia. Prof. Yi-Hsin Hsu is now the president of TSA, and surprisingly, this Taiwanese scholar discusses the modern post-colonial history of Korea via Shakespeare. Through her philological studies of modern Korean newspapers such as *Dong-A Ilbo*, *Chosun Ilbo*, and *Sisa Shinmun*, her study reveals that while Shakespeare was often viewed as a symbol of Westernization and modernization, he simultaneously exercised significance as a voice for the weak and the oppressed. This argument is convincing, given that she discusses Shakespeare's politics in terms of the discourse of national self- determination. Prof. Vanessa Lim discusses *Chicken Rice War*, a mesmerizing Singaporean comic adaptation of *Romeo and Juliet*. Her talk discusses how this Singaporean adaptation "interrogates and destabilizes the prestige of Shakespeare" in a Singaporean view— particularly through its use of "acrolectal, mesolectal, and basilectal Singaporean English and Cantonese." Her presentation, after all, raises the issue of politics in cultural translation. Finally, Yilin Chen's presentation examines Shakespeare's *magnum opus*, *Hamlet*, through an Asian religious philosophy. She argues that Buddhist thoughts offer successful alternatives and answers to Hamlet's inner turmoil, pain, and anxiety coming from uncertainty. This Shakespearean encounter with Eastern religion sparks Hamlet's deeper reflection on the nature of existence and his own consciousness.

Towards Self-Determination: Shakespeare Reception and the Voice of the Weak in Colonial Korea (Yi-Hsin Hsu)
This study explores the reception of Shakespeare in colonial Korea by focusing on how Shakespeare and his works became engaged with the discourse of national self- determination. Analyzing primary sources from newspapers such as Dong-A Ilbo, Chosun Ilbo, and Sisa

Shinmun, this paper reveals that while Shakespeare was often viewed as a symbol of Westernization and modernization, he simultaneously exerted deeper significance as a voice for the oppressed. Shakespeare's status as a revered literary figure transcended his Western origins and offered Korean intellectuals a model for both cultural progress and resistance to colonial oppression. In this context, Shakespeare's works served as a means of fostering enlightenment and as a mouthpiece for the weak.

Shakespeare in Singapore: *Romeo and Juliet* and *Chicken Rice War* (2000) (Vanessa Lim)
The 2000 romantic comedy *Chicken Rice War* reframes *Romeo and Juliet* in a distinctly Singaporean context with two rival families competing over the business of selling the nationally-beloved dish of chicken rice. Through a college production of *Romeo and Juliet*, Fenson and Audrey meet, fall in love, and reconcile their families, turning Shakespeare's tragedy into a light-hearted comedy. This paper not only reads *Chicken Rice War* as a Shakespearean adaptation, but also explores how it interrogates and destabilizes the prestige of Shakespeare in a Singaporean context, particularly through its use of acrolectal, mesolectal, and basilectal Singaporean English and Cantonese.

Hamlet Meets the Buddha: From "To Be or Not to Be" to "Being" (Yilin Chen)
This essay proposes that Hamlet's soliloquy serves as a meditation on consciousness, applying Buddhist teachings to his search for self and the concept of "being" from mindfulness practice. Shakespeare invites audiences to confront profound human anxieties, illustrating how the mind grapples with complex existential dilemmas. As Hamlet contemplates "to be" (to live) or "not to be" (to die), he explores the essence of authentic existence, questioning what it means to live when life is filled with suffering and doubt. Trapped in his mind, Hamlet's struggle reflects the Buddhist concept of suffering caused by attachment and uncertainty.

P02.
Comedians Sans Frontieres:
Theatre Beyond Borders in Early Modern Europe

Organisers: Laurie Johnson, Elizabeth E. Tavares

Studies of Shakespeare and English theatre history have long had a tendency to reinforce national delineations of one dramatic heritage from any others. Yet as Johan Huizinga pointed out in *Homo Ludens* (1938), Western Civilization and its various formations such as cultures or nations are "sub specie ludi," that is, they come after play (173). Accordingly, playing in its various forms represents a pre-cultural field of exchange. Within recent studies of London playhouse culture, the idea that "a play" was a self-contained unit of dramatic entertainment has begun to erode. From puppetry to acrobatics, fencing to flyting, the leisure marketplace of early modern England comprised a wide range of options beyond drama. The overlap of playhouses with animal baiting arenas has long been presupposed but we now acknowledge that many other kinds of entertainments also competed and collaborated in these spaces. Playgoers could also take in penmanship and archery contests, watch stilt walkers and plate spinners, and participate in a game of chance or bowling. Dancing and rope-dancing performances by international troupes including women or trainers working alongside horses and baboons could be taken in for a small fee. These activities were sometimes embedded in plays through scenes of combat, gaming, or dancing, but were not contained by the expectations of stage drama.
The traffic between plays and other performance practices illustrates an entertainment environment defined by exchange, multiplicity, and an unstable line between representational

and presentational forms of theater. The same is true when extended well beyond the city walls of London. Performers and theatre-makers of all kinds routinely toured the countryside but then also crossed international borders, and may have even been traded as a sign of the Renaissance princely ideal. Considering the variety and complexity of early modern entertainment types and places provides an opportunity to reassess the concomitant, imbricated role of theatre within the wider leisure industry, particularly the ways in which itineracy facilitated modes of artistic engagement beyond mere "contact" between the cultures or communities of a single national polity.

To examine a range of perspectives on play as a site of exchange and inter-play, this panel brings together scholars working across performance-based entertainment media—and themselves from different subject positions, career stages, and parts of the globe—to complicate the impact of different European performance traditions on the evolution of early English drama. By decentering drama as but one part of a complex ecosystem of victualling, hospitality, and leisure, as well as England as an implicit nexus of theatrical innovation, we hope to enliven a cross-disciplinary conversation exploring theatricality, entertainment, and the notion of "play".

Lines of inquiry raised in this panel include:

— playing as a bridge between national contexts;
— itineracy and international touring, official and otherwise;
— collaboration between troupes from different national origins;
— travel and/as performance;
— varieties of play as modes of transgression.

Borders and Confessions: English Players in the Holy Roman Empire (Hana Ferencová)

While in Renaissance England the theatre was a highly developed entertainment industry, in Germany, English acting companies were entering a field that, at the time, was still in its infancy. Consequently, the theatre was conveyed to them in a modified form, reflecting the different cultural, and religious contexts. The paper focuses on the travels of English players through the Holy Roman Empire from a confessional perspective ca. 1590s–1650s. The objective is to identify the strategies employed by English touring companies to overcome religious boundaries in the confessionally divided Germany and to discuss the audience's perceptions of their performances.

"Com'st thou to beard me in Denmark?" – Playing as Englishmen and Strangers (Laurie Johnson)

A sense of dislocation marks Hamlet's greeting to the players who have come not just to Elsinore but to Denmark. These evidently border-hopping players provide a tangible connection to those members of Shakespeare's own company who had travelled to Germany with the Earl of Leicester in 1586, were gifted to King Frederick of Denmark and then sent to serve the Elector of Saxony. This paper considers player identity when, within England, provincial touring companies were defined in law as "foreigners or strangers," but when they crossed borders while travelling in Europe they did so as "English" players.

From No-Body to Niemand: English Comedians and the Affordances of Site-Specificity (Ann-Sophie Bosshard)

On 12 February 1608, a group of English Comedians performed the play Niemand und Jemand, based on the unattributed English No-Body, and Some-Body, at the Habsburg Court in Graz. Extraordinarily, the German adaptation has survived as a manuscript and offers unique insights into the English Comedians' performance practices. This paper considers how the English Comedians tailored the play to their specific performance context and thereby prompted the

Graz audience to cognitively and affectively engage with and respond to the play. Site-specificity thus emerges as a dynamic theatrical practice, employed by English theatre-makers across cultural and linguistic boundaries.

Moving Metaphors: Tumbling in and across Early Modern Europe (Elizabeth E. Tavares)
Wending through a London bedecked, Mary I and Philip II were interrupted by a rope-dancer. With streamers ablaze, Peter the Dutchman sailed down from St. Paul's weathervane with a series of risky somersaults to the surprise of the 1553 nuptial train. A "feat of activity" associated with women and international performers, tumbling was a feature of English Court, civic, and fair-going culture. This paper develops a history of tumbling in England as part of a Europe-wide re-interest in Olympic sports. Exploring the appeals of their dramaturgy affords a reconsideration of state-sponsored traveling theatre troupes across international borders and gendered boundaries.

P03.
Shakespeare and 'Asiatic' Style

Organisers: Robert Stagg, Goran Stanivukovic

This panel will think anew about scholarly descriptions of a 'Global Shakespeare' by considering aspects of Shakespeare's style, from rhetoric to diction to metaphor. How was Shakespeare's style informed by the world beyond England, and even beyond Europe? How much was Shakespeare a (consciously) worldly writer? Both papers will focus on the classical and early modern phenomenon of 'Asiatic' style as a way to further focus and address these questions.

'Asiatic' Style and the Mediterranean Tragedy (Goran Stanivukovic)
This paper argues that stylistic and rhetorical properties in the tragedies of Shakespeare, Marlowe and Peele exhibit what Cicero describes as the 'Asiatic' way of writing: verbal redundancy and lack of concision. This paper will contend that the (re-)emergence of 'Asiatic' style in Marlowe's plays was motivated by the politics of the eastern, and especially Ottoman, Mediterranean. It will explore how George Peele imitates a Marlovian 'Asiatic' style in *The Battle of Alcazar*, and then how 'Asiatic' style is critiqued for excess and ostentation in *Othello* and *Antony and Cleopatra* (while at the same time being a source of pleasure for readers and audiences).

Shakespeare and 'Asiatic' Style: a Response (Robert Stagg)
This paper will serve as a response to the precedent paper. How did the discussion of 'Asiatic' speech in Thomas North's translation of Plutarch's *Lives* inform the style of *Antony and Cleopatra*? How useful is 'Asiatic' style as a critical phenomenon, both in its classical heyday and in the early modern period? Can we talk of Shakespeare's 'worldly' style, in the double sense of it having been affected by the extra-European world and it having been conscious of, even cosmopolitan about, that world? Is 'Asiatic' style a tragic, or anyway specifically generic, phenomenon in its early modern revival / continuation? And how do we reconcile, if we can, the pleasure and disdain that an 'Asiatic' style evidently prompted in its classical and early modern respondents?

P04.
Ecophilia and Ecophobia in Shakespeare's *Hamlet* from the Global South

Organisers: Murat Öğütcü, Amrita Sen

The difference between ecophilia and ecophobia lies in the contrasting attitudes towards nature and the environment. Ecophilia refers to a deep love and appreciation for the natural world, leading to a desire to protect and preserve it. On the other hand, ecophobia is characterized by a fear or aversion towards nature, often stemming from a lack of understanding or negative experiences. By exploring the intersection of ecophilia, ecophobia, and literary adaptations of *Hamlet* from the Global South, we can gain a deeper understanding of how cultural perspectives shape our relationship with the environment. While Metin Erksan's Kadın *Hamlet* showcases nature as a claustrophobic entity, Vishal Bhardwaj's Haider focuses on the destruction of nature by the forces of capitalism and terror, and Varouzh Karim-Masihi's Tardid illustrates how nature resists human-made corruption. Therefore, this panel will explore how Turkish, Iranian and Indian adaptations confront the eco-crisis. This panel will try to explore the following questions:

- How do the concepts of ecophilia and ecophobia manifest in contemporary film adaptations of *Hamlet* from the Global South?
- In what ways does Shakespeare's work serve as a platform for exploring ecological themes in adaptations from the Global South?
- What role does nature play in shaping the characters' identities in Metin Erksan's Kadın *Hamlet*?
- How does the portrayal of Kashmir in the film Haider challenge traditional notions of paradise and reflect the intersection of ecological destruction and socio-political turmoil?
- How does nature affect the conceptualisation of human-made corruption in Tardid?
- How can adaptations of *Hamlet* from different cultural contexts provide insight into global ecological issues?
- What are the implications of the eco-crisis for the ways we interpret Shakespeare's texts in modern adaptations?
- How does Shakespeare's adaptability across cultures highlight the universality of human experiences concerning nature?
- What messages can be derived from the contrasting portrayals of nature in Kadın Hamlet, Haider and Tardid?
- In what ways do the ecological themes in these adaptations prompt discussions about community and care?
- How can the concept of ecophilia be seen in the actions of characters in these adaptations?
- What significance does the setting hold in shaping the narrative of the said adaptations, and how does it reflect the characters' emotional states?
- How can the exploration of ecological themes in Shakespeare adaptations contribute to a broader understanding of the eco-crisis we face today?

All in all, when we examine adaptations of Shakespeare's *Hamlet* from the Global South, conflicting and co-existing attitudes towards nature shed new light onto current studies on ecophilia and ecophobia.

Eco-claustrophobia in Erksan's Kadın *Hamlet* (Murat Öğütcü)
In Metin Erksan's Kadın *Hamlet* (1976), also known as *Female Hamlet* or the *Angel of Vengeance*, nature is portrayed as a phenomenon that entraps individuals rather than offering solace. The film explores how the characters are confined by their natural surroundings, highlighting the claustrophobic nature of the forest. This surreal adaptation intertwines themes of intergenerational power struggles and questions of action and inaction within the upper class of rural society. Metin Erksan's Kadın *Hamlet* delves into the complex relationship between humanity and the natural world, showcasing how individuals can disrupt the tranquillity of nature through their own conflicts and struggles.

***Haider*: Conflict and Ecological Crisis (Amrita Sen)**
The film *Haider* (2014) directed by Vishal Bhardwaj adapts Shakespeare's *Hamlet* and is set against the backdrop of Kashmir, historically lauded as a paradise. While Kashmir was once celebrated for its natural beauty in literature and mainstream cinema, Bhardwaj's portrayal starkly contrasts this idyllic image, revealing a landscape marred by terrorism and counter-insurgency. The film visually represents this transformation, showcasing once-romanticized locations now stained by violence and despair. The Jhelum river, once a symbol of beauty, is depicted as a site of horror. Through its narrative, *Haider* critiques the socio-political turmoil in Kashmir, illustrating how ecological destruction reflects broader themes of capitalism and terror.

Nature and Corruption in Tardid (Parviz Partovi)
In *Doubt* (Tardid, 2009), the director Varouzh Karim-Masihi reimagines Shakespeare's *Hamlet* within a contemporary Iranian context, featuring a distinctively proactive Ophelia named Mahtab. The narrative follows Siavash, the Hamlet figure, grappling with his father's mysterious suicide and haunted by his father's ghost during a Baluchi Zar ritual. As Siavash struggles with inaction and doubt, Mahtab intervenes, challenging the traditional portrayal of women in early modern English and contemporary Persian cultures by taking charge of her destiny and motivating Siavash to confront his challenges. Throughout the film, nature communicates via natural elements such as wind, and thunder, the character Mahtab (which means the light of the moon), and Baluchi people dressed in white whose tribal life directly involves nature. Nature is an active character throughout the film, symbolising truth and resistance against corruption, with the story beginning and ending in natural settings reflecting the characters' emotional turmoil and eventual quest for balance.

P05.
Fostering Critical Hope: Creative Engagements with Shakespeare in Times of Environmental and Political Crisis

Organisers: Gretchen Minton, Kirsten Sandrock, Sandy Young

Contemporary cultural productions adapt, rewrite, and trouble Shakespeare for many reasons. This panel examines cultural productions that turn to Shakespeare as a tool to think through the intersections of environmental crisis, socio-political injustice, war, planetary dispossession, migration, and indigenous knowledges. We examine the interconnections between the "new" realities of environmental, material, and socio-political crisis in late modernity and the early modern concerns that emerge in Shakespeare's works. We consider how contemporary literary and cultural productions set up a novel dialogue between Shakespeare and present-day audiences, enabling transhistorical perspectives on the present and the imagining of more just

futures. The panel probes the impact of creative practice in bearing witness to the intertwined realities of environmental and political crisis. The works under focus include a range of genres (new stagings of Shakespeare's plays, innovative adaptations, documentary films, and contemporary fiction that invokes Shakespeare in some way) and a range of political contexts beset by environmental crisis, cultural conflict and political turbulence, including Ukraine and Palestine. Guided by the creative innovations of the works, we seek to explore the parallel stories of anthrocide and ecocide. In what ways might the early modern works offer themselves as a resource for answering questions about the urgent concerns of "late" modernity, as the impact of centuries of extractionist degradation and colonialist exploitation manifests in climate crisis and political turmoil? We consider what Shakespeare might contribute to discussions of environmental crisis, migration, planetary dispossession, climate change, and socio-cultural hierarchies. How do creative practitioners work with Shakespeare to invite audiences and readers to engage with disturbing histories, bear witness to unfolding crises in the present, and imagine together a more just and sustainable future? Taking our lead from playwright Madeline Sayet who cautions, "Shakespeare … has become weighed down by the baggage of its performance history, instead of the possibility of its performance future," the panel thus explores how Shakespeare's works serve not only as historical backdrop to contemporary crises but also as active interlocutors for questions about environmental justice and the ongoing processes of war, dispossession and injustice. Fostering critical hope through creative engagagements with Shakespeare in contemporary culture is one of the ways in which Shakespeare may be conceived of as "planetary" in the twenty-first century.

Making our Ukraine Bleed: Reflections on Ecocide and Reclamation in Contemporary Shakespeare Adaptations (Gretchen Minton)

Max Webster's production of *Henry V* opened at the Donmar Warehouse shortly after Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2022. Webster's original aim to highlight the links between imperialism, masculinity, and ecocide inherent in *Henry V* thus gained urgency in the face of the war and its atrocities unfolding in real time. Reports listed not only massive human loss, but thousands of instances of ecosystem damage. Such a bleak picture of the loss of a country due to military destruction is evident in a documentary entitled *King Lear: How we looked for love during the war*, about a troupe of refugees who staged Lear in Uzhhorod, Ukraine and subsequently in Stratford-upon-Avon in 2024. As the director Viacheslav Yehorov repeatedly emphasized, "Although we are saddened by the events of this real-life tragedy, we have to live in hope, be strong and love." This paper will look at the ways in which these contemporary adaptations offer parallel stories of anthrocide and ecocide, while also using Shakespeare to reclaim a more just future founded upon a stewardship of "this best garden of the world".

Planetary Crises, Critical Hope: Shakespeare and Contemporary Dystopias (Kirsten Sandrock)

In an age of planetary crises, Shakespeare features surprisingly frequently as a vehicle to express hope in contemporary dystopias. Recent fiction repeatedly turns to Shakespeare as an interlocutor to negotiate different crises, including climate change, environmental disaster, pandemics, refugee experiences or socio-political hierarchies. This paper discusses how Shakespeare features in Emily St. John Mandel's *Station Eleven* (2014), John Lanchester's *The Wall* (2019), and Eleanor Catton's *Birnam Wood* (2023) to ask what kinds of dialogue the novels initiate between early and late modernity and how Shakespeare unites dystopian traditions with critical hope. Shakespeare functions not only as a bridge between past and present, but also as an interlocutor to negotiate the complex and frequently uneasy role literature and the arts play in our crisis-ridden culture.

What the Land Remembers: Contemporary Encounters with *Hamlet* from a Place of Dispossession and Outrage (Sandra Young)
Contemporary activist creatives continue to turn to *Hamlet* as a play with which to give expression to outrage and mourning in the wake of political violence. In a paper that reads Isabella Hammad's novel, *Enter Ghost* (2023), alongside the documentary, *The Village Under the Forest* (dir. Heidi Grunebaum, 2013), I reflect on the way in which the novel invokes Shakespeare's most widely travelled play as part of its work of witness. Inviting readers to imagine a bold staging in the West Bank, the novel draws *Hamlet* and his discontents into a contemporary Palestinian landscape, reminding readers as it does so that the landscape itself tells a story of dispossession and loss, and that the ecoviolence it is subjected to is intertwined with the dispossession of its people. The paper approaches the Palestinian landscape as a site of memory and forgetting, through an exploration of Hammad's imaginative rendering of a Palestinian Hamlet and his struggles.

P06.
Grounding Shakespeare, Responding to Ecological Crisis: Land, Soil, and the Inappropriable

Organisers: Randall Martin (chair), Daniel Vitkus, Carolyn Sale

How do we marshal Shakespeare to make his work available as a resource for helping humanity address our current state of deepening ecological crisis worldwide? To think in terms of the "planetary" as scholars of Shakespeare is to think of how we might interrogate the various cultural legacies that have played a part in creating a global state of ecological crisis—not just for humanity but for non-human nature. At the same time, it is to engage the question "what can be done?" as we face the impending and rapidly escalating threats of the climate emergency. How does our work with Shakespeare assist with this? How might our readings of the Shakespearean drama and other early modern literature help us address the crisis? What sort of approaches and methods might enable new ecocritical readings of literary texts that illuminate the long struggle to shield the Earth from harm and build a shared sociality supportive of more just orientations toward both human and non-human natures? How can our work as teachers and scholars help to shape a governing ethos for humanity and specific practices and institutions that may drive responses adequate to the scale of humanity's concatenating crises?
This panel seeks to ground our understandings of Shakespeare in new or newly urgent ways by showcasing the Shakespearean drama's orientation to land, soil, and an ethos of the inappropriable. How does the Shakespearean drama and other early modern literature represent and confront the material conditions and social developments in England during Shakespeare's lifetime that have contributed to our contemporary global ecological crisis? How does this work diagnose the problems, and how does it orient us to prospective solutions? Where might historical ways of thinking or historical ideas orient us, urgently and positively, to present concerns? How might a consideration of "the commons" in tension with exploitative individuality and private property help us now as we confront neoliberal power and its ecocidal economy?
The three talks engage with the important creative and critical opportunities that scholarship on Shakespeare brings to the urgent need for planetary responsibility and investigate some of the ideational obstacles, historic and current, that stand in the way of collective action to protect our planet. Daniel Vitkus will offer a paper about how Shakespeare's purchase of land in Stratford-upon-Avon, his leasing of tithes, and his activity as a "grain badger" provide a window into the early history of the commodification of the land and the exploitation of labor

that have culminated today in a world of agribusiness and food scarcity. Liz Oakley-Brown's talk argues that Shakespeare studies (broadly defined) have a key role in the difficult task of "communicating the crucial importance of soils to the public" today. And Carolyn Sale's talk on *As You Like It* will argue for the imperative of a new legal order of the inappropriable. In tandem, the panel's papers activate a dialectical synthesis of early modern contexts and present crises in order to propose radical reorientations to life on our planet.

Leasing the Land: Shakespeare, Property, Commodity (Daniel Vitkus)
With the wealth he accumulated as a sharer in the Globe Theater, Shakespeare purchased land in Stratford-upon-Avon, leased a right to collect local tithes there, and stockpiled large amounts of grain during times of scarcity. The archival record of these financial transactions provides a window into the early history of the commodification of the land and the exploitation of agrarian labor under early capitalism. The paper concludes by developing some fruitful connections between these transactions and the language used by Shakespeare to describe the land and the ways it was controlled and commodified by the landowning class that Shakespeare joined.

Shakespeare's Soil and Marlowe's Muck: *Timon of Athens*, All Ovid's *Elegies* and Safeguarding Planetary Surfaces (Liz Oakley-Brown)
As William Rueckert's 'first Law of Ecology' puts it, 'Everything is connected to everything else' ('Literature and Ecology : Experiment in Ecocriticism', 1978). With this principle in mind, my short comparative talk suggests that Shakespeare's play and Marlowe's poems are key texts for raising awareness of and acting against the global soil crisis. In so doing, 'Shakespeare's Soil and Marlowe's Muck' shows how Shakespeare Studies has a key role in the difficult task of 'communicating the crucial importance of soils to the public' today (Thinking with Soils: Material Politics and Social Theory, Granjou, Kearnes, Krzywoszynska, and M. Tironi (eds) 2020).

***As You Like It*, Ecological Crisis, and the Inappropriable (Carolyn Sale)**
This talk will focus on what is most optimistic about representations of the ecological in Shakespeare's drama. While much of the drama critically represents the problems of developments in the sixteenth century which permitted the expropriation of life-sustaining resources into fewer and fewer hands, *As You Like It*, especially through its melancholic Jaques, promotes, in a hopeful register, an ideology of the common, and, more specifically, the imperative of humanity's orientation to an ethos of non-appropriation or a logic of the inappropriable. Global orientation to this ethos will be essential to extricating humanity from our planetary state of ecological crisis.

P08.
Painted with Unnumber'd Sparks: Sign Language Translation Ideologies for Shakespeare's Works

Organisers: Andrew Morrill, Crom Saunders.
Chair: Crom Saunders
This panel will feature several presenters well versed in translating Shakespeare into sign language, specifically American Sign Language (ASL) and British Sign Language (BSL), discussing their respective approaches to translating Shakespeare's works for an audience that relies upon visual language rather than the spoken word.
Different ideologies and rationales will influence the choices made in translating text/performance into sign language, and the culture of theatre and the Deaf communities in

the U.S., Canada, and the UK will also be featured as factors to be considered in this field of study.
The variety of productions based upon Shakespeare's works may seem as numerous as the stars in a galaxy, and the sign language translations for each production is as unique as each star is, yet there is research in progress on how to take a more linguistic approach to translating Shakespeare for general consumption in sign language, rather than re-invent the wheel for each individual show performed from Shakespeare's canon and all its limitless adaptions. The presenters participating in this panel are all experienced in both the theoretical and practical aspects of sign language translation, and through their own experiences and expertise, have developed ideologies that reflect current attitudes in theatre inclusivity and diversity, the ever-changing nature of modern sign languages and the revered Early Modern form of Shakespeare's writing, and bridging the sociolinguistic gap between both. Some problems/issues the panelists will be addressing will include:

- The key to successful translation is rooted in idiomatic conveyance of the message, not an attempt to retain form. Yet Shakespeare's form is an integral part of experiencing his work; the language, meter, and imagery, not just the stories themselves. How then, can a visual language convey those elements in a way that will do Shakespeare's style justice and yet remain easily understandable for a Deaf patron who may or may not be at all familiar with Shakespeare's language?
- Sign languages are concept-based languages, not lexicon based. One sign can be used to equate any number of English synonyms, but given that Shakespeare incorporates a diverse range of vocabulary, including ones that were coined at the time of writing, what other aspects of sign language syntax, paralinguistics, and expression can be utilized to reflect the lexical depth of Shakespeare?
- Access to Shakespeare through sign language translation is relatively new on a global scale; in Italy, translating Shakespeare's plays into Italian Sign Language (LIS) has only been done within the last two decades. BSL translations did not begin in earnest until the 1970's, not too far behind ASL translations in the U.S., with the earliest documented ASL performance of Shakespearean text taking place in the 1950's. This means that interest in Shakespeare as a patron, scholar, or student has been historically proportionally lower in the Deaf community. How can the translation work and research being undertaken by the panelists and others in the field be disseminated effectively into the Deaf community, therefore increasing the contributions to this universe of language modality and access to Shakespeare's work?

The Epistemology of Silence: *Twelfth Night* in American Sign Language (Peter Novak)
This paper (with video examples) explores the planetary reach of Shakespeare through the unique medium of American Sign Language (ASL), highlighting how digital technology enables ASL to offer a four-dimensional reinterpretation of Twelfth Night. By examining the challenges and innovations in translating Shakespeare into ASL, this study underscores the intersection of language, technology, and cultural identity. The translation process, captured exclusively through film, not only expands Shakespeare's global accessibility but also challenges traditional notions of textual primacy, offering new avenues for understanding Shakespeare's relevance in a digitally connected, post-human world.

To Sign or Not to Sign: Translating Shakespeare into British Sign Language (BSL) (Janet Guest)
This paper discusses the intricate challenges of translating Shakespeare into a visual language. The translation process, while rewarding, can be daunting. This paper outlines the complex process of translating the original text, what the words meant then, and the importance of the

work for the Deaf audience. Because the Deaf patrons are not listening to the words, the opportunity exists for 'show me don't tell me' using BSL Visual Vernacular (VV). This paper, and discussion with other translators, may foster understanding of the process that interpreters may face and the benefits then reaped by Deaf and hearing audiences alike.

The New Lexicon: Transfiguring ASL Poetics and Shakespeare's Verse (Katherine Williams and Andrew Morrill)
This paper will explore emerging trends in translating Shakespeare into American Sign Language, contributing to creative collaboration and the expansion of ASL Shakespeare lexicon. Sharing their experience working together as experts in acting, linguistics, poetics, and Shakespeare studies, the co-authors will detail how this creative collaboration reinvents the translation process and offers fresh perspectives on familiar Shakespeare text by discussing their findings from *Titus Andronicus* and *As You Like It*. The challenges and opportunities of exchange between artistic and scholarly expertise highlight dialogue on best practices and future directions for translation, enhancing the effectiveness and inclusion of ASL in Shakespeare.

P09.
Planet Kott:
Opening up the Archives of the 20th-Century Shakespeare Critic

Organisers: Anna Cetera-Włodarczyk, Zoltán Márkus, Nicoleta Cinpoeş
Chair: Sabine Sabine Schuelting

The panel intends to offer a new take on the legacy of Jan Kott (1914–2001), one of the most important Central and East European Shakespeare critics, whose work strongly impacted both Shakespeare scholarship and theatrical practice of the post-WWII decades and beyond. The main objective of the panel is to reassess Kott's international stature and influence, based on newly accessible documents donated to the Emigration Archive at the Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń, Poland. This largely unexplored collection is rich in documents, diaries and letters, mapping Kott's ideological and spatial trajectories, his shifts of allegiances and intellectual agility. The resources testify to Kott's progress through times and regions, his gradual absorbing new cultural affinities and agendas and yet rebounding to his strongly political and presentist stance. Kott's international approach and reputation, his encounters with widened cultural domains and uprooted identities as well as his theater-centered resistance to historicist philology paved the way for globalism. By reassessing some of the old political East-West polarities now reactivated, the panel intends to throw new light on the mediation of East European politics to Western audiences and the instrumentality of Shakespearean criticism in the process.
The panel addresses the following specific issues:

- Kott's complex relation with his native land/continent, explored from within and then reconfigured from an American perspective;
- Kott's embracement of new cultural contexts and attempts to nuance the paradigm of "Shakespeare Our Contemporary";
- the uses of self-narrative(s) in the construction of Kott's critical discourse;
- Kott's ties with fellow Shakespeare scholars, theater practitioners and literati involved in the dissemination of his work;
- the incongruent perception of Kott's Shakespeare criticism in the East and in the West, before and after the fall of the Iron Curtain;

— the relevance of the concept of Kott's "Grand Mechanism" in current stage practice.

So far, the most complete picture of Jan Kott as a Shakespeare scholar as well as the origin and dissemination of his criticism can be found in chapters written by Madalina Nicolaescu ("Jan Kott in the East", Great Shakespeareans. Ed. Hugh Grady London: Continuum, vol. xiii, 2012. 130–153) and Zoltán Márkus ("Kott in the West", ibidem, 53–174). Neither of these studies draws on the resources available in Kott's archive. These have been first explored by Anna Cetera-Włodarczyk (2021), "Shakespeare in purgatory: (re)writing the history of the post-war reception", Theatralia, vol. 24, special issue, 17-32, https://doi.org/10.5817/TY2021-S-2. By reassessing Jan Kott's work and legacy in light of the newly available documents, this panel opens new perspectives on the origins of presentism and globalism in the study and performance of Shakespeare.

'In his own land': Eastern Europe and the Birth of Kottian Criticism (Anna Cetera-Włodarczyk)

With recourse to the (un)published diaries of Jan Kott, this contribution sets out to reconstruct the key geographical spaces, with their tensions and ideologies, which shaped Kott's understanding of man and history and were gradually incorporated into his Shakespearean discourse. With the main emphasis falling on the immediate pre- and post-WWII period, the paper juxtaposes Kott's repeated failures to see through the hazards of his own time with the sharpness of his critical insights. Thus Kott's presentism is seen as dependent on the immediate shaping pressures, but also on his processing of memories, including radical changes of optics, lapses and disclosures.

Shakespeare East and West: Kott's Academic Reception in the USA (Zoltán Márkus)

In 1969, Alfred Harbage posed the question regarding Jan Kott's *Shakespeare Our Contemporary*, "…whether the kind of 'contemporary' that Shakespeare proves to be depends less on when one lives than on where one lives. Or putting it another way: is there now a 'Shakespeare West' and a 'Shakespeare East'?" Harbage emphasized Kott's geographical alterity: his Polish-American colleague represented "Shakespeare East" to him. Based on materials newly available in the Kott Archive, this paper explores this East-West divide in Shakespeare studies as a harbinger of a disciplinary shift towards the study of non-English-speaking, postcolonial, and glo/calized Shakespeares.

When 'the unbearable and the absurd are constantly in tandem': Re-visiting the Kott – Ionesco Connection (Nicoleta Cinpoeş)

East of Berlin, the reception of Jan Kott's works and ideas is more diverse than what a general(ised) "Bloc" approach might claim. Re-reading Kott's published remarks and views on Eugène Ionesco in tandem with the rich collection of notes and letters discovered in the Jan Kott Archives, held at the University of Torun, this paper brings to bear the constancy of their lifetime friendship as strengthened by surviving similar terrors, 'obliteration by decree' in their homelands (Marowitz: 1994) and living diasporic existences. In doing so, the paper aims to re-visit this intellectual fellowship in its potential relevance to understanding Kott-ean Shakespeare criticism, before and after 1989.

P10.
Reconstructing Shakespeare's Globe around the Planet

Organisers: Miles Gregory, Alex Baines, Angus Vail

This panel brings together theory and praxis, focusing on several cases in which the early modern Globe theatre has been reconstructed in different locations around the world: Shakespeare's Globe in London, UK; the Container Globe in Detroit, Michigan; the Pop-Up Globe in Auckland, New Zealand and elsewhere in Australasia, as well as the Panasonic Globe Theatre in Tokyo and Rome's Gigi Proietti Globe Theatre Silvano Toti. Surveys of the Container Globe and Pop-Up Globe will be delivered by their founders.
Shakespeare's Globe on London's Southbank opened in 1997. Initially disparaged by some scholars for the extent of its perceived "inauthenticity," the venue has since become an iconic part of London's contemporary theatrical scene in its own right: a vibrant aesthetic space which continues to attract flocks of tourists as well as vast bodies of scholarship and press attention.
The Container Globe in Detroit is currently situated on the grounds of the former Herman Kiefer Hospital in the Midtown neighbourhood of the city, constructed from repurposed shipping containers. Conceived by Angus Vail, a business manager in the music industry, the Container Globe hosts a variety of events and aims to recreate the intimacy and raucousness of early modern theatregoing at a site of low-cost and mobile materials. The Pop-up Globe was a project and production company founded by theatre director Dr. Miles Gregory. Between 2015 and 2020, five temporary reconstructions of the Globe hosted over 700,000 people at theatrical performances in four cities across New Zealand and Australia. The panel will also reflect on two prominent sites outside the Anglosphere: the Panasonic Globe Theatre in Tokyo, which opened in 1988, and Rome's Gigi Proietti Globe Theatre Silvano Toti, which opened in 2003. These spaces invite different kinds of responses to, and assessments of, dynamic acts of linguistic and cultural translation as well as the broader "Planetary Shakespeares" conference theme.
Thinking with sociologist Henri Lefebvre's celebrated proposition that "(social) space is a (social) product" and theatre studies scholar and practitioner Dorita Hannah's idea of "performative architecture," the panel locates this range of projects within the multitudinous social and material networks in which they were produced. The panel asks, broadly: Why rebuild the Globe theatre? What features are necessary for a rebuilt Globe theatre to be considered a version of the Globe theatre at all? What can reconstructed Globe theatres offer present-day communities in vastly different geographical, temporal, linguistic, and social contexts?
A further aim is to gesture towards the "gathering" work that they each perform, deploying the term from archaeologist Ian Hodder. The panel as a whole suggests that part of the value of the structures under consideration here lies in this gathering work they perform: gatherings of people, of places, of materials, of timeframes, and of ideas. This in turn provokes much broader reflections about the kind of imaginative and material work that is done when buildings from other times and places are reconceived in new cityscapes, landscapes, and social-environmental contexts.

"These Unworthy Scaffolds": Rebuilding Shakespeare around the World (Alex Baines)
This paper serves as an introduction to the key themes of the panel. It offers a brief survey of reimagined Globes around the world, both speculative projects and material rebuilds, and seeks to theorise their importance. The paper includes especial consideration of Shakespeare's Globe on London's Southbank, opened in 1997, the Panasonic Globe Theatre in Tokyo, opened in 1988, and Rome's Gigi Proietti Globe Theatre Silvano Toti, opened in 2003. It examines the

venues' functions beyond theatrical productions and argues for the importance of the "gathering" work that these reconstruction projects perform, borrowing the term from archaeologist Ian Hodder.

The Container Globe, Detroit, Michigan (Angus Vail)
The Container Globe, located in Detroit, is a venue based on Shakespeare's original Globe theatre, constructed from repurposed shipping containers. A multifunctional space, the innovative design and modular construction of the building provides entertainment and education in the arts, design, conservation, and engineering fields, so far hosting Shakespearean productions, student performances, and a techno music festival. The site is fully transportable and can be moved to various locations, including various underserved communities. This paper reflects on the Container Globe's role as a nexus of cultural and economic activity for the Detroit community.

The Pop-Up Globe, Australasia (Miles Gregory)
The Pop-up Globe, a temporary reconstruction of Shakespeare's second Globe, functioned as more than a physical space; it was also as a site of significant social-cultural gatherings across Australasia. The performances it hosted sparked dynamic cultural exchanges, with, for instance, Australians cheering for England during *Henry V*, provoking an interrogation of nationalisms and showcasing the global malleability of Shakespeare's plays. Examining the Pop-up Globe's engagement with local theatregoing practices in Auckland, Melbourne, Sydney, and Perth, the paper will consider the transformative role of temporary architecture in shaping and reflecting present-day responses to Shakespeare's works.

P11.
Rescripting Shakespearean Worlds Through the New York Shakespeare Festival

Organisers: Vanessa I. Corredera, Louise Geddes, Stephen Purcell

This panel thinks about how the New York Shakespeare Festival (NYSF), later known simply as Shakespeare in the Park, has used Shakespeare to engage with both local and global issues, responding to a changing world and taking advantage of New York City's diversity to explore how Shakespeare can create radical acts of world building that respond to changing historical moments. Although it is hardly original to point out that the theatre offers acts of world-building, these papers explore how performance can be radical acts of world-altering, in turn disrupting Shakespeare in unexpected ways as a means of unsettling the world in which he is performed.
The vision of the Shakespeare festival was to create a Shakespeare for American audiences. It has thus always embraced the global community who move through the hub of the city, imagining a Shakespeare that speaks for and to the people who live in its boroughs. The locus of this engagement was the public space of the city's Central Park. This remit, however, has expanded with the festival's increased popularity, drawing crowds from outside of NYC. As such, NYSF Shakespeare routinely sits at an unusual intersection of radical performance and crowd-pleasing commercialism. Because of the diasporic makeup of New York City and the tourists who flock there, the festival is both intimately local and broadly global (and even inter-galactic) in its scope. This scope has only increased as performances from the NYSF have been streamed to audiences around the world.
This panel thus examines how the NYSF strives to alter the world it performs to and in by rescripting the Shakespearean worlds it stages. The papers in this panel thereby examine

different forms of rescripting, from multiple "rescriptings" of the same play over time to new frameworks that "rescript" a familiar play in order to offer audiences a fresh take on theatre's radical possibilities to offering new racial scripts that counter the longstanding parameters that shape how Blackness can and should be performed.
Together, then, these papers trace moments in Shakespeare's twentieth and twenty-first century performance history in which traditional social and performance worlds are challenged by varying levels and types of radical performance. These rescripted and therefore altered Shakespearean worlds disrupt easy assumptions about the universes that Shakespearean texts construct, thereby directing attention to the impact of rescripted Shakespeares on changing cultural climates.

"I've got the joy, joy, joy": The Rescripted, Radical Affect of *Black Joy Merry Wives* and *Fat Ham* (Vanessa I. Corredera)
When considering the affects of Black theatre perhaps the heartbreak in Fences, the discomfort of *A Slave Play*, or the communal hope at the end of *For Colored Girls Who Have Considered Suicide* spring to mind, not joy. Yet Black joy plays a vital role in countering racial oppression. This paper turns to two Shakespearean adaptations-–Jocelyn Bioh's *Merry Wives* and James IJames's *Fat Ham*–that center Black joy. I argue that both plays use Black joy to offer audiences a new, and therefore radical, racial script that counters the longstanding one of Black trauma.

The Radical Simplicity of the Spanish Mobile Unit (Louise Geddes)
During the 1960s, the NYTW made two attempts at Latinx Shakespeare: the bi-lingual Mobile Unit and the "Naked" Hamlet, a radical retelling that featured Martin Sheen using a Puerto Rican accent. The touring production presented the festival's English options in Spanish translation, and took a grassroots approach, bringing in renowned artists from Mexico and South America, and celebrating Hispanic culture by running *Macbeth* alongside Federico Garcia Lorca's plays. The paper compares the simplicity of the mobile project to the *Naked Hamlet* to suggest that the most radical staging of Shakespeare is simply the one that brings him to new audiences.

'Amazing and modern': *Troilus and Cressida* at the New York Shakespeare Festival, 1965-73 (Stephen Purcell)
In *Shakespeare Our Contemporary* (1961), Jan Kott redefined thinking about *Troilus and Cressida*, interpreting it as a savagely ironic anti-war satire that mirrored the disillusionment and radicalism of the 1960s. This paper tells the little-known story of the New York Shakespeare Festival's engagements with this 'amazing and modern' play over the decade that followed, spanning science fiction, drag, and anti-war protest: from Joseph Papp's groundbreakingly feminist 1965 production, through his development of a rock musical with Hair composer Galt MacDermot over 1969-71, to David Schweizer's absurdist (and critically panned) production of 1973.

P12.
Shakespeare and Artificial Intelligence

Organisers: Gabriel Egan, Anja Muller-Wood, Heejin Kim

Since the Enlightenment, Shakespeare's plays have been served as heuristics for exploring human behaviour and personality. The uncanny capacity of Shakespeare's characters to make us infer an inner mental life from exterior behaviour and words is, for the first time, being

matched by a similarly uncanny ability in machines. Shakespeare's plays do not merely reflect human behaviour but create plausible prognostic simulacra of human minds not unlike modern Artificial Intelligences (AIs). If, as some believe, the machines are starting to actually understand us, then they do so in ways that drama has understood people (and predicted their behaviour) for centuries.

This panel will explore how Shakespeare's creative explorations of human society, culture and interaction can contribute to the comprehension of the increasingly sophisticated AIs that are being developed, while also honouring the fundamental difference between machine and human intelligence. The precise inner workings of artificial neural networks are too complex to be fully understood even by their creators. We account for them by how we train them and by what they subsequently do. So it is, to a large extent, with people. As machines start exhibiting human characteristics, the methods by which we have long made sense of human behaviour will increasingly be needed to understand machines, while, in turn, the inscrutability of AI might have a bearing on the way we think about plays.

The problem of inscrutability affects our understanding of AIs and Shakespeare's characters in similar ways. In both, 'inner workings' can only be hypothesized from outward manifestations; characters are black boxes to each other and spectators. Even theatrical strategies that serve to reveal characters' minds at work (soliloquies, asides) ultimately affirm the inscrutability they ostensibly transcend by sourcing it for plot devices such as dramatic irony. When plot construction is foregrounded in this way, plays illustrate that they are not about human desires, intentions and plans, but, like AIs, goal-driven systems following a theatrical rather than a psychological logic.

In English studies we have specialists who discriminate between existing writings (literary critics and linguists) and those who create new writings. AIs likewise divide between the discriminative (for example those detecting spam in email and cancers in x-ray images) and the generative (those creating new texts and images). If techniques from English studies help us make sense of AI, it may be worth exploring whether this likeness is significant or trivial. The research questions the panel will seek to explore are:

- How can the linguistic and structural properties of Shakespeare's plays help model the inscrutable workings of AI?
- In turn, how can what we know about AI contribute to a more sophisticated understanding of these dramatic properties (for instance, does this knowledge help shed light on how plays lead spectators to develop a sense of character)?
- What are the limitations of comparing dramatic art and AI? In how far will inscrutability also increasingly differentiate art and AIs, especially generative AIs whose communicative transparency can be developed and improved by, among other things, prompt engineering.

How Are the Speeches of Shakespeare's Characters Individuated? (Gabriel Egan)

The transformational generative grammar introduced by Noam Chomsky in 'Syntactic Structures' (1957) offered the first model that could plausibly account for how the human mind generates original sentences. Chomsky thought he had proved that finite state automata were inadequate to the task, but the new Large Language Models that so impressively mimic human speech are built on those derided finite state automata. This talk will compare how these two ways of modelling speech help us understand Shakespeare's techniques for individuating his characters' speaking styles.

Inscrutable Plots (Anja Muller-Wood)

Anthropomorphism is a problem in the discussion of plays and of AI. Neither dramatic characters nor machines have minds of their own, and yet intuitively we seem to think about

both in this way. Strongly plotted plays such as 'The Comedy of Errors' and 'Othello', however, defy such psychologizing and instead foreground that character is subjected to, even created by the plot and its integral logic. In this paper I will consider how such plays demand to be thought of as "systems" not unlike AI and how this take on plays may also shed light on the inscrutability of AI.

Computational Dramaturgy: Deep Learning for Character Type Analysis in Early Modern Plays (Heejin Kim)
This study explores the integration of Artificial Intelligence with literary analysis to examine character archetypes in early modern dramas. By leveraging a dataset comprising more than 500 plot summaries linked to full dramatic texts, a neural network model is used to provide quantifiable insights into the prevalent character archetypes of the period and their narrative functions. The model, trained on both summaries and full texts, aims to classify complex character roles, such as heroes, villains, and sidekicks, based on their narrative contributions and developmental arcs.

P13.
Shakespeare and Eco-Romance

Organisers: Elizabeth Freestone, Christina Wald
Chair: Gretchen Minton

This panel will explore the ecological affordances of romance from creative and critical perspectives. At a historical moment when we are trying to come to terms with the catastrophic effects of climate change, patterns of tragedy on an apocalyptic scale have become pervasive in creative practice, cultural analysis and eco-theory. Accordingly, Bruno Latour has suggested that climate change 'has not only become a piece of news, not only a story, not only a drama, but also the plot of a tragedy […] so much more tragic than all the earlier plays' ('Agency at the Time of the Anthropocene', 12–13) and Timothy Morton has observed that '[r]ight now, ecological awareness presents itself as tragedy' (All Art is Ecological, 27). More recently, however, scholars and artists have emphasized that despair in the face of loss is an unhelpful, even paralyzing response to climate change: it usually does not inspire action and can instead induce passive suffering. We propose that when it comes to the most versatile genre for addressing environmental crisis is the tragicomic romance so beautifully articulated in Shakespeare's late plays. Romances stage loss and yet end in hopeful, if often fragile, reconciliation of a community, thus offering productively hopeful models of restoration, collaboration, and solidarty.
On page, stage and screen, Shakespearean eco-romances are also effective for informing, moving, and motivating audiences because of their evocations of various ecosystems like forests and oceans; their portrayal of many kinds of love including intergenerational, romantic, social, and inter-species; their processing of eco-grief, eco-anxiety, pre-traumatic stress disorder and solastalgia; and their evocation of hope, forgiveness, and community repair. This panel, featuring both scholars and scholar-artists, will offer three case studies of Shakespearean eco-romance in the 2020s to open up a more general discussion about the epistemic, experiential and activist potential of planetary romance.
Questions to be addressed in the panel include, but are not limited to the following:

- As a way of conveying both the tragedy of environmental catastrophes and the reconciliatory efforts needed to mitigate and make more just such crises, what advantages does Shakespearean romance have over tragedy, comedy, or history? What are its limitations?

- How does the experience of eco-romance via the theatre or film differ from that of reading in terms of impact and effectiveness as environmental communication?
- What particular plays–including both Shakespeare's late plays and earlier plays that can be adapted to fit or emphasize a tragicomic narrative arc–lend themselves best to eco-romance?

"Mine would, were I human": Intergenerational and Interspecies Healing through Acts of Witness, Time and Care in *Cymbeline* and *The Tempest* (Elizabeth Freestone)
To consider eco-romance within the current outlook of mass extinction and climate chaos is to recall the trauma of living through what may prove to be the end times. In the context of such 'ecological grief' socio-environmental connectivities between individuals, communities, and more-than-human neighbours rupture. It is within this space and temporality that Shakespeare's romances enact the careful attention of witness and the patient act of repair; the dual energies required to embark on the process of what Derrida calls 'successful mourning'. Through stories that span years, against backdrops of environmental change, the late plays model intergenerational and interspecies healing, platforming the possibility of forgiveness. Jo Confino suggests that failing to recognize the collective pain of ecological grief "block[s] us from reaching out for the solutions that can help us find another direction" (2014). Through an exploration of T*he Tempest* and *Cymbeline*, this paper suggests that acknowledging past hurts is the first step towards an improved ability to enter empathetically into the existence of others, and therefore to care better for our shared oikos.

The Eco-Romance of King Lear: Floods, Rough Water Swimming, and Human Endurance (Steve Mentz)
Ecocritical readings of Shakespeare's romances often emphasize the way the last plays reconfigure the inhospitable world of tragedy into survivable spaces. From Prospero's magic isle to the sea coast of Bohemia, eco-romance employs both theatrical and environmental magic to redeem human communities. Taking a cue from the presence of romance materials in the subplot, via Philip Sidney's The Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia, the brutal core of King Lear hints at the redemptive genre that will follow. The flooded and barren land-and-seascape of the storm strains the limits of human endurance. Different responses to environmental catastrophe – the Fool's cautionary remarks about swimming, Poor Tom's demonology, the different political fantasies of Gloucester and the King – chart possible routes through the hostile environment. None of these figures arrives at the hospitable magic that characterizes the last plays of Shakespeare, but together they trace ways to confront alien surroundings. The seeds of eco-romance appear in these scenes of desolation.

Foe as Post-Apocalyptic Tempest Adaptation: Romance as Renewable Resource (Christina Wald)
How can we use romance as a renewable resource to come to terms with climate change and resource depletion? Is the portrayal of romantic love an escape from planetary questions, an inadequate indulging in the private concerns of the couple (or throuple) – or do the genre patterns of love romance have their own ecological affordances? How can love melancholia and eco-grief be thought together in the Anthropocene? Addressing these questions, this talk will discuss the film *Foe* (2023), starring Saoirse Ronan, Paul Mescal and Aaron Pierre, as an unmarked Tempest adaptation. Translocating the romance of Miranda and Ferdinand to a post-apocalyptic future where AI, robotics and human colonies in space promise brave new worlds, Foe intertwines the study of a failing marriage with the ecological ruin of climate change. Yet, true to Shakespearean romance, it also offers ways of thinking towards hope and restoration on a personal and planetary scale.

P14.
Shakespeare's Planetary Roots and Routes. African Oral Literature as a Re*source of Shakespeare's Trans*Textuality

Organisers: Susan Arndt, Ife Aboluwade, Michael Steppat

This panel explores the ways in which Shakespeare has been transtextually impacted by African literatures and oratures. The panel will start off from the thesis that Shakespeare knew people of African descent that have had an impact on his work in two respects. For one thing, Shakespeare was way more sensitive to the power and violence of colonialism, slavery and racism than most other of his white contemporaries in Europe. For another, Shakespeare's plays display a profound knowledge of African folktales as well as other textualities of African societies such as the Yoruba-religious corpus of "Ifa divination"(Nigeria). We hold that both perspectives and respective layers of knowing are intersected. By thus transgressing the normative focus of Shakespeare Source Studies on written texts in languages that Shakespeare is said to have been able to read, the panel will thus offer a step towards reconfiguring Shakespeare Source Studies. To support that claim, we will explore and map a respective theoretical and methodological framework. By looking at power constellations, particularly also with respect to British, Caribbean and West African encounters around 1600 and to the subsequent reception histories, we will complicate conventional notions of "the global" and "universality", while using "planetarism" (Spivak), "decoloniality" (Mignolo) and "provincialising" (Chakrabarty) as categories of practice (Brubakar). Thus tuned, we will discuss the modalities of the "contact zones" (Pratt) between Shakespeare and African Oral Literatures. The panel is a plea to study Shakespeare and the respective adaptations by taking the very power constellations into account that code ideas of Shakespeare being global and universal. Two of the papers (Aboluwade/Arndt and Artese) will trace African and African-diasporic re*sources that have had an impact on Shakespeare. Another paper (Raman) will look at possible roots and routes of such textual meetings, i.e. at ways in which Shakespeare might have encountered persons of African descent and their knowledges. In doing so, we look at Black people in Shakespeare's reach, while also considering Shakespeare's relatedness to travelling the world and seaman/sailorship. The fourth presentation (by David Dabydeen) is to employ "cultural memory" to suggest that contemporary African and African diasporic writers adopt Shakespeare, while amplifying Shakespeare's indebtedness to African orature and thus focalizing this very trans*textuality and its invite für decolonial adaptations. These objectives will be pursued in four entangled papers (15 minutes each) that focus on *Othello*, *The Comedy of Errors*, *The Tempest* and the *Sonnets 127, 130*, *132* and *144* as well as respective contemporary theatre productions by David Dabydeen, Femi Osofian and Ahmed Yerima.

African Oral Literature and Ifa Divination in Shakespeare's: *Othello*, *The Tempest* and *The Sonnets* (Susan Arndt and Ife Aboluwade)
The first paper "Black knowledge in Shakespeare's: *Othello*, *The Tempest* and *The Sonnets*" by Ife Aboluwade and Susan Arndt will discuss the theoretical and methodological context for complementing Shakespeare Source studies with a decolonial perspective on Shakespeare's indebtedness to African oral literature and Black knowledge. Thus framed, they will focus on the decoloniality that informs the character design of Othello and Caliban in general and their monologues in particular. Moreover, they will pursue the thesis that sonnets 127, 130, 132 and 144 address a Black woman of African descent.

Black Jack and White Jack: Shakespeare, African Diasporic Folktales and Racial Doubling (Charlotte Artese)
Shakespeare's early play *The Comedy of Errors* and his late play *The Tempest* both have folktale analogues. *The Comedy of Errors* resembles the folktale type "The Twins or Blood-Brothers" and *The Tempest* resembles "The Magic Flight." A version of each of these generic folktale types from African diasporic cultures raises issues of identity and power particularly relevant to Shakespeare's plays. While Shakespeare could not have known these two specific iterations, both recorded in the early twentieth century, comparing them to the plays provides insight into the slavery that undergirds the plots of both *The Comedy of Errors* and *The Tempest.*

Black Knowledge in Shakespeare's Work. Mapping Possibilities and Plausibilities of Encounters and Entanglements (Shankar Raman)
In his paper, Shankar Raman will pursue the question as to whether and how Shakespeare would have had access to African and African-diasporic folktales. How could Shakespeare have met them? What do we know about Black people in Shakespeare's reach? And how would that plausibly interact with the criticism of racism and colonialism as displayed in Shakespeare's *Othello* and *The Tempest.* The paper employs historical materialism eager to bridge biographical narration and Shakespeare Source Studies.

Shakespeare Inspired Many – But Who Inspired Shakespeare? Tracing Black Knowledge in Shakespeare's Work via Cultural Memory-Perspectives on Shakespeare Adaptations (David Dabydeen)
Using cultural memory as a tool, David Dabydeen will talk about how the presence of African and Caribbean narrations in Shakespeare's work is amplified and thus focalised in Shakespeare adaptations. In doing so, David Dabydeen will also talk about the poetics of his own Shakespeare adaptations. As for the objective pursued, Dabydeen will also look at how Shakespeare's being impacted by Black knowledges has been an invite for decolonial adaptations and rewritings of Shakespeare's plays.

P15.
Shakespeare's Sonic World: Sound Studies and Early Modern Theatre

Organisers: Antonio Arnieri, Lara Ehrenfried, Alexandra Siso
Chair: Maddalena Pennacchia

This panel session delves into how sound studies foster new insights and engagement with Shakespeare's theatre. By focusing on the sonic dimensions of his works, we explore how auditory elements—both diegetic and extradiegetic—shape the aesthetic, socio-cultural, and political frameworks of his plays.
The session features three presentations that examine the role of sound in Shakespeare's dramaturgy from different angles: Antonio Arnieri's The Island's Soundspace explores the setting of The Tempest as an auditory universe, Lara Ehrenfried's Soundscapes of Violence examines sonic representations of violence in *Macbeth* and *Richard III*. Alexandra Siso's Sounding Death investigates how sound underscores themes of mortality in *Hamlet.*
Current scholarship has emphasised the critical role of acoustic environments in understanding historical contexts and how these soundscapes were employed to represent the world on stage. Since Bruce Smith's seminal work *The Acoustic World of Early Modern England* (1999) pioneered sound as a hermeneutic tool, evolving methodologies in sound studies offer new pathways to a multisensorial engagement with the past, connecting disciplines like literature,

musicology, cultural studies, and the history of science to reconstruct a more nuanced understanding of the early modern sonic world.

Shakespeare's works offer a fertile ground for these explorations. Sound in his plays functions both as a vehicle of meaning and as a tool for interrogating the epistemological assumptions constructed on stage. His acute awareness of the aural dimension reveals a strategic use of sound and music, reflecting broader cultural and scientific currents of the time. Re-examining these auditory elements enables new interpretative possibilities.

How can we recover the meanings associated with sound to deepen our understanding of Shakespeare's plays? The answer lies in an interdisciplinary approach, which draws on a variety of sources—historical records, philosophical treatises, scientific texts, and rhetorical manuals—to construct a detailed picture of the role sound played in early modern life and theatre.

The objectives of the session are as follows:

- To explore how sound studies can deepen our understanding of Shakespeare's dramaturgy by revealing the layered meanings carried by sound and music in his plays.
- To examine how early modern modes of listening differ from contemporary practices and the implications of these differences for interpreting Shakespeare's works.
- To investigate the interdisciplinary connections between auditory history and Shakespeare studies, specifically how sound intersects with broader cultural, political, and scientific discourses.
- To encourage scholars to rethink the role of sound as a central, rather than peripheral, element in both the creation and reception of Shakespearean drama.

Through interdisciplinary dialogue, this panel aims to foster a renewed awareness of Shakespeare's auditory world. We seek to open a discussion on how listening functioned in the early modern period, enriching our understanding of Shakespearean soundscapes and contributing to broader discussions on the role of sound in both historical and contemporary performance contexts. Ultimately, this panel offers a unique opportunity to reconsider Shakespeare's plays not only as visual spectacles but as immersive auditory experiences that continue to resonate today, albeit in a transformed auditory world.

The Island's Soundspace: The Auditory Universe of Shakespeare's *The Tempest (*Antonio Arnieri)

Antonio Arnieri's paper examines the island in *The Tempest* as a self-contained world, representing a sonic abyss. Through an auditory history analysis, it explores how the island functions as a resonating shell—a metaphor for sound, knowledge, and spatiality. Referencing early modern treatises like Helkiah Crooke's *Mikrokosmographia* (1616), the paper likens the island to an ear, capturing and amplifying sound to shape reality, thus challenging Renaissance views on hearing as a tool for knowledge. The study concludes by connecting this interpretation with Alessandro Serra's 2022 adaptation, *La Tempesta*.

Soundscapes of Violence (Lara Ehrenfried)

Lara Ehrenfried's paper *Soundscapes of Violence* examines the links between the auditory dimension of Shakespeare's plays and Early Modern theatre's dramatization of violence. Ehrenfried argues that attuning ourselves to the sonic element of Shakespeare's tragedies, such as *Macbeth* and *Richard III*, offers new insights into Early Modern conceptions of brutality and treason and critically interrogates what it means to 'hear violence'. *Macbeth* and *Richard III*, for instance, rely on dissonant and discordant acoustics to explore socio-political upheaval. By establishing direct links between sound and violence on stage, Shakespeare's tragedies also open up new spaces for performance and remediation.

Sounding Death (Alexandra Siso)
Alexandra Siso's paper Sounding Death examines the voice of Hamlet's ghost as a sonic expression of Purgatory. While the Tudor era saw Purgatory's gradual disappearance from religious doctrine, theatre—particularly in the Jacobean period—became a space where it could still resonate. The dead, once silent, silenced, and unseen in the mortal world, regained a voice and presence on stage, among the living. Nowhere is this more striking than in Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, where the vivid and disturbing representation of Hamlet's father breaks the silence of death, sounding with the echoes of Purgatory.

P16.
Shakespearia: A Comparison Between Teenagers

Organisers: Kamil Tukaev, Jonathan Salway, Solimano Pontarollo

SHAKESPEARIA is a project launched in 2015 by Kamil Turkaev. Its goal was to create plays based on the works of William Shakespeare with teenagers aged 14-16, performed in English. The project was launched within the walls of Natalia Vlasova's IH Linguist language school in Voronezh, Russia.
Starting from "Romeo and Juliet" the teenagers and Kamil read and analyzed the material in deep detail, identifying the circumstances and events happening in this great tragedy.
Kamil assumed that the conclusion of this period would be his question, "What do you feel at the end, having gotten to know this story so well?" To his surprise, all the participants in the youth group called Romeo and Juliet idiots, immature individuals, and used other derogatory terms from their youth lexicon. What upset them the most was the death of the protagonists, whom they blamed for their own death.
Kamil realized that the approach and methodology needed a radical change; the traditional principles used in professional theater were not working here.
To ensure that the responses from the teenagers weren't just a peculiarity of this specific group (around 12-14 people), Kamil decided to repeat the experiment with an adult group, all of whom were parents. Once again, he heard from the group of about 12-13 adults the same lack of understanding toward the characters, insulting comments about them, and unanimous support for the actions of the adults in the play. He must admit, he was slightly indignant: "How can you think this way? You're all parents! The first thing I expected to hear from you was the word 'PITY!' Pity for the children! That's the phrase I was waiting for." Only later did he understand that the adult audience, through their criticisms of the main characters, might have been concealing some personal pain, as if this tragedy had occurred in their own lives, and they were carefully trying to avoid letting this experience enter their hearts.
Kamil returned to the teenagers and asked them to write monologues on a very simple topic: WHO OR WHAT DO YOU DISAGREE WITH? WHO DO YOU BLAME FOR WHAT HAPPENED TO ROMEO AND JULIET? Kamil insisted on hearing their genuine, heartfelt thoughts on the subject. He urged them not to worry about offending him or William Shakespeare. In the end, he received a wonderful response, which began as an open conversation and eventually took shape in monologues.
These monologues, developed with his colleagues in the Shakespearia project Jonathan Salway and Solimano Pontarollo, are presented for this showcase. The monologues appeared to be so sincere and honest that they seem to require no further commentary.
In conclusion, Kamil will say that the play came to life and had an interesting run. Some of the children were cast in the roles of characters they had initially criticized. Like in a real court, they became both the prosecutors and the defenders of their roles. The play was performed in Russia, in Ghent (Belgium) and in Verona (Italy).

SHAKESPEARIA in VORONEZH (Kamil Tukaev)
Presentation of the results of the Shakespearia project with the students of Voronezh. Their monologues and their judgments show how the universal Shakespearean values are elaborated according to their culture, society and desires. A result that is then compared with the same process proposed to the English and Italian students, expressing equalities and differences in reading and growth methods of the same students after the Shakespeare experience. Finally the monologues are presented to the students of the other nations to receive feedback.

SHAKESPEARIA in LONDON (Jonathan Salway)
Presentation of the results of the Shakespearia project with the students of London. Their monologues and their judgments show how the universal Shakespearean values are elaborated according to their culture, society and desires. A result that is then compared with the same process proposed to the Russian and Italian students, expressing equalities and differences in reading and growth methods of the same students after the Shakespeare experience. Finally the monologues are presented to the students of the other nations to receive feedback.

SHAKESPEARIA in VERONA (Solimano Pontarollo)
Presentation of the results of the Shakespearia project with the students of Verona. Their monologues and their judgments show how the universal Shakespearean values are elaborated according to their culture, society and desires. A result that is then compared with the same process proposed to the English and Russian students, expressing equalities and differences in reading and growth methods of the same students after the Shakespeare experience. Finally the monologues are presented to the students of the other nations to receive feedback.

P17.
Thinking Like a Planet – Shakespeare's New/Old Ecologies

Organisers: Joseph Campana, Jessica Rosenberg, Laurie Shannon

This panel assembles three unfamiliar pathways into understanding core ecological questions (around quotidian rhythms, renewable energy, exploitation and use). These "Shakes-planetary" points of view invert what so many describe as the human-centered designation of "Anthropocene" – turning our attention (eyes, ears, hands) towards macrocosms and microcosms not scaled to human use. The era, these papers find, offers vast imaginative resources for formulating alternatives to destructive/extractive eco-modernities as well as early modern alternatives to the presentist nature of most energy and environmental humanities scholarship. These essays try to think like a planet, which is to say they offer "planetary" points of view: points of view inverting what so many describe as the human-centered designation of "Anthropocene." Indeed, so many critiques of the Anthropocene preserve the logic of its designation by preserving its core structure of causality but substituting a different culprit (Plantationocene, Capitalocene, Wasteocene) or backdating the start date (1945, 1769, 1610, the invention of agriculture) without allowing those earlier histories to alter the logic of the Anthropocene.
To paraphrase Vinciane Despret, "What would the planet say if we asked the right questions?" In trying to ask the planet the right questions, we draw on a range of interlocutors. We invoke "natural history," despite its sometimes imperial legacies, to seek in early modern thought a "planetary" sensibility. What if "natural" histories (of tides and earthly rotation, of use, of the sun) might help reframe later and darker environmental eventualities? We place a range of later

thinkers in dialogue with Shakespeare, be it Lamarck for his pioneering theories of evolution (especially including questions of "use") or influential environmentalist Rachel Carson, whose lesser-read reflections on tides and oceans offer new pathways. These papers work to transform recent environmental criticism, with its highly presentist focus, not only by revisiting figures like Lamark and Carson but also by offering longer genealogies of critical concepts in energy and the environment.

This panel proposes to bridge the gap between environmental work centered in the present and the rich environmental terrain within Shakespeare studies by marking longer arcs that might connect them. Shakespeareans have been and remain central to the development of eco-critical approaches refined through interpretations of the plays and poems, analyses of critical environmental histories in an era of political transformation and early globalization, and accounts of the relationship between these plays and early modern theatrical practice and the complex instabilities of the little Ice Age. In fact, the iconicity and canonicity of Shakespeare the "man of all seasons" and expert on nature, allows critical leverage on an "all-too-human" Anthropocene.

Our panel is structured with three papers addressing core questions in energy and environmental humanities through Shakespeare's works and worlds. Given the logistics and timing, we were not able to secure greater international participation by the deadline for submissions. Our intention, should the panel be accepted, is to bring on a fourth panelist who would serve as a chair and respondent to the panel and who would enhance the international diversity of the panel.

Solar Shakespeare (Joseph Campana)

This paper approaches what Michael Marder might call the "energy dream" of solar energy in the works of Shakespeare. This paper places a decade of fascinating if presentist energy humanities scholarship in conversation with Shakespeare's solar moments (*Timon of Athens*, *King Lear*) and other early modern reflections on the sun that provide alternatives to present day global energy crises. What was solar before it was renewable and apart from human worlds? Must "energy" be party to disaster and tragedy? What can Shakespeareans learn from the energy humanities? What can energy humanities learn from the pre-fossil fuel energy regimes of early modernity?

The Natural History of Use on Planet Shakespeare (Jessica Rosenberg)

This paper takes Shakespearean drama as an inflection point in longer natural histories of use and utility, in order to ask: What do we understand about the ethics of using nature and one another when we begin to see utility on the planetary scale towards which Shakespeare points us? Its argument tracks accounts of "use" as a category beyond (and even indifferent to) the human, through accounts of plant and animal habit, cunning, and instinct in early modern nature writing and in Shakespeare's plays, before tracking these concepts forward into Lamarck's *Law of Use and Disuse* and contemporary theory.

The Quotidian Cosmos: Girdling the Globe, from Shakespeare's Midsummer Day to Rachel Carson's Tides (Laurie Shannon)

Midsummer's notorious sublunary matters make inconstancy fundamental to humankind. But have we fully fathomed the play's cosmic affordances? What else might it say about our planetary place, speaking from a time when sensibilities about cosmic scale made a more quotidian mark? Midsummer's lunar phases and diurnal earthly rotation establish a nonhuman calibration of time and an ultra-global sense of our earthly standing as minor (even puny). Using Rachel Carson's 20thC rediscovery of a world without us, this paper considers how her

oceanic writings about tidal forms suggest new perspectives on Shakespeare's prescient capacity to conjure a planet without us.

Shakespeare's Graves: The Time of the Subsurface in the Sonnets (Danila Sokolov)
Shakespeare's *Sonnets* use various models and technologies to track time: planetary rotations, the natural cycles of plant life, the erosion of buildings and monuments, the visible decay of the human flesh, clocks and poems. But all of these tend to happen on the surface of the planet. To complicate our thinking about measuring time in the *Sonnets*, this paper considers Shakespeare's fascination with the inert, dead matter of the planetary subsurface. Hidden from sight and inscrutable, indifferent to human desires, it erupts into consciousness in the many graves that Shakespeare digs, imaginatively, across his collection. The deep past associated with the earth's subterranean forces gapes from these excavated tombs. By reading the Shakespearean subsurface this paper will ask how these Chthonic energies affect Shakespeare's poetry and our idea of lyric.

P18.
"To unpath'd waters, undream'd shores": Shakespeare, Language and Learning in Oceania

Organisers: Joanna Erskine, Kyle Morrison, Florence Boulard, Claire Hansen

In this session, two presenters from Australia – Joanna Erskine, Head of Education at Bell Shakespeare, and actor, director and cultural consultant Kyle Morrison – and two presenters working in Kanaky-New Caledonia – Dr Florence Boulard and Dr Claire Hansen – speak to the ways that Shakespeare is being used as a vehicle for transformative learning and cultural connection in marginalised Australian communities and Oceania.
Joanna Erskine will speak to the power of Shakespeare as an educational tool in regional, remote and socially-disadvantaged Australian schools. Bell Shakespeare is Australia's national theatre company specialising in Shakespeare, founded in 1990. Since its inception, the Company's vision as set by Founding Artistic Director John Bell, is to ensure access to Shakespeare and high-quality arts experiences for all Australians, regardless of socioeconomic challenges or geographic location.
A key feature of Bell Shakespeare's education program is engaging with schools and mentoring teachers in regional and remote Australia. This takes the Company into schools and communities experiencing myriad challenges including geographic isolation, environmental disasters, trauma, industry closures affecting employment, lack of resources, low levels of attendance, low value of education, and more. In addition to student engagement programs, the company also provides specialist training for teachers via the renowned National Teacher Mentorship program.
Next, actor and director Kyle Morrison will speak about the intersection of Shakespeare's works with Aboriginal Noongar culture and language, from south-west Western Australia. He will explore these ideas and themes as he speaks to the journey of creating, rehearsing and performing Noongar sonnets (based on Shakespeare's sonnets) and how we are still learning the best ways to situate and connect Shakespeare on and to the dreaming of this country.
Morrison, the former Artistic Director of Yirra Yaakin Theatre, has an extensive history working with Shakespeare including translating Shakespeare's sonnets into Noongar language, presented at the World Shakespeare Festival in London at Shakespeare's Globe. The Noongar Sonnets project broke ground on the cultural collaboration between Noongar language and Shakespeare's texts by creating six of Shakespeare's sonnets fully adapted into Noongar worldview and philosophical paradigm through Noongar language.

Dr Florence Boulard and Dr Claire Hansen will then extend this session's focus from Australia to Oceania. Their presentation will explore the adaptation of Shakespeare's works in Kanaky-New Caledonia. Located in the Pacific Ocean, Kanaky-New Caledonia is the native island home of Kanak families, whose descendants first arrived on the archipelago over three thousand years ago, after travelling from Southeast Asia and Papua New Guinea. Colonised by the French in 1853, Kanaky-New Caledonia's theatrical histories may historically have favoured Molière over William Shakespeare, however the country also enjoys a vibrant history of Shakespearean theatre and has witnessed a revival of Indigenous art and theatre. This paper will explore the work of a contemporary New Caledonian playwright, Pierre Gope, including the 2007 production of his adaptation, *La nouvelle et sublime histoire de Roméo et Juliette.* This production facilitates a shared exploration of Kanaky-New Caledonian cultural exchanges around race, gender, politics and place.

Shakespeare as a Vehicle for Transformative Learning in Regional and Remote Australian Communities (Joanna Erskine)
What value can Shakespeare have to young people in regional and remote Australian communities, and how can teachers in these settings meaningfully engage with his works? In this paper, Bell Shakespeare's Head of Education Joanna Erskine will share how Shakespeare's plays are used as a vehicle for transformative learning in regional and remote Australian communities. From Christmas Island to Arnhem Land, farming communities to mining centres, Erskine will detail how an active engagement with Shakespeare's plays can enhance social, emotional and academic outcomes for young people in geographically-isolated Australian communities, and transform teacher capacity via the National Teacher Mentorship program.

Aboriginality in Shakespeare (Kyle Morrison)
What are Shakespeare's stories when told through a 'classical' Aboriginal lens? How do we connect the classical text to the world views of Australia's first peoples and are there synergies which facilitate these creative collaborations? In this session Kyle Morrison will speak about the intersection of Shakespeare's works with Noongar culture and language, from south-west Western Australia. He will explore these ideas and themes as he speaks to the journey of creating, rehearsing and performing Noongar sonnets and how we are still learning the best ways to situate and connect Shakespeare on and to the dreaming of this country.

Shakespeare in Oceania: Adapting *Romeo and Juliet* in Kanaky-New Caledonia (Florence Boulard and Claire Hansen)
In this paper, we explore planetary or 'global' Shakespeare by looking to the French and Kanak language adaptation of his works in Oceania – specifically, in Kanaky-New Caledonia. We will focus on the work of Pierre Gope, a director and theatremaker, offering an exploration of his French and Kanak language adaptation of *Romeo and Juliet*, titled *La nouvelle et sublime histoire de Roméo et Juliette*. The paper will offer insights from an interview with Gope and analysis of his script and a 2007 production of the play. In this adaptation, we find a reimagining of Shakespeare that enables a playful exploration of community tensions – social, political and environmental – in Kanaky-New Caledonia through an enmeshing of Shakespeare's symbolism with contemporary, local concerns.

P19.
A Translational Approach to Shakespeare's Transnational Sources

Organisers: Laetitia Sansonetti, Alessandra Petrina, Iolanda Plescia

This panel, which presents work by Laetitia Sansonetti (Université Sorbonne Nouvelle), Alessandra Petrina (Università di Padova), and Iolanda Plescia (Sapienza Università di Roma), seeks to conceptualise Shakespeare's relationship to his sources as possible acts of translation: specifically, and according to the different languages in which his sources were first composed – most often Latin, Italian, French, and English – as instances of interlingual, intralingual, and intersemiotic translation, to pick up again the thread of Roman Jakobson's well-known and fruitful tripartite structure. Such a structure considers translation not as mere transposition but as the expression of a dynamic relationship within, and between, languages, and even at times within the same language.

Rather than try to demonstrate that Shakespeare was a translator in any current or literal sense of the word, the papers in the panel will use the translation category to apply pressure to Shakespeare's creative process involving his use of transnational and multilingual sources, shedding light on the distinctive phases of their transmutation and transmission. His interlingual appropriations of sources in foreign languages or of mediating translations and his intralingual rewritings of sources in English are to be read on their own terms not as simple inspirations or revisitations but as the result of complex technical processes which adapt celebrated source materials for the stage.

Interesting implications arise when this model is adopted: Shakespeare can be seen as one of the protagonists of the process whereby English was trying to establish itself as a language with some prestige of its own with regard to the Continental languages and nations. His acts of 'translation' can be placed in a continuum from interlingual *translatio linguarum* to *imitatio* through *paraphrasis*: such a perspective can be understood by bringing together classical and early modern proto-translation theory with recent developments in the field, redefining intertextuality as a form of translation.

Drawing upon the outlined premises, and using three distinct case studies, the proposed panel will seek to answer some foundational questions. What is added, eliminated, amplified – terms which have direct applications in translation studies today – in order to obtain dramatic effect? What linguistic transformations are effected upon the source words? Can early reflection on translation and contemporary translation studies help us understand some of the dynamics at play? And finally, what does it mean to place Shakespeare at the centre, or consider his creative process as a node, of a network of wider, transnational cultural exchanges in which linguistic transformation takes main stage?

Shakespeare's Multilingual Sources for *Romeo and Juliet* (Laetitia Sansonetti)

For most people nowadays, the story of *Romeo and Juliet* is Shakespeare's. Of course Shakespeare scholars know that he borrowed the plot from an Italian tale which had circulated in at least two English translations via French. From Arthur J. Roberts' "Sources of *Romeo and Juliet*" (*MLN*, 1902) through Silvia Bigliazzi's "Whose memory?" (in Bigliazzi, ed., *Revisiting Shakespeare's Italian Resources*, 2024) via Geoffrey Bullough's *Narrative and Dramatic Sources of Shakespeare* (1957) and Jill L. Levenson's "*Romeo and Juliet* before Shakespeare" (*SP*, 1984), to mention but a few, there have been many contributions to the study of Shakespeare's appropriation of his multilingual sources. What I would like to offer in this paper is of a slightly different nature. I would like to bring together Shakespeare's written knowledge of the story, which he gathered from books, and Shakespeare's aural knowledge of Italian, which he may have gathered from books too (in particular John Florio's manuals for learners

of Italian), but which he may have also acquired from direct contact with Italians living in London. I will focus more particularly on the language of fencing, comparing this technical lexicon (and more generally Italian words) as it appears in the 1597, 1599 and 1609 editions to test the hypothesis that the move from the Theatre to the Globe by Shakespeare's acting company, by bringing him closer to the area where foreign fencing masters had their schools, may have changed his perception of and relation to the Italian language. I will thus analyse *Romeo and Juliet* as a transnational play where written and oral multilingual sources meet on stage.

A Pilgrim Everywhere: Petrarch and the Italian Nation as a Cultural Model for Shakespeare (Alessandra Petrina)

In the English Renaissance Italian texts were often servilely imitated, lifting words or phrases that the audience need not understand; they also were more freely translated and adapted, subtly used to enrich the text. Especially in his early plays, Shakespeare experimented with a wealth of literary sources and with the linguistic variety that is behind the importation of literature into England in the sixteenth century, offering us a variety of approaches that went from the parodic reproduction of an Italian *sententia*, as we can see in *Love's Labour's Lost*, to a complex interplay with the source text that goes well beyond our idea of translation and/or imitation, as can be seen in the great tragedies. Transnationality here takes the form of a critical overview of the heritage of a nation that has hitherto been proposed as a cultural model: Shakespeare's act of translation is also a critical appraisal. This is a topic that has been often and successfully studied, but there are areas that still repay critical analysis, and one such is the influence of Petrarch on Shakespeare. This topic has tempted a number of scholars; but their efforts have been mainly articulated upon the use that Shakespeare made of the sonnet. However, a direct filiation of Shakespeare's *Sonnets* from the *Canzoniere* is impossible to demonstrate; any comparison yields unsatisfactory results. The suggestions emerging from the *Triumphi*, in this context, tends to be shelved. This paper posits that it is useful – and indeed, revelatory – to tease out some strands and isolate contexts in which the *Triumphi* appear to play a role that goes beyond the evocation of the Roman ceremony. Shakespeare's complex and critical use of the triumphal meditation he found in Petrarch also asks us to rethink the categories of translation and the relationship between source and target text, and suggests a dynamic, organic model of *imitatio*. Given Petrarch's definition of himself as *peregrinus ubique* – a pilgrim everywhere – such an analysis yields fascinating results also on the relation between translation and transnationality.

Shakespeare's 'Historical Translations' (Iolanda Plescia)

This paper proposes taking a fresh look at Shakespeare's use of historical sources, drawing on current work for an edition and translation of Shakespeare and Fletcher's *Henry VIII*, or *All Is True*. It posits that the use of a source such as Holinshed's *Chronicles* – indeed, in principle any historical writing source – may be understood as an instance of intralingual and intersemiotic translation, in that it must be considered as an act of mediation both within the same language and towards the semiotic system of dramatic language. The paper will apply categories largely studied within contemporary translation studies to traditional source work to ask what insights can be gained from identifying the linguistic and cultural processes behind 'lifting' historical passages for dramatic purposes ; it will also consider the transnational theme of *Henry VIII*'s break from Rome as represented in different sources to ask how historiography is 'translated' on stage from varying points of view.

P20.
Revisiting the Galaxies of (post-)Soviet Shakespeare

Organisers: Aleksei Semenenko, Michelle Assay, Natalia Khomenko
Chair: Aleksei Semenenko

If Global Shakespeare is an endless multiverse, Soviet and post-Soviet Shakespeare is a large cluster of galaxies with multiple solar systems that accommodates a wide variety of approaches to Shakespeare. This panel examines Shakespeare's dialogic function in Soviet and post-Soviet Russia, focusing on Hamlet as the most popular and influential of Shakespeare's plays in Russia and discussing different translations, adaptations and interpretations of both the play and its title character.

The Soviet era of Shakespeare translation and adaptation experienced many twists and turns during its 70-year history. If the 1920s signified a decade of bold experiments and intercultural dialogues, the 1930s became a borderline period not only for Shakespeare but for the whole Russian culture. It was the decade when socialist realism was introduced as the official dogma, and literary translation became a profession; Shakespeare studies were established as a separate discipline in Soviet academia, and Shakespeare—whose 370th birthday in 1934 was celebrated as a national holiday—was named among the models for the new socialist literature. In the era of oppression and total control over artistic expression, socio-political interpretations of Shakespeare became especially pronounced, and his plays were used—once again—as a form of Aesopian language, a medium through which writers, directors, and translators could express their philosophy and/or critique of the regime. In particular, Hamlet productions during the 1950–80s in the Soviet Union were characterized by particularly strong socio-political connotations. Hamlet the character was usually portrayed as a rebel opposing the authorities (or masses/mainstream) and used as a symbol of nonconformism, liberal thinking, and dissidence.

After the fall of the Soviet Union the focus in Shakespeare adaptations shifted from socio-political interpretations to aesthetic conceptualizations with a distinct postmodernist flavor. At the turn of the century several Shakespeare "offshoots" in Russia could be classified as parodies and pastiches that emphasized intertextuality, irony and the mixture of contrasting genres. The papers of this panel focus on Hamlet as the most significant text of the Soviet Shakespeare canon. Michelle Assay's paper deals with the legacy and impact of Russian/Soviet Shakespeare in Iran and particularly of Grigori Kozintsev's cinematographic Hamlet; Natalia Khomenko's paper turns to the Cold War period and discusses the uses of Shakespearean allusion in Soviet science fiction's treatment of intercultural encounters; Aleksei Semenenko's paper discusses the function of the travestied Shakespeare canon in the context of the post-Soviet culture. The papers also assess different research questions that include—but are not limited to:

— Shakespeare, the Cold War, and the Soviet science fiction
— Shakespeare as a vehicle of intercultural dialogue
— Shakespeare as a Soviet export
— Buffoonery, irony and parody in the canon: pro et contra
—"Hamlet: a window on Russia"—still relevant for the post-Soviet era?
— Hamlet the play vs. Hamlet the character
— Post-Soviet Shakespeare vis-à-vis the Soviet canon

Playing the Victim: The Travestied Hamlet of the post-Soviet Era (Aleksei Semenenko)
The paper is dedicated to the 2006 film by Kirill Serebrennikov Playing the Victim. The film is a black comedy featuring a man named Valia who earns his living by playing the victim in

murder reconstructions during police investigations. Many funny, horrible, and absurd situations culminate in the ending where Valia poisons all his family including mother, stepfather, and girlfriend. The absurdity of the situation is exacerbated by the fact that the plot of the film is not so loosely based on Hamlet. The paper investigates the function of the travestied Shakespeare canon in the context of the post-Soviet culture of the early 2000s.

Voice of Defiance and Dissent: When the Soviet Hamlet Spoke Persian (Michelle Assay)
From 19th-century Russian performances as reported by Iranian travelers, to Vahram Papazian's Soviet-era Shakespeare in Iran, to the recent popularity of Macbeth Zar (a highly ritualistic Iranian adaptation on Russian stages), Iran's reception and appropriation of Shakespeare has often been influenced by that of its northern neighbor(s). Russian/Soviet (and Armenian) Shakespeares have embodied Iran's fascination with the West, and its quest for modernization and cultural diplomacy. This paper considers this historical context, while focusing on the long-lasting influence of Grigori Kozintsev's 1964 Hamlet, and how its hero has continued to represent a voice of protest and defiance among Iranian youth.

Shakespeare's Tragedies and the Cold War in Late Soviet Science Fiction (Natalia Khomenko)
In this paper, I argue that late Soviet science fiction often references Shakespeare's tragedies—with their supposedly universal significance—subversively, as part of complex commentary on the Soviet state's relationship with the global community. For example, in the brothers Strugatsky novel Hard to Be a God (1964), Hamlet serves as an intertext in exploring the ethics of the future communists' involvement with an alien civilization. Ultimately, late Soviet science fiction's allegorical depictions of exploration and cultural encounter highlight the remedial potential of Shakespeare, as they draw on the tragedies to interrogate the USSR's political activities during the Cold War.

Seminars

S1.
Anthropocene Shakespeare

Organisers: Sophie Chiari, Randall Martin.

Description: This seminar invites scholars and practitioners: to examine how Anthropocene conditions can make fresh sense of Shakespeare's plays; to explore how today's earth-system and environmental crises are reshaping Shakespeare criticism and performance; and to discuss how environmentally impacted and adapted Shakespeare can productively suggest post-Anthropocene futures. The use of non-Western forms of knowledge to reincorporate ecological values into Shakespeare, the institutional and transcultural mediation of eco-Shakespeare in performance, the environmental footprints of theatre production — these are just some of the many issues worth investigating in today's contexts of rethinking and staging Shakespeare on a precarious planet. How does Shakespeare's attention to the non-human resonate with today's Anthropocene crises? How does eco-dramaturgy imagine alternatives of environmental preservation, equity, and coping mechanisms? And how can it encourage best practices and post-growth sponsorship and investment?

Insular Precarity: The Island as A Metaphor for Planetary Crises in Recent Polish Productions of *The Tempest* (Magdalena Cieślak)
Among Shakespeare's plays, *The Tempest* seems to be a particularly fitting text to address the crisis of the Anthropocene, be it in criticism or production. The play's engagement with utopian discourse, its underlying legacy of colonialism and patriarchal white supremacy, and its framing of the feminine redemptive potential in the context of fertility, ownership and control, are among the aspects that signal the possible developments towards eco-critical and posthuman perspectives. What is more, the isolated space and the strict time-frame of the narrative create a sense of urgency and inevitability, making the island a small-scale universe that reflects the precarity of our planet and its entangled systems. In my paper, I wish to discuss three recent Polish productions of *The Tempest*: Grzegorz Jarzyna's *2020: The Tempest* (Teatr Rozmaitości), Szymon's Kaczmarek 2024 production in Gdańsk Shakespeare Theatre, and this season's diploma production of the students of the Lodz Film School (dir. Tomasz Fryzeł). While their dramaturgical and visual strategies differ, all the productions capitalize on the claustrophobic insularity of the play to engage with the crisis of the Anthropocene (or rather Capitalocene), and reimagine the play's precarious characters – Caliban, Ariel and Miranda – to discuss the perspectives of a posthuman future.

'Mud, Water, Metal, Plastic: Staging *A Midsummer Night's Dream*' (Patrick Durdel)
This paper considers different stagings of Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* with a particular focus on set design. I will look at a number of productions of the play from the early 1990s (slightly before the term Anthropocene was popularized) to the present. The primary focus of the paper will be on the materiality of staging the forest environment in the play, contrasting the use of metal and plastic – as materials intertwined with the industrial processes that characterize the Anthropocene – with the use of mud, water, and other (supposedly) natural materials on the stage. My paper asks how these artificial environments shape different ideas about the contact between human and natural world (oppositional, integrative, identical) in performance.

Love in the Anthropocene: *Venus and Adonis* (David Goldstein)
If, as historian Timothy Reiss has argued, early modern humans were "passible" creatures, then any discussion of the early modern Anthropocene must address not only issues of human stewardship over the nonhuman world, but also the environmentality of humans themselves. For early modern people, the key question was not about the human relationship to the environment outside them so much as to all the unruly environmental forces at work within them. In Shakespeare's *Venus and Adonis*, Venus's desire is depicted as a site of both human and non-human ecological crisis. If love is the fundamental engine of species continuity (the primary argument Venus offers Adonis for having sex with her is the production of offspring), but is experienced as a disruptive and unsustainable set of emotions and actions, how does the poem encourage us to think with love and sex as complex ecosystemic forces?

'We call a nettle but a nettle': Queer Ecology and Shakespeare's Nettles (Saraya Haddad)
This paper looks at early modern attitudes to nettles through the lens of queer ecology. As Robert Azzarello writes, queer ecology is an integral part of environmental studies, an offshoot which shares 'a profound interest in' what constitutes as "the natural" [...] queer theorists express their frustration with the naturalisation of nature, [...] many environmentalists have viewed these efforts to denaturalise nature as part of the problem — indeed crisis — in the environmental movement.'[1] Nettles are a prime example of queer ecological matter, and according to Renaissance anthropocentric thinking, the nettle was commonly viewed as an unnatural invader, a queer symbol of postlapsarian ruin and its perceived accompanying

disorderliness. Focusing on references to the nettle in Shakespeare's *Henry IV Part 1* (c. 1597), *Othello* (c. 1604) and *Coriolanus* (c. 1607), I am interested in how the playwright's imagery involving these plants engages in the era's portrayal of the nettle as a pest.

Militarization in *Hamlet* (Mónica Maffía)
Behind the striking recurrence of the word "nothing" in *Hamlet* there could be more than a stylometric analysis. But combined with the "fortune" word frequency they act as a part of a conceptual device that work together to perform a specific function: that of a symbol. A masterful treatise of mining and metallurgy (written in Latin) was being published in Basel just after the ascension of Elizabeth to the throne of England, and a new alloy was being introduced in early modern weaponry. The first two mining companies were created to search for copper and calamite. In a calculated move to break traditional power, the queen removed officials in key positions and replaced them for those loyal to her and proceeded to apply lawfare to justify her greed. I shall argue that the term "fortune" encodes a clear figure of extractivism and together with "nothing" embodies the lawfare used by the State to intimidate and silence political opponents and society in general to proceed to illegal mining. So I suggest that the repetitive use of those words was a means to condemn a criminal act that resulted in political upheaval and deaths.

Performing Indigenous Mexican Legends and Eco-Shakespeare in OrangeMite's *La víbora y el cuervo* (Ángel Nuñez and William Floyd Wolfgang)
Long before Anthropogenic crises emerged, Mexican Indigenous legends warned of the consequences that follow when humans forget their interdependence with the earth. These stories promote balance, reciprocity, and, most importantly, kincentric ecologies. While similar notions can be found throughout Shakespeare's work and have been the focus of a rapidly growing body of ecocritical scholarship, our ecodramaturgy foregrounds non-Western forms of knowledge and places these systems in direct dialogue with Shakespeare. At the OrangeMite Shakespeare company in Pennsylvania, USA, we implemented these methodologies to move beyond anthropocentric binaries, explore epistemological commonalities, and illustrate the cross-cultural distinctions for our audiences. Our Shakespeare-infused adaptation, *La víbora y el cuervo* (our company's third Spanish-English bilingual Shakespeare adaptation), combines indigenous legends from the Mam, Kiliwa, and Wixárika people. It is framed around the origin story of *La víbora de algodón*, which arose from oral traditions of the Huastec people. We intersperse language and themes from *As You Like It*, *Cymbeline*, and *Titus Andronicus*, particularly focusing on violence inflicted on humans and animals in these texts, along with the many manifestations of "hunting" and consumption. Lastly, we find persistent imagery from the more-than-human world in Shakespeare's *Edward III* and entwine it with the vipers (*víboras*) and crows (*cuervos*) found in legends. Indigenous communities long understood the interconnected web between human and non-human systems. By placing this type of work in our theatrical season, we hope to explore with our community-based participants and audiences later this year how familiarity with these legends helps us to imagine a post-anthropocene future.

Shakespeare, the Anthropocene, and AI: Reading Between Archives (Kirsten Sandrock)
This paper seeks to bring together two strands of Shakespeare scholarship that shape and, arguably, change literary studies today: the Anthropocene and AI. Despite their fundamentally different angles, both fields question the centrality of the human and, with it, the role of human-authored literature (Colavizza et. al; Horn/Bergthaller 2020; Vermeulen 2020). Drawing on Shakespeare-centred case studies (e.g., Basu 2025; Borlik 2023; Chiari 2019; Randall 2015; Warren-Crow 2024; Yang 2025), I am particularly interested in the role of the archive and how

our understanding of the archive changes vis-à-vis posthuman approaches. This is especially true for Shakespeare. I take Derrida's concept of the archive as a space situated between the material, the ontological, and the nomological (Derrida 1996) as a starting point to think about the Shakespeare archive not so much as a physical place but as a site where power over the past, present and future understanding of Shakespeare's works is negotiated. Ever since Shakespeare's rise to canonical status, his dramas and sonnets have functioned as an archive that is attributed a key role in Western cultural memory (Basu 2025). The Anthropocene now urges scholars to think about "non-traditional archives", including the "terrestrial archive" or the "planetary archive" or the "digital archive" (Vermeulen 2020, 113). At the same time, LLMs change the way Shakespeare's works are treated as archives when turned, like other texts, into big data for neurological network training (e.g., Basu 2025; Warren-Crow 2024; Yang 2025). Key questions arising from these concurring developments include: Who or what oversees and interprets Shakespeare's archive? What knowledge is gained, or lost, when we prioritize nonhuman archives? How do Shakespeare's works themselves deal with human and non-human archives, for instance, in the sonnets, *The Tempest*, and *King Lear*? My paper seeks to address these and other questions so as to explore what reading between archives may look like for the future.

Caliban, Indigeneity, Ownership, Ecology: *The Tempest* transformed and translated (Chris Thurman)

"This island's mine[,] by Sycorax my mother..." is a much-cited line from The Tempest. But is Calibanasserting his inheritance of the island via his mother? Or is he swearing by her name? And what does this mean for competing claims of ownership and belonging – as well as the very different relationships these claims imply between the human and non-human? This paper responds to the seminar's invitation to consider, among other topics, "the use of non-Western forms of knowledge to reincorporate ecological values into Shakespeare". It will revisit some familiar questions about Caliban's presence on the island and his acquired symbolic status as indigene, placing these in dialogue with an ecocritical/ecodramaturgical response to the play. A simultaneously decolonial and environmentalist reading or performance of The Tempest appears to require the adaptation or revision of key plot and character elements. Alternatively, transforming The Tempest in the Anthropocene may entail translation. The author situates these considerations within a South African context and discusses the example of an isiZulu translation-adaptation from the 1950s by K.E. Masinga.

Water and the Anthropocene: Rivers, Dams, and *1 Henry 4* (Amy L. Tigner)

In Act 3, scene 1 of *1 Henry 4*, the rebellious Mortimer, Hotspur, and Glendower decide that they will divide up the land, drawing new borders that will accommodate what they image is a tripartite but separate governance of the British Isles. In an effort of fairness, the archdeacon hath "divided it/into three limits very equally" (1.2.72-72) take up the map and diagram what each their portions will be of land. However, Hotspur is disgruntled about his apportionment, especially considering how a river runs through his parcel. "See how this river comes me cranking in/ and cuts me from the best of all my land/ A huge half-moon, monstrous cantle out" (3.1.98-100). Even as he complains, he has already come up with a plan to move the river Trent by damming it: "I'll have the current in this place dammed up" (3.1.101). Such practices of moving, constraining, and damming rivers do not take into account the river's own perspective and freedom. Rivers (and really nature itself) for Hotspur, as with most Europeans of the time and European colonizers up until the present, are an object rather than a subject. Treating all nature thus has led us into the current existential climate crisis of the Anthropocene. However, if we change our perspective and ask the question, as Robert MacFarlane does in his new book, *Is the River Alive?*, how might we be able to create a paradigm shift towards an animate earth,

an earth that should have the same rights as (privileged) human beings? This paper aims to use Shakespeare as a backdrop to facilitate this new/ancient/indigenous way of thinking about nature, and thus advocating for the legislation of rivers, forests, and oceans, as persons with inalienable rights.

Macbeth and energy (Robert N. Watson)
Shakespeare persistently associates the "butcher" Macbeth (trying to "enkindle" his way into the crown) with blood-thirst and fire. The Weird Sisters who provoke his short-sighted hunger for power are similarly associated with blood soup and fuel-burning (and the "filthy air" Londoners lamented), and a corruption of natural renewal. The heroes are associated instead with sunlight and the planting and growing of seeds, against villains linked to clouds, sundown, darkness, and autumn. The competing ways of acquiring and employing power politically correspond with the competing current ways of acquiring and consuming energy in 21st century. The collision between the Macbeths' egoism and the world's entropy ends in rage and despair. They bet on the wrong "golden round" to resist mortality: a brief candle can't replace sunlight. Shakespeare culminates the lesson with a parable of reforestation, relevant to Scotland in the historical Macbeth's time and the time Shakespeare wrote this play.

On "Mutinous Winds" and the "Dread-Rattling Thunder" - Early Modern Ecoterrorism in Shakespeare's *The Tempest* (Natalie Zwätz)
Ecoterrorism, in various forms, has shaped modern environmental discourse and helped make discussions of the Anthropocene mainstream. However, as this paper will argue, ecoterrorism is not a uniquely modern phenomenon. Rooted in considerations of ecoterrorism as an abuse and utilisation of natural forces,1 I will reevaluate *The Tempest*'s eponymous storm and Prospero's utilisation of the island setting and its non-human inhabitants as acts of ecoterrorism. Shakespeare's meteorological romance is particularly susceptible to such a re-evaluation because it negotiates control, agency, and violence among both human and nonhuman actors in a setting where the boundaries between natural and unnatural are decidedly blurry. This reading illustrates the affordances of ecological approaches to Shakespeare in the Anthropocene and exemplifies how reading early modern literature through modern concepts like ecoterrorism can contribute to making sense of our current crisis, which has, to say it with Ken Hiltner's words, its "roots in the Renaissance".

S02.
Antony and Cleopatra as Cosmos

Organisers: Eric S. Mallin, Paromita Chakravarti, and Thea Buckley

Nearly every expression of theme, affect, or selfhood in *Antony and Cleopatra* partakes of the transcendent. From assertions of racial identity to articulations of conquest, empire, desire, and grief, the play repeatedly argues for human participation in and encounters with the infinite, the sublunary real. How best can we understand characters who think themselves virtually divine, planetary objects? What are the significances for our reading of the sexualities, politics, and ecologies implied in discourse about the heavenly spheres? This seminar will consider the play's challenge to Eurocentric habits of thought through its obsessions with universality and global scale.

Border Crossing in *Antony and Cleopatra*: Escapism Reimagined and Reinvented (Ali Bahani)
In Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra*, Rome is presented as a finalised and closed structure that tolerates neither external elements nor internal departures. This expansionist project attempts to reduce the manyness of the world into oneness. Antony realises that the experience has completely dehumanised him and he decides to break free from it; to break free from the black hole of subjectivity. His crossing of the borders is similar to Julius Caesar's crossing of the Rubicon, yet with a distinct difference. He displaces the center of gravity to the East without any disciplinary re-integration. In the new spirit of a nomad, he traces a new cartography in a more fluid and open space that opens his eyes to another real. This active line of emancipation, that I interpret as a line-of-flight in the Deleuzian perspective, is sublimated from the start It persists through every phase of the journey until the tragic couple dies a sublimated, stylised death, challenging the Roman authority and interpreting this death as an escalation to an ideal world. Caesar, the avatar of the ascetic ideal, wants to repatriate Antony to a world of gregariousness, but all his efforts fail; his eventual victory is only partial. Antony's heroic death and Cleopatra's genius deprive him of the ecstasy of parading them through the streets of Rome. Ultimately, my reading does not condemn Antony's flight, but rather it integrates into the active poetics of resistance theorised by Deleuze and Guattari, Alain Badiou in their texts, wherein love operates as an event and a positive connection to the outside.

"I am fire and air": South Indian cosmologies in Jayaraj's film *Kannaki* (Thea Buckley)
In 2001, Keralan film director Jayaraj adapted *Antony and Cleopatra* into the national award-winning film *Kannaki*. In recasting the middle-aged lovers as Kannaki and Manikyan, a star-crossed snake shrine priestess and fighting cock trainer, Jayaraj not only telescopes Shakespeare's sweeping geographical and historical epic into a South Indian border village but also reenvisions it in a Hindu cosmology. Just as Shakespeare's titular lovers by the end of the play become larger-than-life cosmological figures, immortalised in poetry – a celestial being with the sun and moon for eyes (5.2.50), a goddess of elemental air and fire (5.2.289) – so too are Kannaki's leads aligned with heroic figures in the Hindu pantheon and epic poems *Silappatikkaram* and *Mahabharata*. Ultimately, twenty-five years on, this paper builds on my experience of subtitling *Kannaki*'s song lyrics in English to explore the ways in which its intercultural transformation illuminates what remains a very human tragedy.

"Above the element they lived in": Chaos and Cosmos in Antony and Cleopatra (Jessica Chiba)
Cosmos. It is a word Shakespeare never uses; but etymologically, philosophically and visually, the word exemplifies the illogical logic of *Antony and Cleopatra*. Full of people talking about others, and employing descriptions that necessarily exceed reality, this sprawling play of oppositions constantly 'words' chaos into cosmos, cosmetically layering metaphysical order over physical disorder. This paper traces the poetic way that *Antony and Cleopatra* pushes up against the limits of human experience in a yearning for transcendence. As truest feigning, I will argue that poetry in this play questions ordinary distinctions between true and false, order and disorder, seeing the world from an astro-logical vantage while inhabiting the sublunary.

Narcissus at the Cosmos: The Art of Infinite Fascination in *Antony and Cleopatra* (Wanjie Feng)
The success of *Antony and Cleopatra* as tragedy depends upon the reader's complicity in the *voluptas* of self-love. The lovers' culmination in death can be conveniently read as transcendence—their elevation above the Roman political order, above every order of confinement, into a love as enduring as the never-dying universe. Such fascination implicates

precisely the reader's self-deifying image reflected in that of the lovers' own. This paper argues that the lovers' mutual gaze constructs a cosmos that is less a ladder of transformation than a mirror of magnified self-perpetuation. As Shakespeare's Ovidian queen, Cleopatra is at once Narcissus, Salmacis, Pygmalion, and Phoenix; Antony is simultaneously her echo and creature: each finds an idealised world encapsulated in the other. Where the Neoplatonic tradition holds the lover's gaze at the beloved the first rung of an ascent to divine love, their love is instead the externalisation of self-infatuation. The narcissistic structure converts both *imperium* and art into destructive stasis. Antony, a triumvir, turns the sovereignty that should govern Rome into the construction of a private cosmos that seems impervious to political concerns. Cleopatra proves to be the Ovidian creator whose artwork is the colossus-Antony, confirming his power of absolute control in a dream. Her death completes the design as the phoenix's self-immolation, appearing to catch another Antony in the eternal repetition of the same. The cosmic love that seems to transcend Roman and Egypt rather dissolves both.

Humiliation: Milton Reading Shakespeare's *Anthony and Cleopatra* (Paul Stevens)
In this paper, my focus is Milton's recurring feelings of humiliation over the course of his career, what they mean and how they affect his representation of the world – critically, my focus is an account of the degree to which they often appear gendered and the way he turns to Shakespeare to help him articulate them. In order to do this I need to unravel a complex network of texts, but most importantly, the place of Shakespeare's *Anthony and Cleopatra* in that network, specifically in its relation to the biblical story of Samson. Shakespeare's play demands the attention it does because Milton's climactic representation of Dalila in *Samson Agonistes* is mediated through Shakespeare's Cleopatra. As Milton's "sage and serious" Spenser makes clear in Book 5 of *The Faerie Queene*, the relation between Delilah and Cleopatra is highly conventional, and *Samson Agonistes* telegraphs its peculiar importance for Milton with the first appearance of Dalila. She seems to the Chorus like a "stately ship / Of Tarsus," the city on the river Cydnus where Cleopatra's stately barge in Shakespeare is made to evoke the overwhelming power of her erotic attraction. In an image completely missing from Shakespeare's source in North's Plutarch, the sails of Cleopatra's ship were "so perfumed that / The winds were lovesick with them," and so in Milton, Dalila's sails with an "amber scent of odorous perfume" were "Courted by all the winds that hold them [in] play." Dalila enters Milton's tragedy redolent with memories of Shakespeare's Cleopatra. In order to understand the full significance of this particular relation we need to go back to Milton's *Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce*.

S03.
Blue Shakespeares

Organisers: Steve Mentz, Shaul Bassi, Dyani Johns Taff

Description: Shakespeare's planetary vision often focuses on the sea and other bodies of water. From the 'boundless' seas of love that animate Romeo and Juliet to Macbeth's 'multitudinous seas' and Hamlet's 'sea of troubles', the World Ocean operates throughout Shakespeare's plays and poems as both metaphor and fundamental physical reality. This seminar invites papers that expand Shakespeare's watery visions beyond the poetics of oceans into fresh waters, ice, clouds and fog, and other watery forms. We aim to engage with recent scholarship in the blue humanities, ecocriticism, and different kinds of planetarity and globalization.

“The Sea is not a metaphor”: Shakespeare’s Supernatural and Super Natural Seas (Sarah Crover)

The Tempest opens with the spectacle of a magic-induced storm at sea. Although the storm audiences are confronted with is explicitly fabricated, one of the storm’s inspirations came from a real account of a disastrous hurricane English colonists encountered in the Bermudas, and their subsequent shipwreck. Prospero’s magic, Caliban, and the army of spirits that people the isle remain obvious examples of the preternatural uncanny in modern eyes, but it is easy to forget that all that Prospero can do temporarily, the ocean always already does “naturally.” St. Elmo’s fire, hurricanes, rogue waves, etc. are natural, though deeply weird and alienly wild oceanic phenomena. Those caught up in the devastation of hurricane Helene might have belatedly realised, but everyone in early modern England knew the life-altering, wild ferocity of sea storms. Afterall, they would have been aware that the invading Armada was routed by a storm, supernatural or not. The phenomena Shakespeare describes emphasizes rather than elides the deeply uncanny reality of the open ocean. When settler colonists arrived in the pacific northwest, they came fully expecting as wild and unpredictable seascape as any Shakespeare could conjure and they were not disappointed. Vancouver Island, British Columbia has numerous notorious maritime graveyards, and anyone living on the island today knows how gorgeous and treacherous its waters still are. However, if we focus solely on the uncanny nature of these early modern and modern seas, both real and imagined, we miss how normal and readable these waters and their tempests were and are. Ultimately, I argue, reading Prospero’s seas alongside settler encounters with the north Pacific, can help ground us in the unsettling reality of the super natural (and supernatural) oceanic systems.

“Multitudinous Seas Incarnadine”: Water, Blood, and Institutional Violence in Pakistani Shakespeare” (Zakia Resshid Ehsen)

This paper analyses the Najmuddin Dramatic Society’s *Shakespeare Unriddled* (Kinnaird College for Women, Pakistan, May 2024), a performance that employs Shakespeare’s water imagery — storm, blood, “gentle rain from heaven” — to expose institutional violence and human rights failures in Palestine, Bosnia, Kashmir, and Iraq, contributing a Global South perspective to Blue humanities scholarship. The production’s most distinctive intervention lies in its reimagining of Shylock as a South Asian religious minority, translating Venice’s hydro-political exclusions into contemporary contexts where minorities drown in institutional indifference. Portia’s mercy as “gentle rain from heaven” establishes water as the language of institutional promise, yet speaking from Venice, Shakespeare’s “watery historical space” built on maritime exclusion, Portia enacts the devastating gap between promised rain and actual blood.The production’s sonic architecture moves from the sitar’s flowing waters to tempestuous war sounds, enacting what Mentz calls “shipwreck modernity.” Lady Macbeth’s blood-smeared body, surrounded by maternal figures holding bloodied infants and UN/G7/G20 placards, reveals water’s impossibility: institutions have contaminated all waters. Macbeth’s “multitudinous seas incarnadine” — the World Ocean turned red with blood — becomes the governing image of institutional failure. Lear’s storm, staged amid war sounds and institutional placards, performs communities drowning in violence while global institutions watch from dry ground. *Shakespeare Unriddled* ultimately demonstrates that Shakespeare’s water imagery describes actual conditions where marginalized communities navigate catastrophic waters with no rescue in sight.

The Sea with its Endless Motion and Cyclical Change in Nature Reflecting both the Cosmos and Microcosmos in Shakespeare's *Pericles* and *The Tempest* (Neslihan Ekmekçioğlu)

The Mediterranean Sea has been an inspiration for Homer and Shakespeare "a nourisher and destroyer of life". Homer's *The Odyssey* deals with Odysseus' adventures in the Aegean and Mediterranean Sea. In *Pericles* Shakespeare displays the sealife experiences of Pericles who is confronted with unpredicted events. Pericles witnesses the nativity of baby Marina and the death of his wife, Thaisa who is put inside a chest after the childbirth. Thaisa who has already become "the treasure of the deep sea" is discovered after a turbulent and stormy night by Cerimon who brings her back to life. Most probably there has been an earthquake causing the billow, the swelling of the sea which delivered the chest carrying Thaisa's body to the seacoast of Ephesus. Shakespeare's maritime imagination reveals a profound ontological relation between the sea and human. The ocean with its tempests and shipwrecks brings about a transformation in human existence. In *Pericles* the sea brings hope and despair, life and death as well as deep changes in Pericles' life. The sea witnesses the revival of life with magic and music at the seashore of Ephesus. The sea in *Pericles* stands for the hero's psyche, his unconscious fears and desires, and his inner psychological storms. Shakespeare's *The Tempest* takes place on an island in the Mediterranean Sea but the hero, Prospero does not travel as Pericles does in the wild sea. Prospero was once the Duke of Milan usurped by Antonio. The Tempest and shipwreck at the opening scene were created by the magic of Prospero to take revenge from his brother. Prospero's sea experience is not as profound as that of Pericles but Prospero has the magical power to influence the winds like Aeolus and create the tempest. At the end Prospero's sense of revenge is cured and turned into forgiveness. Just like an alchemical process in which after the boiling of certain elements only gold remains as pure, Prospero's soul is purged off the previous base emotions and there remains the golden part of humanity. Shakespeare was inspired by a real shipwreck which took place in 1609 close to the Bermudas when the ship *"Sea Venture"* split into pieces after a terrible storm as mentioned by William Strachey in *'A True Reportory'*. In Prospero Shakespeare creates an artist, a magician and a creator. I think Caliban is more a sea man like Pericles and an islander who knows the most beautiful shores of the island and the best fauna and flora that exist on this island of paradise. My paper will deal with the Sea with its endless motion and cyclical change reflecting the interaction between Cosmos and Microcosmos in Shakespeare's *Pericles* and *The Tempest*.

"Your rheum upon my beard": Anti-Semitism and the Uses of Water and Watery Things in *The Merchant of Venice* (Simon C. Estok)

In the watery setting of *The Merchant of Venice* (a real setting wherein Jews are segregated by canals), the sliming up of the Jew weaponizes water. Far from humanizing Shylock, the play sources him as a site of disgust, a slime-faced dog (at least with Antonio's rheum upon him). He is a vile thing who can't even get shechita (שחיטה) right, but Portia lessons him with her pronouncements on the bond: she claims that it allows no blood in the rendering of the pound of flesh. This clearly resonates uncomfortably with—and, it seems, mocks—halachic rules of slaughter. Coupled with the weaponizing of water as slime, then, the play (through Portia's legal gymnastics) weaponizes against Shylock another form that water takes: the blood of the tainted wether. Moreover, in addition to Portia's sham lawyering, the *actual* laws of the land at the time required Jews to live in exile in the ghetto. Like the rheum upon his beard, the setting sources Shylock as a site of filth and horridness. Venetian Jews clearly didn't have the happy and bright lives that the merry and triumphant goyische of the play seemed to enjoy. Nor did they enjoy the freedoms to escape for business the brackish waters of the lagoon. In this watery world, then, how *shared* is the shared resource of water? Who uses it, and who is subject to it? Why do these things even matter today? These are among the issues that I will discuss.

Fathoming a Sea-change – phase states and refractions of reality in Shakespeare's *Tempest* (John Joughin)
This paper forms part of a larger project on immanence, ecognosis and Shakespearean Romance, where indivisible states of matter and motion are prevalent, and where 'melt' accommodates perhaps the best known of the playwright's figures for, and of, the theatre.
The images that surround the 'insubstantial pageant', and the dissolve of the formal masque which precedes it, extend a watery vision that expands to encompass 'cloudscape' and 'rack' (driving mist or fog) in a process which could just as easily apply to rainbows or other vaporous forms – each comprising non-reflective or dioptric phenomena, wherein water droplets produce their own prismatic luminosity. In filtering a light which originates from elsewhere these phase-states remain immanent to the materials which refract them. In amplifying the liminality that attends the 'dissolve' or 'melt' of any theatrical experience, Shakespeare anticipates Bergson's famous example of the durational phenomenon of a sugar cube melting, a lived process or 'thinking *in* duration', which also materialises a deeper sense of the significance of the 'interval'. In attending to Shakespeare's alchemic perception of the indivisible states of fluidity, meld and melt, I want to follow the playwright's 'watery logic' in its heterogeneous continuity with Bergson, as it is refracted through various art forms, including, among others, the work of Woolf, Eliot and most recently Ali Smith.

"The Wild Waters in This Roar": The Semiotics of the Shoreline and the Discursive Construction of Chaos and Order in Shakespeare's Plays (Simona Laghi)
This paper examines how language related to the sea and its environment serves as a semiotic resource for discourses of chaos and order in Shakespeare's *Pericles, Prince of Tyre* and *The Tempest*, two plays which pivot on the sea. Starting from a textual analysis of words belonging to the semantic field of sea geography, this paper employs critical discourse analysis and a multimodal approach as a theoretical framework to explore how maritime imagery encodes meanings related to law and authority. The aim is to contribute to the blue humanities by combining quantitative and qualitative analysis with the support of digital tools. In Shakespeare's plays, the sea and land function as semiotic resources through which discourses of chaos and order, instability and stability, are constructed. The sea is discursively represented as a space of instability and uncertainty, particularly in scenes of storms and shipwrecks, while land and island spaces are idealised as sites of stability, juridical order, and political control. However, this opposition is often destabilised when political disorder or natural phenomena disrupt the order of the land. Departing from this framework, the shoreline, the liminal space where sea and land merge, is analysed as a discursive node whose linguistic patterns reveal the underlying power relations structuring the discourse of order and chaos. Furthermore, this paper argues that Shakespeare's language of sea imagery functions as a semiotic resource through which questions of power, law, and the human relationship with the environment are articulated**,** offering a perspective that resonates with contemporary debates on the Anthropocene.

Water to Die, Water to Rebirth: Affective Streams and Fluid Imagination in Shakespeare (Angela Leonardi)
This paper explores Shakespeare's imagery of water in *Othello*, *King Lear*, *The Tempest*, and *Antony and Cleopatra* through close readings of selected passages, arguing that water functions as a dynamic conceptual space in which the tension between balance and imbalance—both emotional and cognitive—takes form and circulates. Within this framework, the analysis is organised through a set of thematic areas and sub-areas designed to articulate the complexity of Shakespeare's aquatic imagination. These include, among others, water as nourishment and

life-sustaining force; water as contamination and corruption; water as a medium of empathy and affective transmission. Each area is further refined into sub-areas that trace specific affective configurations and their transformations across different texts, following the shifting currents of Shakespeare's dramatic and poetic language. In *Othello*, for instance, flowing or stagnant water becomes a projection of affect: it may figure faithful love, which nourishes and sustains life, or, conversely, evoke sexual disgust and corruption. In *Antony and Cleopatra*, the Egyptian environment—its heat, the Nile, the blazing sun—generates an imagery that oscillates between generative passion and moral decay. In *The Tempest*, the sea emerges as a space of empathy, as in Miranda's compassionate response to the suffering caused by the storm. By contrast, in *King Lear*, water often appears as a silent and indifferent presence: when Gloucester is asked whether he can hear the sea, he replies that he cannot, while the cliffs of Dover and the vastness of the sea frame Lear's psychic collapse, juxtaposing human instability with the apparent permanence of the natural world.

The Waters of Deliverance in *Pericles* (Nicholas Luke)
This paper explores the interconnections between water, resurrection, and the romance genre in *Pericles*. A strange sort of life force seems to run through the waters of the play, as if the water has its own suprahuman agency, an agency intimately connected to Shakespeare's experiments in genre. I connect these ideas to the way early modern religious writers think about water, including the ways it can be infused with spirit. Water seems to work as a radically open signifier that can point to both life and death, affliction and deliverance. John Donne, for example, links the waters both to first creation, when "the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters" (Genesis 1:2), and also to death ("the water of death overflowes all"). Crucially, however, Donne also speaks of the waters of *re*creation: in both the new life of baptism and in the eschatological life of resurrection (when God gathers up the spilled pieces) "he moves upon the face of the Waters againe". In the play, Pericles speaks of the "humming water" in his elegy for his dead wife, but the humming suggests a strange form of environmental agency, and very soon these waters belch (or cast up) Thaisa's coffin lifeboat into new life, leading to the play's first resurrection scene. I here explore links between the play's waters, the Jonah story, and Christ's resurrection, while also pointing to the role of Marina's watery narrative (and name) as an agent of deliverance or recreation.

'The ocean of thy blood': Envisioning Blue Poetics in Red and Black in Shakespeare's The Rape of Lucrece (1594) (Armelle Sabatier)
At the moment, I am thinking of water polychromy in Shakespeare so as to investigate the paradoxical chromatic nature of Blue Humanities, which lays in the fact that water, in its different forms and states of matter, is not perceived by the human eye automatically as blue and is not systematically pictured or described as blue in arts and literature either. To sustain my reflection, I am using concepts such as Cohen's 'prismatic ecology' or the "ecology of colours", but I am also thinking of combining concepts and theories stemming from colour studies (and even intermediality) and Blue humanities, such as the notion of materiality which is at the core of both fields of study. Shakespeare's second narrative poem, *The Rape of Lucrece*, teems with watery metaphors, taking the shape of ocean when related to Tarquin, rivers of blood in the long *ekphrasis,* and finally the picture in red and black of Lucrece's bleeding body compared to a river. This paper aims at investigating the chromatic processes at work to depict the deep connections between aquatic forms and bodily fluids, especially in red and black. The first hypothesis of the choice of red to picture watery forms probably goes back to Homer's texts. It is also related to the theory of humours and the balance between human fluids. Shakespeare intertwines exterior watery forms and internal bodily fluids, hence creating an inner 'sea life' within the intimacy of the human body.

Moisture and memory in Shakespeare's Airchive (Stephanie Shirilan)
I am taking the opportunity to engage more directly with the blue humanities in my work on air, breath, and atmosphere in Shakespeare. The inhabitable world's atmosphere, literally vapor or steam sphere, is per this etymology, a humid one. Arid atmospheres desiccate not only the body's surfaces but, more immediately, its organs of respiration. Atmospheric humidity is vital to creaturely survival, and the humidity of the breath is one of the most conspicuous signs of its presence. The threshold between the too wet and dry is a fragile one, as fatal in the breach by excess as dearth. Too much atmospheric moisture breeds disease, infecting animal hosts who pass pathogens through the humidity of their respiration. My essay explores the fragility of this balance in Shakespeare via an investigation of the emblematic "firmament," the separation between the waters "above" and "below" in the creation story of Genesis. In this essay, I am not focusing on disease but rather on the function of moisture to take and retain formal impressions of sensory data, especially sonic/linguistic *species* of information, as atmospheric memory. I have elsewhere attempted to theorize air as archive, or *airchive* in Shakespeare, using the framework of early modern sensory/cognitive as a way of contesting postmodernist theories of performance as that which leaves no trace (Phelan). I wish in this paper to consider the specifically humid aspects of atmospheric impressionability and intelligibility, focusing on the mnemonic function of atmospheric waters 'above' and 'below' the 'firmament' (Oakley Brown) as a kind of threshold of consciousness or what we might call sublimation. My case studies include *Hamlet* and *Macbeth,* but my focus will likely be on the role of watery atmospheric echo in *The Tempest*, in effort to connect this newer research to my reading of sublimated Jewish listening.

Shakespeare's Watery Queens (Whitney Sperrazza)
In Act 1, Scene 5 of *Antony and Cleopatra*, a messenger arrives to present Cleopatra with a gift from Antony: an orient pearl ("this treasure of an oyster"). This pearl, the messenger explains, is a promise, signifying Antony's pledge to help Cleopatra expand her kingdom so that "all the East...shall call her mistress" (1.5.46-49). The pearl, that is—a treasure dredged from the bottom of the sea—encapsulates a promised future of imperial expansion across waters. It functions in several different ways as what we might call a watery form. In this paper, Antony's gift is my starting point for exploring the connection between Cleopatra and Queen Elizabeth I. I am particularly interested in how both queens are represented in relation to watery forms. In part, then, this paper will address the ongoing critical debate about just where Queen Elizabeth I is in Shakespeare. Elizabeth I was, of course, Shakespeare's queen, but still the only generally accepted direct allusion to her is Oberon's description of the "fair vestal" in *Midsummer Night's Dream*. Orienting our reading of Shakespeare through the framework of blue humanities reveals new sites for where we might look for Elizabeth I in Shakespeare's plays (one answer, I propose, is: water). The paper's main intervention, though, lies in its attempt to keep nuancing and theorizing our understanding of watery places and forms in early modern England. Situated in the nascent decades of the British Empire, early modern texts have complex lessons to teach us about the significance of water as a distinct, unique site for imperial thinking.

S04.
Caliban and the (Inter-)Planetary: The In, the Out and the Beyond

Organisers: Michela Compagnoni, Anna Kowalcze-Pawlik.

Description: By offering insights into the development of the troubling discourses of race, and by coupling these discourses to the conflicts between bodies and identities, contemporary rewritings of Caliban as a character speak powerfully to our own world of religious, ethnic, and national antagonism that can be translated into transnational, global, post-Earth, and even inter-planetary scenarios. The seminar invites submissions that explore the (inter)planetary afterlives of Shakespeare's Caliban in the literary, performative, and digital forms of expression in the twenty-first century and that allow us to imagine alternatives to this increasingly fractured world and its unjust power relations.

"This island is mine, by Sycorax, my mother, which thou tak'st from me." How Colonialism and *White* Gazes are Reflected Critically in *The Tempest* (Susan Arndt)
Starting from postcolonial readings by scholars such as Kim Hall and Ania Loomba, who argue that *The Tempest* is a play about colonization and reflects racist attitudes, this paper advances that approach by examining Shakespeare's negotiation of white supremacy, Africanism, and colonial gazes. It argues that *The Tempest* displays an abolitionist agenda, contesting studies such as Patricia Akhimie's *Shakespeare and the Cultivation of Difference* (2018), which read the play as affirming English colonialist endeavours. First, Prospero's magic is read as a figure for white supremacy, and his conflict with Caliban as shaped by racialized power. Second, the paper analyses Prospero's gaze on Caliban, focusing on contradictions between colonial perceptions and Caliban's speech and actions. It argues that white gazes do not reveal Caliban himself, but rather project colonial fantasies onto him. Finally, by examining Caliban's resistance, resilience, and longing for freedom, alongside the negative traits embodied by white characters, the paper reads Prospero's epilogue as a farewell to colonialism and interprets the play as an abolitionist intervention favouring Gonzalo's Commonwealth vision over colonial hierarchies.

Steel Caliban: From Colonial Other to Planetary Condition (Michela Compagnoni)
Starting from a new possible etymology of Caliban's name as deriving from *chalybs* ('steel'), this paper reconsiders Caliban not only as a colonial or racialised other, but as a broader universal figure of extracted alterity. If Caliban as *chalybs* embodies a natural element torn from its original state, forged, hardened, and transformed into a man-serving instrument, his condition exceeds colonial subjugation to illuminate a wider paradigm through which many of the conflicting identities projected onto Caliban across centuries of 'Caliban watching' can be reconsidered. Read through the alchemical architecture of *The Tempest*, Caliban emerges as the flawed metal excluded from Prospero's project of purification: not fully transmutable, not redeemable within the new Golden Age Prospero seeks to engineer, but rather the 'dross' of that civilising and epistemological enterprise. This framework foregrounds the violence of humanist regimes founded on extraction, discipline, and the forced reshaping of bodies, languages, and environments, while also offering a contemporary lens through which Caliban can be understood as a recurring figure for those beings – human or otherwise – uprooted, instrumentalised, and excluded by projects of domination, purification, and world-making. As such, *chalybs* Caliban becomes a planetary site where colonial, postcolonial, ecological, and posthuman anxieties converge.

Caliban in *Blade Runner*: Shakespearean Echoes of *The Tempest* in Dystopian Key (Maria Consuelo Forés Rossell)

Shakespeare's *The Tempest* is a recurrent reference for sci-fi, but Ridley Scott's *Blade Runner* (1982) offers a particularly compelling dystopian rewriting through a pioneering contemporary revision of Caliban that can be analysed from a posthuman perspective. Envisioning the twenty-first century through both fear of dehumanizing technology and faith in human values, Scott's film, though loosely based on Philip K. Dick's *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* (1968), became an original work with a transcendental message and lasting influence on popular culture. This hybrid film combines aesthetic elements from Fritz Lang and Moebius with narrative threads recalling Mary Shelley and Raymond Chandler, but its central plot can also be read through Shakespeare's *The Tempest*. *Blade Runner*'s characters echo Shakespearean counterparts, especially Roy Batty, whose afterlife as a revision of Caliban raises profound questions about life, humanity, time, and mortality. The struggle for freedom and equality, and the conflict between tyrannical master and rebel slave, are reimagined through the fugitive Nexus 6 replicants, Rick Deckard as a technological Ariel, and Dr. Tyrell as a futuristic Prospero. *Blade Runner* thus updates *The Tempest* to present a dark vision of thefuture, warning against oppressive identity constructs and unequal power relations.

Why Do We Struggle With Caliban? (Coen Heijes)

This contribution explores the extent to which Caliban is intertwined with Dutch history and anxieties. Building on Global Shakespeare studies, it examines Shakespeare productions within specific regional, national, and international contexts to analyse how they reflect or actively participate in contemporary debates. Focusing on Dutch productions and adaptations of *The Tempest* in theatre, ballet, and opera over the last three decades (with brief reference to earlier works), the paper investigates representations of Caliban across approximately six or seven productions. Preliminary findings suggest that, on the one hand, Caliban's representation reflects broader Dutch theatrical conditions and traditions. On the other, and more significantly, his staging and interaction with other characters engage with Dutch history, including the Netherlands' involvement in the slave trade, growing unease with Dutch colonial history, and a sense of cognitive dissonance in confronting this past. While distinct from the debates generated by Dutch productions of *Othello* or *The Merchant of Venice*, these representations also intersect with discussions of multiculturalism and today's polarized political and cultural climate, including controversies such as Black Pete. The paper ultimately asks whether Caliban functions primarily as a mirror for Dutch anxieties or has become an active participant in addressing them.

'Thou, earth, thou, speak!': Caliban and/as Geopoetics of *The Tempest* (Anna Kowalcze-Pawlik)

This paper explores Caliban's embodiment, taking Prospero's interpellation of Sycorax's son as an earthbound, clay-like figure seriously, and situates this radically verbatim interpretation within ecocritical framework to ask what can be learned from speaking earth if only we truly listen. Reading Caliban as an elemental creature - sculpted from soil, debris, and organic decay - underscores the entanglement of the human with the non-human, and may direct our attention from the human - to the hum-us, the collectively organic. A variety of transcreations of the play is analysed to trace such a geological turn, whereby Caliban's clay-like crusty form reconfigures the boundaries between being and matter, as well as colonial subject and landscape. This suggests a potential for ecological becoming – one whose "monstrous" hybridity foregrounds (early) modern anxieties about domination, extraction, and the liveliness of the elemental world — and can teach us in the process something fundamental about the nature of the earth/ hum-us.

Rethinking Caliban: Challenging English Constructions of the Native American (Powhatan) 'other' (Xin Ying Lim)
This article locates *The Tempest* in seventeenth-century Virginia by considering how the first encounters between Caliban and the European newcomers parallel those between the Indigenous Powhatan and English settlers in Jamestown. It argues that reading Caliban's first encounter with Prospero through the conventions of the Powhatan economy of gift exchange offers a different perspective on why Caliban so willingly shares knowledge of the island's resources in Act 1.2. This approach also encourages us to move beyond viewing English settler colonialism solely as a story of property and instead understand it as one of emotional subjugation. While scholars have situated *The Tempest* in locations such as the Bermudas, the New World, and the English Fens, and have proposed various ethnicities for Sycorax and Caliban, this article is the first to read Caliban in relation to the Powhatan and to interpret his speech and actions through Powhatan tributary conventions. By examining Prospero's gift of "water with berries in't" (1.2.335) through Powhatan tributary relationships, and by recognizing how colonial history intertwines natural resources, emotions, and Indigenous politics, the article reveals how Caliban's narrative can illuminate the political nuances of colonial Virginia.

Prospero's Emotional Regime (Yang Liu)
Recent scholarship on *The Tempest* continues to debate whether the island narrative should be read primarily through New World discovery and colonial exploration, or as an allegory of European political concerns more immediate to early modern English audiences; and how Caliban's ambiguous identity should be understood – as an indigenous inhabitant, an Old World savage, or something beyond the fully human. Building on Alden T. Vaughan's call for a "rounded interpretation" that acknowledges both European influence and ambiguous American presence, this paper shifts attention away from the binary between Old World and New World contexts toward the concept of "emotional regime," as theorized by William Reddy in *The Navigation of Feelings*. Through this lens, the paper examines the power relations between Prospero, as the embodiment of legitimate magical authority, and Caliban, as the alterity of witchcraft and the culturally constructed figure of the witch. It argues that magician and witch occupy sharply differentiated cultural categories, distinguished above all by their respective capacities for emotional self-restraint and regulation. Finally, it analyzes how anger is suppressed and strategically released within Prospero's emotional regime, and how this structure ultimately incites Caliban's rebellion against his authority.

Caliban: The Soul of the Earth (Julie Raby)
This paper revisits Caliban's reception by shifting attention away from the dominant emphasis in Caliban studies on post-Shakespearean displacement, marginalization, and narrative reinstatement, and instead examines how eighteenth-century British criticism, painting, and literature reimagined Caliban in ways that resist stereotypes of subordination and otherness. Building on Anna Kowalcze-Pawlik's work on Caliban's evolving reception, it argues that, rather than merely displacing or subordinating Caliban, some eighteenth-century representations already anticipate later efforts to reinstate him as a figure of agency and intellectual complexity. A central case study is Henry Fuseli's visual representation of Prospero and Caliban, whose surviving fragment and print reveal that, rather than isolating Prospero alone, Fuseli's larger composition positioned Caliban as a prominent figure in dynamic relation to him. Alongside Fuseli, writers such as William Hazlitt recognized Caliban as a powerful, original figure rooted in landscape and environment rather than merely defined by servitude or monstrosity. By reconsidering these eighteenth-century portrayals, the paper argues that some

Romantic-era responses understood Caliban through his relation to birthplace, nature, and environment, positioning him as a vital site for rethinking relations among nature, art, and technology, and for reconfiguring social and epistemological understandings of reality.

Caliban's Jab: Monstrosity, Devil Mas' and the (Inter-)Planetary Afterlives of The Tempest (Danielle Ashley Skinner)
This paper rereads Caliban as a Shakespearean creature whose monstrosity exceeds the human and gestures toward planetary and post-Earth modes of being. While critical traditions have often sought to recuperate Caliban as a humanised colonial subject, this study foregrounds his non-human and more-than-human qualities as performative strategies through which power, territory, and identity are contested. Caliban's grotesque body, devilish associations, linguistic excess, and affective capacity for terror are examined as modes of agency that unsettle humanist, colonial, and anthropocentric frameworks. Drawing on Mikhail Bakhtin's theory of the carnivalesque, the paper places Caliban in dialogue with Caribbean devil masquerade traditions, particularly Trinidad's Jab Molassie and Grenada's Jab Jab. Emerging from histories of enslavement and colonial violence, these figures enact monstrosity through exaggerated bodies, horns, paint, sound, and intimidation. Through close readings of Caliban's claims to the island, violent threats, subversive language, and intoxicated celebration, the paper argues that he occupies a threshold space where human, animal, devil, and spirit converge. Attention to contemporary Caribbean adaptation demonstrates how Caliban's hybrid body continues to visualise unstable ontologies, positioning him as a planetary figure whose afterlives imagine identity, resistance, and belonging beyond the human, national, and Earth-bound.

S05.
Contemporary Shakespeare Fiction

Organisers: Koel Chatterjee, Kinga Földváry

Description: This seminar would like to explore novelisations of Shakespeare with particular focus given to contemporary novels from the perspective of minor characters from the plays, non-caucasian characters, non-traditional settings or genres, and novels and prose translations written in languages other than English. Topics of interest for this seminar might address, but are not limited to, the following broad areas: the relevance of Shakespeare fiction and the context of telling the story in a different time, place, or setting, particularly in the present day; the use of Shakespeare to address anxieties about environmental concerns; Shakespeare's fictionality or Shakespearean challenges to modern fiction; individual responses to Shakespeare through writing, editing, or interpreting the plays, for example fanfiction; experimentation with genre and form; Shakespeare fiction adapted to unusual genres, from YA to undead horror; the proliferation of Shakespeare biofiction.

"What's in a name?": Emilia, William, and the Quill of (In)Visibility (Gemma Kate Allred)
This paper examines the Integral positioning of Emilia Lanier as a writer of Shakespeare's works in Alexa Schnee's *Shakespeare's Lady* (2012), Sally O'Reilly's *Dark Aemilia* (2015), and Jodi Picoult's *By Any Other Name* (2024). In the 1970s A.L. Rowse definitively, he claimed, identified poet Emilia Lanier as the Dark Lady. By the twenty-first century, women writers took up the baton and the Dark Lady's identity solidified as Emilia Lanier. As with Rowse, there is a duality to these twenty-first-century works of fiction. On the one hand they act to bring Lanier, as Shakespeare's Dark Lady, out of the shadows and into the light; but on the other, they reinforce her erasure. Within twenty-first century biofictions she remains at the

core of the Dark Lady myth, and her identity is subordinated to that of Shakespeare. These twenty-first century texts take Shakespeare's works as a base from which to craft a fictionalised relationship between Shakespeare and Lanier, as lovers, collaborators, antagonists. Lanier's own writing, is rendered secondary, paling into insignificance when compared to her imagined greater works: those of Shakespeare. The genius of Shakespeare's works is not in question, but rather the identity of the person holding the quill. Despite the apparent feminist leanings of these biofictions, their Emilias only ever matter in relation to and because of Shakespeare. Emilia's actual verse and her pioneering achievement are still forgotten. These texts offer Lanier an expanded canon, attributing Shakespeare's works to her. However, this too is an act of erasure – even in these acts of fictionalised historical (re)mediation Lanier is ultimately invisible, her contribution nameless. However, these texts go further than simple comparison. They seek to expand Lanier's legacy as writer by writing her into Shakespeare's canon. It is not enough to show Emilia as Shakespeare's muse; she must also, to some extent, *be* Shakespeare.

Of Woeful Time: The Fluid Metalepsis of William Shakespeare's *Macbeth* in Kate Hodges' *The Wayward Sisters* (2023) (Delilah Bermudez Brataas)

At first glance, Kate Hodges' debut novel *The Wayward Sisters* (2023) appears familiar: a gothic tale that takes us from London to a dark mysterious manor, Blackthistle, nestled on the windswept Scottish highlands near Inverness. Our newly employed heroine arrives to offer her astronomical knowledge to a reclusive Shakespearean scholar obsessed with *Macbeth*. This is surely a tale that *Macbeth*'s weird sisters might easily haunt. Yet *The Wayward Sisters* is not just an allusive or referential novel, nor is it an adaptation or a transposition; rather, it surprises in that its narrative constructs a nexus of time, space, and history reflected in a metaleptic palimpsest of Shakespeare's *Macbeth*. Here, the play itself is as much a character as the three wayward sisters. In this article, I explore the ways in which *Macbeth* is not merely a background text, but is an active presence through which the story unfolds. Shakespeare's words, characters, performances, historical sources, contemporaries, editors, adaptations, and adaptors all appear within the novel's present, even as the historical event central to the narrative—the astronomical phenomenon of the transit of Venus—confounds that presence. I trace the rich web of the historical and intertextual moments as it expands through a feminist narrative that unsettles the gendered boundaries of history to reimagine science and reason, faith and the supernatural, and most vividly, fiction and truth.

Nostalgia and the yearning for Englishness in Philippa Gregory's *The Constant Princess* (2005) and *The Kingmaker's Daughter* (2012) (Valentina-Ioana Cadar)

Nostalgia and nostalgic representations are common occurrences in the historical fiction genre, especially in the historical novels written and published in the 21st century, as well as in other forms of media dealing with different historical topics. Nostalgic representations of historical figures in literature may attempt to rehabilitate them or to paint them in idealised colours. Nonetheless, not only the characters from a historical novel can be idealised, but also a particular time in the past where the action of the novel is set and the historical context in which those characters live. The choice of that historical era might tell the readers a lot about the author's purpose for that novel or the author's views, values, or ideologies. Philippa Gregory, a well known writer of historical fiction, places most of her novels in the Plantagenet or the Tudor era, within a historical context that existed before the British identity was formed. Her fiction is, thus, set in England, and her characters are proud of their English identity, and they do not miss the opportunities to affirm this. Within the current social, political, and cultural international climate, a post-Brexit context, a point in history which is marked by the resurgence of the right-wing and the far-right ideologies in the recent years, with their

associated nationalism and emphasis on national identity and national values, it is worth looking at historical novels that use nostalgia to romanticise the English past, the so-called 'Englishness' from before England became part of Great Britain and later of the United Kingdom. This paper aims to examine how Gregory's *The Constant Princess* (a retelling of Shakespeare's *Henry VIII* where Katherine of Aragon, Henry's first wife, becomes the protagonist) and *The Kingmaker's Daughter* (a retelling of Shakespeare's *Richard III*, where Anne Neville, Richard's wife, is the main character and the narrator) capitalise on their pre-British historical setting to idealise the English identity, using the theoretical framework on nostalgia.

I See a Damaged Planet: Biosemiotics and Reconstituting the Human through Shakespeare in *Station Eleven* (Timothy Day)

This will be a narrative and scholarly piece about two experiences with Shakespeare in the aftermath of COVID focused on *Station Eleven,* Emily St. John Mandel's 2014 novel and HBO's 2021 adaptation of by the same name, and a post pandemic performance of Macbeth in Madrid. It is a reflection on what Shakespeare means to the reconstitution of a world destroyed by a global pandemic. Once again, as in *1984* and *Brave New World* before it, Mandel's novel—and HBO's production—holds up Shakespeare as the genetic thread of human culture that survives and provides the building blocks for a—hopefully—better future. The novel begins with the death of Arthur Leander (played by Gael Garcia Benal in the show), who is onstage playing Lear when he collapses, an early victim of the outbreak. Decades into the future we follow a troop of itinerant actors as they circle Lake Michigan in the vicinity of a vanquished Toronto (Chicago in the show) performing renditions of Shakespeare. This paper is concerned with how and why Shakespeare and his works have so reliably been proxies for human culture, and how, through a biosemiotic lens, literature performs a fundamental role in the human *umwelt.* I will bring works by Jesper Hoffmeyer, Gregory Bateson, Wendy Wheeler, and Jakob Von Uexküll into conversation with the successful novel and the HBO production—but also with the COVID virus that made it so timely, and reflections on the first performance I saw coming out of the lockdown—as I consider virality, fiction, and the embodied nature of narrative, ultimately aiming to see the works of Shakespeare and the viral mass that so recently traversed the human holobiont, as related in more than metaphorical ways.

"I am not without a heart:" Cordelia's Romantic Resistance in Joy McCullough's *Enter the Body* (Melissa Johnson)

As one of our most celebrated, most taught, and most performed playwrights, Shakespeare is a prime candidate for adaptation. His works are in the public domain, and reproduced enough to ensure worldwide familiarity. Joy McCullough's 2023 book *Enter the Body* takes a unique and compelling approach to Shakespearean adaptation. Structured in sections alternating between conversations and poetic retellings of their own stories, McCullough gives the characters of Juliet, Ophelia, and Cordelia the chance to justify their choices and interrogate the familial and social structures that limited their options and shaped their tragic destinies. Cordelia, in particular, provides an infrequently observed perspective as a young woman unmotivated by romantic or sexual desire, contrasting Juliet and Ophelia's passionate entanglements. This version of Cordelia both challenges universal assumptions of what it means to come of age as a young woman, and opens the door to intriguing interpretations of the tragic heroine of *King Lear*. Ultimately, McCullough's Cordelia provides avenues to enhance our understanding of young women's experiences, in literature and in life.

Blood, Ambition, and Teens: Reimagining *Macbeth* for the YA Audience (Tomasz Kowalski)

The paper examines strategies for adapting *Macbeth* in young adult novels: *As I Descended* by Robin Talley (2016) and *Foul Is Fair* by Hannah Capin (2020). The authors of these works transform the warning against tyranny embedded in Shakespeare's tragedy into a reflection on the formation of adolescent identity, exploring issues related to peer and institutional hierarchies, tensions arising from gender and identity differences, and the sense of agency (or its absence). The analysis focuses on the structural relationships between the original text and its YA reinterpretations, with particular attention to mechanisms of equivalence: the elite school functions as a counterpart to the feudal court, reputational assault replaces regicide, and social or academic advancement stands in for dynastic ambition, among other parallels. In this context, particular significance is attached to the representation of violence—both physical and symbolic—as well as to the reconfiguration of Macbeth and Lady Macbeth as protagonists or anti-heroes whose actions are embedded in the experience of adolescence. Emphasis will also be placed on the use of the Gothic mode as a contemporary equivalent of Shakespearean prophecy. Supernatural motifs and the aesthetics of horror serve here as tools for problematizing psychological disorders and anxieties filtered through the experiences of young protagonists. The aim of the paper is to demonstrate that these strategies do not aim at a simplification of the tragedy for young readers, but rather enable a creative use of its cultural authority and interpretative potential in order to foreground contemporary tensions related to femininity and masculinity, sexuality, agency, privilege, and mental health. The relocation of Shakespeare's tragedy into young adult literature reveals it as a vehicle for reflecting on the moral responsibility of twenty-first-century youth, shifting the focus from political tyranny toward questions of ethics, the consequences of choice, and the limits of ambition under conditions of social and institutional pressure.

Girl's Desires Seen Through Light Novel Shakespeare —All happy couples but why no queer couples? (Kyoko Matsuyama)

In Japan, encountering Shakespeare does not usually happen at school, unlike in English-speaking countries and territories. English classes in Japan are focused purely on learning the English language. Students mostly have contact with English literature as reading material in the form of graded readers. Even in translated form, you have to go and look for them in libraries. However, you can see and feel the presence of Shakespeare in the Light Novel section, a uniquely Japanese genre that targets young adult readers. The Light Novel genre is known for its kaleidoscopic variety; it includes everything from fantasy and romance to standard fiction and picaresque novels. Shakespeare's interesting novelisation and adaptations are found in the Light Novel genre, ranging typical happy ending versions to reincarnation, time-travel. The most creative adaptation can be found in the Light Novel sub-genre of Teen's Love: a soft pornography for young adults. The most popular Shakespeare adaptation is by far of *Romeo and Juliet*. Young love, love at first sight, beautiful dresses, and secret marriage all tick the boxes for young adult female readers. The paper discusses typical *Romeo and Juliet* adaptations in the Light Novel form, *Reincarnated Romeo and Juliet*, *Shakespeare in Love another tale of Romeo and Juliet*, and *Renbaku another tale of Romeo and Juliet Romeo and Juliet* in Teen's Love Novel. All these adaptations alter the ending of the famous tale of *Romeo and Juliet*. There are also adaptations of *Twelfth Night* and *Macbeth*, which adapts the plot of Shakespeare. By analysing these Shakespeare adaptations in the Light Novel form, you would be able to see the adaptations and appropriations preferences in Japanese Young Adult female readers and how those adaptations allow Shakespeare to survive in today's Japan. And to also question the lack of Boys Love, gay love story, adaptation of Shakespeare's play.

Shakespeare biofiction for children and young adults (Sarah Olive)
Books for children in which the figure of Shakespeare appears fall at various points on a continuum that stretches from biography to fiction. Shakespeare appears as a character in multiple picturebooks and novels for children and young adults. These books allow readers access to a fictional Shakespeare's inner mind, thoughts and feelings, from his youth to approaching death. They magnify the speculation around Shakespeare that is present, to an extent, in biographies and non-fiction. Unlike the biographies and non-fiction, which cover key points across his lifespan and career, these books tend to offer a snapshot of Shakespeare's life. I refer to them as 'biofiction' throughout this chapter. There is no consensus on 'how much' Shakespeare is required for a text to constitute biofiction. Such ambiguity is essential for this chapter, given that only three out of the sixteen texts make Shakespeare a narrator, protagonist, or one of the main characters. Notwithstanding their speculation, these biofictions feature strong overlaps and conservatism in their portrayals of Shakespeare. This is suggestive of biofiction's impulse to "subordinate fiction to the biographical" (Latham qtd. in Lackey 2016, 18). I elucidate the likenesses and divergences in this unparalled sample of sixteen books, with a focus on characters and plot as they relate to Shakespeare's biography. In doing so, I originally articulate three traditions within children's Shakespeare biofiction: theatre adventure, Stratford romance, and a hybrid of the two. I uniquely compare the different authors' notes as a resource for understanding the texts' overlaps and divergences. In particular, I attend to what the authors say about their aims, genre, sources, Shakespeare's biography and historical context, and their experience of navigating this and the fictional. I conclude by directly addressing authors, recommending ways that their future writing might push the boundaries of children's Shakespeare biofiction.

From Equivalence to Extension – Complex Shakespeare, Seriality and World-building as Narrative Adaptation Strategies in the 21st Shakespeare (Young) Adult Fiction (Agnieszka Rasmus)
I wish to investigate several ways in which Shakespeare has been adapted in the first two decades of the 21st century, indicating that we have moved from the era of post-textual Shakespeare, as Douglas Lanier calls all the adaptations from the late 1990s to the early 2000s that updated Shakespeare's plays to contemporary language and setting, to "Complex Shakespeare". I borrow the term from Jason Mittell's *Complex TV* (2015) as it seems to epitomize quite well the shift that took place in storytelling mechanics and character development and, by extension, adaptation strategies in the new millennium. Lanier's Shakespeare rhizome adaptation model (2014) is a productive intervention in Shakespeare adaptation studies, freeing the field from fidelity criticism. There are some gains to be made, however, from looking at recent interventions within the "Shakespeare" aggregate (Lanier) from the perspective of seriality, complex TV and world-building as the defining adaptation models across a large spectrum of works within popular media – from the small and large screen (franchises, series, sequels, remakes and reboots), to (Young) Adult Fiction. What seriality has taught us is that any dead character and narrative thread can be revived, re-animated, rebooted and repurposed. This serial logic characterizes 21st century chick-lit historical fiction based on Shakespeare's canon. Written between 2001 and 2016 by different authors, they display a strong tendency to destabilize the narrative frame of Shakespeare's plays in unprecedented ways, with some novelizations serving the function of prequels, midquels, sequels or reboots, opening up the stories to possible new readings, typically from a feminist perspective. To narrow down this large and still growing cycle, I will focus on ten novelizations based on *Romeo and Juliet*, *Hamlet* and *Macbeth* as examples of contemporary adaptive work that is no longer characterized by equivalence but rather by extension.

A Verona for American Adolescence: Imaginative (Re)Settings of *Romeo and Juliet* in Contemporary Children's and YA Fiction (Tyler Sasser)

For this seminar, I bring together several contemporary children's and YA adaptations of *Romeo and Juliet*—including Stone's *Romeo and Juliet Code*, Draper's *Romiette and Julio*, Harper's *The Juliet Club*, Lauren's *Falling for Romeo*, Selfors's *Saving Juliet*, and Avi's *Romeo and Juliet: Together (and Alive!) at Last*—to consider the relevance of the play and its setting for Millennial and Gen Z readers in America. More than the play's canonical status in the American classroom, this popularity suggests that Verona functions as a portable imaginative geography, at once distant enough to aestheticize adolescent intensity and flexible enough to be remade as spaces, such as suburban America, time-travel fantasy, and a romantic Italy. Therefore, less a fixed Italian city, the romantic and American Verona becomes a symbolic site where young people rehearse questions of identity, belonging, surveillance, race, and chosen love. Collectively these novels shift from tragic inevitability toward agency, revision, survival, interracial romance, online communication, metafictional intervention, and the refusal of scripted death. They reflect generational anxieties about inherited conflict alongside a desire to rewrite the story itself. For young audiences shaped by social media, culture wars, and heightened awareness of systemic division, *Romeo and Juliet* offers a narrative template for examining polarization. Tracing how these authors reimagine Verona reveals that contemporary adaptations of the play transform tragedy into a space for negotiating love, difference, and futurity in the twenty-first century.

"I'm not sorry": the teen girl as avenger in Capin's YA novel *Foul is Fair* (Edel Semple)

This paper explores Hannah Capin's Young Adult novel *Foul is Fair* (2020), which bears the dedication: "For every girl who wants revenge." The novel reimagines Lady Macbeth and the witches as Jade Khanjara and her trio of friends, her "coven," in contemporary LA. On her sixteenth birthday, Jade is drugged and raped by four privileged teens. In the wake of the attack, Jade eschews the labels of 'victim' and 'survivor', considers the identities of "queen, killer, justice," and settles on "Avenger". Jade's unrepentant revenge plot sees her infiltrate the boys' prep school in disguise and, with the aid of her "Savage" "sirens," end the lives of the rapists and those who facilitated the attack. In this paper, I explore the novel's adaptation of Lady Macbeth and the Weird Sisters into teen girl avengers. I will consider to what extent Capin's novel avoids what Aiyana Altrows calls "the silent victim script", common in YA fiction; Jade directs her anger outwards, onto the rapists, but does initially conceal the rape from her parents and, near the novel's finale, attempt suicide. I intend to argue that the novel's response to the play is broadly feminist and turn then to focus on its protagonist, Jade, to consider her relationship with postfeminism, neoliberal girlhood, and #MeToo.

Verona or Siena? Shakespeare's sister and their brother (Erica Sheen)

Danish-American writer Anne Fortier's novel *Juliet* (2010) presents an alternative history for Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* - and relocates it from Verona to the supposedly 'original' Siena. Currently in production as a film with Paramount, *Juliet* throws up echoes of Simone de Beauvoir's *Tous les hommes sont mortels* (*All Men Are Mortal,* 1946), with its frame story of a brilliantly successful French actress who turns down a starring role in an American adaptation of *The Tempest* for the vicarious privilege of a romance with an Italian nobleman doomed to immortality. Both de Beauvoir and Fortier reviewed badly. In the *New York Times,* Sept 24, 2010, fellow novelist Tom LeClair described Fortier's dialogue (unlike Shakespeare's) as 'insistently mundane'. De Beauvoir's work had the benefit, at least, of a philosophical rationale: the account in *Le Deuxième Sexe (The Second Sex,* 1949) of Virginia Woolf's 'Shakespeare's sister' as an explanation why women the world over simply can't write as well as their famous brothers. In this paper I discuss the contemporary phenomenon of the

alternative Shakespearean history, with its defining slippage from old mediums to new. I suggest ways in which a resurrection of Shakespeare's sister might usefully revisit what Beauvoir controversially described as the 'general mediocrity' of the feminine 'condition' in an age when the categories that maintain a distinction between the two are as unstable as our understanding of the locations from which they take their historical cue.

Redeeming Tybalt, Reviving Hamnet: Grief and Catharsis in Contemporary Shakespearean Fiction (Donna Woodford-Gormley)
According to Aristotle, tragedy is among the highest art forms because of its ability to evoke catharsis in the viewer. Though Shakespeare wrote his tragedies well after Aristotle, his works may also be interpreted as eliciting this purging of unhealthy emotions in the audience. What happens, however, when the works move from the Renaissance stage to the contemporary page? Two recent pieces of Shakespearean fiction explore reactions to the death of children and the deep grief these losses provoke. In Lois Leveen's *Juliet's Nurse*, Angelica loses her six sons, her infant Susanna, her husband, and ultimately Tybalt and Juliet, children to whom she has been a mother. Her grief is oppressive and overwhelming, but she finds in the love she experienced the strength to resist the temptation to follow Juliet into suicide. She purges her grief and moves on, continuing the work of her late husband and foster son, Tybalt in tending bee hives, risking stings and tasting the sweetness of honey. Maggie O'Farrell's *Hamnet*, takes up not the plot of one of Shakespeare's plays but the life of the playwright and his wife, Agnes, and the devastating grief brought by the death of their son, Hamnet. In this novel the solace comes not from the taste of honey but from the power of theatre to bring a version of their son back to them in a Hamlet who has all the mannerisms of their Hamnet, who shows what he might have grown into, and who allows Shakespeare to do what any parent would desire, to trade places with his child as he becomes the ghost speaking to a living son. These two novels demonstrate that even when tragedies move from the stage to the page, they can help us to work through our grief and experience catharsis.

S06.
Crisis and Resilience in the Roman Plays

Organisers: Pascale Aebischer, Lubaaba Al-Azami, Courtney Lehmann, Hassana Moosa.

This seminar explores how Shakespeare's Titus Andronicus and the Roman plays address resilience in the face of catastrophe to confront planetary permacrises wherein environmental, health, migratory, military, and sociopolitical violences intersect. Through the lens of Marcus' nihilistic plea for planetary destruction, participants are invited to reflect on individual and communal coping mechanisms that reimagine Shakespeare's stoicism as a mode of creative improvisation, fostering kinship and emergent forms of collective resistance among diverse communities. The seminar also encourages considerations of how productions and editions of these plays engage with themes of empire, neo-fascisms, racisms, statelessness, sexual violence, and (dis)ability.

Resilience Through Progeny in *Titus Andronicus* (Lubaaba Al-Azami)
My contribution will consider resilience through progeny in the face of genocide in *Titus Andronicus*. Linking with contemporary global events from Gaza to Lebanon and Iran, where children and families have faced particular assault, my offering will consider the case of Aaron the Moor and his child. I will examine Aaron's protectiveness and devotion to his child as a form of parental resistance and resilience against extermination through the protection of progeny. Furthermore, I will consider resilience to genocide as a community effort by the

racially marked target community given this scene with the child is also the only time Aaron mentions another Moor, Muletius, in Rome. Muletius is described to have his own (arguably interracial) child who is White passing. Aaron believes this Moor will help protect Aaron's Black child by exchanging the infants. Although centring the infant as 'your brother' to Gothic Chiron and Demetrius, it is the bond of Moorish racial community that is confidently turned to for survival. And that survival is rooted in an intimate and experiential knowledge of Roman racial/genocidal impulses**.**

***Coriolanus* and Crises of Misrepresentation (Thomas Cartelli)**
In *Coriolanus,* Shakespeare's plebeians generally confirm the fairness of their identification as a "many headed multitude." Yet they protest so effectively a patrician-managed dearth of corn that the Roman Senate for the first time allows them representation by tribunes, who overrule their initial resolve to give their voices to Caius Martius's consulship and encourage them to demand his exile from Rome as an "enemy of the people." In a presentist turn, I contrast the political intelligence of Shakespeare's plebeians and tribunes with the "general ignorance" of US voters and the venality of their representatives, who jointly misrepresent what they have to gain by returning a lawless demagogue to the Presidency, moved as they are by identification with the demagogue's *charisma* and *pleonectic* values. My argument draws on Cinzia Arruzza's reading of Books VIII and IX of Plato's *Republic* where Socrates holds an appetite-driven tyrant *demos* responsible for the democratic production of appetite-driven tyrants. As Azzurra writes, "The tyrannical figures the *demos* generates are, indeed, 'men of the people,' insofar as they share ignorance and an ideal of freedom as appetitive enjoyment in common with their father." The argument draws as well on analogies between early modern theatrical experience and the latter-day seductions of popular culture.

Between Wittenberg and Corioles: thoughts on political violence, principles, and praxis (José María Pérez Fernández)
This presentation proposes a couple of case studies to illustrate some of the ways in which Shakespeare addressed political violence, political principles, and actual political praxis. I will focus on Hamlet and Coriolanus as general archetypes of two very different models: the principled intellectual bent on doing the right thing versus the strong leader who excels as a soldier but lacks political skills. Other than their common tragic failure, one of the threads that run through both characters is the issue of violence both in the conduct of politics and as an instrument for personal vengeance; in other words, violence comes to be seen as one of the ways in which politics can be conducted in both its public and private dimensions, as well as at the intersection of these two realms. I shall triangulate the contrast between Hamlet and Coriolanus with insights provided by an interview with Carlus Padrissa, the director of La Fura dels Baus theatre company who recently premiered their idiosyncratic version of Shakespeare's Hamlet (SONS: ser o no ser). The way in which La Fura dels Baus has come to stage violence in some of their performances, the frequently raw use they make of the performer's body as a signifier that threatens to break physical boundaries with the audience, and the way in which they use digital tools and robotics in their performances, all have the potential to turn into useful touchstones to look into political violence through their approach to Hamlet as arguably Shakespeare's most performed text.

"[A] bubbling fountain stirred with wind": Sensing Actaeon and Lavinia's silenced body in Shakespeare's Titus Andronicus (c.1594) (Timothy Holden)
This paper explores the sensory crisis centred on Lavinia's mutilated body in *Titus Andronicus*. By focusing on the ecological movement and body language enabled by the textual, material, and performance affordances of that body, and on Lavinia's links to representations of the

Actaeon myth in early modern material and visual culture, it situates the play in a performance ecology of early modern cultural knowledge centred on issues of silencing, embodied articulation, sexual violence, and especially consent. Drawing on the tools of kinesic analysis developed by Guillemette Bolens and others, the paper considers Lavinia's body when it is instrumentalised as an intertextual canvass, as a stage property, and as a medium of embodied practice. Finally, I connect Marcus's description of Lavinia's mutilated, bleeding body as "a bubbling fountain stirred with wind" that produces "a crimson river of warm blood" (2.2.23, 22), with Titus's figuration of Lavinia as a fountain-monument that invokes the Andronici family as an affective community of sharded passion, but which attempts to generate a sense of communal resilience by misreading Lavinia's body-language to– a body which would, in performance, nonetheless speak back…

The Hollow Republic: Coriolanus, Democratic Backsliding, and Permanent War (Urszula Kizelbach)

Shakespeare's *Coriolanus* stages one of the most probing interrogations of democratic vulnerability in the Western dramatic canon. At its centre lies a seemingly procedural dispute: the Roman plebeians' demand that Coriolanus publicly solicit their votes before assuming the consulship. This ritual of democratic consent quickly reveals itself as a site of profound institutional fragility – Coriolanus cannot perform humility, the tribunes manipulate the crowd, and the Senate capitulates under pressure. What emerges is not a stable republic, but a system in which democratic forms survive while democratic substance corrodes through demagoguery, elite contempt, and the weaponisation of popular sovereignty. My talk discusses the play through the lens of democratic backsliding theory, drawing on Levitsky and Way's (2010) framework of competitive authoritarianism and Bermeo's (2016) typology of democratic erosion – particularly the notion of executive aggrandisement, whereby institutions are hollowed out gradually rather than destroyed in a single rupture. The contemporary resonance is unavoidable: Russia's trajectory from post-Soviet electoral theatre to consolidated autocracy mirrors the Shakespearean logic of institutions that persist in name while losing all normative force. By situating *Coriolanus* within current debates on democratic fragility, this paper argues that Shakespeare's Rome is not historical allegory but a structural anatomy of how republics die – and, occasionally, how they endure.

'Doings in the Air': Race and Free Movement in *Titus Andronicus* (Hassana Moosa)

In describing the motions of the common fly in *The Theater of Insects or Lesser Living Creatures* (1634), Thomas Moffet notes that: 'He doth not slie straight forward, as the Bats do; nor skipping as the Locusts, nor making a noyse as the Wasp; but winding in and out to what part of the air soever he pleaseth to move himself'. This type of free, self-determined movement offers a fitting description of the way that Aaron the Moor navigates the world of Shakespeare's *Titus Andronicus.* Notwithstanding his enslaved status, which might suggest constraining circumstances, Aaron's movements are unregulated, as he steps in, remains in, and steps out of scenes in ways that permit him key roles in the violence enacted against the White Andronici family, but simultaneously keep him out of the spotlight. This chapter contends with the play's racialisation of Aaron through his movement, which, I propose, forms part of his embodiment of the qualities of the 'black, ill-favoured fly' (3.2.67) that Titus and Marcus imagine him to be. I argue that the play's representation of his animalised activity constructs his threat to White characters, and produces a warning against the unrestricted shiftiness of Black persons and the enslaved. The menace of his movement, as I will demonstrate, is made more vivid when viewed in relation to fair Lavinia's immobilisation, which occurs through a plot that Aaron co-contrives. By interrogating the entanglements of race, animality, and movement in *Titus*

Andronicus, this chapter will reflect on the play's bearings on recent and present agendas to police and manage the movements of Black men and people of colour more generally.

Ecopolitical Violence in Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar* (Emily L. Piersma Sharrett)
In Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*, demographic groups experience uneven access to certain land and vegetation in Rome. The community garden constructed in Caesar's will reorients—spatially and conceptually—the hierarchies of life and labor in antiquity, for the will inscribes geography as freedom *for some*. Romans and their heirs are entitled to the "common pleasures" of land and leisure in the city center (3.2.248). The underbelly of this move is that Rome and its inhabitants reject the presence of physical toil in the city center and embrace moving the means of production to the fringe of society. The Roman garden that Caesar bequeaths stands not just for the celebration of recreation and relaxation for those deemed worthy, but also the dismissal of energy production and its producers from the center of civic life. The garden obfuscates all labor save sociopolitical contemplation, and the garden and its illusion of humanity's mastery and containment of the natural world *is* the heart of Rome resting between Tiber and the Forum. The devised will in *Julius Caesar* becomes a vector for racialized economics and ecopolitical "slow violence," as defined by Rob Nixon in *Slow Violence and the Environmentalism of the Poor* (Harvard UP, 2011).

The Clown in *Titus Andronicus*: an immersive project (Ayanna Thompson)
Thinking about the current landscape of live theatre, I with a group of collaborators have been exploring what the future of Shakespeare might look like onstage. Inspired by experiential and immersive productions, we have been thinking about what "bits" of Shakespeare would lend themselves to these types of live performances. I have long been obsessed with the Clown in *Titus Andronicus*, a figure that is often cut from productions. Since the Clown's trajectory represents what it means to be dispossessed, disempowered, and disposable, we are exploring an immersive project that looks at the Clown in different time periods. This project, which will premiere at SXSW in 2027, might offer some insights into new avenues for live Shakespeare.

Crowds and Power: Filmed Theatre and Political Recognition in *Julius Caesar* (Michael Ullyot)
Filmed theatre poses a question that pure cinema does not: how does an in-theatre broadcast (camera positions, editing choices, theatre architecture) mediate political rhetoric for remote audiences? In *Julius Caesar*, where rhetoric moves crowds toward collective violence, that mediation is a formal problem two productions answer differently. Greg Doran's 2012 BBC/RSC hybrid alternates location footage with theatrical staging. During the funeral oration, reaction shots and depth-of-field shifts make persuasion visible on listening faces. Remote audiences watch manipulation work on others from outside the crowd. Nicholas Hytner's 2018 Bridge Theatre production, broadcast via NT Live, conscripts its standing audience into the Roman mob; the BBC introduction addresses remote audiences as part of that crowd. Handheld cameras periodically jostle through the crowd; remote audiences watch the conscription happen, and the camera's position partly draws them into it. Resilience starts with recognition: seeing manipulation as it operates is the first political act. That recognition has a rhetorical object (the technique that moves a crowd) and a political stake (the body politic's susceptibility to it). Doran and Hytner offer different conditions for that double recognition. The paper develops the political stakes of those formal differences for crisis and resilience in the Roman plays.

S07.
Dramaturgies of Disruption:
Shakespeare in the Age of Algorithmic Alienation

Organisers: Tai-Won Kim, Lingui Yang, Huimin Wang, Roberta Zanoni.

Shakespeare's enduring dramaturgy—juxtaposing genres, layering mises en scène, and confronting religious strife, gender inequity, and social unrest—remains startlingly relevant. In an era of digital saturation and algorithmic alienation, how do his structural innovations (soliloquies as viral monologues, metatheatricality as hyper-awareness) resonate? This seminar interrogates contemporary stagings that weaponize his humanism: post-human adaptations, VR-driven audience immersion, or tradaptations exposing cultural fault lines. Can his dramaturgical boldness—subversive doubling, fluid temporality—inspire new forms of resistance amid modern censorship? We seek analyses of productions, films, or transcultural reinventions that harness Shakespeare's craft to mirror today's fractures, proving drama's power to interrogate, not just entertain.

***Macbeth*, Yesterday's and Tomorrow's Play of Sound and Fury (Estelle Rivier-Arnaud)**
Respectively created in 2024 and 2025, Macbeth (dir. Silvia Costa, Comédie-française) and Makbeth (dir. Louis Arene, Munstrum Theatre), have received glowing criticism and sparked standing ovations. Athough very idiosyncratic in terms of scenographic design and translation, they have both managed to reflect the paranoiac and labyrinthine psyche of the warlike hero. Resorting to intense music, light effects, elaborate props and a fragmented use of the stage space, they have highlighted the inner fragmentation of the human brain as well as the escalating monstrosity that is at the core of all civilisations and times. Very interestingly, despite their aesthetic and narrative deviations, the two productions have kept the essence of Shakespeare's Scottish tale, i.e. maintained its comedic accents while enhancing its restless bloody action, thereby leading to grandiose spectacular performances.
Therefore, in an era of digital saturation and algorythmic alienation, these productions may serve as examples to show the everlasting propensity Shakespeare's theatre has to:

- interrogate man's place in political and military spheres;
- illustrate social and sexual ambivalent relationships;
- challenge aesthetic creation;
- thwart new audiences' expectations;
- keep being attractive.

Through a detailed comparative analysis of these *Mac*/k*beths,* this paper will try to show that Shakespeare's dramaturgy is far from being exhaustively explored, that it can be still "connected" to the interests of our time while sounding fully early modern. Throughout the analysis, I shall interrogate this theatre's capacity to reflect the fears and dangers of humanity while remaining appealing in a mass *vs* elitist entertainment industry and a context of technological evolution.

***The Winter's Tale*: Misinformation, wonder, and communal reintegration (Benjamin Djain)**
Leontes' soliloquies at the beginning of *The Winter's Tale* exemplify how the line between private and public thought became more fluid in Shakespeare's later plays. Through Leontes' commentary on the surrounding action, the audience witness his descent into madness, a descent characterised by how his interpretation of events is at odds with their observation of on-stage actions. The staging of the RSC's 2021 production of the play emphasizes Leonte's

disconnect through a combination of black and white filters and physical isolation that helps situate its audience in the rapidly changing context of its setting in the 1950s and 60s. These performance decisions reinforce how Leontes' isolated worldview led to a long winter for Bohemia. Leontes' tale of isolation is one that modern audiences recognise. As researchers on AI governance such as Russell and misinformation like van der Linden have demonstrated, our algorithmic world continues to try to isolate us, driving us away from community through polarisation. In this paper I argue that an effective modern staging of *The Winter's Tale*, as exemplified by the 2021 RSC production, can drive home the problems of algorithmic isolation and offer a practical solution: the defamiliarization of the truth through wonder becomes the foundation for a new community.

Shakespeare, Seasonal Dramaturgy, and the Disruption of Algorithmic Time (Mariana Sagasti)

This paper argues that Shakespeare's dramaturgy is fundamentally structured by cyclical, seasonal patterns that articulate an ecological understanding of time, human transformation, and social renewal—an understanding that stands in productive tension with the linear, accelerated temporality characteristic of contemporary algorithmic culture. Drawing on ecocritical theory, Renaissance humanism, and classical pastoral traditions, the paper re-examines *As You Like It* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, with reference to *The Tempest* and *The Winter's Tale*, to demonstrate how Shakespeare embeds the seasonal cycle as a deep narrative and dramaturgical principle. In the context of the twenty-first century, this seasonal dramaturgy acquires renewed critical relevance. Against the backdrop of algorithmic alienation—defined by data-driven abstraction, temporal compression, and the erosion of embodied experience—Shakespeare's plays propose an alternative mode of relationality and temporality. The forest of Arden and the enchanted wood outside Athens function as spaces of disruption where dominant social, political, and epistemological orders are suspended, allowing cyclical time and ecological interdependence to reassert themselves.

By reading Shakespeare through the lens of seasonal structure rather than solely through thematic ecocriticism, this paper suggests that his dramaturgy anticipates contemporary concerns about disconnection, environmental crisis, and technological mediation. Shakespeare's theatre, it concludes, offers not a nostalgic return to nature but a radical dramaturgical model capable of unsettling algorithmic modes of perception and restoring attention to cycles, limits, and collective transformation.

The Century-old Comparative Reflection on Chinese Classical Drama and Shakespeare's Plays (Li Weifang)

In the history of literary and cultural exchange and mutual learning between China and foreign countries since modern China, if we choose one of the most representative western dramatists who can make continuous comparative study with Chinese classical drama, the first choice is undoubtedly Shakespeare. For more than 100 years, Shakespeare's plays have been frequently compared not only with the works of individual Chinese classical drama writers, but also with the Chinese classical drama as a whole. This century-old unconventional comparison is quite rare. Paying attention to this comparative phenomenon has very important theoretical value for us to further promote the exchange and mutual learning of Chinese and foreign literature and culture under the guidance of correct comparative concepts. A century of comparison between classical Chinese drama and Shakespeare's plays objectively and truly presents the inner journey of Chinese scholars from the perspective of Western literature, from the level of literature and culture to constantly understand themselves deeply, rationally correct themselves, and from respecting the West to pursuing equal dialogue and demonstrating cultural self-consciousness and self-confidence.

Lear Ananci: Permeating Shakespeare with the Carnivalesque (Concepción Mengíbar Rico)
Lear Ananci (2001) by Cacique-winning playwright Davlin Thomas received the Trinidadian award in the category of 'most original script'. Thomas presents a disruptive tradaptation of Shakespeare's tragedy *King Lear* which he fuses with 20th century Trinidadian politics in the form of a tragicomic play. He combines cultural and social elements from this part of the Caribbean using the carnival tradition, the figure of Ananci from Afro Caribbean folk stories, and topical island-based references. Davlin Thomas is one of a number of Caribbean artists who have woven their own stories using the storytelling tradition of Ananci. Brought from Africa and sieved by the Middle Passage experience that made Ananci resilient, he is an anti/hero who is able to survive thanks to the healing power of storytelling. Similarly, the tradition of Shakespeare is cannibalized and appropriated by thinkers and writers from all over the Caribbean who challenge the norms and boundaries established by the different Western colonial powers. This paper is part of a series, started in the 2016 Shakespeare Congress, analyzing how the permeability of Shakespeare's work presents a challenge, and at the same time an incentive, to create old stories anew. Carnival, music and aspects of indigenous folklore create cultural adjustments that go beyond translation, disrupt the algorithmic norm, and provoke the audience through the power of theatre.

"Time travels in divers paces with divers persons": Queer temporality and dramaturgies of transformed distance in Shakespeare performance (CJ Turner-McMullan)
Twenty-first century trans, non-binary and gender non-conforming communities across the US, UK and Europe face a historic juncture eerily reminiscent of historic political playbooks. The movements closely intersect with the global rise in fascist and neocolonial violence against racially, ethnically and religiously persecuted populations. Their recurrent nature is repeatedly invoked in popular and social media in attempts to signal the consequences of ignoring historical precedent – a looping of temporal threads in the non-linear narrative of history. These repetitions play out across our screens and stages, in the stories we tell as well as those we adapt. As digital systems exert increasing influence, our physical realities are transformed into landscapes of shallow time. Memory and connectivity are formed, fragmented and rearranged through parasocial relation, drawing temporal loops ever tighter. Yet Shakespeare's works continue to play on repeat, cross-posted from stage to screen, stitched and remixed through adaptation and intertextuality. Shakespeare has long been a site and instrument for grappling with the ethical and philosophical implications of difference and similarity – including, as this paper will explore, queerness and gender-nonconformity. Through narrative and visual dramaturgies, geographic and temporal collapse brings us into algorithmic proximity with the interior and exterior worlds of others. This paper explores queer temporality and place in trans+ performances of Shakespeare, analysing how queerness and historical precedent are dramaturgically relocated across time and space. How do these loops reflect emerging identities and frameworks of relation, and what can these transformative dramaturgies teach us about human connection and preservation?

S08.
The End(s) of Global Shakespeare

Organisers: Alexa Alice Joubin, Dennis Kennedy

How might we bring new critical tools to scrutinize the politics and usefulness of the concept of global Shakespeare? Do the failures of globalism as an economic and social project require

us to rethink what international Shakespeare was, is, or should be? The wave of change in Shakespeare studies in the past thirty years—in print, on stage, and on film—has flooded out the Anglo-centred approach, but we have not fully understood what the wave indicates or what forces drive it. The seminar proposes an international exploration that reconsiders the significance of global Shakespeare and its usefulness as a concept. Participants are invited to offer specific examples that broaden or redefine global Shakespeare.

The Trickster in Shakespearean Drama and West African Narratives (Ifeoluwa Aboluwade)
Global Shakespeare is usually deployed as a designation for the study of the posthumous proliferation of Shakespeare from what is considered his homeland in England to other national or cultural geographies, that is, from the Globe Theatre in London to the Globe. More recently, scholars have referred to Global Shakespeare as a post-national methodology that incorporates transnationally shared implosion of ideas, images and influences (Massai, 2021) and as practices of glocal appropriations (Joubin, 2013). Combining historical and literary research approaches with digital tools, archives and the analysis of visual culture, this paper traces the development of the trickster from transcultural social types to a composite literary category that encompassed a variety of intersecting entities, spectacles and characteristics. It aims to show how a conceptualization of the trickster motif as a transcultural mnemonic category facilitates new dialogues and reveals uncanny patterns, linkages and ruptures that shape alternative interpretations of William Shakespeare's plays and illuminate the intricacies of early modern gender dynamics. It further seeks to contribute to the ongoing debates in Global Shakespeare studies by proffering an approach to literary world-making that brings together Shakespeare's early modern drama and West African ancient narratives and performance traditions.

Smelting Shakespeare (Patricia Badir)
The subject of this paper is "Sunningdale", a post-war blue-collar neighbourhood that has a Shakespearean story to tell. The community is a subdivision of the town of Trail, British Columbia and its economic base is a lead smelter. By 1938 the air around Trail had become toxic from smoke, triggering landmark legislation regularly invoked in transnational pollution cases. The smelter took centre stage again in the 1940s as it became embroiled in the Manhattan Project's race to develop the atomic bomb. Trail continues to make headlines today because the smelter processes rare earth minerals – the very resource that has President Trump dreaming of the 51st state. Against this backdrop we find Sunningdale's neighborhood streets named for "the wives of Shakespearean characters": Viola, Diana, Silvia, Celia, Juliet, Olivia, Portia, Isabella, Nerissa, Hermia, Regan, and Mariana. By naming the subdivision's streets after these characters, the developers intended to create a space that felt gentle and green—an imagined retreat from the destructive forces of war and environmental decay. However, the particular confluence of gender, class politics, and American imperialism that constellates around Shakespeare in this inhospitable environment illustrates the dissonance that comes into play when newly fashioned arcadias prove to be unlivable.

Whose Eyes, Then? Shylock and the Politics of Victimhood in the Jewish–Arab Conflict (Reut Barzilai)
My essay examines how Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice* has been mobilized in Israeli culture to negotiate competing narratives of victimhood. The essay analyzes four moments in the play's recent Israeli reception: Omri Nitzan's 1994 Cameri Theatre production, which modeled Shylock in part on Jewish terrorist Baruch Goldstein, followibg his massacre of Muslim worshippers in the Cave of the Patriarchs; Avraham Oz's Alfa Theatre production

(2016–19), in which Arab actors played Shylock opposite a Jewish Antonio; Habima Theatre's July 2025 staging, which, unprecedentedly in the play's Israeli history, relocated *Merchant* to Nazi Germany and transformed it into a Holocaust tragedy, doing so amid contemporary accusations of genocide against Israel; and a February 2026 protest in which actress Rivka Michaeli recast Shylock's monologue as "Hath not an Arab eyes?" Across these cases, *Merchant* emerges as a flexible political template through which Israeli culture negotiates power, minority status, and historical trauma.

Hakka Opera, Global Shakespeare, and the Ends of Cross-Genre Fertilization (Liana Chen)
Produced by Rom Shing Hakka Opera Troupe of Taiwan in 2019, *Kedai* draws on *As You Like It* as its primary source. The production team's deliberate assembly of specialists trained in *jingju* and *kunqu* reflects both the opportunity and the ambivalence inherent in Hakka opera's position within Taiwan's operatic ecology: the genre can draw on a deep reservoir of cross-genre talent, but in doing so it necessarily raises questions about what makes a Hakka opera production distinctively Hakka. I propose to read *Kedai* as what I call a "localized reflection": a production that engages the global Shakespeare framework while critically examining the local conditions that shaped its own possibility. The metatheatrical architecture of this production worked as a mode of critical inquiry into the history and consequences of Shake-*xiqu* in Taiwan. As global Shakespeare risks becoming an overcrowded category, it continues to generate productive synergies for genres and traditions that are still finding their footing in the international arena. The concept may be fraying at the edges, but for late-arriving theatrical traditions it retains both critical utility and institutional leverage.

The Glocalization of Shakespeare in Chinese Translations of His Sonnets (Tianhu Hao)
Most Chinese translations of Shakespeare's complete sonnets (36 out of 42) were published after 1990, coinciding with the rise of socialist market economy in China and global Shakespeare in the world. On the one hand, Chinese translations of Shakespeare's sonnets are made in two ways: in traditional poetic modes or in the modern vernacular. On the other, Chinese authors appropriate in various aspects (structure, meter, images, motifs, etc.) the Shakespearean sonnet for original poetry compositions and for English translations of Chinese classics. Both of these developments demonstrate the glocalization of Shakespeare, which points to the necessity of localization for the project of globalization. The dialectics between globalization and localization suggests the term "glocal Shakespeare." My paper attempts to explore the viability, usefulness, and limitations of the revision model "glocal Shakespeare" via the case study of Chinese translations of Shakespeare's sonnets in recent decades.

Performing Shakespeare in the UAE (Paul Innes)
This paper introduces some high profile Shakespeare performances that have taken place in the United Arab Emirates some years apart: *Richard III* (Al Jahili Fort in Al Ain, 2009); *Macbeth* Dubai Opera House, November 2023); and *Othello* (October 2025). It does so in terms primarily of the visuals of the productions, seeking to raise issues of adaptation that go beyond the merely textual. Sulayman Al Bassam presented *Richard III* as an Arab tragedy, localised by means of venue and costume. The Shakespeare North Playhouse *Macbeth* was a fully realised modern presentation that utilised sophisticated staging, costuming and sound effects. Lara Foot's South African company represented *Othello* in terms of the late 19th century European scramble to control Africa. The various choices made by these performances permit questions regarding not only the relative effectiveness of Shakespearean performance in the UAE, but also which kinds of Shakespeare are being adapted.

At the Intersection of Local Theater History and Global Shakespeare (Nely Keinänen)
My starting point is the reception of two 1933 productions of *Merchant of Venice* in Finland: one directed by Mia Backman and starring Jalmari Rinne as Shylock, and the other a visiting production by the Austrian actor Fritz Kortner (director and Shylock]. *T*he premiere of the workers' theater production was the same day as the German federal election won by Hitler's Nazi party (March 5, 1933), an event widely discussed on the front pages of Finnish newspapers but not on the culture pages, where space is devoted to analyzing Shylock's character and Rinne's portrayal. By contrast, reception of Kortner's visit that June focused on connections between art and politics, with Kortner at times deflecting questions about the Nazis and his current status as an exiled Jewish actor touring northern Europe playing Shylock. For Finnish critics, "foreign" Shakespeare opened a space for engaging with the key political issue of the day, the treatment of European Jews, in ways that *Merchant* by itself at an avowedly political theater did not. In addition to highlighting the significance of regional Shakespeare, the essay explores what this contrast might suggest about the "ends" of global Shakespeare studies.

Re-staging *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (2021) as Cantonese Opera (Miriam Leung-che Lau)
This paper explores the adaptation of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* as the Cantonese Opera *A Dream in Fantasia* during Covid times in Hong Kong. The play was by Keith Lai Yiu-wai, writer of *Arrant Revenge* (2012), a Cantonese Opera adaptation of *Hamlet*. In 2021 mask wearing was mandatory in Hong Kong, and all schools, theatres, cinemas were closed. So Lai placed *A Dream in Fantasia* on YouTube, freely available to all. I explore whether the piece was successful in employing comedy to lighten the hearts of Hong Kongers. The Chinese title of *A Dream in Fantasia* is *A Dream of Nanke*, and refers to a story written in the Tang Dynasty about a man who dreams of being the governor of Nanke prefecture, where he enjoys great wealth and prestige. After waking, he realizes that everything was a dream, and this story is condensed into the Chinese idiom of *A Dream of Nanke*, metaphorically alluding to the fleeting nature of life. Did the adapted comedy also suggest that the pandemic, however restrictive, was also fleeting and short-lived?

Rethinking Shakespeare at War: Global Perspectives, Impact, and 'Universality' (Amy Lidster)
Shakespeare has been frequently 'mobilized' at times of war from the seventeenth to the twenty-first centuries and is increasingly used within non-Anglophone contexts, including, most recently, by Ukrainians during the ongoing Russian invasion. Does this growing and well-publicised use suggest that Shakespeare's works are profoundly meaningful – culturally, politically, and dramatically – for individuals, communities, and states at times of conflict and cut across borders and boundaries? Or does the interest of Shakespeare studies, research institutions, cultural partners, and the media in this topic artificially elevate Shakespeare's impact – and in ways that might overlook the tensions that underpin wartime culture and the homogenizing qualities of wartime narratives that reflect optimistically on the morale-boosting, unifying potential of cultural figureheads, such as Shakespeare? This contribution to 'The End(s) of Global Shakespeare' responds directly to the seminar's provocative prompt that global Shakespeare might be another way of claiming his universality – and, in wartime contexts, of neglecting the complexities and disagreements that influence the dramatist's appeal. It will reflect on the aims and scope of a proposed new collection on 'Shakespeare and War' and offer a few specific examples of recent uses to consider the priorities and ethics of our investment in wartime Shakespeare.

'*Her hair down, singing*': Singing Ophelia/Singing about Ophelia in East Asia (Ryuta Minami)

The last decade has witnessed a global proliferation of songs titled 'Ophelia,' most notably the hit 'The Fate of Ophelia' by Taylor Swift. A quick search for 'Ophelia' on streaming services like KKBOX yields a list of more than 200 tracks, a trend that holds true in East Asia, too. Apart from the comic song 'Ophelia Mada Mada' (2020), which reimagines the character as a backstroke swimmer unlikely to drown, most contemporary songs still frame her as an icon of girlhood, purity, and true but unrequited love. These depictions remain heavily influenced by Millais's painting of Ophelia as a floral, floating figure. However, if we view Ophelia's singing as a form of self-expression, pop culture representations of her as a singer (or the act of singing about her) may mirror the contemporary cultural milieux and concerns of East Asia. This paper examines how Ophelia has been reimagined within East Asian pop culture by analysing verbal and visual representations of her in Japan and Taiwan. The works are *Vivy: Fluorite Eye's Song* (2021), which features a humanoid AI named Ophelia; *Zero* (2014), a Japanese horror film featuring Ophelia's imagery and song; and 'Ophelia' (2019), a song by Taiwanese artist Waa Wei.

Shakespeare in Norway 1720-1945 (Svenn-Arve Myklebost)

It is possible to trace the presence of Shakespeare in Norwegian history, from the early eighteenth century, via the signing of the constitution in 1814 and independence in 1905, to the construction of a fully-fledged nation in the twentieth century. The importance of Shakespeare in this period should not be exaggerated, but I will argue that his works played a small but not insignificant part in the developing nation's cultural life. In a sense, the presence of Shakespeare is a symptom that some sort of cultural, linguistic, political self-evaluation is taking place, through a transnational dialogue, across time. A crucial element in this history is that Norway was a veritable Danish colony in the 1720s, without its own official language, and no theatres, newspapers or universities. Another point worth noting is that appreciation of an English author was something of a niche concern at first, before it became mainstream. This paper seeks to briefly outline some of the variety of Shakespearean "occurrences" in Norway's national history from around 1720 up to the Second World War, mentioning global parallels.

Whose Globe? An audit of international Shakespeare (Asher Noor)

The concept of "global Shakespeare" has produced rich scholarship but has rarely been financially audited. This paper treats international Shakespeare as an economic system rather than a cultural ideal, and asks: whose balance sheets does global Shakespeare actually strengthen? Writing as an accountant rather than a literary scholar, I apply the logic of capital-flow analysis to the institutions, festivals, and networks that sustain "global" circulation. I test the stated purposes of international Shakespeare against the ledger. Where the books remain closed, I apply the questions an auditor would ask. Who disbursed, who received, who booked the reputational gain? Case studies including the 2012 Globe-to-Globe Festival and the Globe's two-year *Hamlet* world tour illustrate the pattern. When the infrastructure is this asymmetrical, the exchange looks more like extraction than reciprocity. If the money moves in one direction, can we still call the exchange global? If the field cannot say who pays, who hosts, and who captures the value, on what grounds does it claim that Shakespeare now belongs to everyone? And if "global Shakespeare" turns out to be an artefact of the neoliberal moment, whose termination (*end*) is already visible in its economics, what becomes of its stated objectives (*ends*)?

Where is the Global in Korean Shakespeare? (Scott Shepherd)
Alexa Alice Joubin writes in *Shakespeare and East Asia* that 'The global is imagined to be "whatever the United States" – and by extension Great Britain – "is not."' Within the context of Shakespeare studies this claim may well be true; yet, as Hyunjung Lee demonstrates, in South Korea "the global" denotes precisely the opposite. It evokes most prominently an image of the United States, and more broadly, anywhere that is not Korea. Indeed, the implicit US-centrism of Joubin's argument indicates how firmly the USA dominates anglophone discourse in Shakespeare studies. To properly understand Korean Shakespeare, it is necessary to move away from a US-centric mode of scholarship. It is, of course, impossible to become totally delocalised. Instead I seek to adopt a more Korea-centric methodology inspired by Chen Kuan-hsing's work *Asia as Method* – not in an exclusionary or xenophobic manner, but in a way that takes Korean culture and history as primary referent when studying Korean Shakespeare. I argue that Shakespeare has become an internal aspect of Korean culture (what Chen calls 'fragments internal to the local'). As such, the "global" element in the phrase "Korean Shakespeare" is not so much the "Korean" as the "Shakespeare."

***Gesang Lobu and Zhuoma Ciren*: Tibetan *Romeo and Juliet* in Twenty-First-Century Theatre (Yu Yan)**
This paper looks at *Gesang Luobu and Zhuoma Ciren* (2020), a Tibetan theatrical adaptation of *Romeo and Juliet* produced by the Shanghai Theatre Academy. This play, with its unique approach to cross-cultural adaptation, exemplifies the collaborative nature of theatre as an art form and challenges the notion of authorship in a most fundamental way. An adapted version of an abridged Chinese translation of *Romeo and Juliet* formed the basis of the script, and during the rehearsals the director encouraged the Tibetan actors to explore their own culture and bridge everyday experience and theatrical performance through improvisation. This paper examines *Ge Zhuo*'s creative use of mythical framework and natural symbolism and its tension between tradition and spontaneity, paying special attention to the relationship between text and performance. Since the actors that performed in the Tibetan Shakespeare productions to date were all trained at the Shanghai Theatre Academy, this paper also attempts to show the sociocultural significance of ethnic minority acting training and how *Ge Zhuo* stands out among the five productions as a special case.

S09.
Geopolitical Dynamics in Shakespeare Adaptations: Perspectives on the New Cold War

Organisers: Dong-ha Seo, Hisao Oshima, Ananya Dutta Gupta

This seminar explores literary and theatrical responses to contemporary geopolitical tensions, particularly the 'New Cold War' in an increasingly multipolar world. Examining Shakespeare's works, it compares adaptations from the Cold War to reinterpretations in the new millennium, analyzing how they address ideological, geopolitical, and military conflicts. It considers broader cultural and historical contexts shaping collective memory, focusing on the resonance of Shakespeare's works in Europe, East Asia, and other nations. Themes include the siege as a metaphor for geopolitical conflicts and the impact of adaptations on audience perceptions, highlighting Shakespeare's enduring role in reflecting twenty-first century global shifts.

Korean adaptation of Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar* in times of a new cold war (Dong-ha Seo)

Directing Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar* toward the volatile landscape of contemporary South Korean politics, Kim Jeong's *Killing Caesar* (2025) presents a history where the past refuses to remain buried. This study examines how the production, staged against the 2024 martial law declaration and 2025 snap presidential election, radicalizes Shakespeare's political imagination through a Derridean lens of "hauntology." Here, Caesar's ghost is not merely a revenant of personal authority—echoing the specters of Korea's former dictators—but a spectral logic of alliance and escalation inherent in the New Cold War. By staging the assassination as a ritualistic hunt and projecting a permanent "crown-shaped shadow" over the stage, Kim suggests that modern power no longer functions through simple vertical hierarchies. Instead, it operates via what Mark Tushnet calls "constitutional hardball" and an elite polarization that dissolves the ground for true political agency. The conflict is not merely about removing a man, but the impossibility of exorcising a system that demands a "leader" to fill the void. Through a web of multiplying ironies—where the pursuit of justice only paves the way for a "new Caesar"—Kim transforms classical tragedy into a meta-tragedy of systemic fragility and the unending cycle of "strategic resilience."

Srijit Mukherjee's Zulfiqar and Vishal Bharadwaj's O Romeo: Cities, Crime and Geopolitics (Ananya Dutta Gupta)

In the title credits of Zulfiqar (2016), Srijit Mukherjee acknowledges his indebtedness to Julius Caesar; and his faithfulness to the plot. On the other hand, Vishal Bharadwaj, acclaimed for three earlier adaptations of Shakespeare's Macbeth, Othello and Hamlet respectively, does not acknowledge Shakespeare, except for the apostrophe, "O Romeo" from Romeo and Juliet in the title. Both films revolve around parallel societies, set respectively in 1990s Mumbai and early 2000s Kolkata, built upon an urban underbelly of money, power, gang rivalry, and cut-throat violence. If anything, both Mukherjee's Zulfiqar and Bharadwaj's O Romeo are texts in the concept of civil war reimagined as inter-family or intra-community conflict or the grey, porous area of complicity and collusion between law and the state on the one hand and the para-legal crime syndicates operating in metropolises and cities on the other. In the place of actual war, we encounter microcosmic refractions of intra- and inter-state dynamics with the same engendering factors as those driving global geopolitics. Indeed, the macro-picture is often gestured at through direct or tangential thematic gestures and iterations. Cold war then is concept, a trope of violent, dystopian absence of foreign war and the usurpation of its epic grandeur by civil war in all its ramifications. The two films are studies in the parallel geopolitics of global crime networks. In the end, both directors posit Shakespeare as the enduring repository of popular culture presenting inexhaustible possibilities for cultural and geopolitical reinventions.

Cold War and New Cold War: Kurosawa's Ran and Recent Stage Productions of *King Lear* in Japan (Hisao Oshima)

Later Kurosawa made films in the cold war world of the 20th century in which the final devastating nuclear war between great powers was imminent and everyone felt the end of the world was near. Doomsday Clock was set as "7 minutes" to it by the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists, though now the world has 85 seconds remaining in 2026. In his *Ikimono no Kiroku* [*I Live in Fear*] in 1955, an old owner of a town factory is possessed by abnormal fears of nuclear war. Kurosawa criticized human desire for power and territory and its destructive outcomes, especially wars, through his films. *Throne of Blood* (1957) and *The Bad Sleep Well* (1960) visually and spiritually reflected the pathology of afterwar Japan, and *Ran* (1985) anatomized human desire for power and war through its apocalyptic vision. Much has been

changed in the 21 st century in which new cold war often leads to regional conflicts, and even hot wars, in the geopolitically tense modern world. My paper aims to compare some critical visual metaphors in Kurosawa's *Ran* and recent Japanese stage productions of *King Lear* to understand how Shakespeare in Japan has mirrored this change.

Silent and Overt Geopolitics in A Midsummer Night's Dream: Riga, Moscow, and the New Cold War (Martins Zarins)

"A Midsummer Night's Dream" lacks structural resemblance to many of Shakespeare's other plays, making it enigmatic; however, it retains striking relevance to times of power transition and war. This play carries a sense of difficulty from a directorial perspective. Productions have often been received negatively by critics due to many directors' inability to match contemporary contexts to the play's eclectic narrative elements. Surprisingly, this play fits the world of the New Cold War order perfectly, making the audience react to its differing delivery on both sides of the Iron Curtain. The obedience and control at the palace of Theseus, the impulsive, nightmarish events in the forest, and the completely detached play-within-a-play of Pyramus and Thisbe all function as distinct yet connected registers of life under war and authoritarianism. All three events make complete sense in a Russian-invaded character reality staged by the renowned Latvian theatre director Viesturs Kariss. The production of 2025 by the internationally acclaimed Dailes Theatre, was dubbed "the saddest comedy of all", clearly denouncing war through satire, criticizing both sides of the current conflict. Meanwhile, in Moscow, a critic points out that Anton Yakovlev's "A Midsummer Night's Dream" (2023) makes a perfect vehicle for "a lighthearted comedy avoiding political angles in times when it is most needed" - while the timing and place of the performance undeniably hint at a manifestation of regime control in Russia. The theatre, called The Moscow Drama Theatre named after N. V. Gogol, was founded in the same building after the acclaimed but locally scandalous Gogol Centre was closed six months earlier. The artistic director of the new theatre and the director of its first production, "A Midsummer Night's Dream", Anton Yakovlev, had chosen the same material as Kirill Serebrennikov, the previous artistic director of the Gogol Centre, who is now in exile. The theatre was closed with the case hinged on the claim that the show was never staged. Whether it is a deliberate reference to the arrest of Kirill Serebrennikov for financial fraud, on the basis that he never staged "A Midsummer Night's Dream", is impossible to prove. However, the 2023 show, which was nominated for show of the year, attracts review after review discussing Kirill Serebrennikov's performance and the closure of the Gogol Centre. Critics praise the new performance as humorous, simple, and slapstick enough to make anyone enjoy the show. Furthermore, they keep comparing it to Kirill Serebrennikov's performance, in the context of it being replaced by a successful, lighthearted show. The two cases highlight that "A Midsummer Night's Dream" staged in a polarized world can serve very different purposes. Drawing on comparative performance analysis and reception studies, this essay systematically compares scenographic choices, dramaturgical structures, and critical paratexts in these two productions to show how "silent" and "overt" stagings of "A Midsummer Night's Dream" differently register the same geopolitical reality of war and authoritarianism in 2025, and how audiences and critics activate that politics in the New Cold War.

"And therein see a siege": Geopolitics and the Complex Dynamics of Kenneth Branagh's Henry V (Subhajit Sengupta)

This paper explores the complex mechanisms of cinematic storytelling that Kenneth Branagh's 1989 film version of Henry V employs as it builds upon the connections between the play and the geopolitical dynamics of the post-war Western world. Branagh's "anti-war" film, where the spectre of the Vietnam War looms large, responds to the cultural and political demands of its

time. The paper critiques former U.S. ambassador Michael Novak's 1991 commentary on the similarities between Shakespeare's play and George H. W. Bush's Gulf War. Novak writes of the victory of the U. S. forces over Iraq in February that year that there had "been nothing like it since the Battle of Agincourt in 1415." The paper sees Novak's exuberance as potentially dangerous and reads it against Michael Billington's restrained and cautious January 2026 article in The Guardian on productions of Henry V. Looking forward to a Royal Shakespeare Company Henry V directed by Tamara Harvey, Billington writes that the production "seems especially timely as we are living in a world where the threat of war is painfully real."

Troilus and Cressida: A Blueprint of 20th Century Cold War (Santanu Das)
The paper explores the striking resonance between Troilus and Cressida and the geopolitical tensions of the Cold War era and after. The play famously dismantles heroic ideals associated with the Epic War, presenting instead a world governed by pride, political manoeuvering, moral ambiguity, and rhetorical posturing. Ian Kott has seen it as a commentary on the interminable Anglo-French wars of Shakespeare's time; but by reading the play through the lens of twentieth-century ideological conflict— particularly the prolonged rivalry between the United States and the Soviet Union— it also seems that Troilus and Cressida anticipates the logic of the Cold War stalemate inasmuch as it leaves the war unconcluded and continuing.
The play's depiction of hollow heroism, strategic delay, and reputational anxiety mirrors the nuclear brinkmanship and ideological rigidity that characterized events such as the Cuban Missile Crisis. Just as the Trojan leaders sustain a war driven less by justice than by pride and the fear of dishonour, the Cold War superpowers prolonged global tension through proxy conflicts and political spectacle. Moreover, Shakespeare's treatment of betrayal and unstable loyalties—embodied in Cressida's shift of alliance— echoes the atmosphere of suspicion, espionage, andideological defection that shaped twentieth-century global politics.
The paper contends that Troilus and Cressida offer not merely a satire on ancient warfare but a timeless critique of ideological conflict itself. By foregrounding moral ambiguity and the collapse of heroic narratives, the play provides a powerful framework for understanding the psychological, rhetorical, and ethical dimensions of Cold War confrontation.

From "Who Am I?" to "Who Are We?": Staging Identity in Two Chinese *Hamlets* (Shuangting Chen)
This paper takes the same directorial concept of *Hamlet* across two historical periods, Lin Zhaohua's 1990 production and its 2021 revival directed by Pu Cunxin, as the core case study to examine how Chinese cultural production has transformed in response to shifts in geopolitical landscapes and state narratives. After being rejected by the Beijing People's Art Theatre (BPAT) in 1989, Lin founded an independent theatre studio and launched its inaugural production, Hamlet (1990). The production adopted "everyone is Hamlet" as its "director's second theme", referring to how Hamlet's hesitation, melancholy, and existential dilemma mirrored the spiritual confusion and uncertainty of Chinese audiences in the post-1989 era. It emerged when revolutionary narratives were losing authority, a new ideological consensus had yet to form, and cultural expression experienced a brief period of openness and uncertainty. By appropriating a foreign canonical text, the production allowed contemporary Chinese to reflect on their own individual fates and the uncertain conditions of the era. Its significantly restructured script, three actors rotating in the title role, and minimalist post-apocalyptic stage design further created a strong sense of desolation and alienation, embodying avant-garde theatre's radical exploration of individual subjectivity and universal humanity. In 2021, Pu, who played Hamlet in the previous version, directed a revival of the same production as the graduation work of the 2017 Tibetan Acting Class at the Shanghai Theatre Academy. Performed in both Mandarin and Tibetan, it incorporated Tibetan music, dance, and symbolic elements to

commemorate the centenary of the Chinese Communist Party and the seventieth anniversary of the "Peaceful Liberation of Tibet". In contrast to the 1990 marginal experiment, this revival was staged at mainstream venues including BPAT, received support from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and toured Russia and Hong Kong. Deeply embedded in the state framework of "telling China's story well", it demonstrated the increasingly close integration of cultural production and national narratives. From Lin's peripheral independent exploration to Pu's officially supported production as Chairman of the China Theatre Association, these thirty years reveal a clear shift in Chinese cultural politics under the New Cold War: from a period of ideological loosening that allowed greater room for individualized and reflective artistic practices, to an era in which growing state strategic demands have turned Western classics into tools for cultural confidence, multi-ethnic national image-building, and international discourse. This transformation, from inward examination of the individual to outward projection of state will, illustrates how national narratives have come to dominate cultural production amid global geopolitical reconfiguration.

King Lear in our time- Kozinstev and Kurosawa, war, violence and the cinematic auteur (Subhankar Bhattacharya)

One could argue that for a play like King Lear long thought to be unactable and 'too big for the stage', it took the twentieth century, particularly the decades since the Second World War to make us fully appreciate how the horrors depicted in it make one particularly attuned to our own historical moment. As RA Foakes proposes in his introduction to the third Arden edition of the play, 'its exposure of the horror of torture and suffering no longer seems outrageous in the context of concentration camps, napalm bombs, anti-personnel mines, and acts of terrorism such as have become familiar in report to everyone'. In my paper, I want to look at the four most iconic adaptations of King Lear on film- Grigori Kozintsev's last completed film Korol Lir (1971), Peter Brook's adaptation in the same year, Akira Kurosawa's Ran (1985) and Jean Luc Godard's avant garde adaptation of the play (1987). I will attempt to explore how these adaptations are inflected by, and proleptically map, the current fractious political moment where wars in Ukraine, Palestine and Gaza, and now Iran have become our everyday living reality. What is it about King Lear that makes it the most suitable play for our own current divisive and divided political moment?

Do We Exist or Do We Not?: Hamlet, Chutzpah, and States of Exception (Sushmita Banerjee)

Giorgio Agamben, in talking about the Nazi state, points to a central paradox when he suggests that the state of exception is the point at which the law provides for its own suspension; it is the legal suspension of the distinction between legality and illegality. This paper considers, *Haider*, Vishal Bharadwaj's 2014 film adaptation of Shakespeare's *Hamlet,* alongside novelist Basharat Peer's *Curfewed Nights* (2008) to examine how public texts hold the production of a state of exception in present day Kashmir. In Haider, Shakespeare provides a framework to stage the deep schism between the people of Kashmir and their neo-colonial state. If, as Marcellus says, "something is rotten in the state of Denmark," this paper suggests that Shakespeare makes legible, in Kashmir, a rot as old as the Indian state. *Curfewed Nights* serves as a companion text to *Haider* – a literary antecedent – creating a contrapuntal framework for the film's appropriation of Shakespeare. This paper shall look at the various strategies *Haider* and *Curfewed Nights* deploy to examine the ethical, juridical and ontological coordinates of a "no man's land" ["terra di nessuno"] Kashmir. It shall explore the possibilities engendered by the use of *Hamlet* as a frame of reference to suggest the new prince Hamlet must contend with the ghosts of past geo-political wars, and new figurations of sovereign power. I propose that Hamlet's introspective existential dilemma allows *Haider* to stage relationships between the

state and its people, individual and his history, identity and political dis/enfranchisement, and between sovereign power and the right to life.

The Conflict between Britain and Rome in Almereyda's *Cymbeline* (Yukiko Mori)
This paper examines how Michael Almereyda's film *Cymbeline* (2014) adapts the conflict between Britain and Rome from Shakespeare's original play, exploring the significance of this strife within the contemporary context of the 'New Cold War'. The investigation focuses on three key perspectives: the modernisation of the setting, the reduction of geographical scale, and the use of irony. Almereyda modernises the entire narrative. Consequently, although the film predates the full-scale invasion of Ukraine and heightened tensions in the Middle East, the ancient war in the original play resonates not only with current global military and civil strife but also with everyday economic, political, and gender-based struggles. Almereyda downscales the interstate conflict by reframing it as a confrontation between drug cartels and the police, fighting over power and interests within the same region. While the final battle is minimally visualised, the presence of dead bodies and pervasive violence is emphasised throughout, blurring the distinction between virtue and vice. Thus, Cymbeline's concluding declaration of peace appears sudden and unexpected, rendering the outcome ironic or even futile. However, the film does not merely observe these power struggles with cynicism. In the original play, the war serves as a catalyst for family reunion; in the film, however, new possibilities emerge through disengagement from the arena of conflict. While Almereyda's *Hamlet* (2000) featured a preoccupation with cutting-edge communication, his *Cymbeline* suggests that high technology is merely another battlefield of the New Cold War. Notably, communication between Imogen and Posthumus relies not on digital media but on the physical delivery of letters and parcels. In an era of armed conflict and distrust, technological devices lose credibility. The most symbolic connection between the lovers is a woodcut print handcrafted by Posthumus. Furthermore, gender boundaries dissolve at the film's conclusion as Posthumus and Cymbeline accept Imogen despite her 'male' disguise. In the final scene, Imogen and Posthumus depart from the city. Rather than accepting a "peace" forged by the collusion between police and criminal organizations, they choose to escape. While this conclusion remains ironic, the film explores a unique path of exodus from the pervasive structures of modern conflict.

Stalinist "Warrior-Hamlets": Theory, Practice, Cinematic Afterlives (Ilya Nemirovsky)
This paper argues that two post-Thaw-era cinematic responses to Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, Eldar Ryazanov's *Beware of the Car* (1966) and Andrei Tarkovsky's *The Mirror* (1975) rework a high Stalinist and wartime tradition of productions and scholarly elaborations of *Hamlet* that culminated in a series of so-called "warrior-Hamlets" ("boevoi Gamlet"). I begin with an elucidation of this frequently overlooked tradition, theorizing the attendant Soviet model of adaptation, the relationship between scholarship, stage, and page, and how these efforts fit into a broader "cosmopolitan" vision of Soviet modernity as an inheritor of Renaissance humanism. Wartime adaptation practices centered around highly centralized institutional frameworks, such as the Shakespearean Cabinet of the All-Russian Theatrical Society, dominated by scholars who advanced historicizing readings of Shakespearean source materials. These scholars then "consulted" theatrical producers and translators in crafting productions and translations that harmonized these historical meanings with Soviet modernity. Despite the cliche that Stalin could not tolerate the proverbially indecisive tragic hero, this paper discusses instances where Hamlet, paradoxically, was renegotiated as a decisive, moral man of action intently bent on effectuating historical change. This interpretation dominated Soviet Shakespearean study and practice from the end of the 1930s through wartime, reflected notably in the Armenian Shakespeare Festival of 1944, as well as in Shakespearean criticism by Mikhail Morozov and

Josef Juzowski. During the Thaw period, Hamlet (and the Russian tradition of so-called "Hamletism") was redeployed as an anti-totalitarian, anti-Stalinist "intelligent" type, most famously in Grigorii Kozintsev's *Hamlet* (1964). I focus on Ryazanov and Tarkovsky's later cinematic responses to *Hamlet* that reveal an indebtedness to both figurations of Hamlet. These adaptations have often been seen as repudiations of an earlier Thaw-era optimism. I contend that considerations of *Hamlet* in terms of wartime literary and performance history are crucial to understanding the films' ambivalent deployments of Hamletism with respect to their examinations of post-Stalinist humanism, cold war cosmopolitanism, and questions of personal agency and ethical responsibility.

S10.
International Shakespeares: Soft Power and National Cultural Identities

Organisers: Helen A. Hopkins, L. Monique Pittman

Many nations have used Shakespeare's life, works, and iconicity for soft power purposes: to create or assert an appealing national cultural identity that increases their influence on the world stage. This seminar asks: how is Shakespeare used to shape national identities? How do adaptations and appropriations recirculate Shakespeare as soft power? How is Shakespearean power consolidated through the provenance and exhibition of material artifacts? What are the implications of this appropriation of power? This seminar welcomes papers exploring forms of Shakespearean soft power that manifest through global networking, negotiations, and performances in varied locales and through a range of artifacts.

Displaying Transatlantic Diplomacy: American Portraits in the RSC's Fine Art & Sculpture Collection (Anne Nichole Alegre)
This paper examines portraits and sculptural representations of American actors and actresses in the Royal Shakespeare Company's fine art and sculpture collection and asks how such works might be understood within frameworks of cultural diplomacy, soft power, and institutional canonisation of Shakespeare's works and afterlives. While these art objects are often regarded as mere records of performance history or visual representations of people, their presence in the RSC's collection raises questions about the terms through which British-American cultural relations have been forged through artistic and theatric exchange. Focusing on specific figures like Edwin Booth (1833–1893), Ada Rehan (1857–1916), and Mary Anderson (1859–1940), this paper draws on provenance records, acquisition histories, and institutional correspondence alongside close visual and contextual analysis of portraits and busts. I first contextualises the presence of these art objects through a historical survey of the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre's liaison with the Americans, and I then consider how these objects complicate conventional ideas about the relationship between national identity and Shakespeare, particularly in cases where inclusion in the collection has no direct correlation to institutional affiliation (i.e. Edwin Booth). Ultimately, I explore how the representation of American performers in the collection might reflect Anglo-American dynamics of cultural diplomacy in the 19th and 20th centuries, and how such dynamics are still being continued in the present.

Intercultural Practice and Soft Power: The Case of Ong Ken Seng (Rebekah Bale)
This paper looks at the work of Singaporean theatre director and playwright, Ong Ken Seng. From his adaptations of Othello, Lear and Search: Hamlet to his recent Trojan Women at the 2023 Edinburgh Festival, he has been at the forefront of intercultural theatre in Singapore and the region. Most recently, he has set up an artistic director training academy in his home city whilst continuing to advocate for Singaporean national theatre. In the early 2000s, Ong's

radical, inter-Asian adaptations of Shakespeare were viewed as an important moment of post-colonial 'talking back', centring female characters as well as bringing in aspects of traditional art forms such as noh and Cantonese opera. Often performed in Western countries, the reception of these works was varied, with criticism of Ong's intercultural attempts focused on the exoticization or fetishization of Asian culture, a criticism of which Ong was acutely aware. He commented in interviews that the audiences were not ready for 'real' intercultural performance and preferred a narrow interpretation of 'Asian Shakespeare'. The paper will first re-examine the controversy surrounding these adaptations and then look at some broader issues that Ong has addressed concerning construction of Singapore's national identity through its publically funded arts programme.

Broadcasting *Richard III*: Radio Adaptation, Disability, and Shakespearean Soft Power in Early Francoist Spain (Elena Bandín)

This paper examines a Spanish radio adaptation of *Richard III* broadcast in 1945 on Radio Nacional de España under the direction of Claudio de la Torre, with Juan Manuel Soriano in the title role. Produced in Barcelona, the broadcast formed part of a postwar effort to professionalize Spanish radiotheatre and elevate it as a vehicle for literary culture. Although the recording has not yet been located, press references and archival traces reveal how Shakespeare circulated through state radio at a crucial moment of cultural repositioning in early Francoist Spain. Drawing on Joseph S. Nye's concept of soft power, the paper argues that Shakespeare functioned as cultural capital through which Francoist Spain could align itself with a prestigious European canon despite its postwar isolation. Broadcasting Shakespeare thus contributed to a project of cultural legitimation through national media. In dialogue with disability studies (Genevieve Love; Jeffrey R. Wilson), the paper also examines how Richard's bodily difference is reshaped by radio performance. In the absence of a visible body, deformity is constructed acoustically through vocal modulation and sound design, revealing how radio mediates both the politics of disability and the cultural work of Shakespeare as soft power.

Shakespeare in Relation: Creolization, Performance, and Caribbean Cultural Power (Virginia M. Burnett)

This paper examines how Caribbean performances of Shakespeare both participate in and disrupt what Joseph S. Nye, Jr. defines as "soft power." Historically, Shakespeare functioned as a key instrument of British cultural authority, circulated through colonial education and performance. In the Caribbean, however, contemporary adaptations reveal a more complex negotiation: rather than simply reproducing Shakespeare as a marker of imperial prestige, artists refunction his cultural capital to articulate local identities and histories. Focusing on case studies including the Shakespeare in Paradise festival in The Bahamas, Derek Walcott's A Branch of the Blue Nile, and Teatro SEA's Sueño, this paper argues that Caribbean engagements with Shakespeare operate through processes of creolization and relation, in Édouard Glissant's terms. These performances transform Shakespeare into a site of cultural translation, incorporating Caribbean language, music, and spiritual traditions to reframe canonical texts within local epistemologies. In Sueño, for example, Shakespearean narrative is reimagined through Caribbean and diasporic aesthetics, foregrounding hybridity and cultural memory. At the same time, these practices remain ambivalent. The continued use of Shakespeare risks reinscribing the hierarchies it seeks to dismantle, even as it enables new forms of cultural agency. Drawing on postcolonial Shakespeare studies (Loomba, Orkin, Huang) and Caribbean theory (Brathwaite, Lamming, Glissant), this paper proposes that Caribbean Shakespeare functions as a form of counter–soft power: one that exposes the mechanisms of cultural authority while redirecting them toward Caribbean self-definition.

Ultimately, Caribbean performances complicate the "softness" of soft power, revealing it as a contested and transformative field.

Shakespeare in Motion and the Soviet Colonial Empire (Natalia Khomenko)
This paper examines the ways in which the rhetoric of Stalin-era Soviet press celebrated Shakespearean drama as an ideological tool of the Soviet Empire. It begins with the publications related to the All-Soviet Theatre Olympiad, which took place in the summer of 1930 in Moscow and included the Azerbaijan Academic Drama Theatre's *Hamlet* (1926, dir. Aleksandr Tuganov). More broadly, this paper suggests that the Soviet discourse of Shakespeare as an internal cultural export supported a narrative of cultural enlightenment brought by Russia to the non-European republics it added to its territory. At present, there are no Global Shakespeare studies focusing directly on Soviet Russia's colonial uses of Shakespeare in relation to non-European republics. My paper will begin to address this gap in scholarship by analyzing Stalin-era discussions of Soviet Russia's Shakespeare export to non-European Soviet republics. Drawing on such scholars as Madina Tlostanova and Alexander Etkind, whose work seeks to theorize Russia's history as a colonial empire, this paper traces Soviet Shakespeare's Stalin-era journeys in relation to the broader state project of consolidating cultural authority and establishing political control throughout its vast and diverse territories.

Recasting Shakespeare in China: Adaptation, Cultural Capital, and Soft Power (Yujing Ma)
This paper examines the reinterpretation of Shakespeare in contemporary China and the significance of these shifts domestically and globally. Drawing on concepts of cultural capital and soft power, the study argues that Chinese adaptations utilize Shakespeare's iconic status to forge a national identity while securing international recognition. Through an analysis of theater, film, and graphic media, I demonstrate how adaptation serves as a strategic tool for promoting Chinese culture. Stage productions incorporate Shakespearean narratives into indigenous theatrical traditions, while cinematic reinterpretations blend local storytelling with the conventions of historical epics and martial arts. Rather than mere imitation, these works reshape Shakespeare to reflect China's cultural objectives and its evolving role in a globalized world. Such adaptations reveal the tension between seeking global prestige and maintaining a distinct local voice. The paper further explores Shakespeare's growing popularity in Chinese comics, where his work enters the realms of popular culture and education. In this medium, Shakespeare becomes accessible to younger audiences while retaining cultural weight. Ultimately, these diverse forms demonstrate that Shakespeare in China is constantly being redefined, with the pursuit of cultural identity and global influence remaining inextricably linked.

Captured Canon: Has Manan's Romi dan Juli (1974) as Strategic Appropriation of the Shakespearean Archetype (Lestari Manggong)
Romi dan Juli, a 1974 film by the Indonesian director Has Manan, adapts William Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet to the culturally specific landscape of 1970s Indonesia. The film transposes the Western tragedy into a narrative centred on familial and societal conflicts, where the central tension is driven by the rigid hierarchies and societal expectations of a modernizing nation. In the reimagining of this classic, the narrative provides a clear shift from the original's focus on romantic fate to a more localized interrogation of socio-political anxieties. In the context of "International Shakespeare", this can be perceived as a form of strategic appropriation, where a globally canonical text is "captured" to address domestic concerns rather than serving as a passive imitation. Such an adaptation triggers an

analysis of the film as a tactical use of global cultural forms, focusing on the significance of the melodramatic mode in critiquing the architecture of Indonesian modernity. The contribution of this appropriation will be discussed to understand how the film repurposes the Capulet-Montague feud to address issues of patriarchal discipline and the pressures of national development. This discussion ultimately aims to investigate how Romi dan Juli contributes new perspectives on the intertwining between Western literary authority and the negotiation of a distinct national cultural identity.

Muscular American Masculinities in Last Action Hero and Grand Theft Hamlet (Maya Mathur)
No Shakespearean tragedy is more closely tied to universal human values than *Hamlet*. Recent studies of the text have complicated this association by focusing on its portrayal of a racialized subjectivity that links whiteness with humanity and Blackness with violence and deceit. My paper builds on these studies to consider how two films, *Last Action Hero* (1993) and *Grand Theft Hamlet* (2024), recode Shakespeare's representation of white masculinity for modern audiences. Set in Los Angeles, both films feature spectacular acts of violence that are designed to reinforce the myth of American freedom and individuality. The first of these, a parody of the muscular action films of the 1990s, gestures towards *Hamlet* through its protagonist, Jack Slater, who solves Hamlet's dilemma by slaughtering his enemies with a machine gun. The second is a documentary in which filmmaker, Pinny Grylls, follows two actors, Sam Crane and Mark Oosterveen, as they stage a production of *Hamlet* within the world of *Grand Theft Auto*, a video game associated with car heists, money, and machismo. This paper examines citations of *Hamlet* in both films and considers what they reveal about the condition of American masculinity in the twentieth and twenty-first century.

Tragic Dames: Consent in the Medieval Times (Artemis Preeshl)
Power behind the throne through marriage buttressed reigns in *King Lear, Hamlet, & Macbeth*. Female royals influenced governance by tacit or affirmative consent. Wars mask soft power tragic dames wielded. One exception: Cordelia took back the kingdom. Whether female character in Shakespeare's tragedies follow prescribed behavior, femaleness sentences royals to death. This study connects Frankish, Angle, Saxon, Scottish, and Viking women with dramatic counterparts to explore the extent to what extent royal women had the right to consent. Legends and history inform herstories. Cordelia becomes Queen of England and France and fought her sisters in Monmouth, but Lear's daughters die in Shakespeare. Holinshed's historically inaccurate *Macbeth* preceded Shakespeare. Did Princess Gruoch or Gerutha have alternatives to marrying MacBethad, who may have killed her first husband, to become Earl of Moray, or Feng (Claudius), who killed to take the crown of Horwendil (Hamlet Senior)? Gruoch's lineage and Gerutha's queenship solidified reigns of their second husbands. Lady Macbeth becomes insane, but Gruoch's fate is undocumented. After Prince Hamlet jilts Ophelia and kills her father, she, too, becomes insane. Only Shakespeare's witches and the Gentlewoman who waits on Lady Macbeth survive. Female royals gain and retain power through marriage across respective societies.

All's Well that Resists Colonialism: Indigenizing Shakespeare in *1939* (Melissa Pullara)
In an interview on her play, 1939, co-written with Jani Lauzon, Kaitlyn Riordan summed up their creative aim as "exploring what it is to do Shakespeare on this land...looking at what it means to do Shakespeare as an Indigenous person. What is it to import culture?" (Murphy, 2024). The play, which first premiered at the 2022 Stratford Festival, is set in a residential school where the students put on a production of All's Well that Ends Well in anticipation of a

visit from King George VI. Despite rigid directions from a strict teacher who believes that Shakespeare should be played in a particular way, the students begin to see parallels between themselves and the characters, and so adapt the work into an expression of Indigenous struggle and identity. This paper will explore how 1939 demonstrates that Shakespeare can give voice to those whom colonial powers would use him and his works to silence. These characters move towards taking for themselves something that has traditionally been thought of as someone else's property, thereby revealing that the concept of ownership–of texts, of land, of people–is a false ideology that, unjustly used for control, might also be used as a site of resistance.

The Ghost of Hamlet and British South Asian Masculinity (Anandi Rao)
This paper builds on my paper from SAA 2025 that looked at the role that Hamlet – the play and the character – plays in the 2024 play Statues by Azan Ahmed. In the paper for WSC, I build on the key arguments of this paper but use Riz Ahmed's 2026 film Hamlet as a case study. Apart from close reading the film, I will also include my reflections on doing some translations for the film. While in the SAA paper I was arguing that the ghost of Hamlet is akin to the white state moulding British South Asian Masculinity, particularly, Muslim masculinity, into the shape of a "terrorist", this paper asks what it means for a British South Asian man to embody Hamlet. I also think about what kind of British South Asian man gets to embody Hamlet. In doing so, the larger paper will combine the work from SAA last year and the WSC this year, to think about the relationship between whiteness, Hamlet and British South Asian experience.

"Who talks of my nation?": *Henry V*'s (Multi)Nationalism in a WWII Detective Mystery (Kelsey Ridge)
Henry V is a text rife with nationalist and multinational agendas. Despite linguistic and cultural differences (and colonization), Shakespeare's Irish, Scots, Welsh, and English fight under the same banner. The play has been deployed for patriotic — or nationalistic — purposes. In WWII, it was used to marshal the British to fight for the motherland. *Henry V* plays a prominent role in the 1943 murder mystery novel, *Colour Scheme* by New Zealand/Aotearoa writer, Ngaio Marsh. In the novel, New Zealanders (both Pākehā/White and Māori) and Brits discuss the significance of enlisting and the importance of hunting out local traitors; it describes a multinational and multi-ethnic coalition uniting under the banner of the English king. In the novel, appreciating and performing Shakespeare well is treated as a sign of moral and cultural authority, particularly in comparison to the Nazis. Therefore, it is significant that the Māori are explicitly identified as an enthusiastic audience for performances of Shakespeare, especially martial/patriotic speeches from *Henry V*. They not only fight for the British military, they also revere England's prized poet. Marsh crafted a mystery in which Shakespeareans are of vital importance but which also replicates the (multi)national(istic) logic of *Henry V*.

Julius Caesar, Cultural Diplomacy, and Mauritian Independence (Jim Taylor)
In June 1963, the Peter Potter Company arrived in Mauritius to mount a community production of Julius Caesar. This paper investigates how and why the British colonial authorities put so much time, money, and effort into bringing an English Shakespeare troupe to the remote Indian ocean island; and why Shakespeare's most overtly political play was selected for performance in a Crown Colony negotiating its way towards independence. Surveying available press reviews, autobiographical accounts, and administrative reports, the paper discloses the important cultural diplomatic role that Potter's touring production played in supporting Britain's developmentalist agenda during decolonisation. It finds that the colonial authorities called upon Shakespearean soft power to help it strengthen socio-cultural relations between the island's competing Franco-Mauritian and Indo-Mauritian elites. The decision to mount Julius

Caesar during a fraught election campaign overshadowed by fears of communal violence greatly impacted local receptions. While anti- Independence voices hailed Julius Caesar as a timely warning against disrupting the political status quo and of the fallibility of political idealism itself; nationalists reviewers viewed the Forum Scene, which featured 120 local actors, as a clear illustration of the danger that unscrupulous populist politicians posed to decolonising nations. Overall, given the high-stakes political intrigues convulsing Mauritian politics in 1963, the paper considers whether Shakespearean soft power helped Britian exert indirect political influence aimed at shaping Mauritius' national destiny.

Authenticating Portraits of "William Shakespeare:" A Case Study of Soft Power and National Cultural Identities (Jane Freeman)

Authenticating Portraits of "William Shakespeare:" A Case Study of Soft Power and National Cultural Identities I will examine several portraits claiming to be of Shakespeare as case studies through which to trace relationships among cultural capital, national forms of power, and the means through which Shakespeare's "soft power" is guarded. Portraits of "Shakespeare" are typically named after their most famous owners, such as the Duke of Chandos, or Edgar Flower, a member of Stratford's brewing dynasty. The cultural heft of these portraits is further strengthened by their current owners: the National Portrait Gallery and the Royal Shakespeare Company. The Cobbe portrait rose to prominence, some would argue, because it had the backing of Stanley Wells. In juxtaposition to such claims, I will examine those of the Sanders portrait, a much less well-known portrait, owned by a retired engineer in Canada. While extensive testing reveals the Sanders portrait has a potentially stronger claim to authenticity than other contenders, without the cultural heft of people and institutions such as those above, the painting was dismissed as being "Of an unknown gentleman." My paper will explore who has the power to determine what images of Shakespeare are presented as "authentic," and ask, "Can uses of Shakespearean soft power disguise the machinations of hard power and marginalize cultural others?"

Symbol, salesman, and shibboleth extraordinaire: Shakespeare and Latin American intellectual identity (Ana Weinberg)

As nations throughout the American continent gained their independence from Spain, they began constructing identities distinct from their colonial master while also attempting to find their place in the Western world, turning for help to countries who had their own designs on the region. In the early nineteenth century, Shakespeare began to appear in Latin American publications—less his works than his name, functioning as a symbol of the superior European culture that Spain had kept from its colonies. As Shakespeare was being adopted by key Latin American intellectual figures as a strategic appropriation that enabled them to negotiate their position within a global hierarchy, English publications were using Shakespeare—and Latin America's lack of knowledge of the author—to establish their superiority in order to be permitted economic and political control over the region. The name of Shakespeare also became a password among Latin American elites, a name they leveraged to signal cultural sophistication amongst themselves that allowed them to weave intricate intellectual networks throughout the continent.

S11.
Lunar Intersections

Organisers: William C. Carroll, Pascale C. Drouet

We invite papers on representations, invocations, and speculations on lunar topics, from early modern imaginings and scientific investigations to contemporary deployments in performance, queer genre and eco-theory. Suggested topics and questions can include visual representations of the moon, the moon's long association with diseases and madness, the Man in the Moon (sources, circulation, intertextuality), the moon and the cult of Elizabeth I, the cultural circulation and aftermath of Copernicus and Galileo's discoveries, voyages to the moon as a utopia. Authors considered may range from Lyly, Shakespeare and Jonson, to John Wilkins, Aphra Behn, and modern and contemporary writers.

Old Moon, New Moon: Lunar Fantasies in Lyly and Shakespeare (Supriya Chaudhuri)
A Midsummer Night's Dream, set in the dark interval between the waning of the old moon and the rising of the new, makes no direct reference to the lunar research of the time, some of it not yet available – notably Copernicus's calculations of lunar motion, Tycho Brahe's significant corrections, and William Gilbert's naked-eye *Selenographia*. I will argue that two roughly contemporary lunar plays of the mid-1590s, John Lyly's *The Woman in the Moone* and *Dream,* as well as related texts like Spenser's *Two Cantos of Mutabilitie* demonstrate a new way of thinking about the moon: its surface, its inhabitants, the sublunar disorders of climate and psychology over which it presides and which threaten the celestial realm as well. My paper looks at the way in which disorder – political, ecological and erotic – is newly imagined in lunar terms in the 1590s, and how new kinds of mythological fantasy, in advance of science fiction, are stretched to accommodate increasing uncertainty about the moon's place in a no longer stable "firmament." I will end by looking briefly at Georges Méliès' film *Le Voyage dans la lune* (1902).

Methinks the moon looks with a watery eye': interpreting the moon through dew in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*" (Izzy Trent Daltry)
Before Newton theorised the gravitational cause of lunar-tidal influence, the affinity between the moon and terrestrial water was variously understood. Usually, it was assumed to extend beyond tidal motion to impact on a much smaller scale, including that inside vegetal and animal bodies (especially those of women, the moister sex). The moon moves water, but also created it, leaving traces behind each night as dew. In *MND*, the elemental 'sympathy' between the moon and terrestrial water is, in the fairies' realm, an affective sympathy; Titania and Oberon's discord manifests itself in the environment through a series of displeased elemental powers, including the 'moon, governess of floods.' Much of the lunar presence in the fairy world is mediated by dew or water more generally: Cupid's arrow is 'quenched | In the chaste beams of the watery moon' so that it falls upon a flower and generates the love-in-idleness potion. This paper focuses on Titania and Oberon's divergent readings of dew, and suggests a new reading of Titania's affair with Bottom under the influence of the potion.

The moon in Shakespeare's *The Tempest*: between folklore and politics (Alice Equestri)
Shakespeare's *The Tempest* frequently recurs to peculiar moon tropes that touch on early modern folklore as well as notions of time, power, and disability. By examining such references alone and connecting them, in my paper I would like to test out the possibility that Shakespeare might have drawn on available notions of moon dwelling and visitation to draw early links between colonial enterprise at earthly and lunar levels. This is a topic worth investigating,

particularly as *The Tempest* was written during the shift from geocentric to heliocentric theory, and in the early years after Galileo's greatest discoveries.

Representing the Venetian moon in Early Modern England (Anne Geoffroy)
This paper explores literary and cultural early modern English representations of the moon associated with Venice, a city well-known for its impressive tidal ebbing and flowing of the sea. It discusses the specificity of the significance of the celestial body in a Venetian context, showcasing its multi-faceted nature as it intersects with various spheres: symbolic, astrological, alchemical, religious and political. It aims to trace the evolution of the lunar representations taking place before and post-telescopic observations of the lunar surface, from Neoplatonic conventions to optical perspectives.

The moon and other lies: Cavendish, Behn, and figuring unidentified objects in the early modern sky (Lianne Habinek)
Taking as a starting-point accounts of the moon by both Margaret Cavendish and Aphra Behn, I will consider the ways in which knowable and unknowable celestial objects figured in early modern beliefs and cultural practices. Of particular interest will be what were considered unidentifiable flying objects (or, as they have recently been rebranded, unidentified anomalous phenomena) and their reception and artistic representation in the period — for example, the 1581 celestial battle over Nuremberg and the 1665 fire battle of Straslund, as well as Ghirlandaio's *Madonna with Saint Giovannino*. I will contrast the moon as a known/knowable entity — so seemingly well-mapped as to possess the capacity to be the ground both of satire and of scientific knowledge — with less-understood aerial phenomena to imagine a possible relationship between scientific knowledge and faith as both are played out in the heavens.

Lunar Scale in *Paradise Lost* (James Knapp)
This paper stems from a current project of mine on early modern English literature and scale. The work I plan to offer for the seminar will explore how the moon figures in Milton's poetic uses of scale in *Paradise Lost*. The poem contains many notable moments that highlight scalar shifts to produce specific effects, as when Satan's shield is compared to the moon, establishing both the archangel's physical size and the outsized role he will play in the epic. The comparison particularizes Satan at the same time that it disorients the reader by forcing attention at two different scales simultaneously: here, the lunar and the bodily. While the effect is disorienting, it is also affectively productive, and it is this tension that will be the central focus of my paper.

Endymion, the 'long sleeping Latmian swain' (Th. Heywood, 'Oenone and Paris' (1594), st.114): a sacred or profane lover? (Agnès Lafont)
Endymion is a beautiful shepherd whom Selene (the Moon) fell in love with, in a cave on Mount Latmos in Asia Minor (Sappho, lost fragment 199) where Jove had granted him his wish of eternal sleep (Apollodorus, *Library*, 1.7.5). He 'whom Luna loved' (Hyginus, *Fabula* 271) thus comes to represent love between a deity and a mortal. In the Renaissance, mythographers, emblematists and poets associate Endymion – 'beloued of Phœbe as the Moone' according to a gloss of Edmund Spenser's *Shepherd's Calendar*, 'favourite of Cinthya' (Du Bartas) – with the various configurations of Diana: his ravishing becomes the only exception to her chastity. In Elizabethan drama and poetry, the mythological reference to the young, beautiful, sleeping Endymion articulates various readings: he can be Diana's (or Selene's/Phoebe's) innocent lover, her satiated lover but also, since Petrarch, the sleeper who feeds on hopes and phantasms. This paper hopes to discuss how the figure in Shakespeare, Lyly and in early modern contemporary poetry probes male desire when confronted with a strong female and virginal Diana/Phoebe.

‘Berowne is in Verona’: Lunar Intersections in Enter Nurse, or, Love’s Labour’s Won (Scott Maisano)
What critics once called “Shakespeare’s lyrical period” might also be called his *lunatic* one -- in which Shakespeare, drunk on language, is visibly overfull of the moon in *AMND*, *Romeo and Juliet*, and *Love’s Labour’s Lost*. Shakespeareans often read the moon’s power to inspire madness, fancy, affective volatility, deception, and errant eroticism. Missing from this picture are two things: first, the Moon as a character—a speaking subject with unmet desires and passions; second, the too-close reader who, lingering over a line (like, say, Nathaniel’s “A title to Phoebe, to Luna, to the moon”), finds himself transformed from critic into moon-mad mimic, compelled to *inhabit* the very figures he once sought to *interpret*. Positioning itself as an early experiment in what I call *the new lunacy*—a critical method that privileges obsession, excess, and fixation over distance—this paper addresses both gaps at once. I reconstruct select scenes from *Enter Nurse, or, Love’s Labour’s Won*, a speculative sequel to *LLLL* and prequel to *R&J*, in which the Moon begins as a choric presence overlooking the action before becoming immersed in—and injured by—it herself.

Queen of the Moon and Stars: England’s Elizabeth I and the Spanish Romance Tradition (Victoria M. Muñoz)
This paper explores the royal moon symbolism of England’s Queen Elizabeth I in relation to contemporary romance books, namely *Los siete libros de Diana* (*Seven books of Diana*) of Jorge de Montemayor and *Espejo de príncipes y cavallaros* (*Mirrour of Princely Deedes and Knighthood*) of Diego Ortúñez de Calahorra. It asserts that the poetic identification of Elizabeth with the goddess Diana/Cynthia and the cult of the moon originated from the very literary milieu of overzealous romance-reading that Miguel de Cervantes would mock in *Don Quixote of la Mancha* (1605). This paper also shows how the literary climate of the late 1500s, which primed the English reception of *Don Quixote,* produced the lunar imagery associated with Elizabeth’s cult of virginity. Focusing on the application of lunar imagery to Elizabeth’s court culture and military conflicts with imperial Spain, I argue that the moon originally figured as a symbol of resistance against imperial aggression.

Lunar Inconstancy: “The Changing Faces of the Moon in *Romeo and Juliet*, *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* and Emblem Literature” (Natália Pikli)
My paper addresses intersections between public theatre and emblems with a focus on the Moon in *Romeo and Juliet* and *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* (both ca. 1595), which either feature this concept in an emphatic scene (the so-called balcony scene) or throughout the play in more than fifty instances and as ‘incorporated’ in the fictional character Moonshine. My interest lies in the association of the Moon with (female) inconstancy in emblems of Fortuna, Occasio or Inconstantia, as they appear in e.g. Guillaume de La Perriére’s *Morosophie* (1553), where a female figure, a crescent moon in her hand, is leading a child with a windmill in his hand, all iconographic details evoking the idea of stigmatization inherent in the notion of inconstancy, associated with women and children – ideas echoed in Henry Peacham’s emblem book, *Minerva Britanna* (1612) but modified in George Wither’s *A Collection of Emblemes* (1635). In this emblematic context, I will reconsider what characters mean when they refer to the ‘inconstant’, ‘cold’ or, on the other hand, ‘sympathetic’ Moon, “lamenting some enforced chastity” (*MND*, 3.1.193).

Moonshine and Lion are left to bury the dead": 'Very Tragical Mirth' in Shakespeare's *AMND* and *A Merrie Comedie By Name Of Tisbe* (1609) (Kiki Lindell Tersmeden)

Shakespeare's plays, the Moon is as ubiquitous as it is enigmatic, displaying a multitude of both phases and faces – calling forth romance and lunacy in lovers, evoking notions of austerity and chastity (or the lack thereof), and suggesting fickleness and changeability to many, particularly those star-crossed lovers: Pyramus and Thisbe in *AMND* , who met by moonlight, and died in its eclipse. Ovid's version ends in tragedy and death. Shakespeare's lovers meet the same sad fate, but the rude mechanicals' play becomes a comic tragedy.

The Swedish schoolmaster, theologian, botanist and doctor Magnus Olai Asteropherus (1579-1647) wrote a play (1609), *En lustig comedia vid namn Tisbe* (*A Merrie Comedie By Name Of Tisbe)*, to be performed by the boys of the school where he was headmaster. The play is neither didactic nor particularly moral; it is lively and full of indecent wit, with a subplot of bickering minor deities who in the end miraculously bring the dead lovers back to life. My paper will compare *Pyramus and Thisbe* and its Swedish counterpart.

A Renaissance Infinity Gauntlet? Sir Francis Godwin's lunar voyage or how history shapes contemporary space ambitions (Tiffany Jo Werth)

This paper examines how historical celestial aspirations in an imagined lunar voyage are proleptic of contemporary attitudes toward space exploration. Recent US Presidential proclamations to "plant the stars and stripes on Mars" revitalize a long history of celestial entanglements within western culture. Yet conventional nationalist rhetoric seldom examines the cultural attitudes that help grow such ambitions. This paper heeds medievalist Carl Phelphstead's call for "cosmocriticsm," to expand ecocritical concerns into the heavens. The paper's case study is Francis Godwin's *The Man in the Moone* (1638). It contributes to eco-minded discussions of early modern skies such as Sophie Chiari's *Shakespeare's Representation of Weather, Climate and Environment* and the research of Pietro Daniel Omodeo, whose work explores the importance of cosmology to cultural systems. It also heeds the caution of environmental humanities scholars like Julie Michelle Klinger whose *Rare Earth Frontiers: From Terrestrial Subsoils to Lunar Landscapes* explores astral extra global energy extraction as well as our language of space as a "frontier" as a colonial mindset that expands the reach of powerful, wealthy nations into orbit and beyond.

Masquing the Moon: Myth, Cosmic News, and the New Science (Rachel Willie)

The earliest lunar voyage, Lucian's *True History*, a second-century Greek satire, depicts travelers encountering calamitous events as they pass the Pillars of Heracles: they are blown off course and land on the moon where they witness fantastical sightings and a galactic war. The travelers experience the moon as a space both separate from earth yet paradoxically closely bound up with global concerns. Lucian's text was translated into Latin and vernacular languages and was especially popular from the seventeenth-century, influencing writers such as Rabelais and Swift. Ben Jonson's *Newes From the Nevv World Discover'd in the Moone*, a Jacobean court masque (1620), blends myth with ideas of news-making, together with heliocentric understandings of the cosmos and older epistemologies connected to the music of the spheres. The moon is a site of news and elaborate tales, underscored by the celestial harmony of a tuneful lunar language and comparisons between terrestrial and extra-terrestrial societies. Attending to the cosmic places pressure on knowledge making, doubt, and the performance and articulation of news, asking us to reassess the relationship between storytelling and the place of the moon in a new cosmic order.

S12.
‘More … than fancy’s images’: Shakespearean Characters in Their Context

Organisers: Sandra Pietrini, Svenn-Arve Myklebost, Rachele S. Bassan.

We invite contributions investigating the relationship between character and environment in graphic, visual and intermedial representations and adaptations of Shakespeare. Potential discussion topics include, but are not limited to: diachronic and synchronic iconographies of space/environment and Shakespearean characters; graphic, visual, intermedial adaptations of Shakespeare; the production of social and cultural meaning in graphic/visual Shakespeare; the relationship between descriptions of space and environment visuality in Shakespeare and the graphic/visual representation thereof; setting in graphic/visual Shakespeare; the relationship between text and image in illustrated editions, graphic novels, theatrical posters, book covers, and similar media; social commentary through space/environment in graphic/visual representations or adaptations of Shakespeare; influences of the production environment on graphic/visual Shakespeare.

«Heaven is here»: the use of set design in *Romeo e Giulietta* (2023) at the Piccolo Milano (Elena Andolina)
For the first time in the history of the Piccolo Milano, in 2023 Dario Martone is staging *Romeo e Giulietta* at the Strehler Theatre as a long-running production, featuring a very young cast. Mario Martone’s production stands out for its use of the stage space, which transcends a purely representational function to become a central dramaturgical device. The set design is dominated by two enormous, leafy branches from an unspecified tree, towering over a landscape littered with scrap metal and rust. The two enormous branches, thought the play,become the balcony, the Capulets’ ballroom, the lovers’ meeting place, and the site of Juliet’s feigned suicide. All of this creates a fairytale atmosphere - a reminder of Calvino’s *Il baronerampante* (1957)- then, which tends to imbue the entire production with a space divided in two: an upper world, dominated by the lightness and poetry of the text, and a lower world, brutal and dominated by physicality. Martone highlights the divide between a civilised world, where poetry reigns supreme, and a savage one, where contagion and violence reign. A fairy tale without a happy ending, in which nature survives the misfortunes of the star-crossed lovers and, indeed, seems to come out on top in this battle against the urban world.

Repurposing space in Shakespeare’s monastic imagination (Régis Augustus Bars Closel)
Monastic sites are usually impressive in any landscape. During the sixteenth-century, the population witnessed the rapid transformation of once permanent, awe-inspiring, monumental buildings. Some were completely destroyed, repurposed, or left in ruins, their former visual impact shifted as the surrounding world around was itself being reshaped. However, space plays a significant role in imagination and collective life, a presence not easily dismissed. This paper examines monastic sites as a distinctive dimension of Shakespeare’s England, reshaped by the Reformation yet persistently present in cultural memory and the dramatic imagination. Rather than treating monasteries merely as vanished institutions, it argues that they function in Shakespeare’s plays —and in those of his company and contemporaries— as a world in transition, whose lands, buildings, and symbolic capital are redistributed and reimagined. Monastic spaces become theatres in the real world, as in the case of Blackfriars, and sites of narrative tension, curses, and family breakdown in fictional worlds. In plays such as *King John* (1596), *Pericles* (1608), *Cromwell* (1602), and the early Shakespeare-coauthored play *Arden of Faversham* (1588-9), these spaces exemplify the collision between older household

economies and emergent chrematistic values, as well as between religious continuity and secular appropriation.

"… ambition of so airy and light a quality that it is but a shadow's shadow" (*Hamlet*, 2.2.217): An Iconographic Interpretation of Lady Macbeth in Joel Coen's *The Tragedy of Macbeth* (2021) (Sabina Laskowska-Hinz)

The director Joel Coen, cinematographer Bruno Delbonnel, and production designer Stefan Dechant create a distinctive cinematic world for *The Tragedy of Macbeth* (2021). Shot in black and white, the film draws significant influence from the traditions of German Expressionism, Gothic horror, and international art, including painting, architecture, and artistic photography. In this adaptation, light, darkness, and a wide range of shades introduce and underscore the ambiguity that accompanies Shakespeare's dramatic figures. However, the interplay of light and shadow serves as more than a stylistic choice; it functions as a psychological conduit. There, "spaces [exist] to hold the psychology of the characters" (an interview with Stefan Dechant by Hugh Hart, 2022). This paper examines how visual citations—both deliberate and coincidental—recontextualise the figure of Lady Macbeth. The juxtaposition of screenshots with their revealed and potential sources creates a gap that allows for another critical interpretation of the heroine. The great interpretative force is embedded especially in shadows. Stefan Dechant notes that the stage design was carefully arranged to provide undisturbed, meaningful patterns: "Bruno brought up the idea of painting some shadows into columns. We went gradated from lighter grey at the bottom into darker tones higher on the structure, all the way up into black" (Hugh Hart, 2022). Within this theatre of shadows, Lady Macbeth's inner struggles and doomed fate are exposed. Consequently, she is constantly positioned at the vanishing point of screenshot compositions, as if to become a central figure in Macbeth's story. However, her first scene immediately becomes a paraphrase of Damocles' sword. At times, she is subsumed by absolute darkness, only to be abruptly reclaimed by the light. Lady Macbeth becomes an element in the claustrophobic art of Francis Bacon, or she loses her corporeal features when she is transformed into her own shadow (there are echoes of Romantic art, Surrealism, and American or Dutch art, etc.). Ultimately, this paper utilises comparative studies and iconographical analysis to reconstruct a critical interpretation of Lady Macbeth through the lens of visual culture.

A Philomel Project: Reframing the Power Dynamics of Measure for Measure through Textile Design (Jennifer A. Low)

An image drawn from Shakespeare's dramas by another artist is an adaptation—an aesthetic intervention, a dialogic response, an act of literary criticism. My particular subject is the collaborative project headed by textile artist Suzanne Coley and master quilter Mimi Dietrich, which resulted in the creation of a book of hand-sewn quilt blocks responding to Shakespeare's *Measure for Measure*. These works use the aesthetics of typography and the compositional arrangement of text, ornamentation, and imagery to comment on the hypocrisy of the patriarchy in Shakespeare's Vienna. The graphic designs I discuss do not attempt to reproduce the mimetic nature of the stage; instead, they show patterns underlying the plot by using the conventions of quilt patterns. The quilt blocks represent the play's themes graphically, using a semiotic that refocuses attention on the makers, who stand in first for the people of Vienna and second for Isabella. The designs shift agency from Duke Vincentio to Isabella, and to women more broadly. Significantly, they show the maker's own perspective, creating a responsive audient, something like a reflection of the individual characters' unique perspective on the action.

What's in a Graphic Narrative? Reanimating Shakespearean Character and Space in *Giulietta Zombie* (2023) (Irene Montori)
Two hours have passed since Juliet awoke in the Capulet crypt and began her search for Romeo. With a superhuman leap, she reaches the barred window of his prison cell; yet, as she leans through the iron grate to receive a kiss, Romeo recoils at the sight of her reanimated body. This inversion of Shakespeare's balcony scene in Jacopo Angelini and Chiara Iacobelli's graphic novel *Giulietta Zombie* (2023) signals more than a post-Shakespearean sequel: it reworks *Romeo and Juliet* through a visual-verbal adaptation that both reinforces and unsettles dominant readings of Juliet's agency, reconfiguring the relationship between text, stage, and graphic space. In this adaptation, the balcony scene is reimagined as a space of gender reversal and corporeal transformation, where the Shakespearean image condenses and rearticulates the protagonist's centrality. Giulietta's body becomes the organising principle of the page's rhythm, shifting interiority from soliloquy to a multimodal field of word balloons, ruptured layouts, and graphic excess. Agency thus emerges through embodiment rather than introspection, as meaning is produced across the interaction of image and text. *Giulietta Zombie* demonstrates how the comic page can function as a critical and performative space, generating alternative readings of Shakespearean character through visual-verbal form.

Space and Place, Dark and Light, Foul and Fair in Stuart Kenneth Moore's *The Tragedie of Macbeth* (Svenn-Arve Myklebost)
Stewart Kenneth Moore's *The Tragedie of Macbeth* (2016/2023) emerges from his involvement in the Prague Shakespeare Company's 2016 production of *Macbeth*. Yet, despite its anchoring in theatrical practice and the claim that it is "documenting a stage performance", this graphic novel utilises visual arts and comics affordances which move the adaptation away from the stage into a realm where space and place are put into question. The impetus is a wish to "drop the stage and cast the players against the half-remembered and half-imagined light of North East Scotland", the artist's childhood home. The adaptation is at times meditating on the play's themes as much as it is mediating its plot. Moore's graphic novel thus resonates with works in art history or with films which speak to an audience already familiar with *Macbeth*. But as I will argue, the range of techniques, iconographic references, and stylistic shifts found in Moore's adaptation distinguishes it from many visual treatments. The article builds its argument on theories of space and memory in Shakespeare (Karreman 2024), as well as recent work on Shakespeare comics (Casey 2024, Myklebost 2025), and navigates concepts such as *memoryscape*, *dramascape* and *mediascape* to analyse Moore's spatio-graphic reconfigurations.

S13.
The Natures of Shakespeare, Ecological Shakespeare, or Environmental Shakespeare

Organisers: Melissa Croteau, Stephen O'Neill, Victoria Bladen

In the context of current planetary crises, applying an eco-lens to our contemporary critical and creative thinking in Shakespeare studies becomes ever more pressing. Shakespeare consistently engaged with ideas of green space as well as the relationship between humans and their environments, encompassing natural spaces, where green or blue worlds may threaten, offer pastoral escape, or constitute agents of metamorphosis and renewal. These also include mythic and metaphorical uses of green space, natural elements, and animal imagery to articulate ideas from the political to the personal. This seminar explores these various facets, including

consideration of how green space and/or blue space has been represented, created, and recreated in adaptation and performance across various media.

Subterranean Juliet: Silo (Apple TV+, 2023-present), or Shakespeare in the vault (Sylvaine Bataille)
Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* is famous for its celestial imagery and the latter has been visually rendered in striking ways in screen adaptations of the play. In this paper I will look at a television series which adopts a more oblique approach to *Romeo and Juliet* and radically circumvents its cosmic metaphors, rather inviting us to direct our attention to the subterranean imagery of the play. While I discussed in an earlier paper the intriguing presence of Shakespeare and its powerful questioning force in the claustrophobic post-apocalyptic world of *Silo*, adapted from a literary trilogy by Hugh Howey, I will here return to this show from a different perspective. I will argue that the televisual *Silo*, while removing most of the cosmic and sky-related vocabulary from the culture of the Silo residents, expanded downwards the vertical dimension of the play (F. Karim-Cooper, 2020) as it developed the verbal and scenic motif of the "vault", both a protective and lethal place in the play: the "silo" is a giant concrete tube buried underground offering shelter to a population of 10.000 from the toxic atmosphere on the surface. Reworking as it does both *Romeo and Juliet* and real-life events as well as existing buildings (COVID 19-related lockdowns, agricultural silos keeping seeds in stock, fallout shelters, the Svalbard seed vault – or even the Folger Shakespeare Library's vault), the series brings together contemporary environmental preoccupations or anxieties and Shakespeare's earth-related imagery. The "people-as-seed" metaphor that is implicit in the show (but fully spelled out in the novel) finds an echo in the "earth-as-womb" images in *Romeo and Juliet* where the earth is likewise associated both to life and death, growth and decay. Juliette Nichols is a Juliet who gets out of the "vault" alive, bringing hope to a whole community, thus reviving the Proserpina intertext that was cut short by Juliet's tragic death in the play.

Mud and Meadows: Ecological Paradoxes in Kenneth Branagh's Shakespearean films A short academic video-essay (Sarah Hatchuel and Nathalie Vienne-Guerrin)
Kenneth Branagh's Shakespearean films repeatedly stage a paradox: natural landscapes appear as witnesses to devastation yet also as sites of renewal, love and metamorphosis. Branagh's films demonstrate that nature is an active force in human lives, not just a backdrop. In his *Henry V* (1989), the fog, mud, and rain of Agincourt turn the battlefield into a quagmire where the environment amplifies human brutality. This vision is extended in Branagh's *Magic Flute* (2006) by relocating Mozart's opera to the trenches of the First World War: butterflies, skies, and meadows yield to barbed wire and tanks, staging the collapse of pastoral idyll into mechanised chaos. These ruined ecologies reflect not only Shakespeare's ambivalence towards war but also modern anxieties about planetary crises in which natural systems are continually militarised, exploited, or erased. Yet Branagh also turns to nature as a space of harmony. *As You Like It* (2006), filmed in Japanese gardens, renders the Forest of Arden as a site where waterfalls and bonsai nurture romance while revealing nature being shaped by culture and artifice. Similarly, *Much Ado About Nothing* (1993) and *Love's Labour's Lost*(2000) depict choreographed landscapes as participants in love's convergence. This is particularly echoed in his short feature *Listening* (2003), shot in Branagh's personal home garden, in which silence and elemental soundscapes – wind, water, birdsong – mediate intimacy and reveal the environment itself (instead of words) as a language of connection. This ambivalence between devastation and harmony reaches its peak in *Hamlet* (1996), where entire landscapes are covered in snow. This emphasises the advance of Fortinbras's soldiers as black dots against white, while also making them appear insignificant against the purity of nature. Across his

films, Branagh employs earth, air, fire, and water to stage nature as both victim and redeemer, battlefield and sanctuary, dramatizing ecological space as the unstable ground where destruction and renewal are entwined. This exploration will take the form of a short academic video-essay including excerpts from Branagh's films.

Your mind is tossing on the ocean': Water and Conversion in *The Merchant of Venice* and *The Daughter of Venice* (Deborah Leiser-Moore and Richard Ashb)

Water is central to the fortunes and fate of the characters in *The Merchant of Venice*. From the ebb and flow of the Adriatic Sea to the brackish canals that intersect the city, the 'gentle rain' (4.1.185) that falls from heaven to the salt tears Shylock cries over his absconded daughter Jessica, water is central to all that unfolds in the play. Water is primarily conceived in *The Merchant of Venice* as a space of trade – of profit, and loss. But it is also implicitly a space of religious and spiritual conflict and conversion. Jessica embarks on a new religious identity, leaving the hellish house (2.3.2) of her father by a ship, marking her baptismal 'passage' (2.8.55) to Christianity. Water is the site of Christian rebirth – it evokes the possibility of spiritual resurrection. But conversion in the play is also violent and imposed. Shylock is forcibly converted to Christianity in Act 4. Not unlike the 'spit' (1.3.130) Antonio cruelly aims at him, his baptism is a compelled immersion that reveals the ambiguous status of water in *The Merchant of Venice*, where faith, identity, and power are all set in play. Water in the play is at once cleansing and defiling, redemptive and coercive. Our paper – a collaboration between Dr Richard Ashby (UK) and Dr Deborah Leiser- Moore (Australia) – draws together academic research with extracts from a new performance work, entitled *The Daughter of Venice*. Placing Jessica front and centre, our aim is to interrogate Jewish-Christian conversion and its fraught relation to water. The opening scene of the new performance work shows Jessica reading the Haggadah, the story about freedom from slavery ritually read at the Passover dinner. Her mind is tossing on the ocean; projected behind her is a seascape – wild seas crashing against rocks. A cormorant sits on the edge of the water, poised at the moment of immersion. How does Jessica understand the water all around her in Venice? Does it remind her of Passover – the washing of hands, the salt tears of bondage, and the parting of the seas? Does it symbolise the living water (*mayim chayim*) of the Jewish Mikveh – ritual bathing in cleansing water? This is water conceived as covenantal continuity, the renewal of Jewish identity. Or might Jessica see water as baptismal transformation, the washing away of her Jewish self in the act of conversion to Christianity? What are the stakes involved in her perception of water? At the end of *The Daughter of Venice*, we return to a woman – is it Jessica? – sitting alone by the sea. The sea is now calm.

Nature and the City: The Shakespeare Gardens in Manchester, UK (Monika Smialkowska)

This paper examines the work of a little-known Shakespearean scholar, suffragist, and community activist Rosa Grindon at the turn of the twentieth century, and its legacy in the present day. Despite not being employed by any educational institution, Grindon delivered and published lectures on Shakespeare's plays, led study courses, mentored an amateur theatre group, and organised Manchester's commemorations of the 1916 Shakespeare Tercentenary. She worked at the grassroots level, through a network of community organisations. Her three passions were social progress, Shakespeare, and the natural world, especially horticulture. She combined these interests in one of her many community projects, the establishment of a Shakespearean garden in Manchester. Initially, it was a modest affair, with a few beds of plants mentioned in Shakespeare's plays unveiled in Whitworth Park in 1916. Subsequently, it developed into a larger and more permanent Shakespeare Garden, opened in Platt Fields in 1922. It has survived till today, but in recent years it fell into severe neglect, until in 2021 a

dedicated group of volunteers, calling themselves Shakey Gardeners, began the labour of restoration, culminating in a re-opening event in August 2022. Both Grindon and the Shakey Gardeners put into practice their concerns about natural environment and commitment to their local communities. They have achieved this through civic activism, using Shakespeare's cultural capital to advance their progressive agendas.

"Do you know Dover?": Gloucester and the Cliff (Denise A. Walen)
Gloucester's suicide attempt (4.6), along with his blinding (3.7), have been controversial incidents in the staging of *King Lear*. The one considered too painful and the other too ridiculous or improbable for audiences to accept. AC Bradley thought each a "dramatic defect of the play," although he argued the suicide would not be "in the least absurd" in performance "if acted properly" (*Shakespearean Tragedy*, 1904, p.186). Bradley followed in a long line of detractors. Thomas Warton considered "the utter improbability of Glo'ster's imagining, though blind, that he had leaped down Dover cliff" one of the plays "imperfections (*The Adventurer*, no. 122, 1754). In 1770, *The Dramatic Censor* noted that many found the suicide a "laughable" incident that contained "great absurdities" (p. 364). As late as the 1930s, the editor G. Wilson Knight called Gloucester's suicide attempt the play's ultimate expression of "the grotesque merged into the ridiculous" (*King Lear*, p. 187). David Garrick was the last actor-manager to include Gloucester's leap from the supposed top of Dover Cliff in his productions in the 1760s until Bridges-Adams restored it to productions in Stratford in the early 1930s. For nearly two centuries, a greatly reduced scene allowed Lear's entrance on Edgar's line "But who comes here" (4.6.82), to interrupt Gloucester's suicide attempt. Had it not been for Edgar's description of Dover, a speech loved by actors, critics, and audiences, the scene might have disappeared entirely. The cliffs of Dover are a threatening landscape for the blind Gloucester, who seeks release from his worldly cares by leaping off them. However, Edgar's bucolic description and the way the text is structured to indicate that Gloucester is not in fact at the edge of the cliff suggest the location is an agent of metamorphosis and renewal. Objections to the scene revolve around issues of dramatic probability, but they also rely on concepts of masculinity, emotion, age, ability, and religion. This paper will examine the shifting cultural notions toward Gloucester's suicide attempt in *King Lear* and consider the affective relationship between Gloucester and his environment; how the green and blue space of Dover has been represented and recreated, suppressed or enhanced, in performance.

Flow-on Effects: Aquatic Afterlives of Baz Luhrmann's William Shakespeare's *Romeo* + *Juliet* (1996) (Victoria Bladen)
Baz Luhrmann's *William Shakespeare's Romeo + Juliet* (1996) ('*R+J*') foregrounds the aesthetic and symbolic potential of aquatic imagery in Shakespeare's hypotext: the lovers meet through a mediating fish tank; the 'balcony' scene is relocated to the pool; and in death their fluid union is re-visited. I've argued previously that Luhrmann conflates aquatic and celestial space through his screen iconography, and that these metaphorical spaces intersecting love and death are further enhanced through the soundtrack paratexts. In this paper, I explore the flow-on effects of Luhrmann's water imagery and their implications in the epic tragedy *Titanic* (1997), dir. James Cameron, the zombie film *Warm Bodies* (2013), dir. Jonathan Levine, and the musical screen adaptation *Juliet & Romeo* (2025), dir. Timothy Scott Bogart. What happens when we extrapolate Romeo's sinking bark of a soul from Shakespeare and Luhrmann to the wreck of the Titanic? How can we rethink watery spaces of life and death if they give new life to a zombie in love? What happens to these threads in the watery imagery of a submerged Romeo in a musical film adaptation? Imagery of aquatic space functions in these films as a mediating third space between life and death, and can be thought of as a key tributary of the *R+J* legacy. A blue lens also has the potential to provide a fluid framework for theorising

hypertexts as spaces of intertextual suspension, of aquatic imagery as an apt medium for imagining the connective and conductive solution between adaptive nodes in the ongoing alchemy of Shakespeare's afterlives, while also inviting us to reflect on our relationship with the blue planet.

Old Revels, New World: Shakespearean Ecocentrism and Ecocinema in TV's *Station Eleven* (2021-2022) (Melissa Croteau)
HBO's premium series *Station Eleven*, adapted from Emily St. John Mandel's eponymous 2014 novel, represents a post-pandemic, apocalyptic landscape in which the viewer predominantly follows Shakespearean actress Kirsten Raymonde as she travels with her a small troupe of musicians and actors, called The Traveling Symphony, to the small communities who have banded together for safety. As the series' narrative leaps continually backward and forward in time, playing in the realms of memory, art, and dream, themes of isolation, loss, community, survival, and parallel worlds surface in multifarious forms, vividly illustrating a post-anthropocentric world where humans must connect more profoundly with each other and with nature if they are to endure. Through prolific and innovative intertextual transfigurations of *King Lear*, *Hamlet*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and *The Tempest*, *Station Eleven* weaves a brilliant thread connecting key foci of ecocriticism and ecocinema theory through Shakespeare's work and into the island of our own moment by creating a prospective future of both horror and wonder. In this post-apocalyptic text, the new earth is neither a utopic paradise nor a wasteland. It is an opportunity to start again in a smaller world, one replete with abundant perils and beauty. Indeed, *Station Eleven* is about transformation, about what is lost and what is gained when the miraculous machines we rely on to connect and sustain our lives go dormant.

"The Composition of Shakespeare is a Forest": Arboreal Storytelling in Chloe Zhao's *Hamnet* (2025) and Lois Patiño and Matías Piñeiro's *Sycorax* (2021) (Stephen O'Neill)
Samuel Johnson's arboreal metaphor to describe Shakespeare's craft in his *Preface to Shakespeare*, "in which oaks extend their branches, and pines tower in the air, interspersed sometimes with weeds and brambles" (1765/ 2004: 49) takes on new meanings in the context of creative adaptations that arborealize their adapted Shakespearean text and a growing body of criticism under the canopy of the arboreal humanities. Most recently, Poonam Trivedi proposes the Banyan tree, revered in Indian culture, as a paradigm for global Shakespeare, its "arboreal wonder, a complex, self-organizing network with […] multiple roots, trunks, and branches", a holistic organism of multiple origins that "cannot be comprehended in a single glance" (2025: 543). This paper forays into this Shakespearean network of overstory and understory by examining two recent films, Chloe Zhao's *Hamnet* (2025), which adapts Maggie O'Farrell's novel about the death of young Hamnet Shakespeare, and Lois Patiño and Matías Piñeiro's *Sycorax* (2021), which adapts *The Tempest*. Both works, which place their characters into arboreal life-worlds and death-worlds, closely attend to the tree as "a profilmic material object that generates feelings and associations in excess of those required by the film's own logics" (Austin 2025: 436). Trees in these adapted Shakespeares, I argue, not only have expressive, symbolic functions that serve anthropocentric narratives but generate other meanings, including non-human scale and perspective. On screen trees allude to their real-life companions, point to arboreal matter as itself constitutive of a work's meaning, and mourn the slow violence of the Capitalocene.

S14.
New Worlds of Words: Shakespeare's Language, Near and Far

Organisers: Emily Louisa Smith, Carla Mazzio

The ambitions of this seminar are threefold. Its first aim is to reconsider the dominant paradigm of 'close' and 'distant' reading—principally applied only to digital analyses— and thereby foreground the continuities between analogue and digital approaches to reading. Its second goal is to encourage attendees to critically reflect upon the affordances and limitations of their preferred analytical method. Its third and final goal is, relatedly, to encourage thinking about ways in which these diverse analyses can prove mutually informative.

'System and Scene: Rethinking Flyting in Shakespearean Drama' (Bianca Del Villano)
This paper reconsiders the opposition between close and distant reading by situating the debate within a theory of genre and text-type as dynamic, stratified formal systems. Rather than treating close and distant as methodologies distinguished by scale – or aligning them simplistically with analogue and digital practices – I argue that they constitute intensive and extensive modalities of engaging with the same object: historically evolving configurations that organize rhetorical forms, ritualized structures, and context-bound textual functions. While Franco Moretti's distant reading has productively foregrounded abstraction and large-scale patterning, its systemic formalism risks reducing genre and text-type to quantifiable recurrence. Against this polarization, the paper proposes a model in which genre and text-type operate as multilayered functional structures – rhetorical, structural, cognitive, and historical – that shape both textual production and interpretative expectations across time. Within this framework, close reading becomes the intensive analysis of how these stratified dynamics are activated in specific scenes, while distant reading maps their distribution and transformation across a corpus. Shakespeare's drama offers a revealing test case. The flyting – a ritualized exchange of insults – functions simultaneously as theatrical performance, inherited agonistic form, and locally operative dramatic device. Its recurrence invites systemic observation; its shifting functions demand scene-based analysis. The apparent opposition between close and distant reading thus dissolves into complementary perspectives on evolving formal structures within Shakespearean drama.

Applying Pragma-stylistics to Shakespeare: A Case Study (Chiara Ghezzi)
This contribution aims to demonstrate the advantages of applying a linguistic methodology to the analysis of historical literary texts. It shows how a close, deeper reading of Shakespearean plays is possible through the investigation of the recurring, identifying linguistic patterns used by characters in significant conversational situations. Pragmatics and stylistics provide relevant insights about text and context by focusing on foregrounded linguistic features, such as speech acts, (im)politeness strategies and sociological variables. In order to prove the meaningful role of linguistics in the matter of characterisation, this contribution analyses Joan of Arc's peculiar masculine discursive style as it is presented in *Henry VI Part 1*. The harsh, authoritative way of Joan's speaking renders her the embodiment of a broken stylistic code, going beyond the medieval semantic spheres of women/weakness and men/strength to show the enhancement of her power over the other characters. Being interactions fundamental activity types for context and meaning interpretation, the study of facework appears as crucial in reconstructing both cultural scripts and linguistic identities.

Mapping Shakespeare's Language Across Genres: A Neural Topic Modeling Approach (Sujin Kang and Dain Lee)
This paper examines Shakespeare's language within the broader field of Renaissance drama by applying neural topic modeling to a corpus of 430 plays drawn from EEBO-TCP. Using BERTopic, a transformer-based framework that clusters contextual embeddings rather than relying on bag-of-words representations, the study identifies large-scale thematic patterns across tragedy, comedy, history, and tragicomedy. Rather than treating genre as a fixed category, the project approaches it as a relational structure emerging from patterned similarities among plays. The results show that while Shakespeare participates in the dominant thematic configurations of Renaissance drama, his comedies in particular display a wider dispersion of identity-related and misrecognition-centered themes than those of his contemporaries. By modeling semantic distributions at scale, this approach offers a new perspective on Shakespeare's language as dynamically situated within a shared dramatic environment. The paper argues that neural topic modeling can complement close reading by revealing how Shakespeare's linguistic patterns circulate across genres and intensify certain thematic formations within the early modern theatrical field.

***sequent*: Shakespeare's favourite word and the *OED*'s favourite writer (Jonathan Hope)**
Shakespeare uses the word 'sequent' in nine of his plays. Big deal? Maybe: it does not appear in *any* play by an Early Modern playwright not called Shakespeare. The *OED* entry for *sequent* is a paean to Shakespeare: of the 12 senses and sub-senses 6 have first citations to him. The whole entry is structured around his idiolectal usage of the word. But *EEBO* searches show that Shakespeare's uses of the word are highly idiosyncratic - and atypical for the language as a whole. The entry is a good representation of Shakespeare and an awful representation of Early Modern English. From the very early days of the *OED* linguists (Jespersen 1905) and literary scholars (Gordon 1928, Mackie 1936) were concerned that the availability of concordances and lexicons to Shakespeare had resulted in a gross over-representation of his work in the dictionary - and this was confirmed by Schäfer 1980. Generally these criticisms (which have often been ignored in literary studies) have been seen as quantitative: Shakespeare's usages are numerically over-represented. But the case of *sequent* (and other words) suggests something even more troubling: the error is qualitative and structural.

"[T]he proverb is something musty": proverbs near and far in *Hamlet* (Richard Meek)
When Prince Hamlet resolves to wipe away all "saws of books" (1.5.100) from his mind – that is, the maxims and commonplaces he has absorbed from reading – he sets himself a near-impossible task. After all, Renaissance England was saturated with proverbs, which circulated as highly quotable pieces of wisdom, consolation, and collective knowledge. Hamlet's promise to forget them is therefore disingenuous; within the same speech he coins (or at least performs) another: "one may smile and smile and be a villain" (1.5.108). This paper explores the uses of proverbial language in *Hamlet* both "near" and "far", asking what the play can reveal about Shakespeare's broader engagement with this important, though underexplored, verbal form. Through close reading, I examine Hamlet's ambivalence toward proverbs: for him they are simultaneously "musty" (3.2.336) – stale bits of inherited wisdom – and resources for knowledge, irony, and linguistic invention. Through distant reading, I analyse how the play distributes and arranges proverbial expressions across speakers and scenes. Drawing on M. P. Tilley's index, which identifies 140 proverbs in *Hamlet* (more than in any other Shakespeare play), my paper will ask what computational methods can add to such catalogues. How distinctive is *Hamlet*'s proverbial density? How do Hamlet's uses of proverbs differ from those of other characters? And what does this concentration suggest about Shakespeare's evolving practice across his career? By placing analogue and digital methods in dialogue, the paper

reflects on how different modes of reading can illuminate one another – and on what this particular "world of words" can reveal about the language of Shakespeare and the Renaissance.

(Plant) Clock (Marissa Nicosia)
A clock in Shakespeare is not always, exactly, a clock. Sometimes Shakespeare's time-keeping metaphors point to a grand public clock with a face and bells, a mechanical timepiece kept in a private home or worn on the body, a sandglass flipped to count the hour, or a sundial, but not always. Shakespeare also measures time in capons and cups of sack, if in jest (*1 Henry IV*) and muses on the fool-like jack figure that might chime the hour (*Richard III*). Orlando may protest that "There's no clock in the forest" in *As You Like It*, but timekeeping proceeds apace in the forest of Arden. Some of Shakespeare's clocks are plants and two of these clocks among the flora will be the focus of my paper. In Sonnet 12, a wilting violet is a clock that might be arrested and preserved through confectionary arts: In *Richard II* the gardener reads a tree and its "dangling apricokes" to reckon diurnal and intergenerational times. I propose that these plant clocks nuance our definition of "clock" among Shakespeare's words and works. And, moreover, that plant clocks complicate the assumption that time-keeping technology must necessarily divide humans from the plant-filled natural world.

Malapropism and the Fear of Misused Worlds (John Yargo)
This essay examines malapropism as a world-making resource in Shakespearean satire. Malapropism is a term for the distance between a word's proper use and its misuses. Because words and language were believed to contain occulted insights into cosmology, theology, and identity formation, the scientific and humanistic apprehension of the world was predicated on bringing out meaning already latent in words. Misused words shaped the world in both dangerous and appealing ways. I argue that Shakespearean malapropism in Love's Labour's Lost and Much Ado About Nothing can illuminate the role of "error" and "repair" in cosmological thinking, in relation to class and race. For the early moderns, at stake in misused words was the misuse of the world itself.

Is the Message in the Modeling?: Encoding Schemes as Enabling Humanistic Inquiry (Mary Erica Zimmer)
As this brave new world of artificial intelligence unfolds, retaining our awareness of more granular and transparent methods by which one might leverage the "affordances of the digital" remains crucial. Such approaches also complicate the opposition between "close" and "distant" reading that has been historically posited in the digital humanities. While conceptual paradigms such as Martin Mueller's "scalable reading" gesture towards the mutually informing nature of these two perspectives, revisiting and reconsidering the terms of "closeness" itself can shed new light. Attending to ways that large-scale digital projects have chosen to encode and parse their data sharpens our sense of how these anatomized terms of attention may set the stage for further queries making use of the perspectives implied. Through a series of case studies featuring exploratory research of undergraduates at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, this paper will demonstrate how these students' mathematically-oriented engagement with prior digital humanities projects and corpora helped reveal affordances and limitations of the underlying data models used. Taken separately and together, these initial forays highlight the potential of established methods and resources for addressing historical as well as literary questions, while calling attention to the inherent modeling involved in interrogation. More broadly, their work also prompts us to reflect: in an environment of increasing automation, how might we more mindfully leverage capacities for insight that corpora themselves present, along lines that inform and enrich our ongoing research?

S15.
Perfect Bodies, Perfect Worlds:
Proto-Eugenics and Fantasies of the Human in Early Modern Utopias

Organisers: Lindsey Row-Heyveld, Hanh Bui

Our seminar will examine the importance of early modern utopian narratives to the development of proto-eugenic thought and practice, highlighting how notions of ideal bodies helped to define European identity categories, especially whiteness and able-bodiedness, against which 'otherness' was measured. From explicitly utopian texts to genres including drama, non-fiction and lyric poetry, fantasies of ideal societies endorse the types of bodies they imagine would inhabit them. By defining the boundaries of 'perfect' or normative minds, bodies and populations, early modern utopias lay foundations for later theories of biopolitical control while exposing the deep entanglements of race, disability, gender and age.

***In Filigrana*. Decaying Empires and Bodies in *Troilus and Cressida* (Anna Chiara Zambello)**

In *Invisible Cities*, Italo Calvino (1972) describes the latent filigree that binds the inception of civilizations to their demise. Inspired by this epistemological meditation, this paper explores the patterns of entropic decay in William Shakespeare's *Troilus and Cressida* by examining the body-place humoral correlation and its structural crisis as portrayed in the play. Imbued with a sense of immanent ruination, *Troilus and Cressida* stages the collision of two unstable societies: a besieged Troy undermined by internal vulnerabilities, and a Greek encampment severed from its native environment, prone to stagnation and affective contagion. This conflict gains further depth when situated within the micro-macrocosm paradigm of classical and Renaissance thought. From Aristotelian and Platonic formulations of the ideal city (Holmes, 2022) to Renaissance architectural theories (Bek, 1980; Vidler, 1990), civilized spaces were conceived as proportioned organisms mirroring the harmonious order of the cosmos—an analogy that binds the human body to the city. The sixteenth-century revival of interest the Hippocratic treatise *Airs, Waters, Places* (Leong et Stein, 2021) further consolidated this paradigm, positing a direct link between environment, bodily constitution, and political governability. The environmental implications of humoral theory anticipate a proto-biopolitical logic, where civic stability relies on the regulation of bodies and affects. Within this framework, the clash in *Troilus and Cressida* can be reconfigured not only as a collision between empires, but also between unstable somatic regimes and incompatible affective ecologies. By examining how Troy becomes legible through the Trojan bodies and how the Greeks contend with their own symbolic and literal disarticulation, this paper argues that Shakespeare exposes the entropic underside of the micro-macrocosmic model, tracing not the orderly permanence of civilizations and individuals, but rather the inevitability of their dissolution.

Perfect(ed) Bodies, Perfect(ed) Dress: Creating Worlds and Wardrobes in Early Modern Utopian Fiction (Valentina Finger)

My contribution explores the role of dressed bodies in early modern utopian prose fiction. Designed as 'perfect' (literary) worlds reacting to the 'imperfect' conditions of reality, utopian concepts of society are both comments on life beyond the page and visions of what should or could, potentially and partly, come into existence in a spatio-temporal 'other' state. While a great variety of the political, religious, social, and material aspects of utopian world-design projects has been studied by scholars of both literature and culture, what utopians wear and why has received little critical attention. I suggest focussing on dressed human bodies as we read them moving through selected utopias of the sixteenth and seventeenth century to consider

what those vestimentary ideas can tell us about notions of 'the' world and 'the' individual, both within the respective text and within the context of early modern England more generally. As case studies, I have selected three utopian prose texts from three authors, who each outfitted very different worlds in their literary designs: Thomas More's founding text topia (1516) seems to celebrate the value of uniformity and sustainability; Francis Bacon's science fiction New Atlantis (1627) reinvests learned men as spiritual leaders; and Margaret Cavendish's A Description of a New World, Called The Blazing World (1666) connects the author's textile efforts with her textual ambitions to imagine a feminine take on world-making. I aim at investigating how human textures, texts, and textiles interact in these works as well as in relation to the other contributions.

Perfect Bodies, Ordered Worlds: Corporeal Ideals in Early Modern Utopian Thought and its Classical Precedents (Stella Achilleos)

In imagining the ideal of social order, early modern utopian texts frequently engage with the idea of corporeal perfection. This paper examines the ideal of the "perfect body" in Thomas More's Utopia (1516) and Tommaso Campanella's City of the Sun (1602), situating these texts within a longer classical tradition that posits physical excellence as an ideal linked to civic virtue. Drawing especially on the classical precedent of Plato's Republic, I argue that More's and Campanella's texts bring to the fore an ancient classical concern with the body not simply as a site of discipline but also as a site of governance, regulation, and symbolic order. In More's Utopia, the ideal of corporeal perfection is less overtly pursued than in Plato's Republic, yet it emerges through its description of the various practices used on the island of Utopia to ensure the production and maintenance of a balanced and productive population (from the Utopians' practices of moderation, regulated diet, and communal health, to their treatment of such issues as illness and old age). By contrast, Campanella's City of the Sun explicitly engages with the pursuit of physical perfection through a set of eugenic practices that involve such measures as the institutionalization of reproductive control and selective breeding as a means of engineering ideal citizens. Here, the ideal of bodily perfection reflects and is clearly aligned with the principles of rational governance and cosmic order upon which the construction of the ideal city is based. Tracing continuities and shifts from classical philosophy to early modern utopianism, I suggest that More's and Campanella's texts anticipate an emerging biopolitical logic that is in many ways firmly grounded in the idea of corporeal perfection.

Walking, status production, and the (e)utopian stage (Eleanor Rycroft)

This paper will develop prior work on a utopian ideal of a perfect, walking body – one denoted as white, affluent, non-disabled and male – against imagined differences to walking bodies in texts of the early modern period. It is particularly concerned with the production of class/status difference in early modern literature and drama, and also how dystopian political systems exert pressures on bodies and behaviour, using the companion's account of Ben Jonson's 'Walk to Scotland' (1618) and Richard Edwards' *Damon and Pithias* (1568) as case studies. I imagine the early modern stage as both decisively emplaced – and whose place-making is achieved through the interactions of space, bodies, conduct, and proxemics alongside verbal cues – as well as a eutopian 'no-place', whose ontological status therefore threatens to expose the role of all movement in identity formation as arbitrary and performative.

'Thou art blood': perfecting identity in Shakespeare's *Measure for Measure* (1604) (Molly Ziegler)

Scholarship on Shakespeare's *Measure for Measure* (1604) has often described the play as a meditation on power. Much of this meditation surfaces in tensions around sexuality, with efforts to regulate sex having significant consequences for the characters' social, financial and

religious agency. Yet, whilst sex is indeed a central feature of the play's negotiations of power, these negotiations extend beyond desires to control the characters' sexual expression. This paper explores what is else is being controlled in the play's world by considering how *Measure for Measure* may also be read as contemplation on the humours. Blood, as the primary humour referenced in the play, is cited multiple times as both a symptom and cause of the characters' 'indiscretions'. Angelo's blood is a frequent subject of scrutiny, being linked both to his rigid demeanour (his 'blood / Is very snow-broth') and his desire for Isabella (he gives in to the 'heat of blood') (1.4.56-57; 5.1.460). The attention to the characters' blood raises important questions as to what is truly the subject of the Duke's regulatory efforts. For, blood is not only a marker of the characters' sexuality; it is also a vehicle for the play's debates on social, physical and racial identity. By thus interrogating how the characters' treatment of blood operates as part of a process of temperamental and racial curation, this essay explores how *Measure for Measure* attempts (and, arguably, fails) to define what type of blood is 'best'.

Leontes' White Guilt (Jennifer E. Nicholson)
Little has been made of race as a cultural hierarchy in *The Winter's Tale*, and even less of whiteness. A pivotal moment in this "other" race play has Paulina describe the yet-unnamed Perdita to Leontes and the wider court as his printed duplicate. Despite "the print [being] little" she asserts the new child to be wholly a "copy of the father". Doing so, she echoes the affirmations of similarity that the audience has heard about regarding Polixenes, and then Mamillius, too: "art thou my boy?" (I.ii.120). Paulina's endeavour to demonstrate the child's legitimacy is of course also a plea for Leontes to recognise Hermione's innocence and divest himself of unwarranted jealousy. However, when she explains how the baby has "no yellow in't" (I.ii.105), to affirm the absence of jealousy in this newborn child, she raises discomforting questions of epidermal and somatic identity. Shakespeare's whiteness and its impact on many of his characters is incompletely recognised. As the architect of the play's final revelation, Paulina's requirement that audiences "awake [our] faith" (V.iii.95) draws together assumptions about bodies and desires which hinge upon perfected, idealised outcomes make possible by the fusion of tragedy and comedy in this text. Indeed, in this late tragicomedy, language dances around racial identifiers but often stops just short of addressing it. However, Leontes' responses to Paulina embody white 'fantasies of the body' (Coles & Kim) and of power that must be made visible. Moreover, his self-pitying estrangement by the play's conclusion reveals Shakespeare's attunement towards race, and how whiteness itself haunts this tale.

Righting and Whiting the Sexed Adolescent Body (Harry R. McCarthy)
In my paper for this seminar, I wish to revisit that frequent site of supposedly "empowering" Shakespearean gender transformation—the forest—as navigated by youthful, adolescent bodies. I argue that throughout early modern performance this liminal space is more typically a place where gendered binaries are fixed rather than undone, through strategies which are intensely racialized. To make this case, I depart from Shakespeare (though depending on space I may return to him in closing) and focus on a body on its way to perfection outside of his corpus: that of the fourteen-year-old Lady Alice Egerton in Milton's A Maske Presented at Ludlow Castle (1634). I offer a refreshed reading of A Maske which locates what David Getsy terms "transgender capacity" in its centralization of the body of the Lady who is framed throughout as both astoundingly white but also concerningly malleable and open to transformation. I trace how the Lady's journey through the masque, and her interactions with the darkened and charismatically gender-nonconforming Comus, makes visible gender's mutability, including the production of cisness as itself a series of ongoing negotiations and manipulations. In line with one of the central insights of trans studies writ large, I additionally highlight how the solidification of cisness—emblematized at the masque's conclusion by the

Lady's rescue and return—is an inherently racialized project. Through a trans reading, I ultimately argue, A Maske Presented at Ludlow Castle emerges as being intensely concerned with youthful vulnerability to gendered transformation which, far from liberatory, is intimately bound up in the solidification of racial categories—the perfection, that is, of white, binarized normalcy. Such dynamics, I suggest, have considerable implications for more canonical gendered "play" in the forest, including in Shakespeare's As You Like It and John Lyly's Gallathea. The paper shares some preliminary thinking for my monograph-in-progress, Early Modern Childhood and the Engendering of Difference.

Compromised Racial Coherence in Dekker's Lust Dominion (working title) (Kyle Grady)
Spain in Thomas Dekker's *Lust's Dominion* is a chaotic space. As the title suggests, most members of its royal court are motivated by lust. Power and sex are intertwined pursuits in this regard, with several figures seeking to assume authority to fulfill romantic ends. In keeping with early modern English anti-Spanish sentiment, the interracial looms large in these pursuits. While the Queen Mother Eugenia (*the* "Lascivious Queen" of the play's alternate title) fetishizes her relationship with Eleazar the Moor, other characters (namely her sons, Fernando and Philip) propose or enact policies to interdict interracial relationships. The play concludes with Philip expelling Moors from the realm, a move meant to bring resolution – albeit an uneasy one – to the contest over Spain as a site of Moorish or Spanish rule. For this paper, I'd like to interrogate this resolution's inherent insufficiency. Indeed, while Eleazar and Philip war over whether Moors or Spaniards can claim control over the space, the play troubles how one might distinguish between these two groups in the first place, in part by noting intermixture between the two. This denigratory English take on Spain of course participates in what would later be known as the "Spanish Black Legend." But part of what I'm interested in are the broader implications for trying to impose categorical clarity on a site of racial confusion. In the purview of this working group and seminar, I wonder how the English imagined fostering or maintaining a "perfect world" inhabited by "perfect bodies" (particularly in the racist terms that undergird and are forwarded through the English imperial project) in light of how they understood intermixed spaces as depicted in Dekker's play.

Racialized Bodies and Lucy Hutchinson's Good and Bad Seeds (Mary Trull)
This paper explores how poet Lucy Hutchinson draws upon concepts from Lucretian atomism as well as Calvinist theology in her epic poem, Order and Disorder (1673), to create a theory of inherited moral qualities invested in racialized bodies through the metaphor of "seeds." Lucy Hutchinson was the first English translator of the entirety of Luretius's De rerum natura, and her close reading of Lucretius profoundly influenced the creation of her epic poem, Order and Disorder. This paper argues that the motif of good and bad seeds in Order and Disorder draws upon Lucretius's use of "seeds" or semina as a term for atoms. Lucretius's account of how all life began through the germination and development of seed-like atoms provides a material account of how traits are inherited from one generation to the next. I examine how Hutchinson translated Lucretius's references to semina into English, and compare her choice of language to her own discussion of seeds in Order and Disorder, where inherited "seeds" distinguish a holy strain or race of humanity from an unholy one. In retelling the story of Genesis, Hutchinson invents a theory of "seeds" passed down through the generations that convey either a kernel of knowledge of God and a capacity for goodness, or a kernel of evil that will develop into an anti-Christian faction in the final stages of Christ's conquest of the world. The paper explains how Calvin's theory of inherited knowledge of God and Lucretius's explanation of the germination of seeds influenced Hutchinson, and how her depiction of good/bad seeds overlaps with early modern discourse on racialized bodies -- in particular, the theory of the curse of Ham. This paper contributes to our understanding of how ideas about stigmatized

identities developed in quasi-scientific, quasi-religious literary contexts, which is crucial to a fuller picture of the development of racializing discourses in early modern European culture.

(Hannah Hicks)
This paper explores the "hard" bodies in Shakespeare's Tempest and Margaret Cavendish's Blazing World— exploring ways that the external body is made hard in these utopian landscapes through alternatively natural, artificial, and supernatural means. Cavendish's Blazing World is deeply concerned with her "natural philosophy" and by extension, the "the True Principles of Natural Bodies"; their composition, malleability, and ability to transform. Despite the more whimsical "spirit adventures" the Empress undergoes without her body, the physicality and vulnerability of the human body recurs throughout her philosophical musings and eventual war strategies— culminating in her heavily armored, alchemically-formed garment at the climax of Blazing World's second part. In The Tempest, humans and spirits alike are concerned with bodily vulnerability, though unlike in Blazing World, a "hard" bodily exterior is undesirable, not indicative of bodily protection or security but rather as a mode of finality or punishment. Ariel's imprisonment in the pine tree, and the imagined, "calcified" body of Alonso, whose bones become "coral made" as a result of drowning, are both deliberately menacing images of a "hard", impenetrable, or "closed" body. By contrasting the more philosophical and autonomous modes of the "hard body" in Blazing World against the somber and threatening "hard bodies" in The Tempest, I hope to investigate the "perfect body" in these proto-utopias of the early modern fiction, and delineate a spectrum of porousness versus stability in the ideal human form.

(Alani Hicks-Bartlett)
TBA

(Brittany Tang)
TBA

S16.
The Planetary and the Sacred in Asian Shakespeares

Organisers: Yong Li Lan, Im Yeeyon

In this seminar we propose to place the planetary, as a critique and / or 'completion' of globalism, alongside the force of Asian faiths and belief systems for sacralizing the earth. While current conceptualizations of the planetary—as an emergent world-view—are fundamentally secular in ethics and artistic values (Elias and Moraru 2015), adaptations of Shakespeare in diverse Asian theatre cultures are profoundly shaped by ancient cosmological systems that are spiritual in their practices and philosophies of place and nature (Duara 2018).

Dreaming Lear in the Anthropocene: *Nō* Cosmology, Spectrality, and Ecologies of Interdependence (Monica Alcantar)
This paper examines how Asian performative traditions reconfigure *King Lear* through cosmological belief systems in the context of the Anthropocene, focusing on *Lear Dreaming* (2012), directed by Ong Keng Sen and its reworking, *King Lear Dreaming* (2017) by Umewaka Naohiko. Rather than treating adaptation as cultural transfer, the study approaches these productions as cosmological mediations that reposition Shakespeare within relational ontologies responsive to ecological and epistemic crisis. Grounded in the performative framework of Japanese *nō*, the analysis explores how spectral embodiment and phantasmagoria

articulate a worldview in which the human, nonhuman, and spiritual realms are porous and continuous. Structured as *mūgen nō (*dream play), the performances propose a cosmology of continuity, where memory, landscape, and spirit coexist within a shared field of existence. Lear is articulated through the dramaturgic logic of the *shite* (main actor often embodying divine or restless spirits) while Cordelia emerges through absence, staged as an empty bridal kimono that translates 'nothing' into a Buddhist-inflected ontology. These productions reveal how an Asian performance tradition does not simply receive Shakespeare but actively transforms him, situating his work within a context of a shared understanding of suffering, loss, and transcendence.

Bengali Hamlet (2017) from an Islamic Perspective (Diana Ansarey)
This paper reconsiders the concept of interculturalism through a case study of the 2017 Bangladeshi adaptation of *Hamlet*, directed by Ataur Rahman and adapted by Syed Shamsul Haq, staged at the Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy, Dhaka. It explores the cultural exchange between the Western Shakespearean canon and contemporary Bengali performance practices, demonstrating how Shakespeare's text is reinterpreted within the contemporary Bengali culture and politics. Addressed to a Muslim-majority, post-independence Bangladeshi audience, the adaptation is read here through an Islamic interpretive lens, showing how the play's ethical dilemmas, justice and vengeance, intention and action, and conscience and political expediency are reframed and rendered culturally intelligible within Bengali discourse. Methodologically, to examine how performance, language, symbolism, and dramaturgical restructuring generate new meanings, this article combines Jacqueline Lo and Helen Gilbert's two-way model of interculturalism with Catherine Belsey's approach to textual analysis and Linda Hutcheon's theory of adaptation. The analysis shows that the production localises *Hamlet* through references to Bangladesh's socio-political history, liberation memory, and culturally resonant performance traditions, such as Jatra performances, Tagore's songs and poems, the Qur'anic references and allusions of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, while also revealing the tensions that arise when British and European Shakespeare encounters Bengali aesthetics and Muslim ethical sensibilities. Ultimately, the paper demonstrates that this Bengali *Hamlet* (2017) is a significant example of postcolonial intercultural Shakespeare: one that preserves recognisable Shakespearean concerns while producing new meanings through Bengali culture, Islamic thought, and the historical experience of Bangladesh. In doing so, the study shows that adaptation in Bangladesh is not derivative imitation but a mode of cultural interpretation, ethical inquiry, and historical remembrance within contemporary Bangladeshi theatre practice and criticism.

The Potential of 'Shinto Shakespeare' (Daniel Gallimore)
A play such as *A Midsummer Night's Dream* meets an obvious objection in Japan's Shinto religion, where in contrast to the Apollonian domain of sunlit Athens the sun goddess Amaterasu is female and virginal and her estranged brother, Tsukiyomi, the moon god. Yet with its lack of a unified theology and specific moral codes, Shinto belief may also be an apt vehicle for all that is nebulous, uncertain and above all local in the play: in particular the life force of the gods (*kami*) that according to Shinto belief inhabit all natural phenomena, thus corresponding with the amoral mutability of Shakespeare's fairies, but whose worship is intended to channel human willfulness towards ethical goals of gratitude and sincerity. Shinto's polytheism and cult of purity may also be analogous to the localized uniqueness of theatrical experiences and mimetic skills of professional performers, and these features can be seen in performance to counter the reductionist, commodifying tendencies of globalism, but rather than

focusing on a single production my paper will attempt more generally to schematize the potential of 'Shinto Shakespeare' as a comparative and normative framework for understanding Japanese Shakespeare adaptation.

The Laozian Way of Being in Bae Sam-sik's *Changgeuk Lear* (2022) (Im Yeeyon)
Unlike Western modern adaptations of *King Lear* that frequently appropriate the tragedy as a site for interrogating gender, class, politics, and familial power struggles, such as Edward Bond's *Lear* (1971), Elaine Feinstein's *Lear's Daughters* (1987), and Jane Smiley's *A Thousand Acres* (1991), Korean adaptations tend to emphasize ethical and ontological values, focusing on harmony, coexistence, and filial piety. In this paper, I examine the meaning of nature, human, and animals in Bae Sam-sik's Laozian adaptation of *King Lear* in a *changgeuk* style, first staged by the National Changgeuk Company of Korea in 2022 and revived in 2024 in Seoul. While Bae's *Lear* is noteworthy in terms of its transcultural style that adapts the Elizabethan tragedy in a style of *changgeuk*, or Korean opera, my focus will be less on the stylistic innovations than on literary and thematic transformations. Bae Sam-sik, a veteran playwright in Korea, adopts Laozi's philosophy of water as a central concept in his *Lear*, providing a profound reinterpretation through Taoist ontology and the philosophy of nature, which differs greatly from the aforementioned Western ideological appropriations. The stage was filled with 20 tons of water, a visual metaphor for Laozi's concept of "shang-seon-yak-su" ("The highest good is like water"), although the intensity of *chang* (singing) and the spectacle of water may have interfered with the full embodiment of Taoist philosophy on the stage. I offer a close examination of Bae's script to reveal an alternative way of being through the concepts of "indifferent nature" that de-centers anthropocentric cosmology.

Ritual Sovereignty: The Sacred and the Planetary in Kashmiri *Badshah Pather* (Nasir Kibria)
This paper theorises ritual sovereignty as a performative mode in *Badshah Pather*—a Kashmiri reworking of *King Lear* that redistributes authority across performers, audiences, and performance space. Developed through collaborative improvisation with Bhand actors—who reject the authority of textual translation ("Who speaks this Kashmiri?")—the work emerges not as an adaptation of *Lear*, but as a performative recomposition in which narrative, character, and sovereignty are reconfigured within a local theatrical ecology. Drawing on performance ethnography, I argue that the sacred operates here as a structuring cosmology rather than a thematic category. Sufi conceptions of transformation and dissolution shape the dramaturgy of Lear's madness, reworking it from an individual psychological collapse into a collective and relational process. Authority is not represented but enacted, dispersed across bodies, rhythms, and interactions in performance. Situated within the militarised landscape of Kashmir, *Badshah Pather* takes form as an itinerant, open-air practice shaped by disruption, precarity, and communal spectatorship. It operates outside dominant circuits of global Shakespeare. Instead, it articulates a subnational planetary formation grounded in embodied practice rather than institutional circulation. By foregrounding theatre as an event distributed across bodies, spaces, and materials, the paper shifts adaptation from textual translation to embodied recomposition. Through the collective reworking of *Lear* by Kashmiri performers, the sacred and the planetary emerge as lived, relational dynamics rather than abstract categories.

Why *Hamlet* in Korea? Historical Trauma and the Afterlives of Hamlet in Korean Theatre: Lee Sung-yeol's *Hamlet A-bi* (Lee Hyon-u)
Why does Korean theatre display such a persistent and almost obsessive preference for *Hamlet*? Drawing on a dataset of 990 Shakespeare productions staged in Korea between 1990 and 2025, this article examines the remarkable dominance of *Hamlet* in Korean performance history. Of

these productions, 256 were *Hamlet*, accounting for 25.9 percent of the total. This concentration becomes even more pronounced during the COVID-19 pandemic: between 2019 and 2021, 34 of the 113 Shakespeare productions staged in Korea were *Hamlet*, raising the proportion to 30.1 percent. This paper argues that the prominence of *Hamlet* in Korean theatre is closely connected to moments of national crisis. Since the introduction of Western theatre in the early twentieth century, Korean theatre has repeatedly turned to *Hamlet* during periods of profound social upheaval. Hyun Cheol's complete translation of *Hamlet* in 1922 appeared during the Japanese colonial period, while a touring production during the Korean War (1951–52) became a legendary episode in Korean theatre history. In the 1980s, director Ki Kook-seo staged politically charged *Hamlet* productions inspired by the May 18 Gwangju Uprising, transforming the play into a theatrical language for confronting dictatorship and historical violence. The paper focuses on Lee Sung-yeol's *Hamlet A-bi*, which incorporates contemporary traumatic events—including the Gwangju Uprising, the Yongsan Tragedy, and the Sewol Ferry disaster—within the narrative framework of *Hamlet*. By integrating elements of Korean shamanistic ritual (*gut*), the production reinterprets the play as a process of confronting unresolved historical grievances and collective sorrow, often conceptualized as *han*. By situating *Hamlet A-bi* within the broader historical pattern of Korean *Hamlet* productions, this article proposes that the repeated return of *Hamlet* during periods of crisis is structural rather than incidental. In Korean theatre, *Hamlet* has become a culturally resonant dramaturgical framework for negotiating historical trauma, political injustice, and the enduring emotional structure of *han*.

Speaking Alone Together: Pansori, Gut (Korean Shamanic Ritual), and the Sacred Planetary in Park Sunhee's *Pansori Hamlet, Monologue* (Park Unyoung)

The soliloquy is the defining speech act of *Hamlet* — the Renaissance self thinking aloud, individuality made audible. Yet in Park Sunhee's *햄릿, 혼잣말* (*Pansori Hamlet, Monologue*), this inward turn is radically reimagined through the Korean performance form of *pansori*, whose structural logic transforms the soliloquy into *혼잣말*: a mode of speech that appears self-addressed yet is constitutively relational. In Park's production, a single actress voices all of *Hamlet*'s characters, while the 고수 (*gosu*, percussionist) assumes the role of Horatio — Hamlet's witness and interlocutor — and the audience is drawn into the drama as Ophelia, as messenger for Claudius's letter, and as the responsive community of 추임새 (*chuimsae*, rhythmic interjections of encouragement and attunement). What appears as monologue is thus revealed as a cosmological chorus. This paper argues that *Pansori Hamlet, Monologue* enacts a mode of selfhood that current theorizations of the planetary — largely secular in orientation (Elias and Moraru 2015) – cannot fully account for. Drawing on the ritual logic of 굿 (*gut*), the performance articulates a porous boundary between the individual voice and a relational cosmos, in which the dead remain interlocutors of the living. The female 소리꾼 (*sorikkun*, pansori singer-performer) embodies Hamlet in a manner that is not incidental but structurally necessary: in the shamanic tradition of the 무당 (*mudang*, Korean ritual mediator), it is typically the female body that mediates between worlds, giving voice to what cannot otherwise be heard. In this light, Park's adaptation does not merely feminize or localize *Hamlet*; rather, it proposes a sacred planetary in which Shakespeare's most individualist play is reconstituted as a communal, cosmological, and spiritually grounded act of speaking.

Situating *Pansori Hamlet, Monologue* within the broader landscape of female Hamlets and Asian theatre adaptations, this paper contends that the production's *pansori* aesthetics articulate a non-secular planetary vision: one in which deliberation is never solitary, selfhood is always relational, and the cosmos itself becomes an audience.

Between Dream and Death: Staging Permeable Realms in *The Peony Pavilion* in English (Emily C. A. Snyder)
In 1616, two parallel dramatic poets died: William Shakespeare in England, and Tang Xianzu in China. In 2025, a new English-language staging of *The Peony Pavilion*, translated into Shakespeare's idiom by Prof. Huang Bikang, brought these traditions into direct dialogue. Using this production as a case study, this paper explores staging techniques that reveal how "realms"—life, dream, death, and rebirth—are conceived and staged as co-present and transformative states on stage. These permeable realms will be considered in light of Daoist models of transformation, in which dream, death, and life and rebirth form a continuous field, and Catholic doctrines of the communion of saints, which likewise maintain co-presence between the living and the dead. Attention is paid to two sites of intercultural exchange: first, the translation of Tang Xianzu into Shakespeare's idiom, using echoes of Hamlet and the Ghost to underscore Du Liniang's death; then, the translation from page to stage, in making realms visible and comprehensible through a variety of intercultural staging techniques. By foregrounding performance as the site where these states are materially negotiated, this paper argues that intercultural theatre does not merely combine traditions, but exposes and reconfigures the ontological assumptions that structure them.

Cosmology in Performance: Reframing Macbeth in Nomura Mansai's Intercultural Theatre (Suematsu Michiko)
The cosmology of ancient Japan developed under the hegemonic influence of China, yet gradually diverged to articulate a distinctive worldview of its own. One of its most salient features is its markedly this-worldly orientation. This tendency to describe and interpret phenomena through the framework of the earthly and natural world is evident in the *Kojiki* (712) and the *Nihon Shoki* (720), the two earliest extant chronicles of Japan, which record its myths, legends, and early history. In articulating cosmology, the ancient Japanese represented the cosmos through the imagery of the immediate natural environment, such as mountains, rivers, and the earth. Another notable characteristic concerns the interpretation of the relationship between the macrocosm and the microcosm, a conceptual framework that was likewise prevalent in Renaissance Europe. In the European context, this relationship was often conceived through systems of correspondence and analogy between two distinct orders. The ancient Japanese, however, did not posit such a dualistic structure; rather, they apprehended the macrocosm and microcosm as an undifferentiated unity. This inclination toward the non-differentiation of subject and object (*shukyaku mibun*; 主客未分) may, in fact, be understood as a pervasive feature of Japanese culture. *Macbeth*, directed by Nomura Mansai and staged internationally between 2010 and 2016, is a notable example that reflects these key features of ancient Japanese cosmology. The production recasts Macbeth as a figure whose actions destabilise not only the self but also the cosmic and terrestrial order, a disruption articulated through staging that draws heavily on Noh and Kyogen. This paper examines how a pre-modern Japanese conception of the universe is embodied and enacted in the reimagining of the play, thereby revealing the performative processes through which Shakespearean tragedy is reinterpreted within a distinct cosmological framework in an intercultural theatrical context.

Planetary Totality in the Teochew Operatic Adaptation *of The Winter's Tale* (Rosie Guixia Xie)

This paper examines the cross-cultural adaptation of Shakespeare's *The Winter's Tale* into Teochew opera through the lens of the "planetary," focusing on how multiple aesthetic and ideological systems coexist within a single performative form. In the late 1980s, the play was adapted as *Rebirth of the Queen*, a Teochew operatic production performed in local dialect with stylised music, gesture, and costume traditions from southeastern Guangdong. Widely acclaimed at the time, the production became one of the most popular regional performances of its period. Drawing on Lawrence Venuti's concepts of rewriting, poetics, and ideology in Translation Studies, this study undertakes a comparative analysis of three textual strata: Shakespeare's English original, a modern Chinese translation, and the performance script of the Teochew adaptation. At the level of poetics, the drama is reconfigured through the formal conventions of Teochew opera, including codified gesture, musical patterning, and stylised rhythm. At the level of ideology, the adaptation reshapes the play's moral universe: Leontes' jealousy is subordinated to Confucian patriarchy, Hermione's endurance aligns with ideals of female chastity, and Perdita's recovery—along with the expanded role of the young prince—is reframed as a narrative of filial restitution. Seen through a planetary lens, this adaptation cannot be reduced to a simple synthesis of global and local forms. Rather, it constitutes an irreducible configuration in which Shakespearean plays, Confucian ethics, and regional operatic poetics coexist without full assimilation. Their interaction produces a form of "planetary totality": not a unified whole, but a situated and non-substitutable constellation of aesthetic and ethical forces. This paper thus argues that planetary Shakespeare is not a celebration of cultural diversity, rather, it is an ethical practice of translation without equivalence. In this process, regional performance traditions such as Teochew opera do not simply localise Shakespeare; they unsettle the aesthetic and ideological assumptions of global Shakespeare while remaining deeply embedded in their own cultural worlds.

Maternal Cosmologies in Ong Keng Sen's Asian Shakespeare Productions (Roweena Yip)

This paper rethinks the planetary in Asian Shakespeare through the lens of maternal cosmologies in the Shakespeare-based productions directed by Ong Ken Sen, proposing that maternal figures—as symbols and material presence—offer an alternative epistemology and ethics to the secular, abstract and masculinist universalism often associated with planetary discourse. While critical frameworks of the planetary tend to emphasise interconnectedness at a global scale, they remain largely detached from the spiritual and affective dimensions through which many Asian performance traditions and practitioners understand the relationships that humans have with each other and with the natural world. In contrast, Ong Keng Sen's intercultural Shakespeare productions mobilise the figure of the mother, or maternal figures—often spectral, absent, or displaced in Shakespeare's plays—as a cosmological force that sacralises the planetary and produces intercultural relations that are grounded in recuperation. In particular, I analyse the material presence of maternal figures in *Lear* (commissioned by the Japan Foundation, 1997) and *Lear Dreaming* (2012) as well as invocations of the mother in *Desdemona* (2000) and *Search: Hamlet* (2002) to articulate a theory of intercultural adaptation that is always already informed by a consideration of gender.

S17.
Planetary Plenitude: Nature and Multiplicity in Shakespeare

Organisers: Rocco Coronato, Huw Griffiths

The seminar invites papers that explore the themes of abundance and diversity in Shakespeare's works. It highlights how Shakespeare engages with nature to create a sense of planetary plenitude, characterised by a rich interplay of beings and environments. Scholars are encouraged to examine how this concept relates to various genres, genders, and race, considering whether plenitude can have both positive and negative connotations. The seminar also addresses the impact of emerging technologies like digital humanities on the analysis of Shakespearean texts, fostering dialogue on the intersection of nature, multiplicity, and plenitude.

***The Tempest*: Brave Old and New Worlds (Carlo Maria Bajetta)**
In *The Tempest*, Shakespeare presents us with a variety of beings: 'monsters,' spirits, humans, and figures that emerge as not *quite* human. The play—one of the most deftly structured in the Bard's oeuvre—features a plenitude of doubles, parallels, and patent dissimilarities that embrace the temperament and morals of these characters as well as their geographical provenance. Locality is indeed a crucial theme in this work, and critics have frequently linked it with questions of race, ethnicity, ethics, and politics. The play's links with the 'Bermuda Pamphlets,' as well as Montaigne's essay *Des Cannibales*, have often influenced such interpretations, establishing a connection between the Mediterranean and other countries and/or cultures. This paper will re-examine contemporary maps and publications to show how the materials available in Shakespeare's lifetime could have provided him with ideas regarding the location of the island and at least one of the names appearing in the play; furthermore, it will argue that these materials reinforced his view of a multifaceted nature and bolstered Montaigne's views.

Shakespeare, Infinite Variety, and the Reaches of the Cosmos (Jane Hwang Degenhardt)
My paper will think about planetary plenitude and diversity in the context of the cosmological concept of infinity. I am interested in how Shakespeare's plays may be said to grapple with the aesthetic implications of infinity. In particular, I will focus on Shakespeare's engagement with the concept of *infinite variation* and how it compels a rethinking of the aesthetic principles of order, kind, and harmony that were fundamental to early modern cosmology. Shakespeare's plays repeatedly demonstrate nature's capacity to produce infinite variety through characters who are deemed aberrant, ugly, and grotesque. Enter Caliban, the weird sisters, Aaron the Moor, and Richard III. How do these figures embody an aesthetics of diversity and disharmony that routes back to the notion of an infinite cosmos? How do infinite variety and cosmological disorder become attached to a racializing logic? And what purpose does 'ugliness' serve? These questions lead me to some reflections on the role of the sublime in Shakespeare as a cosmological aesthetic concept that both refuses a totalizing finitude and generates new orders of kinds.

Dolphins and Bees: Multiplicities and Universal Histories in *Henry V* and *Antony and Cleopatra* (Nicholas Devlin)
In 1568, Christopher Watson translated the Greek historian of Rome, Polybius, into English for the first time. This exercise was accompanied by an abstract of Henry V's life that drew heavily on Edward Hall's chronicle, *The union of the two noble and illustre famelies of Lancastre and Yorke*. By counterposing English chronicle with Greek universal history, Watson created a

rhetorical set piece to reflect on the pragmatics of international conflict in Henry's—and, by extension, Elizabeth's—reign. In this paper, I trace images of natural multiplicity across Shakespeare's *Henry V* and *Antony and Cleopatra*. I argue that these two plays develop distinct metaphors for relating the individual to the body politic, corresponding to different historiographical approaches to the problems involved in narrating transnational multiplicity. Both plays ask whether conquest and historiography inevitably subordinate the particular to the universal. Ultimately, I argue that Shakespeare resolves the tension between the polyphonic, accretive multiplicity of the chronicle mode and the centripetal narrative vision of universal history by turning to Plutarch as a model for balancing the demands of historical narrative with the provisionality and multiplicity of historical identity over time.

'Thou globe of sinful continents.' (Hu)moral congestion in Shakespeare's universe (Giacomo Ferrari)

The paper interprets the main topic of the seminar in a bodily key – plenitude as abundance of humours, fullness or congestion. I will compare relevant passages from Shakespeare's plays – the ones featuring Falstaff, but also *Troilus and Cressida*, *Timon of Athens*, and *Measure for Measure* – with contemporary medical treatises and pseudo-medical poetry, in order to discuss the interplay of the bodily, moral and political spheres in the staging of excessive, congested, inflamed bodies. My analysis of selected passages from Shakespeare and other authors – such as Thomas Elyot, Willibald Pirckheimer, and Christopher Balista – will concern, in the first place, particular manifestations of humoral plenitude, such as the gout. Secondly, I will address the connection between bodily plenitude and "plenitude" as abundance and excess, and examples of the ensuing overindulgence in enjoyment – and increased capability thereof. I will argue that these examples exhibit implications for the spheres of society and humanity at large, and are instrumental to Shakespeare's ambiguous stance between orderly political wisdom and joyful, self-destructive, carnivalesque excess.

Abundance and Diversity: Shakespeare's Flowers (Thomas Kullmann)

In an anonymous poem published in 1584, entitled "A Nosegay always sweet, for lovers to send for tokens," the speaker imagines giving a bunch of flowers to a person he loves. Each of the flowers is given a specific significance. I should like to explore the concept of variety inherent in early modern lists of flowers. The poets do not just find flowers beautiful but display an awareness of different colours, shapes and seasons of flowering before aligning these flowers with human features and practices. These enumerations evidently suggest abundance as well as perfection. They relate to the human world in two ways: on the one hand, the beauty of the flowers may illustrate the beauty of a person, characterized by the interplay of different parts. These lists, however, may also indicate human variety, differences of character and condition. Finally, these lists may point at the wealth and harmony of nature. While Shakespeare builds on the medieval tradition of reading nature allegorically, these lists also indicate an overwhelming sense of the beauty and harmony both of the natural world and of humanity, provided we are in a position to appreciate it.

When the King of Playwrights Uprooted the King of Plants (Ivan Rybko)

Once the King of Playwrights (William Shakespeare) uprooted the King of Plants (the Mandrake). From then on, the Playwright went with the Plant hand in hand much like the Poet with Nature in Philip Sidney (*The Defence of Poesy*). The Playwright learnt the mighty properties of the Plant well. He knew about its narcotic effects, he was informed that it could be poisonous and was aware that it gives way to intense sexual desire. He was certainly very cautious about the Plant's deadly shrieks. The Playwright referenced the Plant in his plays many times, on every instance to find 'a local habitation and a name' (*MND*) for the Plant's facets

that suited his occasion. Having researched and presented on a range of aspects linked to the fascinating mandrake, for the WSC's *Planetary Plenitude* session, I intend to focus on the mandrake in Shakespeare alone addressing the issues of abundance and multiplicity and, if lucky, delineating what constitutes Shakespearean usage of the trope properly his.

Planets, Stars, and the Cosmological Imagination (Henry Turner)
Claims over *what* planets and stars are, *how* we know them, their *meaning* or interpretative status, what *forms of life* they promote, and their *ensouled* natures all caused controversy in Shakespeare's period because planets and stars were becoming newly relevant to normative accounts of how the world is composed and the place of the human within it. They expanded what the "world" could be, sometimes drawing heterogeneous things nearer and sometimes forcing them further apart. Shakespeare's plays capture the changing status of planets and stars at the turn of the 17th century not because he refers to contemporary developments or subscribes to one cosmological theory or another but because he submits planets and starts to imaginative scrutiny. They become images: densities of affect and force, characterological signatures, symbolic registrations of events that surpass the normative thresholds of human affairs. The paper will conclude by exploring in several plays Shakespeare's interest not in a *solar cosmology*—a cosmology of light, clarity, beauty, and formal perfection—but rather in a *dark cosmology*: a cosmology of shadows, of night and the underworld; of desire, will, and force; of pain, pathology, perversion and death.

S18.
Planetary Poets

Organisers: Paul Edmondson, Claudia Olk

How and why do countries align poets from their own cultures with Shakespeare? 'National' poets who have been aligned with Shakespeare and Stratford-upon-Avon include: Goethe and Schiller (Germany), Cervantes (Spain), Jan Kochanowski (Poland), Iqbal (Pakistan), Tagore (India), and Tang Xianzu (China). How, if at all, do the celebrations of other national poets include, appropriate, or refer to Shakespeare, and why? How does Shakespeare, as an emerging poetic presence, work with or against other traditions? How, if at all, is Shakespeare's birthdate celebrated around the world? How does Shakespeare become part of the processes of cultural contact and transfer?

International Poets: Star-gazing at Stratford-upon-Avon's Solar System (Paul Edmondson)
Stratford-upon-Avon has long attracted international attention. The collections of The Shakespeare Birthplace Trust include an impressive range of Shakespeare in translation, and international representatives have long contributed to the annual celebrations of Shakespeare's birthdate. The birthdates of three 'international poets' have become annual fixtures in the public programming of The Shakespeare Birthplace Trust: Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749-1832), Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941), and Muhammad Iqbal (1877-1938). This paper describes some of the activities that occur to mark the anniversaries of these three poets in Stratford-upon-Avon, and speculates about how and why more international poets might be included in new commemorations.

Nothing like the sun: Cervantes and Shakespeare. a Comparative Approach (José Manuel González)
This paper explores comparative aspects of Miguel de Cervantes and William Shakespeare, situating both authors within the broader cultural and literary context of Renaissance Europe. It argues that the Treaty of London (1604) fostered new intellectual exchanges between England and Spain, making possible a relation of these two canonical writers. The essay traces the development of Cervantes–Shakespeare criticism in Spain, from nineteenth-century to contemporary approaches that emphasize their shared status as foundational figures of Western literature. Particular attention is paid to parallels in their biographies, including the scant documentation available of their early life and their commitment to literary creation.
It also examines their common fascination with the theatre and their contribution to the development of their respective national languages. Despite significant differences, Cervantes and Shakespeare emerge as "rare makers" whose originality transformed literary traditions and expanded the creative possibilities of language. Today, their works continue to serve as enduring models of artistic excellence and of literary exploration of the human condition.

From theatrum mundi to world literature: Shakespeare and Germany (Claudia Olk)
Often referred to as Germany's "third classic" alongside Goethe and Schiller, Shakespeare's influence on German literary and theatrical culture surpasses that of any other foreign and even most German authors. Shakespeare's texts were not only instrumental in shaping German drama and theatre but continue to be an important catalyst for social, political, and philosophical discourses. As Charles III, for instance, pointed out in his speech to the German parliament on 30 March 2023, German Shakespeare reception is a unique example of processes of cultural contact and cultural transfer between Britain and Germany that has also branched out globally. This paper will look at examples of how Shakespeare was translated into German and it will describe more recent performances.

Deconstructing National Poets (Mickhaël Savchenko)
Shakespeare has often served as a golden standard in comparison to other major poets. This paper explores how several 'national', European poets have interacted with Shakespeare and how this interaction may have shaped their prominence. The chronological boundaries for these examples are roughly those of the Romantic age. One of the not-so-obvious questions that may be posed here is whether translating or imitating Shakespeare can be a conscientious strategy, helping one become a national poet. Paradoxically, while national poets embody a distinctively national character, they also foster international communication as a bridge between cultures.
The idea that Shakespeare translations or adaptations have enriched non-anglophone national cultures is not new, but how this has happened is not always clear. My paper paves the way for future research, by analysing Shakespeare's assimilation into another culture, for example by the coining of new words after Shakespeare's models, introducing Shakespeare's images and quotations into popular use, or emulating Shakespeare's characteristic metre, the iambic pentameter.

(Kohei Uchimaru)
This paper examines the shifting associations between Shakespeare and freedom in Japan from the 1880s to 1916. In the 1880s, Shakespeare arrived in Japan at a time when Japanese liberals embraced the Whig interpretation of history, which viewed history as a progressive march towards liberty. Seeking to improve what they perceived as a feudal society, they came to see the Bard as a Whiggish advocate of political liberalism whose works were understood to promote political and social reform. By his tercentenary in 1916, however, the association between Shakespeare and freedom had shifted from political liberty to aesthetic freedom. In

his contribution to *A Book of Homage to Shakespeare* (1916), Shôyô Tsubouchi invoked the seventeenth-century Japanese dramatist Monzaemon Chikamatsu as a Japanese equivalent to Shakespeare, thereby emphasising that both were 'liquid' poets who remained free from the 'solidity' of ideologies. This view stood in stark contrast to the imperialist ideology of the English contributors who lauded the poet as essentially English. In so doing, Shôyô elevated the Shakespeare beyond the status of an English national poet to that of a planetary poet defined by aesthetic disinterestedness. This transition marked a shift in the Japanese reception of Shakespeare from a poet *for* freedom to a poet *of* freedom.

Mihai Eminescu and Shakespeare Revisited (Oana-Alis Zaharia)
This paper sets out to revisit the complex intertextual encounter between Mihai Eminescu, Romania's national poet, and William Shakespeare, through the lens of "nodal and inter-communicational" frameworks of contemporary World Literature (Corniș-Pope, Neubauer, Damrosch). Shifting from the traditional centre-periphery hierarchies, I seek to frame the Eminescu-Shakespeare alignment as a horizontal, ethical, and politically empowering cultural dialogue. The paper maps the trajectory of this literary intersection across several ideological shifts, starting with Eminescu's Romantic self-fashioning as a Shakespearean apprentice—an act of bardolatry rooted in French and German Romanticism. Second, it highlights Titu Maiorescu's role in canonizing Eminescu as a poet of universal stature, suggesting that the Shakespearean connection functioned as a form of cultural "reversed soft power" to legitimize an emergent Romanian literature. Next, it considers 20th-century ideological appropriations, from "autochthonous" nationalist readings to the Marxist-Leninist "painting red" of both poets as revolutionary precursors. Finally, it ends with an exploration of the ways in which the Eminescu-Shakespeare intertextual dialogue has been reframed in a recent Moldovan performance of *A Midsummer Night's Dream.*

S19.
The Rhetoric of Ecology and Racial Difference on Page & in Performance

Organisers: Nora Galland, Anita Raychawdhuri

This seminar looks to explore the relationship between race and ecology in Shakespeare, broadly conceived. We invite participants to consider the Shakespearean text and its early modern contexts and/or adaptations and appropriations across the globe that centre race and ecology in the performance/text's approach to Shakespeare. We are particularly interested in rhetorical use of ecology to describe race and vice versa. Through critical attention to the dynamic between representation and interpretation of race and the environment, this seminar aims to foreground how exploring, mapping, and shaping the world were also about race.

On Kincentric ecologies in Shakespeare's *As You Like it* and Lyly's *Galatea* (Jamie Paris)
Settler Environmentalists discuss Indigenous people as exemplary environmental stewards who practice sustainable ways of living. One reason we see for this focus on environmental stability within Critical Indigenous Studies is the importance of relationality, reciprocity, and more-than-human kinship. According to Potawatomi scholar Robin Wall Kimmerer, rather than seeing humanity as being above nature, Indigenous people tend to see our more-than-human kin as beings who can teach us how to live ethically in the world. As Rarámuri theorist and ethnobotanist Enrique Salmón notes, within an Indigenous worldview, humans are part of a kincentric ecology that sees us as affected by and affecting all life around us in a complex web of relations. Once I exist within this web, binary concepts like gender and sexuality take on far more fluid meanings. This chapter will use the idea kincentric environmentalism to read the

transformative gender and sexual potential of the forest in early modern drama. Specifically, this chapter will consider how we can read the gender and sexual fluidity within forest spaces in William Shakespeare's *As You Like It* and John Lyly's *Galatea* as examples of relational ways of being in nature.

Thou Animal Translation: Bottom's Non-Asshead in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* in Japan (Sae Kitamura)

This paper examines how Japanese theatrical productions of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* have translated the cultural connotations of the 'ass'—the animal into which Bottom is transformed—by substituting it with a culturally equivalent animal. Puck transforms Bottom into a donkey, or 'ass'. Bottom's transformation into an 'ass' sounds humorous to audiences in English-speaking contexts, including Shakespeare's original audience, because the word ass has referred to 'a stupid person' in English since the mediaeval period. This plot could also have helped the early modern audience to understand sexual jokes embedded in the play. The ass, therefore, functions as a culturally rich animal in the European literary tradition. In contrast, most Japanese people are unfamiliar with donkeys. They may have heard of them or seen pictures, but few farms in Japan keep them. Zoos are the only places where Japanese people can see donkeys, and many people confuse donkeys with ponies. In this environment, it is somewhat difficult for Japanese audiences to grasp the meaning of the plot in which Bottom is turned into an ass—it is not funny at all in Japanese. In order to resolve this problem, some Japanese theatrical adaptations of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* have changed the species of the animal into which Bottom is transformed. The octopus (tako) and Japanese raccoon dog (tanuki) are two animals into which Bottom is transformed in Japanese productions, as they are considered 'funny animals' with rich folklore backgrounds and most Japanese audience members are very familiar with them. These productions have successfully translated animal imagery in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* using Japanese folk tradition.

Racialized Ecologies of Tragedy: Thomas Rymer and *Othello* (Jennifer Waldron)

In his *Short View of Tragedy* (1693), Thomas Rymer famously rails against the significance of the "trifle" of the handkerchief in Shakespeare's Othello: "Why was not this call'd the *Tragedy of the Handkerchief*?" Rymer's charge that Shakespeare's plot is both improbable and unfit for tragedy turns on the imperative of correctly valuing the handkerchief as a mere object: it is "so remote a trifle, no Booby, on this side Mauritania, cou'd make any consequence from it."

As Ian Smith has shown, Rymer's comments link Othello to the handkerchief in terms that dismiss both as mere "trifles" within a European racial economy. This essay proposes that the centrality of a piece of fabric to Rymer's critical apparatus is no accident even as he mocks its place in Shakespeare's plot. As with the jealous fantasies of Leontes in the *Winter's Tale*, nothing in this play can shake the "fabric" of Othello's "folly" (1.2.429)—the fictitious story of adultery that Iago cuts from whole cloth. Early modern audiences, however, had the opportunity to judge this fabricated story of adultery from a distance, as a product of Iago's skilled work. The contrast between the audience's view of this fiction-as-object and Othello's confusion of the two thus reinforces the ideological demands of early modern race that Smith outlines. To state the problem in its most extreme form, Rymer represents a powerful critical legacy in which those deemed unable to see through fictions as "mere" fabrications are dismissed as object-like themselves.

'Marble-constant': Race and geology in *Antony and Cleopatra* (Sally Barnden)

In this paper I consider Shakespeare's use of minerals (such as alabaster, marble, ivory, and silver) to connote whiteness in relation to the racialised geology of *Antony and Cleopatra*, which contrasts the monumental permanence of Rome with the seasonal, shifting silts of the

Nile. I discuss the play's interest in marble forms and their relationship to the privileges of whiteness, especially as contrasted with the unsettlingly mobile territory of Egypt, characterised by mud, slime, silt, and quicksand. The stony language associated with Antony's second wife Octavia, described as more 'a statue than a breather' (3.3.21), identify her body with a Roman ideal whose value is called into question in the sensual and fertile environment of Cleopatra's Egypt. But Cleopatra's relationship to whiteness is not stable, and her whitening or whitewashing both in performance and in the play's text has been widely observed, for example by Francesca Royster and David Sterling Brown. Focusing on the play's geological language, I suggest that Cleopatra aspires not necessarily to Octavia's 'swan's-down' pigmentation but rather to her stony immobility. Retreating to her monument, Cleopatra declares herself 'marble-constant' and seeks out the bite of the asp (a creature of Nilus' slime) to preserve herself as a sculptural corpse rather than as a mobile exhibit following Caesar's chariot or a puppet 'uplift[ed]' to please Roman crowds. I suggest that *Antony and Cleopatra*'s use of stony imagery to connect race, mobility, and geology echoes a broader preoccupation in Shakespeare's works linking whiteness to minerals; for instance, the pale marble characterising Shakespeare's Rome is akin to the white chalk cliffs which act as synecdoche for the English border in *King John* and *King Lear*.

S20.
Shakespeare and the Luso-Hispanic Planet

Organisers: John Stone, Deanne Williams

Description: This seminar welcomes work exploring all aspects of Shakespeare and the Luso-Hispanic world, including a) the reading and performance of Shakespeare and his contemporaries in Spain, Portugal, and the Luso-Hispanic world, b) Spanish, Portuguese, and Luso-Hispanic influences on the work and performance of Shakespeare and his contemporaries, c) other forms of dialogue about Shakespeare and the performance of Shakespeare on the Iberian peninsula and in the broader Luso-Hispanic world, from the early modern period to the present day, d) Shakespeare's role in the dialogue between English-speaking diasporas and Hispanic and Lusophone cultures in the territories where they settled.

***The Tempest* and Anglo-Portuguese Relations (Dennis Austin Britton)**
In this paper, I hope to work through my suspicion that the Portuguese are very much *behind the scenes* in *The Tempest.* I wonder what thinking more intently about Anglo-Portuguese relations might do to our understanding of the play and its treatment of race, colonialism, and slavery. Although the Iberian Union (1580 to 1640) strained Anglo-Portuguese relations, the "perpetual friendship" between the English and Portuguese—ratified in the 1373 Anglo-Portuguese Treaty—remained in English memory, and because of the centuries-long friendship between the English and Portuguese, the English were very much invested in the succession crises that lead to the Iberian Union. Elizabeth I supported António, Prior of Crato's claim to the Portuguese crown, and António accompanied Francis Drake and John Norris on the 1589 English Armada to Lisbon. Additionally, the first English settlements in North America relied on Portuguese navigational expertise: Walter Raleigh's first and second voyages to Roanoke Island (1585 and 1587) were piloted by a Portuguese Protestant convert, Simão Fernandes, who immigrated to England. Along with these, Michele de Montaigne's *Of Cannibals,* which we know Shakespeare read, considers reports of cannibalism practiced by the Tupinambá people in the land the Portuguese renamed *Brasil*. I plan to examine Shakespeare's "Portuguese" sources within the context of Anglo-Portuguese relations and the translation of Portuguese texts into English.

The Reduction of Caliban: Imperialist Ethno-poetics and *The Tempest* (Eric Griffin)
Whereas critical studies have tended to conceive *The Tempest* as projecting contemporary English colonial desires, predictive of a British imperial future, or as expressing a more universal (post)colonial condition, this paper will explore Shakespeare's romance as a condensation of imperial precedents that had unfolded during the era of Spanish Hapsburg expansion. So as to situate the text within the transoceanic world to which it plainly alludes, I will compare several of the play's dramatic actions with those represented in store on the ornate plateresque façade of Casa Montejo, a civic artefact dating to the mid-sixteenth century that remains at extant in the colonial center of Mérida, Yucatán. By putting the symbology deployed at Casa Montejo in conversation with *The Tempest*, I hope to reveal aspects of both the monumental façade and the play heretofore underexplored in literary and cultural criticism.

Callad y disimulad – Prophecy and Casuistry in *Henry VIII* and *La cisma de Inglaterra* (Philip Lorenz)
In *Democracy and the Foreigner*, the political philosopher, Bonnie Honig, asks whether democracy could be said to have something like a genre. Arguing that "most democratic theorists approach the texts they interpret through the mode of romance," Honig identifies within political theory in general and democracy in particular a desire for a happy ending. My contribution to WSC 2026 takes Honig's question regarding political form and genre as its point of departure. Slightly modifying our seminar's cfp regarding "other forms of dialogue about Shakespeare and …performance in the broader Luso-Hispanic world," my intervention focuses on the dramatization of what I'm calling baroque or theo-political reason in relation to violence in the two "schism" plays, Shakespeare's *Henry VIII* (1613), and Calderón de la Barca's *La cisma de Inglaterra* (1627?). In place of political theory and genre, my essay turns to the relationship – or to the question of the relationship – between political theology and tragedy. At the heart of this exploration lies Cranmer's prophecy in *Henry VIII* and Mary Tudor's swearing-in scene in *La cisma.* If, as Claude Lefort has argued, the problem of political theology is the problem of a historical "tragedy," then how is that tragedy staged and processed in what could be called Shakespeare's and Calderón's two "[state of] exception" plays?

***Richard III* Arrives in Spain (Jennifer Ruiz-Morgan)**
In Spain during the mid-1830s Romantic drama took the stage by storm. The vogue for the depiction of elevated passions and heightened feelings strongly contributed to an unprecedented interest in Shakespeare's *Richard III*. In Spain the larger-than-life figure of Richard was overshadowed by his two innocent nephews (the young Princes), and their alleged deaths at the Tower of London. This is the focus of the first Spanish adaptation of *Richard III*, *Los hijos de Eduardo* (1835) by Manuel Bretón de los Herreros, a translation from the French of Casimir Delavigne's *Les Enfants d'Édouard* (1833). *Los hijos de Eduardo* holds a special position in the reception of Shakespeare in Spain, as it constitutes the first history play in the Spanish corpus of Shakespearean texts. Since its premiere in Madrid in 1835, it was revived onstage over a period of twenty years, paving the way for subsequent spin-offs from de los Herrerros's adaptation. This paper focuses on the unexpected curiosity and great fascination that *Richard III* had for Romantic writers and theatregoers alike. By examining in detail not only the text of *Los hijos de Eduardo*, but also its impact on the contemporary press, this paper seeks to explore the origin of Spain's Romantic furore for *Richard III*.

Spain and the "Other" First Folio (John Stone)
The discovery of First Folios in Scotland and in France in the 2010s made both international headlines and a considerable scholarly splash. The French copy was of special interest to

students of the culture of recusancy, as various ownership marks associate the copy with St-Omer's English Jesuit College: like the famous Valladolid Second Folio, the St-Omer folio was censored and expurgated by the Inquisition. But it is not the oldest folio of early modern English plays to appear in a recusant collection, nor is the Valladolid folio the oldest English drama in Spain. This paper discusses two copies of that "other" first folio—the *1616 Workes of Beniamin Ionson*—which were present in Spanish collections by 1759 (one in private hands, now at the Universitat de Barcelona; one at the Valladolid English College, inspected there in 1641). They feature abundant inscriptions, with the Barcelona copy boasting Spanish-language marginalia, and that at Valladolid a bilingual ex libris. The fact that the Barcelona copy was owned, successively, by a Spaniard of Irish ancestry (in 1759) and a Spanish family whose chaplain was Irish (c. 1800) raises questions about diasporic book history; and the contrasting interventions of the Holy Office in the Valladolid Jonson and Shakespeare folios make it worth asking if Shakespeare was flagged in some sense, and Jonson not, before the inquisitorial ink well and scissors got to work.

Reading *The Two Noble Kinsmen* in Madrid (Deanne Williams)
In Summer 2020, John Stone announced his discovery of a 1634 quarto edition of Shakespeare and Fletcher's *The Two Noble Kinsmen*. Now held at the Royal Scots College of Salamanca, Spain, the quarto is bound together with eleven other early modern English dramatic quartos, in an early seventeenth-century English, and possibly even Scottish, binding. Although it doesn't have a title on its binding, the volume is listed as "Comedias y Tragedias en Ynglès" in the 1767 college book inventory. This paper considers how *The Two Noble Kinsmen* was read by young Jesuit seminarians in mid-to-late seventeenth-century Madrid, which is where the college was housed until the 1767 Jesuit expulsion from Spain. I will explore the ways in which the play itself would have resonated with them, as readers, but also what the act of reading Shakespeare signified, to them as Catholics, Jesuits, Scots, and members of a small but active English-reading diaspora within Spain. I will also place *The Two Noble Kinsmen* in conversation with the other early modern English plays collected in the volume, proposing that they may be understood, in different ways, as the product of an élite, English education: one designed to produce the kind of ideal gentlemen represented by *Two Noble Kinsmen*'s Palamon and Arcite.

S21.
Shakespeare and the Musical Planet

Organisers: Alina Bottez, Michelle Assay, David Fanning

'Shakespeare and the Musical Planet' considers the multi-faceted field of 'Shakespeare and Music' in tandem with such polarities as 'global vs local' and 'art vs popular'. Employing a cross-cultural range of inter- and cross-disciplinary approaches, this seminar examines both Shakespeare's use of music and later musical responses to Shakespeare (Music in Shakespeare and Shakespeare in Music), probing along the way such notions as the 'universality' of Shakespeare as well as pluralist universes of Shakespeare as reflected in music.

The Greatest *Hamlet* that Never Was (Michelle Assay and David Fanning)
This is the story of the Moscow Art Theatre's production of *Hamlet* that was rehearsed and prepared from 1939-1944. This production brought together some of the most prominent cultural figures of the Soviet Union, including Vissarion Shebalin who provided the incidental music, Pasternak who prepared at least ten different versions of translation of the tragedy, and Nemirovich-Danchenko who picked up the project after Meyerhold was arrested and executed.

Despite more than 500 rehearsal the production was never premiered. Along the way the production created a myth regarding Stalin's supposed ban of *Hamlet* which still persists and dominates Western and Russian media and scholarship. An archival-based close study of the real story behind this production not only unveils what could potentially make an important addition to the repertoire of Soviet music setting of Shakespeare but also summarises facts and features of Wartime cultural life in Moscow. This paper traces the fate of this production while analysing Shebalin's music in the context of the production and of the composer's other Shakespeare settings, including his incidental music to a post-Stalin *Hamlet* (1957) and his opera *The Taming of the Shrew*.

Sonic Adaptation and Cultural Appropriation: Localized Music and Soundscapes in Moda Sahnesi's Shakespeare Productions (Zeynep Fatma Bilge)
This paper explores how the Turkish private theatre company Moda Sahnesi's [Moda Stage] productions of Shakespeare, particularly *Macbeth*, employ localized musical languages as acts of sonic adaptation that complicate Shakespeare's global circulation and cultural appropriation. Rather than treating Shakespeare as a universal musical source, these productions foreground the politics of reading, translating, and re-signifying a canonical text through culturally specific sound practices in contemporary Türkiye. Positioned at the intersection of Shakespeare, music, and adaptation studies, this paper argues that Moda Sahnesi's musical strategies function as counter-appropriations: they reclaim Shakespeare through localized sonic vocabularies that negotiate between art and popular culture, and between global prestige and local cultural memory. In *Macbeth*, for instance, Mustafa Avcı's music and sound design operate as a form of sonic adaptation that appropriates Shakespeare's tragedy into a localized auditory regime, where sparse rhythms, breath-based vocalization, and percussive textures evoke both ritual and political anxiety. This study suggests that these productions challenge narratives of cultural universality and highlight adaptation as an ongoing process of appropriation, resistance, and transformation. It argues that Moda Sahnesi's productions construct plural musical planets in which Shakespeare is neither passively inherited nor simply localized but actively re-authored through sound. In doing so, the paper contributes to cross-cultural debates on Shakespeare, music, and appropriation, demonstrating how localized musical adaptation produces situated, contested, and politically resonant Shakespearean worlds.

Planetary Afterlives of the Star-Crossed Lovers: Religion in the Musical Adaptations of *Romeo and Juliet* (Alina Bottez)
Shakespeare's oeuvre thrives through what Bolter and Grusin call remediation and Charles Suhor transmediation. This paper analyses the religious stances in the play and then shows how opera, symphony, musical theatre, and film music have been adapting the veteran Elizabethan drama since the eighteenth century. The wide international scope of the play's afterlives extends to Germany, Italy, France, Britain, Romania, and the United States. The main approach of the study is comparative and relies on the history of mentalities within the field of adaptation studies. As Linda Hutcheon contends, adaptation is fashioned by cultural context, theatrical conventions, social and political factors, and reception. The confusing religious configuration of Shakespeare's England, presented in detail by Stephen Greenblatt in *Will in the World* (2005), is reinterpreted kaleidoscopically. The paper will demonstrate, for instance, that Berlioz and Gounod reread it according to staunch Catholicism in nineteenth-century France, while Bernstein's *West Side Story* moves the action to New York in the mid-50's, where the Capulets and Montagues are replaced with rival Polish and Puerto Rican gangs, and religion with cultural identity. Thus, Shakespeare's play becomes a common legacy open to planetary reinterpretation.

The Universal Appeal of "Greensleeves" and "Shakespeare": Charting the Planetary Intersections between the Music and the Poet (Cheryl A. Eagan-Donovan)

Registered with the Stationer's Office in London in 1580 by printer and publisher Richard Jones, "Greensleeves" has become one of the most enduring tunes in the Western world, surpassing its initial Elizabethan popularity in contemporary adaptations and modern interpretations. What is the connection between this beloved song and the playwright William Shakespeare? Why did he include a very specific reference to the song in *The Merry Wives of Windsor* and another allusion to the tune in *Twelfth Night?* How do the known relationships between Jones and Shakespeare's contemporaries, including Marlowe and Nashe, help us understand the influence and origins of the work? What can we discern about the Italian sources of the music and their importance to Shakespeare? This paper will chart these intersections and determine how the playwright/poet and composer/lyricist inform, imagine, and reflect one another. The composer of "Greensleeves" remains unknown. Speculation about its authorship includes the myth that Henry VIII wrote the song for Anne Boleyn. Although this theory has been dismissed as anachronistic, the lyrics continue to inspire analysis to determine the relationship between the writer and the lover. Variations of the musical arrangement run the "gamut" from jazz, pop, and rock to traditional folk and classical renditions. In our exploration of the song, its structure, and forms including the *romanesca,* the *passamezzo antico*, and Andalusian cadences, we will seek the components of timelessness that characterize great music and literature, the inherent relationship between the two, and what is revealed about Shakespeare's knowledge of music.

Shakespeare and Progressive Jazz (Douglas Mercer Lanier)

My paper will concern how progressive jazz has appropriated Shakespeare as one of its recurrent touchstones, not merely in titles of compositions but in the content of the music. This type of appropriation serves not only to situate this genre of music more firmly in the international cultural mainstream for which Shakespeare is a potent symbol. It provides this music with a familiar narrative and emotional content that is otherwise challenging for the listener to discern. Noting that references to Othello and Desdemona are especially prominent in the titles of these works, I argue that the appropriation of Othello in particular works to reassert a link between the music and specifically black experience, a connection which, some music critics have suggested, is otherwise troublingly absent. My analysis will take an extended look at compositions by George Russell, Uri Caine, and Roberto Bonati, among others.
This essay is a follow-up to my article "Jazzing up Shakespeare," on Duke Ellington's Such Sweet Thunder, published in Borrowers and Lenders.

Word as Music and Movement Shakespeare 400th Anniversary on the Georgian Stage (David Maziashvili)

The Rustaveli National Theatre of Georgia marked the 400th anniversary of Shakespeare's death in 2016 with the Georgian female choreographer of contemporary ballet Mariam Aleksidze's choreographic fantasia *Shakespeare.Love*. Like Hamlet's "to be, or not to be" dilemma, the performance has a dual musical narrative: Mozart on the one hand and Cage on the other. One expresses the metaphysical side, while the other – the physical side of the universe. As Mariam Aleksidze put it, Mozart expresses the inexpressible through his music. It is worth noting that in the performance Mozart's music is played from a recording, as though coming from afar, flowing towards us from space, while Cage is performed live, since these sounds are played here, with us, within us, on the stage of our world. Shakespeare's sonnets recited by two great British actors, Alan Rickman and Sir John Gilgud, are played during the performance in their original language, which is a concept chosen by the choreographer, since the sonnets in the performance are important not only due to their content but also to their verbal musicality, as

the music of words in itself carries significance and essence. This is precisely why the performance ends with Shakespeare's Sonnet 130 – recited by Alan Rickman and a pensive Creator as Being-Shakespeare-Love – and a Biblical allusion. Throughout the performance, the audience hears music-like words that create life, that is – movement! This is how Mariam Aleksidze's individual style is born when word meaning and shape transform into music, while choreographic compositions created from the music of a word turn into contemporary ballet.

Reconfiguring Falstaff for the Operatic Stage: Salieri's Falstaff and Shakespearean Afterlives (Yuriko Takahashi)
Falstaff is seldom positioned as a heroic centre in Shakespeare's plays, yet he repeatedly emerges as a focal figure in operatic adaptation. Few Shakespearean characters have generated such sustained interest beyond their original dramatic contexts, yet the early musical circumstances that enabled Falstaff to be foregrounded on the operatic stage have received comparatively little attention. An important early instance of this process can be found in Antonio Salieri's *Falstaff, ossia Le tre burle* (1799), composed in Vienna at the end of the eighteenth century. Focusing on this work, this paper considers how—and to what extent—Falstaff could serve as a dramatic focus within an operatic context capable of sustaining audience engagement at this historical moment. This paper focuses on musical dramaturgy, examining how character is articulated through the organisation of action, vocal interaction, and ensemble-based writing. Rather than isolating Falstaff as a singular operatic subject, Salieri's score situates him within a dynamic network of voices, allowing dramatic agency to emerge collectively through musical form. Read in this light, *Falstaff, ossia Le tre burle* offers a case study of how Shakespearean material was reshaped under specific historical and musical conditions at the end of the eighteenth century. Such an approach sheds light on one mode of operatic adaptation in which character, action, and musical structure interact, contributing to a clearer understanding of Shakespeare's afterlife in music.

S22.
Shakespeare and the New Psychoanalysis

Organisers: Catherine Bates, James W. Stone

Recent publications on Shakespeare manifest a renewed interest in psychoanalysis after many years of silence. This seminar invites dialogue with all forms of psychoanalysis and its critics in order to interrogate Shakespeare's treatment of sex and gender, race, social customs, history, trauma, and the construction and dissolution of the self. Ecocriticism, adaptation studies and presentism (including fans on social networks), and colonizations and their aftermath will be on the analytical table. Historicism and cognitive psychology mounted opposition to psychoanalysis over the decades, and global contexts and planetary networks may contest its provincialism and Eurocentrism. How are psychoanalytic Shakespeareans responding?

Narcissistic Injury and the Collapse of the Imaginary in Othello (Yağmur Ateş)
This paper offers a Lacanian reading of Othello through the relationship between narcissistic injury and the collapse of the Imaginary order in Othello's subjectivity. Rather than treating Othello's jealousy as a simple moral failure, the paper argues that the tragedy develops through the breakdown of the fragile self-image on which Othello depends for his sense of stability, authority, and desirability. Drawing on the theories of Jacques Lacan, particularly the Imaginary, misrecognition, and the gaze, this paper examines how Othello's identity is shaped through external recognition and through the desire of the *Other*. Within this framework, Iago

is read not only as a manipulative figure but also as someone who gradually wounds the structures supporting Othello's fragile sense of self. Othello's dependence on being recognized and validated by others becomes more apparent as he becomes more obsessed with Desdemona's desire. Therefore, his breakdown reveals the instability that lies beneath the self-image he maintains throughout the play. As a figure admired yet never fully accepted within Venetian society, Othello experiences recognition as conditional and unreliable. This racialized otherness makes the collapse of the Imaginary closely connected to questions of belonging and selfhood. Finally, this paper suggests that jealousy in Othello serves more as a signal of a deep psychological breakdown than as the main triggering point of the tragedy.

The Confusion of Tongues in a Tale of Woe: 'Juliet and her Romeo' (Vera J. Camden)
Drawing upon Sandor Ferenczi's essay "Confusion of Tongues Between Adults and the Child," this essay considers the significance of the age of brides—whether of Juliet herself, her mother, or the other "ladies of esteem/ [that] Are made already mothers" in Shakespeare's tragedy of *Romeo and Juliet.* The play makes explicit how Juliet, as an imagined bride is conjured variously by adults in the play, confusing, in Ferenczi's terms, her own imagining. Ferenczi's description of the imposition of sexual/social knowledge that prevents and precludes normal development provides context for my discussion of Juliet's desire, despair, and longing for death as protective trajectory, designed to preserve her true self. From a psychoanalytic perspective, the fault is not, so to speak, in the crossed stars of the two teenagers, but in the planetary strife of--and within--their parents' selves.

Psychoanalysis, Cognitive Science, or Social History? Symbolic Economies of Hypnagogic Sleep in *Cymbeline* (Jordi Coral)
Innogen's bedchamber scene has been described as enacting "the instant of the gaze". The nighttime intrusion into private space, the prurient male voyeurism, and the unconscious conflicts it reveals along with the play's manifold transfers and supplantings have attracted a great deal of psychoanalytic attention from, in particular, feminist critics. In these readings, the audience becomes complicit in the ocular violation of a vulnerably exposed woman that renders problematic the very act of watching on which theatrical illusion depends for its existence. In contrast, this paper builds on recent scholarship on early modern bedtime devotion in order to argue that Jacobean audiences would perceive Innogen's bedroom primarily through the lens of "sleep-piety"—the household rituals and routine pious practices that stemmed from the perception of one's bed as an image of the grave. However, in so doing, the paper does not seek to pit psychoanalysis against historicist readings of literary texts. Instead, it argues that Shakespeare's engagement with the psychodynamics of nocturnal sleepers developed his theological insight into the transformative potential of the night as a distinctive temporality. The analysis of the scene as a subtly detailed recreation of a liminal sleep-inducive environment—hypnagogic states, nyctophobia, microdreams, and the loosening of cognitive constraints–shows that in *Cymbeline* Shakespeare discovers what may be called "the eschatological unconscious". The play thus challenges readers and spectators to see eternity in an unseasonable instant of the passing night.

"Will it consume me? Let me see it, then": Desiring Overwhelm in *Titus Andronicus* (Drew Daniel)
Unflinching in its representations of human beings in extremis, "Titus Andronicus" constitutes an *overwhelming* object of aesthetic provocation. The play overwhelms readers and spectators, pressing them towards private and collective thresholds of endurance, as they witness waves of onstage harm, grief and cruelty overwhelm the figures suffering upon the stage. What does it mean to want to read or see "Titus Andronicus"? Is that desire a desire to be overwhelmed or

a desire to be destroyed? How do spectatorial pleasure and sado-masochistic fantasy operate here? I think some possible answers to these questions might be found in Avgi Saketopolou's *Sexuality Beyond Consent: Risk, Race, Traumatophilia* (NYU Press, 2023). In this book, the analyst offers an account of "overwhelm" as an interim in which a subject, caught between the breakdown and the re-construction of the ego on either side of experiences of "limit consent" are taken beyond their own desire. By allowing us to "touch the drive," states of overwhelm offer an opportunity to replace "traumatophobia"- a reactive psychic script seeking to disavow harm and damage-- with, instead, a "traumatophilia"- a stance of "exigent sadism" capable of consciously choosing to repeat and re-enact acts of harm, re-wiring the subject's desire in the process. Can we control our decisions to lose control of ourselves? What conjunctions are possible between early modern faculty psychology and psychoanalytic drive theory? While space prohibits a full reading of the play, I hope to test the affordances of Saketopolou's thinking by bringing her analysis to bear upon the poetics of overwhelm as they surface in key scenes within the play.

(Akiko Ikeda)
In *Measure for Measure*, the Duke's withdrawal from visible governance and disguise as the friar offer a sustained inquiry into authority, ethics, and moral responsibility. By governing through surveillance and manipulation rather than ethical engagement, the Duke refuses mutual recognition and disavows his affective implication. This paper argues that his rule exemplifies a form of detached authority that becomes relationally immoral. First, drawing on Stephen Mitchell's relational theory and Jessica Benjamin's account of intersubjective recognition, I argue that the immorality of the Duke's rule does not arise from asymmetrical power itself, but his refusal to acknowledge his involvement in the relational field. Then, Robin West's ethic of care offers a contrasting model grounded in responsiveness, vulnerability, and accountability—qualities the Duke persistently evades. Finally, through a Jungian lens informed by Hayao Kawai's precision of the shadow, I examine how the Duke's unacknowledged moral impulses are projected outward under the guise of order and benevolence, producing harm—most notably suffered by Isabella. In this way, *Measure for Measure* interrogates whether justice exercised without relational exposure can ever be ethically legitimate.

The Gaze, Shame and Shamelessness in *Antony and Cleopatra* (Lucy Hurst)
Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra* has been described by Curtis Brown Watson as 'almost a study in shame', and recent psychoanalytic criticism has also explored the play's treatment of scatology (Daniel, 2024), gender subversion (Stone, 2010) and spiritual shame (Fernie, 2002). Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick argues that shame 'mantles the threshold between introversion and extroversion, between absorption and theatricality, between performativity and –performativity' and in Shakespeare's play it also mantles the threshold between Egypt and Rome, pleasure and humiliation. *Antony and Cleopatra* imagines a shameless culture through Antony and Cleopatra's shared delight of one another, counterbalanced by an ever-present fear of public exposure and disgrace. Antony's fantasy of being 'window'd in great Rome', […] his face subdued / To penetrative shame' captures this tension: he is no longer a 'subject' but becomes the 'object' of a Lacanian hostile consuming gaze. Drawing on Lacan and Sartre's model of the gaze's subject-object split, alongside recent queer theoretical work by Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, Leo Bersani and Lauren Berlant, I ask: what political and gender-freeing possibilities emerge from being shameless, and what impulses or mechanisms compel Antony to endure shame? This paper thus approaches shame as a process of identity formation, resistance and a political act of expanding the self.

Primal and Typological Scenographies in *Hamlet* (Zackariah Long)
Among the more interesting developments in early modern literary and cultural studies since the new millennium is the emergence of a small but growing body of work done under the aegis of "psychotheology." As suggested by the moniker, psychotheology focuses on points of intersection between dimensions of experience traditionally treated separately under one or the other terms of its namesake. In early modern literary studies, such analyses have struck different balances between these two disciplinary affiliations. One strand of criticism has leaned mostly in the theological direction, lightly drawing on psychoanalytic concepts but primarily grounding analysis within early modern religious frameworks. Another strand has leaned in the opposite direction, granting psychoanalytic frameworks interpretive priority while explicating early modern religious dynamics. Meanwhile, a third strand has attempted to honor both methodological impulses by probing conceptual formations where the terms of analysis from each discipline interpenetrate. This essay joins this lattermost strand by mapping some shared genetic material between a modern psychoanalytic concept–the notion of primal fantasies–and an early modern theological concept–typology–as it finds expression in *Hamlet*. Previous critical treatments of this psychotheological interface have mostly focused on the play's preoccupation with the observation of parental coitus and its typological resonance with original sin. While this scenography is obviously important, I believe it has overshadowed an equally critical scenography to which the play repeatedly links it: the primal scene of seduction typologically associated with the serpent's temptation of Eve. Through an analysis of the dumb show, I trace how seduction and observation are chiastically linked, and how a grasp of the seduction side of this dyad has important implications for our understanding of the play's eschatological horizon.

Interpreting Hamlet's Pregnant Silences: Freud, Nietzsche, Benjamin, Lacan (Björn Quiring)
In Shakespeare's "Hamlet", the protagonist frequently and eloquently refers to his own taciturnity and to the fundamental insights into the ways of the world that this silence conceals from his interlocutors. It is partly due to this emphasis on a pivotal inaccessibility that the play has provoked numerous philosophical and psychoanalytical interpretations. One of the most prominent is that of Lacan, which focuses on Hamlet's struggle with the task of assuming a symbolic mandate, a place from which to speak. Lacan expands and revises Freud's oedipal reading of the play, under the assumption that human desire is always the desire of the Other and that therefore Hamlet's fundamental problem is not his desire for his mother, but his tortured relation to his mother's own desires. Nietzsche in "The Birth of Tragedy" and Walter Benjamin in "Origin of the German Trauerspiel" also have dealt with Hamlet's loquacious refusal to communicate; and their interpretations, while problematic, can contribute to the discussion, when they are brought into dialogue with psychoanalytical interpretations, as well as with one another. In the resultant reading, Hamlet emerges as a rather sinister figuration of modern subjectivity, perhaps prefiguring the reactionary mindset that is delineated in Klaus Theweleit's "Male Fantasies".

S23.
Shakespeare in the Cloud(s)

Organisers: Maria Elisa Montironi, Reto Winckler

Description: Shakespeare in the cloud(s) interrogates categories of temporality and spatiality in relation to digital Shakespeares in the form of performances, editing practices, adaptations, appropriations, community building, AI-revivifications, memes and more and explores their

aesthetic and political implications. Challenging definitions of locality and globality and attendant notions of universality in the face of digital imperialism and ecological crises, the seminar invites contributors to wrestle with the difficult questions raised by the apparent time- and placelessness of Shakespeare in the digital sphere.

Teaching Shakespeare in the Age of AI (Deborah Jayne Martens)
This paper examines how generative AI can shape creative engagement with Shakespeare in the secondary classroom and proposes teaching strategies that have been adopted for managing the risks that accompany its use. While AI tools can support imaginative rewriting, and exploratory interpretation, they also tend to flatten Shakespeare's linguistic complexity, reproduce bland, rote responses that obscure real learning, engagement and enjoyment. As early adopters of AI in the classroom I will demonstrate that challenge is not to ban AI but to frame it as an object of inquiry. I will share structured strategies such as comparative close reading, reflective commentary, and scaffolded tasks—that help students recognise the limitations of AI outputs and use them as prompts for deeper engagement. A case study will be shared to demonstrate this. By foregrounding critical reflection, our teachers are finding that they can guide students to move beyond automated imitation toward more thoughtful understanding. Integrating AI responsibly can strengthen Shakespeare pedagogy. It does this by making the processes of interpretation, revision, and creative decision-making more visible to students. As a result, educators can better combine meaningful literary study with the enjoyment of Shakespeare's texts, even within the strict requirements of state testing curricula.

Neurocosmopolitan Futures: The Living "Hamlet" Edition (Emily Rose Nicholls)
This paper outlines a neurocosmopolitan framework for reading and editing *Hamlet* and presents a prototype for a born-digital scholarly edition: the Living "Hamlet" Edition. Drawing on neurodiversity theory (Walker; Savarese) and cultural cosmopolitanism (Gilroy; Derrida; Spivak; Appiah), neurocosmopolitanism brings neurological and cognitive difference into the ethical field of interpretation, collaboration, and care. Applied to *Hamlet*, it supports an accessibility-first model of digital editing in which the interface and scholarly apparatus are designed for neurodiverse use from inception, rather than adapted from print conventions. The Living "Hamlet" Edition aims to expand access and scholarly engagement while reactivating the collaborative and modular compositional conditions of Shakespearean playmaking (Massai; Palfrey and Stern). Prototyped and proposed features include non-linear navigation, synoptic alignment of Q1, Q2, and F with interactive facsimiles, adaptive annotation, and a 'critical lens' mode that foregrounds editorial cruxes and records ongoing debate. Conceived as a continuously evolving environment, the edition preserves access to early texts while documenting and continuing transhistorical and transcultural participation in *Hamlet*'s afterlives. Without sacrificing scholarly rigour, the project redistributes interpretive and archival authority from a single editor or press to a transparent, attributable, and neurodiverse network of scholars, practitioners, students, and readers.

Hatching Timelessness for Shakespeare and his European contemporaries in the EMOTHE Digital Library (Jesús Tronch Pérez)
This paper deals with some technical challenges (and some economic and ideological implications) of having Shakespeare in the "cloud" of the EMOTHE Digital library of early modern European theatre based at the Universitat de València. Part of the publicly funded EMOTHE Project, this open-access Library offers encoded electronic texts of a selection of plays of early modern Italian, French, Spanish, Portuguese and English theatre, in modernized editions, together with selected translations (also in parallel-text viewing) and some adaptations. Warned by the software obsolescence of Shakespeare digital projects such The

Shakespeare Quarto Archive or Internet Shakespeare Editions (the latter being remediated and re-encoded at the LEMDO platform), we are hatching a plan to make this Library less dependent on technologies that may compromise its digital sustainability (following the principles of The Endings Project) while struggling to convince our public university to assume the technical maintenance of the hosting servers and of the website. Thus, we plan to replace its proprietary relational database application with a free and open-source system, and to rewrite the Library as a static website with less server-dependent scripting. These efforts will not result in long-term benefits unless institutions understand that funds and resources for digital humanities projects should not be exclusively directed to innovation but also to long-lasting (if not timeless) functionality and preservation.

GenAI Shakespeare (Reto Winckler)
Generative AI (GenAI) transplants Shakespeare's works into a space of apparent time- and placelessness. Type a prompt about a Shakespeare play into one of the major AI chatbots, and the AI produces a response to your liking - be it summary, explanation, translation, adaptation, or even scholarly inquiry - in just a few seconds. The variety of different texts that GenAI is able to produce is often astounding. The same is true of the quality of the texts themselves, which, as many studies have shown, cannot be reliably distinguished from human-created texts even by experts in the relevant fields. In this explorative paper, I will think about a few implications of this new way of encountering Shakespeare. As Lev Manovich has pointed out, GenAI is not a new medium in any straightforward sense - it is rather a mechanism for the statistical re-creation of pre-existing media forms, particularly text (see Bajohr 2025). On the one hand, I want to suggest that this statistical re-creation de-materializes Shakespeare, constituting a further step in the ongoing process of abstracting away from the material differences that exist in early modern editions and stage practices and towards an abstracted, artificially unified version of Shakespeare that makes the 20th century editions famously criticized by Leah Marcus and others look diverse by comparison. On the other, in its ever-different responses to prompts and thus ever-different re-presentations of Shakespeare, GenAI captures the dynamic quality of Shakespeare's playscripts, which were never meant to be fixed, definitive textual entities, but were rather born in the uncertain space between literature and performance. The paper will consider some facets of the intriguing, unnerving paradox constituted by GenAI Shakespeare.

Shakespearean Women, Digital Advertising, and the Politics of Online Reception (Maria Elisa Montironi)
This paper investigates "Shakespeare in the cloud(s)" by examining the digital staging of two of Shakespeare's most iconic female characters, Ophelia and Juliet, in contemporary digital advertising. Dislocated from their early modern theatrical contexts and reconfigured within the placeless, accelerated circuits of online consumer culture, these figures function as highly adaptable cultural signifiers whose meanings are continually renegotiated across platforms. Their online appropriations disrupt conventional understandings of temporality and spatiality, foregrounding new forms of Shakespearean presence and reception in the digital age. By analysing and categorising a corpus of marketing adaptations, the study identifies emerging modes of reception that reveal how digital media reshape the circulation, consumption, and cultural value of Shakespeare, and it interrogates how these evolving reinterpretations reconfigure Shakespeare's symbolic capital. To account for this distinctive form of digital literary afterlife, the paper maps the formal and discursive characteristics of these character reworkings and situates them at the intersection of adaptation studies, platform culture, and digital media theory. Particular attention is devoted to the aesthetic and political implications of such appropriations, examining the interplay between Shakespeare's perceived timelessness

and the commercial imperatives of digital imperialism. Ultimately, the paper argues that the commodification of Shakespearean women within digital advertising not only reshapes the cultural meanings attached to these characters but also reflects broader struggles over gender, cultural authority, and value production in contemporary digital culture.

S24.
Shakespeare in the Global Musical Opera: From Stage to Sound

Organisers: Elena Biggi Parodi, Adriana De Feo, Elena Abbado

This seminar will explore the pivotal role of Shakespeare in shaping global opera traditions, focusing on how his works have inspired composers, librettists, and performers across different cultures and historical periods. Participants will investigate a wide range of musical adaptations, from operas to ballets and contemporary compositions, examining how Shakespeare's themes and characters resonate in diverse musical languages. The seminar aims to foster interdisciplinary dialogue among scholars, musicians, and artists, encouraging new insights into the enduring influence of Shakespeare on world music and its role in the ongoing reinterpretation of his legacy.

Musicality in Kunqu Adaptation of *Macbeth — A Man's Woman* (Zhiyan Zhang)
Revered as the "Ancestor of a Hundred Operas" in China, Kunqu Opera was proclaimed a Masterpiece of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity by UNESCO in 2001. As the opera's "soul", musicality in Kunqu Opera constitutes a holistic, rule-bound and multi-sensory dramatic experience, which lies in its lyrical librettos, melodic templates, orchestral accompaniment and beat patterns. Kunqu Adaptation of Macbeth — A Man's Woman is a short experimental opera that centers on Lady Macbeth's handwashing scene, intertwined with flashbacks to Macbeth's three evolving identities, each played by a male performer of a different age. From Lady Macbeth's spectral presence to the haunting physical manifestations of her guilt expressed through water sleeve movements, every gesture of hers is fully choreographed to the music. The sweetness of love, underscored by the bamboo flute, gives way to the intense crash of a sharp "da!" on the drum — only to be abruptly interrupted by her sorrowful remorse, embodied in the fluttering of water sleeves. The repetitive refrain of "my love" by Lady Macbeth in the theme song, which also closes the opera, lends a pervading sorrow to the entire work. The phantomlike witches and Macbeths appear interchangeably in Lady Macbeth's fragmented memories; together with the three towering red chairs, her scarlet costume and bloodstained hands, they forge the image of a spectral yet pitiful figure — A man's woman!

The Significance of 2022 production of *Othello* at the Royal Opera House in Covent Garden (Jasmine Seymour)
The 2021-2022 season at the Royal Opera House in Covent Garden was special in several ways. In March 2022 ROH announced a series of fundraising events to support Disasters Emergency Committee providing humanitarian aid for Ukraine as victims of Russia's invasion. Also, the season included the revival of Keith Warner's production of Giuseppe Verdi's much-loved opera Otello. For the first time in the history of ROH, the role of Shakespeare's Moor was interpreted by a black singer, American tenor Russell Thomas. Yet the very first appearance of a black Othello in Covent Garden Theatre was as early as in April 1833, when Ira Aldridge replaced Edmond Kean in the role, when the famous tragedian took ill and died unexpectedly. Only three months before the adoption of Slavery Abolition Act by the Parliament, Aldrige's first appearance in London had mixed critical reaction. Nonetheless, Othello accompanied

Aldridge's career for decades to come. Having performed in lyric roles in festivals and prestigious opera stages across USA and Europe, it was Russell's second appearance at the Royal Opera in Covent Garden. Verdi's late opera, written at 73, culminated his life-long love affair with Shakespeare, the role of Othello being one of the most demanding parts for dramatic tenors. The paper aims to discuss the production from historical perspectives and reflect upon the significance of the first black Othello in Covent Garden almost 200 years after the legendary Ira Aldridge.

Shakespeare's *Othello* in Verdi's opera. Jealousy, hatred, or betrayal? (Dominique Porebska-Quasnik)
Introduction: *Othello*' s historical context of dramatic action. Act I set in Venice. Iago and Roderigo go to Brabantio's house and they seek to discredit the Moor, Othello, who has just received a summons to the Doge's court. Ottoman ships are threatening Cyprus and Othello is tasked with defending it. At the Act II, a violent storm has destroyed the Ottoman fleet and Iago sees this as an opportunity to put his plan into action. **Problematic: The true Iago's motivation**. The cause of the drama appears to be Iago's hatred and jealousy. Because he wasn't choiced as Othello's Lieutenant. (Act I, scene I, Iago: « I know my price, I am worth no worse a place…»). What is indeed the Iago's true motivation or goal? Research hypothesis: hatred or political treason? Iago's treason provocates Othello's death. Is it a revenge blind because death of the only hero capable of defending Cyprus against the Ottomans could lead to Venice Republic's downfall. Expected results: Verdi's opera traditionally onlights Iago's ambiguous attachment for Othello. But from Shakespeare to Verdi where is the true interpretation?

Authority and Harmony in *Diaomangongzhugangfuma*: Reimagining *The Taming of the Shrew* in Chinese Opera (Yuanwei Yin)
Diaomangongzhugangfuma (1984), a Chinese opera adaptation of *The Taming of the Shrew*, relocates Shakespeare's comedy from the sphere of household conflict to that of imperial authority and diplomatic order. In this shift, marriage ceases to function as a site where political power, court ritual, and moral discipline are negotiated. The adaptation's significance lies not only in its reconfiguration of plot and setting, but in the way Chinese operatic performance traditions reshape the play's meanings. Vocal delivery, percussive rhythm, stylised movement, and codified stage action do not merely present the plots of the play; they recast its emotional and ideological structure. Princess Fengxia/Katherina is redefined as intelligence, dignity, and political force, even as the opera ultimately reabsorbs her into a hierarchical order. Besides, the final reconciliation rearticulates harmony through a specifically Chinese operatic framework in which patriarchal restoration intersects with Buddhist-inflected ideas of moral transformation, release from worldly attachment, and renewed social order. *Diaomangongzhugangfuma* thus demonstrates that *The Taming of the Shrew* is not merely transferred into another cultural setting, but fundamentally redefined through the aesthetic and ethical logic of Chinese opera.

From an Elizabethan Comedy to a Viennese opera buffa: the Case of *Falstaff* by Salieri and De Franceschi (1799) (Adriana De Feo)
This paper examines the translation and adaptation of Shakespeare's *The Merry Wives of Windsor* into the first operatic version of the subject: *Falstaff*, *ossia Le tre burle* «dramma giocoso per musica in due atti» by Italian composer Antonio Salieri and librettist Carlo Prospero De Franceschi, which premiered in late 18th-century Vienna (1799). The analysis of the process by which Shakespeare's play was adapted and rewritten as an Italian operatic libretto is enriched by a comparison with the adaptation of another Shakespearean play into opera: Lorenzo Da Ponte's libretto *Gli equivoci*, a dramma buffo based on *The Comedy of*

Errors, set to music by the English composer Stephen Storace (Vienna, Burgtheater 1786). This investigation sheds light on how specific creative decisions transformed Shakespeare's words into lyrical form, reflecting contemporary Viennese tastes and operatic conventions during the fascinating period of transition between Enlightenment and Biedermeier.

Salieri's ability to create a form of "living musical theatre" in his opera comica *Falstaff* ossia le tre burle, based on De Franceschi's dramma giocoso, at the beginning of the Romantic era (Elena Biggi Parodi)

Composed in 1799, *Falstaff ossia le tre burle*, by Antonio Salieri, is not an experimental work, but rather a work of synthesis. The aim of this paper is to identify the stylistic features of this opera, which can be traced back to its earliest theatrical productions in the 1770s, including elements of Carlo Goldoni's musical theatre, as well as the French Gluckian influence. It also incorporates the musical conventions of opera seria alongside its playful disguise, combining Christoph Willibald Gluck's homorhythmic choral writing with the polyphony of the great comic finales of the 1780s, blending in its own way the linguistic codes of both opera seria and opera buffa. We know that Salieri used to read directly the texts from which his librettos were derived, carefully reflecting on the plot in an effort to express through music both the literary work underlying the libretto and the performative musical act that would bring about its theatrical effect. Salieri's skill in highlighting every nuance of the action succeeds in creating a living theatre, not far from the original spirit of Shakespeare's *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, which portrays a "little world" in which characters are "caught in their everyday attitudes." At the same time, it reflects the growing affirmation of the poetics of sentiment and the rise of Biedermeier thought—elements characteristic of its time.

Shakespeare's representation of femininity transposed in Italian opera: the Case of Romeo and Juliet from Zingarelli to Bellini (Elena Abbado)

This paper explores the reception history of Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* in Italian opera between 1796 and 1830 through an analysis of the femininity element. The subject of this investigation begins with *Giulietta e Romeo* by Nicola Zingarelli and Giuseppe Maria Foppa (Milan, 1796), and continues through Nicola Vaccai and Felice Romani's *Giulietta e Romeo* (Milan, 1825), whose libretto was subsequently set to music by Eugenio Torriani (Vicenza, 1828), right up to Vincenzo Bellini's *I Capuleti e i Montecchi* (Venice, 1830). Unlike the original context of Elizabethan theatre, in which the role of Juliet was *en travesti* performed by a male actor, the earliest Italian operas dedicated to this subject immediately highlighted the need for a high vocal register for Romeo. Zingarelli employed the castrato singer Girolamo Crescentini. However, the decline of castrato singers on stage, led Vaccai to cast a woman for the part of Romeo, thereby opting to have two female singers on stage, in contrast to the original performance context. Later Bellini, too, kept this *en travesti* part for his interest in high vocal registers. The paper will analyse the works in question as the final outcomes of a specific cultural context, represented by the Italian opera production system and contemporary society between 1796 and 1830. The characteristics of this output were shaped by many factors and practical constraints such as tight production schedules and the choice of the cast.

"The Blanket of the Dark": Shakespeare and the Power of Otherness in the Operas of John Adams, from *Nixon in China* (1987) to *Antony and Cleopatra* (2022) (Mathieu Duplay)

Shakespeare is very present in the operas of John Adams. *Antony and Cleopatra* (2022) is a reworking of Shakespeare's play. *Girls of the Golden West* (2017) incorporates selections from *Macbeth*. *Nixon in China*(1987) references Shakespeare when a ballet performance draws telling reactions from the American guests in an echo of *Hamlet*. *Why* Shakespeare – since

Adams seeks to give voice to the *American* experience? And *which* Shakespeare, as Adams's approach stresses the plays' unique resonance in the here and now? I argue that Shakespeare's strangeness is key. Adams's Shakespeare is a found object to which he turns for purposes of defamiliarization; seen as critical tools, the Shakespearean texts are valued for their disruptive force, not their supposed authority. Adams's Shakespeare speaks an alien tongue, English made inassimilable by the power of poetry, and uses it to write of dumbfounding otherness. Hence Adams's desire to respond to Shakespeare as a musician, by using non-verbal means to deal with his near-incomprehensible remoteness.

S25.
Shakespeare, Spirituality, and Universal Spaces for Encounter

Organisers: Marta Cerezo, Marguerite Tassi

Description: This seminar will reflect on unexplored religious and spiritual readings of Shakespeare which address the following issues: (1) Shakespeare's texts as 'universal' in the sense that they hold space for many different voices, and evoke communion and social cohesion, rather than supremacy; (2) 'spaces of encounter' taking shape in Shakespeare's texts themselves, but also outside them, such as religious, civic, cultural, natural and even digital locations where Shakespeare takes centre stage as evocation of a spirituality and ethics whose main values point to social reconciliation and fight against polarization and division. The seminar is open to all religious and spiritualities.

A mystic substance intuited': Sri Aurobindo and/on Shakespeare (Antonio Ballesteros González)

This contribution aims at analysing the presence and the inspiration of Shakespeare in the thoughts and the writings of Sri Aurobindo (1872-1950). This sage was one of the great intellectual and spiritual voices of modern India. Linguist, poet, translator, philosopher, yogi… he agglutinated multiple facets in his tireless and fruitful life, an epitome of transculturality and of the synthesis between the East and the West. Imbued with a vast culture, he was the author of a prolific oeuvre, with the highlights of his writings on yoga —he was the creator of what he called "supramental or integral yoga"—, on philosophy —*The Life Divine* (1914-1919)—, and on poetry. As a poet, he composed in blank verse the monumental epic *Savitri: A Legend and a Symbol* (1920-1950), still the longest poem in the English language, inspired by an episode of high theological value in the *Mahabharata*, where he describes from the perspective of the epic self his inner and autobiographical experience from a spiritual viewpoint. The impact of Shakespeare, whom he alludes to recurrently in his critical writings and letters, is essential on this colossal poem, the same as in the rest of his dramatic and poetical works.

Aurobindo compares the Bard with *Hyranyagarbha*, the luminous egg, the primordial energy that existed before the Creation itself began, being the origin of all creation. According to him, Shakespeare is a 'creative *ananda*': the extreme happiness of the life spirit, one of the highest states of being. This imaginative and motivating vein, instilled with spiritual nuances, pervades Aurobindo's writings. He ultimately considers Shakespeare a "vital creator and a seer of life" (in Sethna 1991: 67), one of the embodiments of what he called "Overhead poetry", which either deals with mystical and spiritual themes or brings out a "deeper something" which transcends the mental level (Sethna 1991: 81-82). Aurobindo identifies the highest plane in world literature as "the Overmind", the source of what in India has been revered as the *mantra*, the Divine Word that can be found in the sacred writings of Ancient India: the Rig Veda, the Bhagavad Gita, and the Upanishads. The sacrosanct words of these holy Scriptures —the same as those in the works of Shakespeare and other great poets—, infused with mystic nuances, go

beyond their meanings, finding an overt or covert echo of "some infinite beyond the mind" (in Sethna 1991: 82). The influence of Shakespeare on Aurobindo is enormous in intellectual and spiritual terms. Eventually, their works provide universal spaces for artistic, literary, and spiritual encounters.

The Inner Crisis: A Spiritual Reading of Shakespeare's Major Tragedies (Elena Mădălina Călin)

The starting premise for encountering and relating to otherness is self-knowledge. The labyrinthine psychological space of undergoing oneself is a place not readily available to be reached, hence the consequence is the avoidance of the honesty brought by insight into the depths of being, where the voice of the conscience aligns with the providential order. The catharsis triggered by the great Shakespearean tragedies implies a movement toward self-awareness through emotional discharging and moral insight. The reason why people do not aspire to self-consistency and alignment with the spiritual values is explored from different angles in the four major tragedies. In *Hamlet*, the search for knowledge surpasses intellectuality and transitions towards spirituality. Shakespeare's most puzzling play depicts a protagonist with an excessive epistemic crisis, delaying action with a devotional caution. Hamlet struggles to find the truth and to apply justice in a totally corrupted society of which he himself is a part. Shakespeare explores other instances of self-alienation through the couple Claudius and Gertrude, 'united' in sin, marriage, and death. Macbeth exemplifies the prototype of a brave warrior with unrivaled prowess in battle, a person with success and social recognition, yet lacking the power to control own destructive impulses. Macbeth collapses on the spiritual battlefield as he chooses to reject moral knowledge, reinterpreting the contact with the metaphysical to suit his ambition and hardening his conscience to his damnation. In Othello, there is the example of a brilliant general, a different 'other' accepted and respected by society as long as he doesn't try to integrate into it completely. He is initially described as having a spiritual verticality, yet he quickly gives in to deception due to the insecurity that makes him feel the need to rely too much on others' opinions for internal validation. *King Lear* is the tragedy of the inner blindness, where openness to providence and, consequently, otherness has been closed years before. Access to wisdom and knowledge is achieved through humility and suffering, which ultimately lead to the regaining of one's spiritual vision and compassion towards others. Thus, in Shakespeare's major tragedies, the existential quests are always connected to the transcendent: spiritual disorder results in ontological fracture. To be able to embrace otherness, one must see beyond the appearance, which implies uncovering the "blank of thine eye" (King Lear, 1.1.163), to "see better" (1.1.105) oneself and the world.

Biblical Inwardness and Spaces for Encounter in Spanish Hamlets (On)Stage (Luis Javier Conejero Magro)

This paper explores how Messianic imagery in *Hamlet* creates what may be described as a 'hidden chamber' of spiritual encounter –an interior space where suffering and redemptive longing unfold beyond explicit theological discourse. As is well known, rather than presenting overt doctrinal Christianity, Shakespeare constructs a subtle Christological framework through symbolic gestures, suspended action, ritualised language and the dramaturgy of delay. Messianic resonance thus operates as an undercurrent: a spiritual grammar embedded within silence. Focusing on two major twenty-first-century Spanish productions: Will Keen's *Hamlet* at the Teatro Español (2012) and Miguel del Arco's *Hamlet* at Teatro Kamikaze (2016), this paper examines how these latent structures are reactivated in performance. Both productions foreground Hamlet as a figure of ethical suffering whose hesitation acquires sacrificial overtones. Through translation choices, spatial configuration and the modulation of soliloquies,

these adaptations transform moments of inward reflection into theatrical spaces of spiritual encounter. In the Spanish cultural context –marked by a Catholic heritage and a strongly secularised contemporary stage– religious symbolism often emerges obliquely rather than declaratively. I argue that Messianic imagery functions here as a form of concealed desire: a submerged spiritual discourse that resonates affectively even when stripped of explicit theological vocabulary. Soliloquies operate as interior chapels. Pauses become ritual suspensions. Visual austerity evokes devotional iconography without reproducing it.
By situating these productions within the broader history of Shakespeare's religious afterlives in Spain, this paper suggests that spiritual encounter in modern performance occurs through concealment rather than proclamation. The persistence of Messianic structures demonstrates how early modern religious frameworks continue to shape contemporary ethical imagination. Shakespeare's tragedy becomes a universal space of encounter precisely because it stages belief in crisis and redemption as possibility rather than doctrine.

Hiding in the Contrary: Shakespeare's Re-Creating the Joseph Narrative (Gen 37–50) (Tibor Fabiny)
In their role-playing, Prospero in The Tempest and Duke Vincentio in Measure for Measure do not merely pretend to be what they are not; rather, they frequently appear as the very opposite of what they are. Prospero's humiliation of Ferdinand and of "mine enemies" whom he has brought to his island, just as the Duke's apparently cruel manipulation of Isabella, reveal a pedagogical strategy grounded in paradox. These acts operate within a dramatic logic of revelation by concealment: seeming humiliation ultimately serves the manifestation of forgiveness, most often experienced as undeserved love. This paper interprets such dramaturgical "games" as Shakespearean recreations of the Joseph narrative (Gen 37–50). Although critics such as Steve Marx have noted certain parallels, reading these plays through the lens of Martin Luther's theology opens new interpretive possibilities. Luther frequently employed theatrical metaphors, conceiving history as one of the "masks of God" and describing God as hiding behind contrary appearances—even behind the mask of the devil. His paradoxical theology, especially the theology of the cross, proves strikingly compatible with Shakespeare's artistic vision in The Tempest and Measure for Measure. Central motifs of Luther's thought—the hidden God (deus absconditus), indirect revelation, revelation under the opposite, the "strange acts of God" (opus alienum), God's "rearward parts" (posteriora), and the experience of suffering (Anfechtungen)—resonate with latent theological tensions within Shakespeare's drama. One of Luther's favored biblical figures is Joseph, whose story he interprets as a divine drama of concealment and recognition. Sold by his brothers and subjected to suffering before rising to power in Egypt, Joseph conceals his identity and tests his brothers through a "pleasant and delightful game," provoking repentance through affliction. For Luther, Joseph becomes a figure of God's paradoxical action: God appears to afflict in order ultimately to reveal mercy. Joseph's concealment mirrors the logic of Luther's theology: God acts under masks that confuse human perception, so that believers struggle to recognize divine presence beneath contrary appearances. The brothers initially interpret Joseph's actions as hostile, even diabolical, yet the final recognition scene discloses love hidden beneath severity. Luther's reflections on Isaiah 45 further underscore this inversion, where the godly suffer while the ungodly prosper, and reality seems reversed. The believer's task, therefore, is to discern God beneath the mask of contradiction. Building on Luther's interpretation of Joseph as a God-figure, this paper argues that Shakespeare's Prospero and Duke Vincentio function as Joseph-like figures who disguise themselves in order to reveal truth and love. Their dramaturgical strategies reproduce a theological pattern in which authority hides itself, subjects undergo trial, and recognition culminates in reconciliation. By tracing these parallels, the paper demonstrates how the logic of Luther's paradoxical theology operates implicitly within Shakespeare's plays,

even in the absence of explicit doctrinal discourse. Through the lens of the Joseph narrative, Shakespeare's dramas emerge as theatrical explorations of hiddenness, testing, and forgiveness—where knowledge of reality arises only through encounters with what appears contrary to itself.

'That that is, is': *Twelfth Night* as Space for Liturgical Encounter (Paul S. Fiddes)
Church liturgies for three Shakespeare plays (*A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *The Merchant of Venice*, and *The Tempest*) have already been created and staged by Paul S. Fiddes on behalf of the Project for the Study of Love in Religion in the University of Oxford. Like these examples, a new liturgy based on *Twelfth Night* is being written which combines the text of the play with main features of the western Christian liturgy, and which incorporates Shakespeare's own references to the bible, the Prayer Book, and theological disputes of his time. Like earlier examples, this liturgy follows a five-fold pattern typical of both liturgy and Shakesperean comedy: gathering, acknowledgement of disorder, further disruption of the situation, reconciliation, and dismissal. Running throughout this pattern in *Twelfth Night* is reference to the eucharistic dispute of the period: the question as to the sense in which the eucharistic bread 'is' the body of Christ ('That that is, is', while 'Nothing that is so is so') is brought by the comedy into interplay with the characteristic Shakesperean comic theme of the relation between appearance and reality. This intertextuality creates a space for the characters to interact with each other, for the audience to interact with the drama in the theatre, and for the congregation to interact with a liturgy which defamiliarizes people's expectations.

Marriage and Community in *The Winter's Tale* (Kenneth J. E. Graham)
Act 4, scene 4 of *The Winter's Tale* is one of Shakespeare's most successful depictions of communal festive rituals, both representing on stage and building with its audience an inclusive and joyful community where cooperation and an economics of abundance decisively replace the isolation, competition, and scarcity that dominated the play's first three Acts. At the center of this scene and this community lie the chaste desire and potential handfasting of Perdita and Florizel, whose love (as often in Shakespeare) overcomes apparent class and hidden national divisions. Focusing on this scene, this paper will explore the characteristics that allow marriage to create welcoming communal spaces in Shakespeare's plays. Some of these characteristics are conventional features of post-Reformation imaginings of marriage, such as the Prayer Book's "Form of Solemnization of Matrimony," which understands the significance of marriage as its representation of a more general "mystical" or spiritual union and emphasizes its connection to the blessings of prosperity. But others seem more distinctively Shakespearean, including a valuing of non-hierarchical difference and a cherishing of a wife's freedom to "entertain"—that is, to perform hospitality rituals designed to strengthen social connections by distributing material and spiritual wealth. Both the mutual admiration and respect between the young lovers and Perdita's role as "mistress o' th' feast" prove exemplary, illustrating the foundations of an enduring and spiritually transcendent community.

Breath and Shared Spirit in Shakespeare's Early Comedies (Clémence Lescoutre)
In a commentary on Shakespeare's early comedies, the philosopher Ernst Cassirer identifies what he calls the "game of the pure self-activity of the word" as their main motive force. He relates this verbal self-activity to "the obsessive cultivation of linguistic forms in the Renaissance" (K. Elam) and argues that it "reveals" that "inner, deeper dynamic of the spirit" (*The Platonic Renaissance in England*, 1932: 176). Bearing here the meaning of "wit", the term "spirit" is essential to Shakespeare's first comedies and is often related to "wind" or "breath". For that matter, and more generally, air is an element long associated with blood in the humoral system and the terms involving air included "ghost" (an English term for "breath")

and the "spirit" (from the Latin *spiritus*, but also *anima* and in Greek *pneuma*). Various classical theories linked air to the notions of psyche and soul and the question of inwardness. To only quote one classical philosopher, Animaxander, Thales' pupil, air was the essence of man, the unknown "nothing" at the source of being. Therefore, for Shakespeare the notion of "breath" attests to the presence of the spirit in his early comedies. That is why I would like to argue that Shakespeare mostly treats words as sounds and breaths, i.e. air, in the early comedies. Like the medieval nominalist Roscelin de Compiègne, he seems to reduce the linguistic sign to a *flatus vocis*, reducing words to "empty signs, or mere *vox,* (…) or so much idle breath" (Keir Elam, *Shakespeare's Universe of Discourse*, p. 167). In *the Comedy of Errors*, Dromio of Ephesus says: "A man may break a word with you, sir, and words are but wind;" (3.1.74-75). This proverbial form comes back later in another early comedy, *Love's Labour's Lost,* when Longaville explains that "Words are but breath, and breath a vapour is" (4.3.60). I will argue that breath, as inconsistent as air is, is still paradoxically conveyed as a very material, vital and essential component of Shakespeare's drama and specifically his comedies that connect voices altogether. For that matter, Dromio of Ephesus's cue continues and is completed in such way as to connect the "base *flatus vocis* to the baser *flatus viscerarum*" (Elam, 174). The *flatus vocis* comes to be related to what Puttenham would have termed "foule speeche". The breath of the vowels – "All words [are] made…of the breath that commeth of the lungs" (William Perkins, *Works*, fourth edition, Cambridge, 1600, III: 631) – is readily transformable into the wind of the bowels: "Ay, and break it in your face, so he break it not behind." (*Comedy of Errors*, 3.1.76). To sum up, I would like to show how Shakespeare's use of breath gives substance to the spirit or soul of his craft, but in a more secularized conception, gradually turning toward the question of a spirituality based on a shared and common spirit grounded in the physicality of the body as well as the language, that of the Theatre.

'Our Two Books': Shakespeare and the Bible (David McInnis)

In 2012, I travelled to Wellington, New Zealand, for a conference on editing and early modern texts. The Immigration Officer jokingly admitted me into the country on the condition that I wouldn't change Shakespeare's words. At what point, and why, did Shakespeare's words become sacrosanct — scripture that could not be altered? Such veneration is presumably the result of love and admiration, but its consequences (especially in the domain of performance) are debilitating, relegating Shakespeare to the inaccessible past and raising barriers to enjoyment. In this paper (work towards a chapter in a planned book on 'Sacred Shakespeare'), I analyse anecdotal evidence – drawn from opinion pieces, letters to the editor, reports of speeches and events, and so forth – of attitudes to Shakespeare and the Bible in the popular imaginary, in an attempt to better understand the reasons why Shakespeare's work (written for dynamic performance and mass entertainment) became fetishised in its written form and pored over religiously, and what role this played in communion as well as colonisation. (The paper's working title is drawn from Sir Herbert Beerbohm Tree who, at an event in New York City commemorating the tercentenary of Shakespeare's death, declared that 'Two books…stood side by side—the Bible and Shakespeare'.) A probable, glib conclusion is that Shakespeare is a victim of his own success, the high value placed on his work producing a protectiveness or even 'ownership' that can potentially limit the work's ability to evolve. A more complex consideration, however, potentially brings Shakespeare studies (dominated in recent decades by a materialist turn that situates Shakespeare's work in specific historical moments) into productive dialogue with the general public's reverence for Shakespeare as a transcendental figure whose creativity is the source of quasi-divine qualities. It explores, as a complement to academic explication, an imperfect striving for spiritual fulfilment through a Protestant work ethic and a Reformation-style promise of unmediated access to divinity through the written

word, and a parallel trajectory of performance culture that is not in fact at odds with this mission but is itself an endless quest for understanding and perfection.

Reforming Oberon and Inde: From Huon of Burdeux to Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Emily Soon)
Despite its classical setting, critics have long noted that Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (ca. 1594-6) features multiple traces of Roman Catholicism. Scholars working on religious history and ecocriticism have hence fruitfully probed the implications of the play's fairy monarchs, Oberon and Titania, participating in spiritual practices that Elizabethans associated with the pre-Reformation church. However, the extent to which the play's suggestive references to the Old Faith – and especially Shakespeare's depiction of Oberon and his fairy followers – may exist in conversation with the religious ideas found within the thirteenth-century French romance *Huon of Burdeux* remains relatively unexplored. This is curious, because Shakespeare is generally believed to have taken key elements of his portrayal of the fairies (including the name Oberon and the idea that fairies could come from 'Inde' or 'India') from John Bourchier's 1570 English translation of this romance, a text that had repeatedly incurred the disapproval of Protestant writers for its perceived Catholic overtones. To date, scholars have tended to interpret *Huon*'s Oberon as being broadly Christian, without probing the extent to which the romance's fairy king would, to Elizabeth eyes, have appeared as being specifically devoted to the Roman church. This paper hence uncovers *Huon*'s close engagement with papal practices, and interrogates the degree to which, and possible reasons why, Shakespeare chooses to 'reform' *Huon*'s Oberon and 'Inde' for an English Protestant audience. It asks how *A Midsummer Night's Dream* re-imagines the fairy king and this distant space of encounter, and elucidates the connections both texts envisage between faith, fairies, mortals and the East. In so doing, this paper highlights how Shakespeare creates an 'India' that allows for a more nebulous – and perhaps more universal and pluralistic – vision of the wider world, thereby illuminating the surprising ways religion shaped Elizabethan dramatic portrayals of regions far beyond Europe during the Global Renaissance.

S26.
Shakespeare's Sonic Galaxies and Constellations of Emotional Response

Organisers: Jennifer Linhart Wood, Maddalena Pennacchia

Description: This seminar is interested in the wide range of sounds in, and prompted by, the Shakespearean multiverse: music, sound-effects, soundscapes, and later musical adaptations such as operatic works, songs, and popular music. Taking a wide range of sonic phenomena as its starting point, this seminar will investigate the myriad ways in which sound was employed in Shakespeare's theater and what affective or emotional responses it may have generated in its audiences—including the effects it can produce on contemporary audiences, especially younger ones.

"My Throat of War Be Turned": Voice, Vulnerability, and the Performance of Masculinity in Coriolanus (Antonio Arnieri)
In Coriolanus, Shakespeare renders the protagonist's identity legible through sound, and more specifically, through the shifting qualities of his voice. Drawing together insights from sound studies with reflections on vulnerability, emotion, and gender performativity, I argue that Coriolanus's identity is articulated and sustained through vocal dominance, yet ineluctably destabilised as he tragically moves from thunderous speech to aphonia. Throughout the play, martial noise, shouting, and percussive vocality function as markers of normative masculinity

and authority. Coriolanus's identity is repeatedly described in acoustic terms: his voice overwhelms, silences, and dominates the aural field, embodying an ideal of adult manhood grounded in military violence and control. Yet voice as a sound is structurally volatile and inescapably relational. It cracks and breaks, it is affected by the speaker´s emotional state, and it requires an audience as it depends on listening; the sound of voice is therefore intrinsically vulnerable. Shakespeare stages this tension by repeatedly associating vocal modulation, persuasion, and softness with femininity, childhood, and gender ambiguity, while framing vocal force as a sign of masculine coherence. This, as I will show, becomes particularly visible in Coriolanus's interactions with his mother, with the Roman people, and with his archenemy, as they demand dialogue, bodily exposure, and emotional negotiation. Coriolanus's sonic identity thus oscillates between excessive vocal aggression and moments of metaphorical aphonia, staged as silence, failed communication, or an inability to "perform a part" [3.2.109].

The Music of Tears: Female Lamentation and the Soundscape of Grief in Shakespearean Drama (Paula Baldwin)

Early modern medical and religious discourses often portrayed female melancholy as bodily, irrational, and pathological, while male melancholy was valued as a sign of intellectual depth. This paper challenges that framework by examining the sonic language of female grief in Shakespearean drama. Drawing on the history of emotions (Lucien Febvre, Barbara Rosenwein, William Reddy) and melancholy treatises by Timothy Bright and Robert Burton, it argues that dramatic texts developed a counter-discourse in which women's sorrow gained expressive authority not only through rhetoric but also through sound. Focusing on Hamlet and Othello, the paper explores how sighs, sobs, and tears create an audible register of lamentation – a "music of tears," the melancholic sound of grief. In the acoustic environment of early modern theatres, such sounds did not rely on mechanical effects, nor even on song alone, but emerged from the embodied performance of emotion itself. The audible expression of grief could resonate through the theatre and potentially provoke sympathetic responses among spectators. By foregrounding the soundscape of lamentation, the paper reveals how female sorrow functioned both as a performative mode of expression and as a contagious auditory and affective experience within early modern theatrical culture.

Meter and Mind (Christine Coch)

Early modern English literary theorists like Campion treat the ear as a "rational sense, and a chief judge of proportion." Less a receptor than a kind of literacy, the ear measured a poet's language against its abstract form. This essay explores how the auditor's ear was thought to mediate between sensation and sense, reason and passion, in a performance of metrical verse.

According to Samuel Daniel, when the ear perceives the rhythms of its vernacular, they are "such as the ear of itself doth marshal in their proper rooms" even without a poet imposing a metrical frame. Meter formalizes the ear's expectations. "When we hear music we must be in our ear, in the utter-room of sense," Daniel asserts, "but when we entertain judgement we retire into the cabinet and innermost withdrawing chamber of the soul; . . . it is a work of power for the soul, to master the rhythms and measures of life." In early modern models of the mind, what happens when a soul withdraws to judge the rhythms of what it is hearing against what it expects to hear? How does this juxtaposition contribute to verse's capacity to move a person to new perceptions? The essay will consider early modern theories about this mechanism alongside recent work in cognitive poetics theory and neurocognitive poetics models.

A Taxonomy of Silence in Shakespeare: Constellatory Structures of Meaning (Chiara Di Dio)

Alongside the dimension of sound, which embraces and surrounds the entirety of Shakespeare's dramatic production, there is the dynamic and ambiguous dimension of silence. Silence in Shakespeare is not merely the opposite of sound and language, but rather its Janus-like counterpart: the enigmatic and codified side of reality. As he himself explains in the concluding couplet of Sonnet 23, to better understand silence, it is necessary to learn synesthetically to "hear with eyes". In this regard, the aim of the following contribution is to present a taxonomy of Shakespearean silences, allowing them to be recognised and decoded: starting from the definitions of "silence" and "silencing", I will provide a mapping of silences and silencing acts consisting of basic interpretative patterns. The use of established patterns will facilitate the visualisation of intersectional links by highlighting gender, social, political, and identitarian interrelationships. Silences will be divided into two primary classifications: functional and conceptual silences. Specific categories will be included for each of the two macro-areas, respectively rhetorical function (i.e., by means of omission, reticence, and ineffability) and thematic-interpretative analysis (i.e., passions, gender, social roles, secrecy, etc.). Through the analysis of the silencing acts I will take into account both the "silenced subject" (the character being silenced) and the "silencing agent" (the character who interrupts the rhetorical continuum), as well as their respective gender. To gain a more comprehensive understanding of the functional dynamics that emerge from the silencing act, I will refer to the theoretical frameworks developed by the philosophy of action, as illustrated by Keir Elam in his *The Semiotic of Theatre and Drama*. The third and final category along with silence and the silencing act is that of the absolute silence, for which there are no linguistic markers to determine its presence, but which can only be perceived by the blank space it occupies.

The Sound of O in Cesario (Natasha Korda)

This essay re-examines the editorial history of a textual crux in Cesario's "As I am man … As I am woman" soliloquy in *Twelfth Night* (2.2) from the perspectives of two recent developments in early modern trans studies: trans philology (Gamble) and trans theology (Gordon). The torment occasioned by editorial fixation with textual cruces, it argues, is symbolically (and etymologically) freighted with the theological weight of crucifixion. Yet cruces simultaneously promise virtuous editors philological atonement through the salvific work of emendation. The gendered stakes of such emendation emerge when the indeterminacy of the text intersects with that of sex, as in Cesario's "O"-crux. The essay ultimately makes the case for further study of the longer history of gender variance and queer eroticism among Shakespeare editors by revisiting a neglected chapter in *Twelfth Night*'s editorial history, that of Charlotte Endymion Porter and Helen Archibald Clarke's collaborative First Folio edition (1903).

Listening to Shakespeare's Snatches of Song: Recognition, Familiarity, and Association in the Early Modern Playhouse (Elisabeth Lutteman)

As editors and critics alike have long acknowledged, Shakespeare's plays incorporate quotations from, parodies of, and references to extant songs that were likely familiar to many early modern playgoers. In this, the plays offer a small glimpse of a much wider contemporary theatrical practice of drawing on songs and tunes that were in circulation outside the playhouses—in print, oral tradition, or both. A diverse range of songs found their way on stage in the form of whole pieces, snatches of stanzas, and fleeting sung or spoken phrases, bringing with them associations, ambiguities, and dramatically significant possibilities. Once there, they participated in and contributed to a larger web of intertextual and intertheatrical references central to the shape and experience of plays. This paper focuses on extant, familiar song material as a significant element of the soundscape of early modern playhouses, exploring

musical recognition and association as a key aspect of the aural experience of playgoing. The discussion contextualises and analyses selected song references, paying attention to the musical, textual and theatrical networks expanding around the songs as well as to the dramatic potential of the references. In so doing, it traces lines that connect actors to audience members, audience members to one another, and all to previous experiences from both the playhouse and the outside world. The brief examples lead to a series of interconnected, methodologically inflected questions aimed at probing what it means to hear something that we have heard before, and what kind of individual and collective responses recognition and familiarity might have elicited within the early modern playhouse as a site of listening and feeling.

Talking Pictures: Punctuation in Woodcuts and Engravings in Early Modern Playtexts (Daniel Yabut)
At first viewing, the early modern woodcut or engraving may offer a perhaps unremarkable example of how punctuation serves as an embodiment of respiration, when the illustration includes speaking characters whose speech is represented on banderoles. Yet, this particular material format might also be pointing toward more subtle interpretations beyond rhetorical considerations. This paper seeks to identify and examine the multifarious functions of punctuation in woodcuts and engravings of early modern playtexts. Building on the methodologies and critical terminology of graphic and comic artists such as Gérard Blanchard and Scott McCloud, this paper analyses how playbook illustrations and their punctuation reveal how their artists understood, interpreted, and marketed the texts for a targeted readership. It analyses how punctuation or the lack thereof may not have been accidental or random but in fact deliberate and carefully considered. As illustrations such as the frontispieces of *The Spanish Tragedy* or *A Game at Chess* conflate multiple sequences into one frame, this paper shows how punctuation in woodcuts and engravings serves not only as a mimetic device intended to provoke the reader to hear the words and visualise the action, but also perhaps evoke an emotional response through temporal embodiment, as the points may serve to dictate the passage of time and comprehend the order by which readers are guided to follow the action on the page.

S27.
Shakespeare's Tragedies and their Twenty-First-Century Reverberations

Organisers: Gemma Kate Allred, Benjamin Broadribb, Edel Semple

Description: This seminar explores reverberations of Shakespeare's tragedies across a range of twenty-first-century media. Venturing beyond the safely-charted territory of traditional stage and screen performances, the seminar considers how Shakespeare's tragic protagonists, narratives, themes, and tropes haunt, echo in, or inspire contemporary cultural objects. Papers may address tragic echoes and textual hauntings in drama, film, TV, prose, advertising, and other media. Key questions include: why do twenty-first-century artists look to Shakespeare's tragedies; how can these echoes and hauntings illuminate Shakespeare's tragedies; and how might reverberations galvanise shifts away from imbalanced power structures, and towards greater empathy and equality for historically marginalised communities?

***Romeo and Juliet* reviews in Russian political media: Shakespeare as a distorting mirror to Russian traditional values (Liudmila Artemeva)**
In this paper I would like to consider how Russian political media - ranging from newspapers promoting official propaganda to Telegram channels by Russian governmental officials - review Western theatrical and cinematic adaptations of *Romeo and Juliet*. I also include the

comment sections of these reviews into the material I consider in order to see whether the propagandists manage to achieve their goals and how their message reverberates through the public discussion. The choice of the subject by the reviewers might seem arbitrary: why Shakespeare and why *Romeo and Juliet*? As for the latter, it might simply be explained by the play's popularity among Shakespeare performers and its familiarity to the Russian reader. As for the former, it goes back to the Russian political discourse's long-standing tradition of appealing to Shakespeare's authority, as well as juxtaposing the Russian "correct" understanding of his tragedies against the Western supposedly flawed interpretations. In the present-day version of this discourse, Russia stands as a self-proclaimed defender of global culture as a whole - and Shakespare specifically - from the corrupting influence of the West.
Covering a considerable scope of recent Western adaptations of *Romeo and Juliet*, such reviewers provide very little factual information about the performances but an abundance of derogatory comments. Their goal is to underscore their intrinsic flaws, such flaws being the Western mindset juxtaposed to Russian traditional values (implied to be love, traditional family, self-sacrifice). The reviewers aim to unite their readers in their outrage against the West. Studying the comment sections shows that the propagandists overachieve their goal, as their reviews ignite in their readers aggression not only towards the West but towards each other, animals and minorities. After considering the reviews and comment sections I would like to circle back to one of the seminar's points on how reverberations of Shakespeare's tragedies might "galvanise shifts … towards greater empathy and equality". Relying on Richard Meek's analysis of sympathy in *Romeo and Juliet* I argue that empathy is extremely hard to achieve "in the complex world of social relations": if anything is galvanised in Russian propagandists' discussion of *Romeo and Juliet*, it is the misunderstandings and inability to feel what others feel as it often happens in the play itself leading sometimes to disastrous consequences.

Apparitionalizing Real-ism: *Macbeth*, the Figure of Human, and Anirban Bhattacharya's *Mandaar* (Ved Dutt Arya)
Although Shakespeare's *Macbeth* is not a "realistic" play in the strict sense of the term, its adaptations and appropriations often employ strategies of realism for sociopolitical purposes. While definitions of what is "real" are always open to questions, realism presumes that the "real," or a version of it, exists and seeks to represent it "truthfully." Humans, for instance, are assumed "real" but not apparitions; tides are considered "real" but not trees that walk. Works that fashion themselves, consciously or unconsciously, into a realistic aesthetic, then, also generate and feed into the discourses of the "real" that tend to (re)produce ontological truths, epistemological certainty, and an anthropocentric worldview. But despite adapting *Macbeth* into a realistic mould as *Mandaar*, Anirban Bhattacharya presents an Indian sociopolitical reality that has become saturated with corruption, a hunger for power, and violence. As a result, his use of cinematic realism in *Mandaar* creates an unsettling effect on the audience and their perception of reality, even when they see a slice of regional life from the Indian state of West Bengal. In particular, they are confronted with the question—can a "human," "too full of the milk of human kindness," unleash unimaginable violence "[t]oo terrible for the ear?" It is this question that my paper attempts to explore through an analysis of how Bhattacharya reworks an "unrealistic" play like *Macbeth* into a hyperrealistic *Mandaar*. It argues that realistic modes of representation are no longer adequate to sensitize audiences to the harrowing realities of the time and may have been co-opted by neoliberal economies. Therefore, by reappropriating strategies of realism, Bhattacharya not only critiques the transparent nature of "realistic" works but also models an aesthetic to represent the human "truthfully."

The Cyborgian Stage: Exploring Digital Embodied Experiences of In-Game Shakespeare Recitals (Jasmin Bieber)
The 'Wasteland Theatre Company' differs from most amateur groups dedicated to staging Shakespeare plays in one striking way: the performances occur within *Fallout 76* (2018), a multi-player video game set in a post-nuclear American wasteland. In their 'live' enactments, Richard III is, for instance, turned into a zombie-like creature, and Coriolanus, along with his followers, wears a militant exoskeleton. Not only are previously human characters rendered into various kinds of cyborgs, the act of digital play itself is, according to recent digital phenomenologists, a 'cyborgian phenomenon' (Keogh). The paper will thus argue that the 'Wasteland Theatre Group' offers an exemplary 'cyborgian stage' in its contextual dimension, ludic affordances, as well as phenomenological implications. It will inquire into the digital embodied experience of watching and/or enacting Shakespeare in a digital game environment. What are its social implications, and how does the game structure impact the script, staging and reception? To follow up on these concerns, the paper will focus on two performances by the 'Wasteland Theatre Group': *Richard the Ghoul* (2024) and *Romeo and Juliet: The Holotape Cut* (2022). Both productions are presented by a collective of players on make-shift stages that are, at times, reminiscent of physical theatres. The theatrical embodiment of the actors is restricted to predefined motions that, as I will argue, provoke non-normative enactments, defamiliarising the players with the game's intended agendas and ludic functions. The resulting dissolution between actors and audience will be discussed by focusing on the set-ups and post-productions of each performance. The paper will, overall, demonstrate that play-making on a digital 'cyborgian' stage is a multifaceted and still unexplored addition to the ever-expanding Shakespearean rhizome.

"More Things in Heaven and Earth": Anakin Skywalker as Hamlet's Philosophical Successor (Madeline N. Cisneros)
This paper is interested in expanding upon the initial research put forward in my own Master's thesis, entitled "Forced to Be the Fine Line: How Shakespeare's Hamlet, Henry V, and George Lucas' Anakin Skywalker Embody Exile and Estrangement." The thesis offered forward a central conceit which falls very closely to this seminar's key interest: that the two Shakespearean characters of Hamlet and Henry V continue to reverberate forward into our time now, with those reverberations impulsed by the important negotiations Shakespeare offers within these two characters, and which George Lucas picks up on in his *Star Wars* films with Anakin Skywalker 400 years later. For the purposes of this paper, I wish to set aside the character of King Henry V as he is explored in my thesis, and focus more specifically on the relationship I identify between Hamlet and Anakin— a relationship defined not only by these "reverberations," but also by a unique metaphorically exilic condition which is at the core of both characters, and which reveals the specific problematics Shakespeare negotiated in Hamlet that George Lucas also contends with in his own work. The intervention this paper proposes offers a deep, targeted analysis of how Anakin not only reverberates Hamlet's contentions with identity, performance, and action, but also how Anakin distorts, refracts, and enhances them as such. Further, I am to explore how these refractions indicate a departure from, or conversely a continuity with, the questions of Shakespeare's time into our own. In order to do so, this paper will utilize various methodological and theoretical approaches to both text and character, including those created by André Aciman, Edward Said, Murray Smith, Rob Conkie, and Viktor Shklovsky.

***Richard III* Rewritten: Staging Disability on the Contemporary Stage (Méline Dumot)**
This paper will focus on the play *Teenage Dick*, written by Chinese American author Michael Lew and published in 2019. It was commissioned by *The Apothetae*, a company whose mission

is to shed light on the "disabled experience", notably through the rewriting of canonical plays featuring disabled characters. *Teenage Dick* is a contemporary rewriting of *Richard III*, in which Lew gives a new voice to the characters of Shakespeare's well-known tragedy. In his rewriting of the play, Richard suffers from a mobility disability (either hemiplegia or cerebral palsy, depending on the actor impersonating Richard), is bullied at his school by "EDDIE IVY, male, seventeen, junior class president, football guy, kind of a dick" (Lew, 12) and tries to become the senior class president. His best friend is Barbara 'Buck' Buckingham, a wheelchair user. Noticing that one of the most famous disabled characters in theater history is rarely – if ever – performed by a disabled actor, Lew centers his play on Richard's experience as a disabled teenager. The play questions our current vision of disability, both in the theatrical industry and in society in general. It will allow me to reflect on the intersection between Shakespeare's vision of the "deformed" character and contemporary understandings and representations of disability. I will reflect on the following questions: how is the Shakespearean tragedy used as a material to question the contemporary marginalization of disabled people? To what extent is Shakespeare's text resisted and questioned through the act of rewriting? Can Shakespeare be a tool to attract the audience's attention to their own biases and stereotypes? Does Lew's text point to Shakespeare's tragedy's relevance to understand pressing contemporary issues, or does it suggest its limits?

From 'The Warwickshire Diggers' to Amazonia: Shakespeare and the Tragedy of Primitive Accumulation (Chris Fitter)

Throughout England's sixteenth century, the economic elite launched a predatory campaign of private enrichment which dispossessed plebeians of common land, and often of their smallholdings, creating popular wrath and national homelessness. Tragedy, with its sense of irreparable loss, addressed in Shakespeare (especially Lear) the dementing atrocity of enforced vagrancy (Poor Tom), the apology of power to the homeless ("Poor naked wretches"), the availability of the destitute for crime (the captain killing Cordelia), the righteous counter-violence of rural objects of commodification (Oswald slain by a churl), arguably anticipating the Midlands Rising, and the contrast of dehumanising avarice with earlier, more caring relations of neighbourliness and tenurial reciprocity (the tenants assisting blinded Gloucester). Elsewhere Shakespeare shows us petitions from the poor carelessly ripped up (2 Henry VI), charitable rural livelihood imperilled (Corin), the spirit of private possession turning easily murderous (Iden), and a perspective on agricultural productivity that ignores, like the new quiritary (absolutist) landownership, the existence and needs of the human beings working that land (Burgundy in Henry V). The assault of 'primitive accumulation' (Marx) upon traditional 'moral economy' (Thompson, later Scott) which protected the poorest, generated the Midlands Rising of 1607, where self-proclaimed 'Diggers of Warwickshire' flung down enclosures: yet was thereafter echoed in a country-by-country replay of invasive capital destroying communities of humane mutuality. Today's most tragic instance is perhaps Amazonia. In a set of parallels to *Lear*, the film *Embrace of the Serpent* (2015) depicts another journey into the desolation of ruined community, where relentless deforestation has virtually recapitulated the Tudor pattern: dispossession, enclosure, and abolished land-rights, deploying fraud and violence, driven by a language of contempt for the resident population, a discourse of 'improvement', confronting popular resistance. Amazonian natives today face Tragedy's inestimability of loss.

'The curiosity of nations to deprive me?': The Stigmatised Performance and the Self-justifying Edmund in *King Lear* (Liane Elvira Martinez)

My research's main objective is to identify and analyse the stigma of Shakespeare villains that have self-justification through their dramatic text and modern performance. For the purpose of

this paper, I will be examining a part of *King Lear's* dramatic text and performance of Edmund, the illegitimate son of Gloucester. One of the methodologies that I have been utilising is Jeffrey Wilson's *The Figure of Stigma in Shakespeare's Drama*. According to Wilson, the figure of stigma states that stigma is incorporated to identify the abnormality of a villain, giving the audience a brief glimpse at the horrors these villains may have gone through. Wilson investigates how stigma gives certain villains a sympathetic outlet to do their villainous actions. Such as Edmund, whose stigma is his illegitimacy becomes the catalyst for seizing the title from his father, while pushing out his brother Edgar. Unlike other scholars that have stated that Edmund's illegitimacy is the source of his evil, Edmund's duplicity in a performance shows that his illegitimacy is his drive to obtain social justice. I question if pursuing self-justification and identifying a Shakespeare villain's stigma helps villains to perform their actions, thus pushing the audience to their favour, even if for a brief moment. By incorporating performance, I started to see that there are multiple layers that shed light to how Shakespeare villains strategically reveal their villainous actions that transform them into man-made villains that have been moulded by the secondary characters within the play. By connecting the bridge of the dramatic text and performance, its link will provide some answers and motives as to why the modern audience can develop sympathy, see the villain as a victim or even understand why these villains seek self-justification from an unjust society within the play. Understanding the complexity of villains with self-justification shows how Shakespeare is still representing the human condition through stigma. Shakespeare tragedies in twenty-first-century media have changed how the audiences are seeing villains and their villainy. Because of twenty-first-century media, television series and films are showing stigmatised villains more often than not. Therefore illuminating Shakespeare tragedies to show the stigma of a Shakespeare villain through their character's origin story and their treatment by secondary characters in Shakespeare tragedies because twenty-first-century media has opened up to embrace every aspect of the human condition *in* a villain. Artists are reinventing Shakespeare villains. Overall, twenty-first-century media is giving me the opportunity to see stigmatised villains with self-justification that can reverberate an audience's empathy and desire to want to see a villain succeed.

Don't You Dare to Be Romeo and Juliet? (Salim Mustafa)

The continuing relevance of Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* in twenty-first-century India becomes particularly noticeable when read against the persistent phenomenon of honour killing. This relevance may be critically examined through *Sairat* (2016), Nagraj Manjule's Marathi-language cinematic rearticulation of the play, which relocates Shakespeare's tragedy within a contemporary socio-cultural framework in India where romantic autonomy is still intolerable and produces lethal consequences. The paper is divided into two sections. The opening segment provides a comparative analysis of *Romeo and Juliet* and *Sairat*, foregrounding questions of narrative structure, the beauty of youthful desire, and the ideological inheritance of authority, regulation, and transgression. Rather than treating adaptation as faithful, this section reads *Sairat* as a critical refunctioning of Shakespearean tragedy. The analysis reframes tragic resolution by contrasting two models of death: in Shakespeare, dying becomes a contradictory act of self-assertion within rigid social structures, while in *Sairat*, honour killing functions as a brutal imposition of collective norms. The shift from self-determined tragedy to socially administered execution signals a transformation in the idea of the tragedy, from romantic fatalism to systemic coercion. The subsequent section embraces a cultural-historical and discursive approach, situating the film within the context of honour-based violence in India. By placing cinematic representation in dialogue with case histories, legal discourse, and media narratives, the paper interrogates how tragedy migrates from stage to screen and from fiction to lived reality. Moreover, it examines how cultural texts

both reproduce and contest the moral economies that regulate intimacy and punish dissent. Through this framework, the study positions *Sairat* not merely as an adaptation but as a site where Shakespearean tragedy is expressed differently within contemporary regimes of power and social control.

***Romeo and Juliet*: Recontextualizing Shakespeare's "Ancient Grudge" in Pakistan's Contemporary Television Drama (Mehreen Odho)**

The idea of young love set against family or social opposition is a familiar one in Pakistan. In Pakistan's patriarchal society, beliefs and notions associated with disparities in class, culture and religion have led to the creation of many 'Romeo and Juliet' stories. This paper discusses the presentation of such love stories on Pakistani television in the recent drama serials, *Burns Road Kay Romeo Juliet* (2024), *Mann Mast Malang* (*Carefree Heart*, 2025), *Sher* (*Lion*, 2025) placing focus on the recontextualized trope of the 'family feud' in the serials. It engages with the "grudge" or enmity between the families of the lovers as the site of central conflict in these television serials, exploring their depiction of family politics and power dynamics, to posit that such presentations offer us a socially and culturally repositioned *Romeo and Juliet*. In its approach, the paper draws on forward-thinking scholarship on Shakespeare adaptation such as that witnessed in Eric S. Mallin's concept of the "non-adaptation", Adam Hansen and Kevin J. Wetmore, Jr's "Shakespearean echoes" and Erin Sullivan's "reception as adaptation". I argue that in spite of their departure from the plot and action of *Romeo and Juliet*, and a limited or absent acknowledgement of the serials as Shakespeare adaptations, such drama narratives are a manifestation of how reverberations of Shakespeare's tragic narrative of young love may be traced in Pakistan's contemporary television drama.

The King's Crown: *Hamlet* Reimagined in Telugu Cinema (Nishi Pulugurtha)

Shakespeare arrived in India along with the English and then remained in the country. Indians made him their own by translating, adapting and appropriating his plays, using elements and characters from his plays, performing his plays, reading extracts from his plays, staging the plays in several Indian languages. What began in the nineteenth century still continues in films, plays, in advertisements, in almost every aspect of life in India. The translations into several Indian languages led to performances on stage and later, with the coming of cinema, led to adaptations in Indian language films. In this paper, I propose to examine a Telugu language film, *Raja Makutam* (The King's Crown, 1960). The film uses elements from *Hamlet* to create a film in a genre of Telugu cinema that was very popular in the 1960, 70s and 80s – that of the swashbuckling encounter, of kings and intrigues, and of the folklore. The paper will locate the film in cinematic history and examine the way in which elements from Shakespeare's play work to bring in ideas that are assimilated within the idiom of Telugu cinema. Produced under a big banner (Vauhini Studios) and starring big names in the Telugu film industry (N.T. Rama Rao), *Raja Makutam*, like the earlier *Gunasundari Katha* (1949, this film used elements from *King Lear*) reveals the way in which Shakespeare functions as cultural capital.

Universality and transgression in two Brazilian theatre adaptations (Margie - Margarida Gandara Rauen)

Talking back to Shakespeare in a transgressive way has not been the rule in Brazilian productions, which tend to reflect the high regard of directors worldwide for the alleged timelessness and universality of the plays. Aligned with shifts that took place in the twenty-first century, it has been noted that artists from Latin America also approached the plays "from postcolonial and other critical stances […as well as] contributed to reposition the so-called subaltern subjectivity in arenas where self and other can come fruitfully, although perhaps also uncomfortably together" (Modenessi and Rauen, 2016, p. 879). This paper considers such

tensions in two Brazilian plays: director's Paulo de Moraes *Hamlet with* Armazém Companhia de Teatro (2017); actress Nathalia Luiz's feminist monologue titled *Deslady* (2018), a clown adaptation directed by Andrea Macera which has been showing for eight years. The dramaturgical and staging differences between these plays show that Moraes's *Hamlet* illustrates the traditional focus on the destruction of political order, and Luiz's *Deslady* exposes the struggle to reject and transform imbalanced power structures. Moraes's *Hamlet* consisted of a translated version of Shakespeare's play to which were added texts and poems by other authors, with an original sound design by Ricco Viana and costumes by João Marcelino and Carolina Lobato that convey several periods and cultures, from rock music to Elizabethan props, three-piece suits, sweatshirts and jeans, all of which suggest that "The time is out of joint " (I, 5). *Deslady* features Nathalia Luiz's own text interpolated with excerpts from Shakespeare's Macbeth that allow for her clown character to reflect upon oppressive patriarchal power relations as she unsettles Lady Macbeth's violent identity to become *Deslady.* Thus, the paper discusses ways in which, unlike Moraes's *Hamlet*, *Deslady* "talks back" to Shakespeare through his tragic narrative and selected characters of *Macbeth*.

To Play or Not to Play: Meta-Theatre and Lockdown Creativity on the Digital Stage of *Grand Theft Hamlet* (Vasundhra Singh)

During the global lockdown of 2020–21, theatre artists were confronted with the absence of physical stages and live audiences, leading to radical experiments with digital media. Among the many digital performances, *Grand Theft Hamlet* (dir. Pinny Grylls & Sam Crane) stands out as the most critically acclaimed and groundbreaking piece of work. It is a documentary film that follows two actors attempting to stage Shakespeare's *Hamlet* inside the online world of Grand Theft Auto V. This paper examines *Grand Theft Hamlet* as an important work in the evolution of theatrical practices under conditions of crisis, exploring how a violent and chaotic game becomes an unlikely stage for one of Shakespeare's most canonical tragedies.

The paper argues that *Grand Theft Hamlet* operates on two interlinked levels: as an act of meta-theatre, where actors and characters reflect self-consciously on performance, and as a form of lockdown creativity, where digital platforms substitute traditional theatres. The game-world of Los Santos greatly complements Shakespeare's themes of corruption, decay, and existential uncertainty, while also inviting disruptions from online players who blur the line between audience and participant. The project, therefore, complicates notions of liveness, theatrical space, and the boundaries between "high" and "popular" culture.

By situating *Grand Theft Hamlet* within the broader field of digital Shakespeare adaptations, this paper demonstrates how the constraints of the pandemic gave birth to new hybrid forms of performance that challenge the hierarchies and legitimacy of literary works. Ultimately, the paper contends that this adaptation not only reimagines *Hamlet* for the twenty-first century but also changes our critical approach to what it means to "play" Shakespeare in the age of gaming and global digital audiences.

From subversion to salvation – the madness of *Hamlet in Ward no.6* by Goran Markovich (Nataša Šofranac)

A novel by renowned Serbian theatre and film director Goran Markovic, with a clear reference to Chekhov's novella in its title, *Hamlet in Ward no.6* combines three parallel plots: theatre rehearsals of *Hamlet*, the lead actor's sessions with a psychologist, and his psychodrama work with patients of a mental asylum. Like Shakespeare's original, this story includes elements of bitter comedy, familial dynamic, and societal and political commentary. In present-day Serbia, Filip is an actor preparing for the role of his life – Hamlet. He wants to see madness up close, so his ex-girlfriend, a psychologist, refers him to a psychiatric hospital, suggesting that roleplay often makes patients feel better, because they step out of their everyday life and, by discarding

their own personalities, they might eventually discard their illness. Filip too needs to step out of his life to be Hamlet, defining his own *paradoxe sur le comédien*. At the same time, he is seeing a psychotherapist, also recommended by his ex, discussing his unresolved issues and fears. So, we follow three Hamlets simultaneously. With certain resignation, he brings the patients the news from the outer world, describing the state of dictatorship where madness is normalized and where the only nook of sanity he can find is – a mental hospital. His communication with the "patients" is by far the easiest of all his interactions. For totalitarian governments, madness is a vehicle to discredit and lock down political opponents, but for them, it is a leeway and survival strategy in hostile environments. Unlike the hermeneutics of the actor bravely quoting Shakespeare to the dying Soviet dictator in a Yugoslav play banned by the communist regime, the 2025 actor is disillusioned and ends his private little rebellion by taking care of his own well-being instead of setting right the time out of joint.

The Human Experience of Shakespeare's Tragedies: Echoes of Hubris, Political Theatre, and Moral Paralysis in the Digital Age (Jesse Watson)
This paper explores the enduring impact of Shakespeare's tragedies—specifically the dynamics of hubris, political theatre, and moral compromise—as a resonance of various twenty-first-century Western cultural crises. Investigating how contemporary digital culture, marked by disinformation and viral narratives amplifies the tragic mechanisms of Shakespeare's dramatic worlds, this paper will draw parallels between the loss of institutional faith in plays such as *King Lear*, *Hamlet*, *Macbeth, Romeo & Juliet* and *Coriolanus* as well as modern audiences' possession of a heightened "conscious awareness of tragedy"—a sense of impending political or environmental catastrophe. In this explroation of contemporary events, the paper argues through student-led inquiries that societies are are often paralyzed by a failure to act, thus expounding the circumstances of both Shakespeare's characters and their tragic outcomes. These analyses will use case studies from modern politics tyrants, pop-culture dystopias and digital tools for dehumanization to demonstrate how Shakespearean tragic cycles—the descent from order to chaos— are transgenerational examples of the human experience.

S28.
The Skirts of the Forest: Re-placing Arden

Organisers: Tom Bishop, Sophie Lemercier-Goddard, William N. West

The Forest of Arden is probably Shakespeare's most famous location. This seminar invites participants to look again at the sort of space Arden is (including what happens there), and to extrapolate from there to discuss the sorts of places –literal and figurative, real and fictional, staged, filmed, otherwise imagined– that it has become since As You Like It took us into it. Are they all "pastoral"? Are they geographical? virtual? educational? ecological? fantastical? Do they do the same work that Arden did, or afford the same respite? Can one still seek Arden, or has it become an impossible destination?

On the time of the Forest of Arden in *As You Like It* (Natallia Zeliazinskaya)
Whether death is the end or the beginning is a crucial question of the early modern age, specifically Shakespeare's tragedies and comedies. Drawing on Jay L. Halio's famous article on timelessness in the play "As You Like It", I propose to examine the structure of time in the poetics of the comedy. My paper focuses on the early modern emblematic "the end is the beginning," demonstrates the origin of this concept in the teachings of Heraclitus, its connection to the Neoplatonic symbolism of Shakespeare's age, and seeks to show that the play's linear time does not exist in parallel on its own, but rather constitutes a variant of cyclical

time, unfolding in the poetic rather than the real universe. Viewing time from the perspective of the identity of the end and the beginning allows us to assess concepts of the past, present, and future as modes of a single stream of time, represented in the text through genre references to the chivalric romance, the pastoral, and utopia. The shift between these forms is achieved both through "proper" temporal ideas of remembering, forgetting, wasting time, losing time, fleeting from time and thanks to the play's morphology: "if," "will," "would" are no less important here than "I would I were," "had I before," "as I remember," "new/old news," "be merry," "hereafter in a better world," and so on. However, all these temporal modes would have existed in isolation were it not for the Forest of Arden —the topos where all these modes coexist and interact with each other. The forest, too, has neither end nor beginning, and it is also organized in the form of a circle. Nevertheless, it should not be perceived as a space-time bound to a single temporality. The space of the Arden is constantly challenged by temporal and genre-based alternatives. The shift between the past — present — future, as well as between the pastoral — utopian — romantic, helps Arden resist definitions and avoid the dichotomy of the real and the unreal; it endows the space with both distinct characteristics and the uncertainty of its nature, creating a wide spectrum of moods from which you can choose "as you like it."

The Forest of Arden As/Through Immersive Technology in *Black Mirror* (Benjamin Broadribb)

This paper engages with the 'concentric ripples'1 of Arden that can be felt within two episodes of science fiction anthology series *Black Mirror* (2011-), both of which are written by Charlie Brooker and directed by Owen Harris. Like Shakespeare's forest, the digital realms in these episodes – in 'San Junipero' (S3.E4, 2016), a virtual reality which offers 'immersive nostalgia therapy' to the elderly; and, in 'Striking Vipers' (S5.E1, 2019), an immersive fighting video game in the mould of *Street Fighter* and *Tekken* – exist as heterotopias which allow 'the ideal to blend into the actual, and the actual to attain the ideal'.2 They offer places of difference within the narratives and, just as in *As You Like It*, what happens within them influences each episode's wider world. I argue that, through prioritising sincere emotion in their narratives and the felt experience of the audience, even while presenting overtly fantastical stories primarily taking place in simulated technological environments, these episodes of *Black Mirror* create Shakespearean 'ripples' of *As You Like It*'s heterotopian Arden.

Arden and Englishness: The forest in biographies, biopics and documentaries (Clara Calvo)

As a geographical location close to Stratford, the Forest of Arden is linked to Shakespeare's family life, if only because his mother's maiden name was Mary Arden. Successive biographers have connected him to a variety of Catholic Ardens and to locations in or around the Forest of Arden, stressing that it is in Warwickshire, 'the heart of England'. Shakespeare's biographers have seen the wood in *As You Like It* as Shakespeare's simultaneous domestication of Tomas Lodge's Ardennes in *Rosalynd* into the woodland area north of the Avon and into a utopian 'green world' where outlaws, like Robin Hood, and shepherds share the shade. Biopics and documentaries about Shakespeare often romanticise the forest, presenting it as a 'green world' where economic activity is absent. This paper intends to explore how the forest of Arden as biographical space has been re-placed in Shakespearean biopics and documentaries with a magical version of the woodland north of the Avon, closer to *A Midsummer Night's Dream* than to *As You Like It*, and to explore the mechanisms used to make the liminality of the forest compatible with the epitome of Englishness, the 'English verdure, English culture' of heritage drama.

Territory and topsoil: the relocation of Shakespeare's Arden (Elizabeth Freestone)
A digger revs its engine, its mechanical jaws open, ready to rip up the trees that lie in its path. Five miles away, another digger gets to work, this one clearing hedgerows and shovelling topsoil in preparation for new planting. Two industrial sites; two different ways of managing what remains of the ancient Forest of Arden. The former is South Cubbington Wood, a patch of ancient woodland felled to make way for HS2, the UK's new high-speed rail network. The latter is the Heart of England Forest, an audacious attempt to join up sections of woodland across the Midlands and, in part, recreate Shakespeare's Arden through a mass reafforestation programme. But can the Forest of Arden be so easily de- or re-placed? What and where exactly *is* it, literally and — as may be the only remaining viable option — imaginatively? Drawing on personal experiences of walking the Warwickshire woodlands, this paper examines the sites of today's Ardens in conversation with the arboreal and cultural remnants of Shakespeare's fictional forest.

Arden: Ways of Seeing (Meaghan Hird)
This paper takes as its starting point local and global texts that celebrate, acknowledge, and lament humanity's relationship with natural worlds. By adopting the metaphor of the camera lens, I propose to explore *As You Like It,* Samantha Harvey's *Orbital,* and selected contemporary Australian Aboriginal poetry to consider notions of perspective, responsibility, and identity. Whilst *As You Like It* offers a view of the forest as a site of play, transformation, and renewal, *Orbital* presents a contemporary ecological perspective, using the view of Earth from space to foreground planetary fragility and humanity's shared responsibility for the natural world. In addition, having embarked on a significant reading journey of Australian Aboriginal poetry, this paper will explore how texts challenge settler views of the Australian pastoral, and represent Country as a living entity, inseparable from cultural identity. Examined together, these texts reveal shifting constructions of natural worlds, while exposing humanity's consumption of resources and need for stewardship.

The Pastoral as Present: Satirical Topicality in Arden (Jill P. Ingram)
My essay examines *As You Like It* as Shakespeare's first Romance, where family betrayals find atonement in the intervention of the mythological God Hymen and the unlikely religious conversion and renunciation of the court world by Duke Frederick and Jaques. Yet the play seems to fit more squarely into the comic genre, with its conclusion of multiple marriages and social unity. To achieve that unity, Arden's green world operates, as Celia asserts, as a place of "liberty" and "not" "banishment," in the pastoral setting of a "Robin Hood" court of song and love poetry where characters can express their wishes and explore identities, free of immediate political constraints. Yet the play executes the pastoral in its traditional classical mode, with language commenting on serious political matters and real-world anxieties persisting in the woodland court. Hunger, bodily danger, usurpation, and exigencies of commerce are all illuminated by court exiles and rural shepherds alike: Orlando admits to deception in the "savage" forest, and Corin laments that the forest is a place of work. Satirical political commentary is most cogent in the flytings of Touchstone and Jaques, whose verbal sparring rehearses the real-world religio-political satire of the 1590s, where the Marprelate controversy, satire bans, and book burnings both highlighted the dangers of satirical poetic expression. In light of those dangers, liberty—personal and poetic alike—is found, Shakespeare suggests, in an "Ardenspace" at once mythological and religious, a space of atonement where poetic license meets forgiveness to best achieve familial and communal ties.

Arden, the play metaphor, and the value of the humanities (Agnes Matuska)
Long intrigued by the heterogeneous meanings of the play metaphor at the turn of the seventeenth century, and concerned about the future of Shakespeare studies—also as a metonymy more broadly, for the humanities—I propose to examine the cultural traditions at work behind the diverse and sometimes contradictory uses of the *Theatrum Mundi* in As You Like It. I am interested in how these traditions complicate any clear distinction between play and world, imagination and reality, fiction and fact, distinctions that remain unstable : more happily on the stage, and more embarrasingly within contemporary academia. Drawing on Bruno Latour's distinction between "matters of fact" and "matters of concern," as well as my previous musings on AYL, I map multiple interpretive frameworks that reveal layered meanings of the Theatrum Mundi figure. These include the following: the material space of the theatre building; explicit textual articulations of the metaphor; and its implicit enactment within the play's plot, particularly through Rosalind's performative strategies and the transformative space of Arden, where play emerges as an organizing principle that reshapes social relations and epistemological assumptions. I hope to rely on the play metaphor as a lens through which it becomes possible to reaffirm the critical and imaginative value of the humanities in present-day academia.

Arden 2.0: The Potential for Cultural Renegotiation in Serious Games (Marco Nathaniel Nappo)
This paper examines how the Forest of Arden, traditionally understood as Shakespeare's paradigmatic "green world" of transformation and social reconfiguration, may be reimagined within contemporary serious games. Drawing on Semler's concept of "Ardenspace" as a temporary site of pedagogical exploration3, it argues that game-based environments can function as structured yet flexible spaces in which identities are performed, tested, and renegotiated. In contrast to traditional dramatic or narrative forms, serious games invite participants to actively inhabit such spaces through role-play, decision-making, and interaction with simulated social systems. In doing so, they create conditions that resonate with key dynamics of the Shakespearean green world, such as the suspension of normative constraints and the reconfiguration of social relations. Situating this discussion within broader debates on intercultural interaction and social learning, the paper suggests that serious games offer a useful framework for modelling processes of cultural negotiation in increasingly complex and diverse societies. Arden thus emerges as a conceptual structure capable of informing contemporary pedagogical and experiential practices, extending its transformative logic beyond the early modern stage.

Touchstone and the Forest of Arden: Pastoral as a Site of Undecidability (Yuko Sugiura)
This paper reads the Forest of Arden in *As You Like It* not as pastoral, anti-pastoral, or post-pastoral, but as pastoral as a site of undecidability. It further positions Arden as a space of thought that resists immediate determination of meaning in contemporary society. Drawing on Jacques Derrida's concept of différance, the deferral of meaning, this paper especially argues that Touchstone functions as a linguistic agent that continually displaces meaning within the forest. In Act 3, Scene 2, his exchange with Corin develops a logic in which "A can be said, and B can also be said," ridiculing Corin's straightforward truth-claims through ironic syllogism. In Act 3, Scene 3, "the truest poetry is the most faining (feigning)" unsettles romantic love while foregrounding the undecidability of "truth" and "feigning." In Act 5, Scene 4, the passage on "the quarrel on the seventh cause" suggests that conflict arises from fixed viewpoints, while "if" renders reality hypothetical and avoids confrontation. The Forest of Arden thus functions as a space that resists the final determination of meaning, a space that resists binary thinking and immediate judgments characteristic of contemporary society. Rather

than a pastoral structured by a one-time movement of retreat and return, Arden may be understood as an open site of meaning—a pastoral space to which we may move back and forth in thought.

"Tongues in Trees:" *As You Like It*, Arden, and the Wood Wide Web. (James Tink)
The "Wood Wide Web" is the popular name for a hypothesis proposed by botanists that forests are ecosystems dependent on "common Mycorrhizal networks"— that is, underground filaments and fungi—to mutually assist and encourage their survival as organisms. Although the idea has captured the public imagination, it remains contentious: the nature writer Robert MacFarlane objects that the hypothesis depends on the tropes that turn data into metaphors of environmental interdependence, which usually reflect the ideological preferences of the author (i.e. whether ecosystems are fundamentally cooperative or competitive). And on this point, we find a correlation with literary critical interpretations of Arden Forest as a pastoral "green world" in *AYLI,* for as critics swerve between suspicious readings of pastoral as ideological containment and reparative readings of the play's aesthetic or Utopian possibilities, they reveal how the meaning of the forest also becomes a contest of metaphors and implied textual networks. This paper will engage with ecocriticism and Shakespearean adaptation studies by exploring how the pastoral of *AYLI* has been used as an interface in contemporary British poetry of the forest (Alice Oswald and R.F. Langley) and the "green world" comedy of Jez Butterworth's *Jerusalem* (2009).

S29.
Sport on Stage: Playing across Difference

Organisers by Jade Standing, Jonathan Koch

This seminar asks how differences in identity are dressed, addressed, and redressed in sports played on and beyond the early modern stage. Participants will explore how sports—athletic games (e.g., football, tennis, fencing), physical pursuits (archery, dancing, ropewalking), organised and non-organised competitions (chess, hunting, playwright collaborations, intercompany rivalries)—created and tested communities of diverse players and playgoers. Approaching the concept of 'sport' capaciously, we invite papers that consider the players, venues, occasions, rules, and audiences of early modern sports; the relationship of sports to drama, intellectual history, colonialism, theology, etc.; or historical examples of moments when sport has metamorphised difference.

"From the Water to the Wall": Mobile Spectatorship and Early Modern Football (Benjamin Blyth)
On New Year's Day 2026, Jade Standing and I followed the Kirkwall Ba' through four hours of snow, ice-rain, and hail. Gardens were trampled, parked vans scaled, decoy balls deployed; spectators fled before the rolling wave of the scrum, as the boundary between watching and participating proved, repeatedly, difficult to maintain. When the Ba' finally touched Mackinson's corner, "Uppie" Standing's side emerged victorious, leaving "Doonie" Blyth to reflect on the theatricality of a folk-game that has resisted attempts to contain, codify, and suppress it since at least 1650. Tough game. Credit to them. We'll pick ourselves up and go again next year. Reading football prohibitions alongside anti-theatrical polemics, this paper considers shared anxieties around ungoverned assembly in early modern sport and theatre. Sir Thomas Elyot, for example, denounces football's "beastly fury and extreme violence" (*The Governor*, 1531); while Phillip Stubbes condemns it as "a bloody and murthering practise" before turning to the playhouse in a sweeping condemnation of ungoverned play (*Anatomie of*

Abuses, 1583). A shared moral vocabulary that tethers football and playing across these texts registers a perceptual overlap between watching a game and watching a performance, especially when neither is architecturally fixed. This paper asks whether transgressive modes of mobile spectatorship (like those of contemporary folk-football games such as the Ba') might offer a more useful framework for studies of early modern assembly and engagement than the static, architectural models theatre history tends to favour: troubling the boundaries between pitch and yard; player and playgoer; offside and onstage.

The Prize Fighter's Playhouse (Callan Davies)
Valentine Long stowed his sword, buckler, and longsword in a small side room abutting the Curtain stage. It was the 4th February 1581, and he was about to graduate. In a few hours, he'd have fought well enough to become a "free scholar," the first rung on the status ladder of the Company of the Masters of Defence. This paper traces Long's short biography to offer a provocation: what happens if, like him, we understand the early modern playhouse as equally or even primarily a sports and combat space. The activity was common across all such venues, but theatre historians typically frame fencing as peripheral. Long's appearance, though, is one of the Curtain's earliest recorded entertainment events, and the playhouse was still hosting prize-fighters beyond the end of its theatrical life over 40 years later. So, too, were the Rose and the Swan, usually deemed "former" playhouses by 1620s. Long helps us read the wider playhouse environment through a fencer's eyes. The Curtain's high, 14-metre-long stage (equal to a modern Olympic fencing piste) defined the venue both within and without, even reflecting the neighbouring high-way that would soon see a fatal fight involving local Christopher Marlowe. What drew Long here? He returned to the Curtain a year and a half after his Scholar's Prize, ready to level up. Theatre historians have probed the motivations that drew companies to particular venues but not granted the same curiosity to other occupants. Did the "convenience" of the journey matter, might some stages offer better accommodation than others, and/or were external factors at play? Keeping company with Valentine Long can't fully answer all these questions, but it shows them to be central to our understanding of an entertainment landscape that did not always privilege staged drama and that involved many stakeholders… and swordholders.

"Are You Crept Hither to See the Wrestling?": Performing Physical Exercise in Act 1, Scene 2 of *As You Like It* (Laurie Higgins)
In the French court, a man and an adolescent engage in a life-and-death contest of physical combat as two girls and a small group of men watch from the sidelines. In early modern London's Globe Theatre, two men tussle with each other in front of a large compound audience made up of their fellow actors on the stage and a wide variety of onlookers throughout the playhouse. The wrestling match between Orlando and Charles in act 1, scene 2 of *As You Like It* serves as a dramaturgical set piece hurling the action forward towards a new tree-lined arena in Arden. However, this paper reexamines the wrestling as primarily a theatrical and corporeal performance which grapples with the textbook regimen of early modern physical exercise. This paper uncovers the bodily skill and strength implicit in the loaded stage direction, "Wrestle.", by considering the cultural and medical principles of sixteenth-century exercise, the sporting possibilities of Shakespeare's actors and the contest's theatrical staging, and the impact of Richard Burbage's likely casting as Orlando. Using performance studies to turn from wrestling's function on the page to its physical spectacle on the stage moves us closer to a potential ringside view of the athletic displays playgoers may have been witness to during an afternoon's entertainment at the theatre in early modern London.

Wit, Will and *Serio ludere*: Verbal Sparring in the Gendered Discourse of Shakespeare's *Love's Labour's Lost* (Alison Sorbie)
The artful rhetoric and wit combat between the sexes in Shakespeare's *Love's Labour's Lost* is fertile ground for investigating the playful dynamics of gendered discourse; the quips and repartee of individual and collective interactions among players of opposite sex set the stage for a dance of courtship that goes awry. Given societal restrictions and limited opportunities for early modern women to engage in social discourse with their male counterparts or to openly express their desire, I am interested in exploring the patterned responses of dialogic exchange and will delve into gender issues and civil conversation promoted as pastimes and games in courtesy books. In pursuing Mary Sidney's literary influence elsewhere, I link Shakespeare's early career with her courtly community at Wilton and will consider the importance of place as an imaginative framework for drama—an open field beyond the court gates, its boundaries and the *genius loci* of this pastoral context in particular. The King of Navarre proclaims his devotion to study with his Lords in heroic terms: "brave conquerors . . . [over] the huge army of the world's desires" (1.1.8-10), framing themselves an irresistible challenge upon the arrival of the Princess of France and her train, that soon evolves into a veritable "civil war of wits" in the Court of Love, pitting Lords against Ladies, though the parries remain verbal (2.1.225). Foreseeing their intent, the Princess seizes the upper hand, thwarting them at their own game: "There's no such sport as sport by sport o'erthrown" (5.2.153).

Hearing a Bergomask: Dance, Skill and Theatricality in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Gillian Woods)
Like a hard-to-shake school nickname, 'rude mechanicals' (5.9) is the label frequently used by actors, audiences, and even some editors for Bottom and his fellow 'handicraft men' (6.6), though they don't necessarily attend to its ideological baggage. When Puck coins this description, he is busy sneering at the tradesmen who need to 'work for bread upon Athenian stalls' (5.10). In early modern English, 'mechanical' signalled both social subordination and professional expertise: Florio translated 'Mecanico' as 'mechanical, base, vile, a workman in whom there is a good hand and a good wit'. Since *rude* could mean not just 'deficient' in 'refinement' (*OED* adj. I.4), but also 'inexpert, unskilled' (*OED* adj. I.3), Puck's phrase is a potential contradiction in terms that pinpoints one of the comedy's central theatrical questions: what is the relationship between practical skill and artistic sophistication? This paper investigates that question through exploring instances of one of the play's most spectacular demonstrations of creative skilfulness: dance. *A Midsummer Night's Dream* features more dance than any other Shakespearean play and it is performed both by fairy characters defined by their aethereal tripping (8.26, 51) as well as tradesmen reduced to a 'hard-handed' (7.72) and 'thick-skin' (5.13) physicality. In what ways, then, does dance characterize these roles (which may have been doubled)? How does dance help to consolidate or challenge the comedy's social hierarchies? And what might it tell us about the relationship between the body and the intellect in theatrical art?

S30.
Storms, Tides, Floods: Shakespeare and the Power of Climate

Organisers: Susanne Wofford, Christian Billing

Description: This seminar invites participants to explore the many ways extreme climate events in Shakespeare's works, such as storms, tempests, floods, high winds and tides, can be a catalyst for change on a dramatic, political and personal level, and how climate events can lead to moments of transformation, even if that transformation has tragic effect. Using an eco-

critical lens, this seminar will explore the ways in which extreme climate events intersect in Shakespeare's works with questions of genre; with geography and travel; with island studies; with mythology and Shakespeare's debt to/inclusion of epic; with representations of environmental forces as figurations of the gods, among other things.

The 'I' of the Storm: The Weather as a Planetary Subject in Shakespeare's *The Tempest* (Ari J. Adipurwawidjana)

In Shakespeare's works, storms serve as a symbolic marker between the desirable, familiar realm and the chaotic, unknown world in which *hamartia* is cured before the calm of social order—'the eternal summer,' if you will. In tragedies and romances such as *King Lear*, *The Tempest*, *Macbeth*, *Julius Caesar*, *Othello*, *Pericles*, and *The Winter's Tale*, as well as in the sonnets and comedies such as *The Merchant of Venice*, storms are traditionally read as metaphors for the collapse of a well-managed socio-political reality, which the text must rehabilitate through a central human figure. Weather thus forms a spatio-temporal setting, a backdrop for human psychological struggles. In this framework, pseudo-human figures—Caliban and Ariel in *The Tempest*, the Witches in *Macbeth*, or the fairies in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*—personify such threats. This paper proposes an alternative stance, reading Shakespearean storms as planetary subjects. Focusing on *The Tempest*, it departs from an anthropocentric view to argue that meteorological activity functions as an agent, interacting with humans at the limits of the mapped world. Resistance to Prospero's dominance is thus enacted not only by Caliban, but also by the earth's own activities.

Apollo's Oracle, the Bohemian Storm, and the Bear Episode in *The Winter's Tale* (Rita Banerjee)

Apollo's oracle in *The Winter's Tale* 'the king shall live without an heir if that which is lost be not found' signals the loss of identity of Perdita. The natural forces that shape this occurrence seem contingent on Apollo's oracle. Apollo (the sun god) may, therefore, be said to represent forces of nature. The bear, inferior to humans (early-modern thought showed animals as, lacking reason, inferior to humans), part of the physical environment, represents a force associated with and equate-able to nature since humans sought mastery over both nature and animals. This paper studies how natural forces effect the complete elimination of knowledge regarding Perdita and her heirship of Sicilia, while shaping a new life for her in Bohemia with the shepherds as natural actors.

The tragicomic economy dramatizes transformation of loss into gain. While Leontes's loss arises from his lack of trust and devastates Sicilia, Paulina's faith that nature would resolve the problem in her own way restores Perdita and Hermione to Sicilia. Trust and cooperation as opposed to contest and dominance are key elements that regulate nature. By combining economic and ecological approaches to the play, this paper seeks to read the tragicomic design in *The Winter's Tale*.

IL VENTO (The Wind): Adapting *The Tempest*'s Storm, Tides, and Floods for a Planetary Shakespeare (Alys Daroy)

A dreamy tempest or a tempestuous dream? This paper examines *IL VENTO* (*The Wind*), an ecological re-imagining of *The Tempest* created for the 2026 WSC in Verona, with music by Maestro Federico Zandonà and musicians of the Conservatorio di Verona. Evolving from the initial proposal *A Planet of Sound and Fury*, a sound-based fusion of *The Tempest* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream* interwoven with projections of Australian extractive industry, *Il Vento* became a five-actor work centred on atmospheric forces in a Shakespearean island world. The production situates the island within an extractive landscape governed by Prospero Enterprises: Miranda arrives shipwrecked; Caliban labours in the island's logging division; and

Titania appears as a displaced *meža māte*, a forest guardian exiled by hydroelectric inundation, recalling the flooding of Latvia's Doles sala in 1974. At its heart moves *Il Vento*, the isle's wind, merging Ariel's airy spirit with Trinculo's resilience. Drawing on this creative process, the paper explores ecological adaptation in Shakespearean performance, asking how ecodramaturgy and scenography might render wind, water, and atmosphere as theatrical agents; how adaptation reframes environmental justice within extractive and engineered landscapes; and how sonic and digital technologies reshape Shakespeare for planetary storytelling in an age of crisis.

Rereading *The Tempest* in an Age of Climate Crisis: Ecology and the Recognition of Human Limits (Angela Kikue Davenport)
Amid the escalating global climate crisis, this paper reconsiders humanity's relationship with the natural world through Shakespeare's *The Tempest*. It explores how the play dramatises both Prospero's attempts to control nature and the recognition of human limits, particularly through his interactions with Ariel and Caliban, as well as through the island environment shaped by its landscape and seascape. Shakespeare represents nature not merely as a passive backdrop but as an active force that resonates with the characters' emotions and actions. The paper examines how Prospero ultimately recognises the limits of his power as he moves from mastery toward renunciation, most clearly expressed in his decision to abandon his books. By rereading the play in light of contemporary ecological concerns, the paper considers what Shakespeare's drama might offer for thinking about human responsibility and environmental coexistence today.

Prospero's Instruments: Music as Conservation and Extraction in Shakespeare's *Tempest* (Emily Glider)
Music was ecological in the early modern imagination, linking the human body to influences from the earthly to the cosmological plane, yet the nature of that influence was highly contested. While some early modern theorists of music frame harmony as a partial and imperfect reflection of larger natural systems of balance and order that elude the human faculties of comprehension, others frame music as a tool with which human performers actively intervene in natural systems to therapeutically restore harmonious proportions or even engineer changes of their own design. This paper examines the music of Shakespeare's *Tempest*, which plays a complicated and ambiguous role as an environmental actor, bringing about violent transformations and ambivalent "restorations" of the land and water ecologies of the play's imagined island setting. Prospero's music is a technology for exerting influence over these natural surroundings, which show themselves to be malleable in response to the manipulation of the atmospheric soundscape. My reading traces the play's engagement with multiple, competing theories of music's environmental power and efficacy, as defined in Humanist academic writings on music as well as the writings of professional musicians thinking through the ecological implications of their trade.

Strange Contraries of Mind: Climate, Cognition, and Solastalgia in John Lyly's *Gallathea* (Perry Guevara)
This essay argues that John Lyly's *Gallathea* (c. 1585) stages an anticipatory form of climate grief, dramatizing the psychological effects of an environment inevitably trending toward ruin. Set in a coastal community threatened by cyclical flooding, the play unfolds under the looming possibility of a deluge sent by Neptune, a catastrophe that has not yet occurred but whose approach saturates the play's emotional atmosphere. I suggest that Lyly anticipates what Glenn Albrecht has termed solastalgia, the distress produced by environmental change that is coming or already underway. In *Gallathea*, characters do not merely respond to disaster after it arrives;

rather, they inhabit a world shaped by the expectation of ecological loss. Situating the play within the tidal geography of Lincolnshire's Humber floodplain, the essay shows how climate and cognition are enmeshed within a shared ecological field. The erosion of dunes, the instability of coastal marshes, and the seasonal threat of inundation form the backdrop against which 'thoughts unknit' and characters experience 'strange contraries' of mind. Drawing on work in cognitive ecology and environmental psychology, this essay proposes that *Gallathea* registers an early modern poetics of anticipatory environmental mourning.

Disastrous Storms in Shakespeare (Rebecca Lemon)
This essay draws on and expands research from a forthcoming edited collection, *Shakespeare and Ecological Crisis*. It approaches the long history of climate crisis in order to consider how humans have understood extreme weather over time. Shakespeare's plays repeatedly depict not only the catastrophic effects of storms, but also what characters identify as their consistent origin: the singular, absolutist self-interest of humans, particularly those who hold or seek power. Storms emerge—in Shakespeare and arguably today—as leaders and administrations consolidate power, dominate subjects and citizens, and ravage the earth, producing catastrophic results. What is symbolic in Shakespeare may be understood as scientific today: human domination functions as cause, and the storm as effect—a fierce weather event that serves as both symbolic and scientific expression of the impact of one species on the rest of the globe.

'[T]he present business | Which now's upon's': *kairos* and climate crisis in *The Tempest* (Sarah Lewis)
Kairos—the opportune moment, right timing, or appropriate action—is especially relevant to contemporary responses to crisis. The rhetoric of *kairos* ('seize the moment,' 'act now or regret it') pervades public discourse and has been repeatedly invoked in relation to the COVID-19 pandemic, ongoing global conflicts and immigration crises, and, centrally for this seminar, the climate emergency. This paper interrogates the work *kairos* performs as a temporal and rhetorical framework shaping ideas of individual and collective agency, as well as understandings of social and economic status, in response to eco-catastrophe. Focusing on *The Tempest*, I examine how extreme weather events in the play stage kairotic rhetoric in action. In the opening scene, the Boatswain tells Gonzalo to 'work the peace of the present' and to prepare for 'the mischance of the hour, if it so hap.' Here, the durative unfolding of the storm ('the hour') is set against the immediacy of the present moment, marked by contingency and the instability of fortune, which may either destroy or save. I explore the entangled opposition between *chronos* (durational time, the storm itself) and *kairos* (the decisive moment of action), arguing that this temporal duality, activated through an extreme climate event, helps clarify the play's negotiation of social status and of collective versus individual agency.

Seeking Another Drop in the Ocean: Sisters and Brothers in *The Comedy of Errors* (Etsuko Matsuo)
The *Comedy of Errors* frames its narrative around a storm that alters a family's fate. In the opening, Egeon recounts a shipwreck 33 years earlier and the destructive force that broke his family apart. This shipwreck is not only part of the past narrative; within the play's structure, characters are also figuratively shipwrecked. Antipholus of Syracuse compares himself to 'a drop of water / That in the ocean seeks another drop' (1.2.35–36) and loses himself in a storm of mistaken identities. Imagery of drops of water in the ocean underlies the play's central vocabularies. Surrounded by the frame story of Egeon, whose name evokes the Aegean Sea, characters undergo a kind of 'sea change,' transforming into new selves. Antipholus of Syracuse asks Luciana to 'create' him 'new' and to 'transform' him (3.2.39–40), Dromio of Syracuse is transformed through insults casting him as: 'snail,' 'slug,' and 'ass' (2.2.185–90).

These shifts suggest movement between human and inhuman through metaphor and performative address. This paper focuses on the female characters, examining female intimacy in relation to systems of inheritance in Shakespearean comedies. It investigates their shared household and Luciana's unmarried status, marked by her 'troubles of the marriage-bed' (2.1.27).

Reeds, Resistance, Resilience (Melissa Walter)
In John Lyly's *Midas*, the title character foolishly wishes that everything he touches will turn to gold, and soon finds out that he has ruined his relationship with the living world. Later, a stand of reeds reports that 'Midas the king has ass's ears.' The reeds are ephemeral as individuals, easily cut down, occupying a shifting margin. But when humans are afraid to pipe up, the reeds reveal politically sensitive information that indicts at once Midas's political misconduct and his ecological stupidity. Literarily, reeds are Syrinx, a nymph transformed to escape rape by Pan but subject to being fondled by him endlessly as he blows his panpipes. Biologically, they are denizens of wetlands, the in-between spaces which resist erosion and provide resilience against storms, and were historically sites of resistance to enclosure. Multiple, flexible, transformed and transforming, yet also stabilizing and rhizomatically connected, the reeds structurally oppose the extractive economic model, initially adopted by Midas, that neglects life-supporting systems in pursuit of gold (or other abstracted tokens of value like money and bitcoin). This paper reads Lyly's reeds in the context of their ecological and political import, with reference to Ovid, Shakespeare, and our contemporary moment.

S31.
Theorizing Global Shakespearemes

Organisers: David Nee, Jason Eng Hun Lee

Description: This seminar aims to put pressure on how we define and conceptualize the units or elements of global Shakespeare, or what we are calling "Shakespearemes" (on the model of Lévi-Strauss's mytheme, or motifeme in folkloristics). How might closer attention to the different kinds of bits and pieces that get remixed in global Shakespeare inform our criticism? We seek a wide range of contributions including but not limited to (1) interventions applying non-Western concepts of the units or elements of art to global Shakespeare; (2) microhistories tracking a specific Shakespearean element (motif, phrase, meme, image, etc.) as it migrates through global adaptation/reception; (3) papers attending to the role of media, remediation, and intermediality in the transmission of Shakespearemes; (4) efforts to re-theorize, in the context of global Shakespeare, key terms like motif, theme, citation, image, gesture, prop, scene.

Tracing Shakespearemes in Nisha Sharma's Shakespeare trilogy *Dating Dr Dil* (2022), *Tastes Like Shakkar* (2023), *Marriage & Masti* (2024) (Florence Cabaret)
In a sequence of three connected novels staging three female friends meeting three male friends who all end up as three couples in present-day USA, South Asian American writer Nisha Sharma has achieved a loose rewriting of three Shakespeare comedies (from *The Taming of the Shrew*, to *Much Ado About Nothing* and *Twelfth Night, or What You Will*) which is now marketed as the « If Shakespeare Were an Auntie series ». Focusing in this abstract on the third and final installment (*Marriage & Masti*, a modern retelling of *Twelfth Night*) in the rom-com trilogy, I would like to show how the apparition of a sufficient number of Shakespearean indicial paradigms (Ginsburg, 1983), such as character and place names, key words and motifs, trigger the re-cognition of a haunting Shakespearian presence (Derrida, 1993) that is

subsequently reinterpreted as a Shakespearian rhizome (Lanier, 2014) expanding across the three novels inspired by three Shakespeare comedies. If the crosspollination of the mariage trope from a Shakesperian context to contemporary diasporic South Asian novels both enhances and mitigates the darker sides of three comedies frequently described as ambivalent and ambiguous (could genre in-betweenness be described as a Shakespeareme ?), it also illustrates how a reader familiar with Shakespeare gets caught in a web of inductions and abductions that entails the *a posteriori* identification of original iconic characters and themes that crop up, in a second reading time, as defracted and dispersed in the novels.

Shakespearemes' in a Japanese Anime-Otaku VR Adaptation of *Hamlet* (Mika Eglinton)
This paper examines *VR演劇ハムレット* (*VR Theatre Hamlet*, 2024), a non-commercial production staged in VRChat by the Japanese community organization 一般社団法人メタシアター (Meta Theater), as a case study in how Shakespearemes circulate within subcultural digital ecosystems. Performed by avatar-embodied participants drawn from Japan's VR and Vtuber communities, this production raises questions about how Shakespeare's global cultural prestige operates at the micro-scale of a niche online subculture of digital natives. Drawing on Azuma Hiroki's theory of "database consumption" in Japanese otaku culture, which proposes that postmodern fan groups relate to narratives as databases of extractable, recombinable elements, I argue that this VR community's relationship to Shakespeare exemplifies a distinctively contemporary form of Shakespeareme: one in which the play is approached as a reservoir of usable components rather than a text to be reverenced. I also consider the production's layered avatar identities, in which anime-aesthetic character designs function as a visual localization of Shakespearean roles into a Japanese subcultural idiom, and to its multi-platform intermedial infrastructure (VRChat, SyncRoom, SonoBus, Discord), which actively shapes which Shakespearemes can survive remediation into virtual space.

« Who's Country? » : Country as Character in Indigenous-Australian Adaptations of Shakespeare (Cato Rooryck)
In the famous opening scene of *King Lear*, it is the division and transfer of land, and the power it comes with, that initiates the play's tragic plot. The play plays with different conceptions of what is happening and what is at stake in that moment, when Lear reveals his "darker purpose". My paper will focus on *The Shadow King*, a 2014 Aboriginal adaptation of *King Lear* by Balang T.E. Lewis and Michael Kantor, to investigate how the transfer of land (and power) creates a structure of opposition in the play through a clash of different conceptions of relations to the land. *The Shadow King,* which "reworks [the play] as a sprawling, blood-soaked tale of two Indigenous families in Australia's north" (MT 2014) offers a culturally grounded, Aboriginal perspective on land, which centers on custodianship. This perspective is brought into conflict with a Western conception of land ownership mobilized in the opening scene. My paper takes up how land itself, as a potential Shakespeareme, functions as a character as well as a plot-driving element, showing how *The Shadow King* opens up new understandings of the central conflict that sets off Shakespeare's tragedy and how it might be reread through an Indigenous-Australian cultural perspective in the twenty-first century. I will focus on the way *The Shadow King* stages land as a central character, in line with the Aboriginal concept of Country, a term that is used by First Nations people to refer to their lands but that represents much more than a physical, geographical place or piece of land. The capitalization of Country embodies its connection to people (as a proper noun), and the weight it carries in the holistic Aboriginal world view, in which everything is interconnected and "Everything is living" (Neale 2020, 1). Country, seen as a living and breathing entity and holding cultural significance, becomes a "who" rather than a "what." The real tragedy, in *The Shadow King*, I argue, is the estrangement from Country. When the Aboriginal Lear divides the land 'he owns' between his daughters, he

is effectively selling *it* to the highest bidder. He is "playing the white fella game" (MT 2014). This is his madness: he has lost sight of his relationship to Country, and simultaneously, to family.

'A pound of flesh': transnational and transmedia circulations (Sabine Schülting)
In March 2026, at an AI summit in Washington, D.C., the Democratic senator Mark Warner (VA) commented on growing concerns about AI-related job losses. Rejecting demands for a moratorium on AI, he pondered instead on the options for securing financial support for affected communities, saying that the "easiest place to extract the pound of flesh is probably going to be from the data centers." I am less interested in the debate on AI than in Warner's unmarked citation from Shakespeare's *Merchant of Venice*, which is a recent example of the frequent reference to a 'pound of flesh' in political debates in the US and elsewhere. Indeed, the 'pound of flesh' has proved extremely mobile and appeared in diverse settings and media: in historical studies about slavery in America, in documentaries about the South-Asian trade in human organs, in pop songs, action and Sci-Fi movies, and a Hindi animated story for children. My paper will trace these transnational and transmedia circulations of 'the pound of flesh', starting with a brief glimpse at its history from its pre-Shakespearean (folktale) origins to its presence in contemporary culture and media. Deviating from traditional adaptation studies, I will take up the suggestion made by the panel convenors and consider the 'pound of flesh' as a 'Shakespeareme', analogous to what Lévi-Strauss has called a "mytheme" and Kenneth Pike a "motifeme", i.e. a constituent or meaning-making narrative unit of a myth or folktale. In other words, rather than offering a close-reading of individual Shakespeare adaptations or spin-offs, I will take my point of departure from the narrative core of the 'pound of flesh' Shakespeareme, look at cultural and/or historical variations in which it has been fleshed out and become meaningful, and consider some of the conditions that have impacted its transcultural and transmedia circulations.

Bardolatry and Anti-Stratfordianism in Finland: An Autoethnography (Niko Suominen)
This paper explores the manifestations of Shakespeare myths and anti-Shakespearean conspiracy theories in Finnish culture. Outside the anglosphere, the notions of Shakespearean exceptionalism and ahistoricity continue to persist, affecting teachers, publishers, academia, professional theatres, funding decisions, translators and national literature. Paradoxically enough, even though Finland stands out as one of the most successful countries in the field of media literacy, these debunked, half-understood and outdated ideas about Shakespeare make appearances as historical truths in all the Finnish news outlets. The purpose of this paper is to extend the thematic focus of *Contested Will: Who Wrote Shakespeare?* (2010) by James Shapiro towards Shakespeare's global afterlife. Utilizing autoethnographic methodology, I discuss the issues of Bardolatry and Anti-Stratfordianism in Finland. This piece attempts to provide insights into the questions: Where, when and why did these myths and conspiracy theories enter into the Finnish cultural consciousness? What has been their historical impact? How have they affected my personal idea of Shakespeare? Who are the ones spreading the misinformation in today's Finland? My findings include an understanding of the cultural transmission through which the Finnish culture has inherited an extra-factual Shakespeare, serving as an intercultural conversation starter in the era of post-truth and artificial intelligence.

S32.
‘There is no world without Verona walls’:
Exile in Shakespeare, Now and Then

Organisers: James M. Sutton, Stephanie E. Chamberlain, Jane Kingsley-Smith

Description: This seminar will explore the cultural, historical, religious, and racial aspects of exile in Shakespeare’s works, and in the plays and poems of his English and Italian contemporaries. Do early modern works that center exile, and their contemporary global adaptations, prove fertile ground in the search for hospitality offered to the dispossessed? Can Shakespeare speak to the diverse travails of those forced from their native borders? What new revelations about exile can literature, past and present, help us glean? We invite papers that examine early modern representations of exile, as well as adaptations and contemporary performances.

Between Verona Walls and a World Elsewhere: Shakespearean Models of Exile in the Cuban Diaspora (Rodney Castillo)
In *Romeo and Juliet*, Romeo responds to his banishment from Verona with the despairing declaration that “there is no world without Verona walls” (3.3), imagining exile as a condition in which life beyond the city becomes indistinguishable from death. William Shakespeare offers a strikingly different formulation in *Coriolanus*, when the banished Roman general asserts, “There is a world elsewhere” (3.3). Taken together, these moments articulate competing Shakespearean models of exile: one in which the loss of the homeland annihilates the possibility of belonging, and another in which life—and identity—can be reconstituted beyond the city’s walls. At the same time, Shakespeare’s plays repeatedly test the possibility of a cosmopolitan subject able to exist between political communities, while also portraying characters who perish when they fail to adapt to life beyond the walls of their homeland, revealing both the promise and the limits of such an identity. This paper places these Shakespearean explorations of exile and belonging in dialogue with the evolving experience of Cuban migration to the United States since 1959. Early waves of Cuban displacement often resembled Romeo’s logic of banishment: exile entailed dispossession, the near impossibility of return, and an identity structured around permanent separation from the homeland. In this context, the metaphorical walls of the nation appeared impermeable. Over time, however, the Cuban diaspora has come to contain multiple and overlapping relationships to those walls. Increased mobility, remittances, and transnational family networks have rendered the boundary between homeland and diaspora permeable for many migrants, echoing Coriolanus’s vision of a “world elsewhere.” Yet exile rhetoric and experiences of rupture persist even as other migrants imagine identities no longer structured by permanent separation or by the expectation of return. This paper argues that since Fidel Castro’s revolution in 1959, the Cuban diaspora has developed layers of identity redefinition, simultaneously inhabiting multiple Shakespearean models of exile and belonging. Romeo’s walls, Coriolanus’s world elsewhere, and emerging cosmopolitan identities coexist within the same diaspora. By reading Cuban migration alongside Shakespeare’s dramatization of banishment and belonging, the paper explores both the possibilities and the limits of transcending the exilic condition when the walls separating home and elsewhere become permeable.

Returning in Stone: Shakespeare’s Problem Plays and the Question of Mortality (Roslyn Joy Irving)
In Sonnet 81, Shakespeare begins, ‘Or I shall live your epitaph to make / Or you survive when I in earth am rotten.’, at its close he promises his lover a return: ‘You still shall live—such

virtue hath my pen— / Where breath most breathes, even in the mouths of men.' The idea of marking a return from death to life, and how to undertake such a task, is not limited to his sonnets, in which verse becomes a viable vehicle for immortality, but appears in two of his 'problem plays'. In *Timon of Athens*, the titular character returns to the stage after death, not as a figure but as a voice preserved in stone, an epitaph read aloud by Alcibiades: 'Here lies a wretched corse, of wretched soul bereft. / Seek not my name.' (V.4.81-2). This return, John Dixon Hunt suggests is part of a wider pattern in which the play considers the 'emblem', and the relationship between 'verbal and visual modes'.1 The epitaph continues for two further lines and offers an interesting call for immortalisation at odds with anonymity. Spoken by Timon's one-time friend, the epitaph is accompanied by wider reflections on war, peace, and 'faults forgiven' (V.4.93, 95-7) The realisation that all are bound to rot, and yet all hope for some sense of legacy is universal, be it a record in stone, lines in verse, or as can be found in Hermione's return in *The Winter's Tale*, as statue grown warm, granted the opportunity to live once more: 'To see the life as lively mocked as ever / still sleep mocked death.' (V.3.22-3). In the face of such a figure, all are silent, something made explicit by Paulina: 'It the more shows off / Your wonder.' (V.3.24-5) One is left questioning if this line is meant to describe the theatre-goers too, faced with an icon of death, and soon, one that will awaken. Katrina Spadaro, describes Hermione's reawakening in terms of 'the dissolution of an artwork' and 'the loss of a monument' that ultimately produces scepticism.2At this moment in the play, Leontes is in imitation of his wife's statue, frozen by the likeness of life, and then he breaks the silence: 'Chide me, dear stone' (V.3.28), surely Timon's epitaph did, but Hermione's statue confronts her viewer with the passage of time, a slightly aged visage, and yet full of tenderness. As Leontes continues, one is brought repeatedly to what death feels like for the living, 'Does not the stone rebuke me / For being more stone than it?' (V.3.43-4), incapable of changing redressing or altering a much-altered state. Shakespeare's own epitaph promises a haunting curse that seems to conjure the presence of the poet in Stratford. This paper addresses Shakespeare's construction of death through returns in stone that promise a resistance to mortality.

Homelessness and Gender in *Cymbeline* and *Philaster* (Rieko Ishibuchi)

Beyond the fact that Shakespeare's *Cymbeline* and Beaumont and Fletcher's *Philaster* were performed around in 1610, both plays share commonalities, when explored through the perspectives of exile and homelessness. For instance, each play begins with banishment or deposition; in *Cymbeline*, despite different reasons, Posthumus, husband to Innogen, and Arviragus, a lord living in Wales, suffer banishment from the court of Britain, while, in *Philaster*, Philaster, rightful heir to Sicily, is in a state of displacement, because his father was deposed by the late King of Calabria. Regarding the female characters in both plays, the experience of exile and homelessness carries more nuanced and layered meanings. Driven by distinct motivations, Innogen, Princess of Britain, and Bellario/Euphrasia, servant to Philaster and later revealed as an aristocrat's daughter, both seek refuge in male disguise, resulting in a state of homelessness in Wales or the woods. However, Innogen and Bellario/Euphrasia reach different endings in terms of the early modern expectations of gender and marriage. The former is confined within the framework of patriarchy after the revelation of her brother's identity as an heir to the throne. On the other hand, the latter remains unmarried as a devote servant to Philaster and Arethusa even after the revelation of her identity. In other words, Bellario/Euphrasia is portrayed as a heroine who defies the framework of a happy marriage in this tragicomedy. Considering cultural and social contexts in which both plays were written, this paper will explore an intersection of homelessness and gender in *Cymbeline* and *Philaster.* In doing so, it aims at looking at how Shakespeare and his contemporaries shed new light on

the idea of gender, belonging, hospitality, and human connection within our current divided society.

A wild faction: the outlaws in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* (Hester M.M. Lees Jeffries)
In *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, Valentine is banished from Milan as a result of his supposed friend Proteus's machinations exposing his plan to elope with his beloved Silvia, daughter of the Duke, whom Proteus also loves (or rather 'loves'). In 4.1, Valentine and his servant Speed encounter a group of 'outlaws' in the forest, who at first threaten them, and then—seeing that Valentine is a 'proper man'—invite him to become their leader. These outlaws are often comic in performance, inept, easily-led, given to touchingly transparent self-aggrandizement or self-exculpation as they outline the purported reasons for their banishments; it's not uncommon for their numbers to be expanded, giving the ensemble more to do in this lopsided play. Through a close-reading of this scene and the outlaws' other appearances (5.3, when they capture Silvia; 5.4, where they are pardoned by the Duke at Valentine's request) this paper will explore how the outlaws quickly establish individual characters, a hierarchy, relationships, and shared values, and how they present an idealised version of exile that at the same time speaks to larger, more complex ideas around banishment both in the late sixteenth century and elsewhere on the early modern stage. As well as thinking about these 'comic' outlaws in modern performance, it will consider what precedents they might establish for Shakespeare's writing of other small groups of similarly unnamed characters (servants, soldiers, guards, citizens) later in his career.

Genealogies of Exclusion in Theatre Dybbuk's *Merchant of Venice (Annotated)* (Robin Kello)
What might *The Merchant of Venice*, with its foundation of vitriol and exclusionary social structure—so dependent on the boundary between Christian and Jew or alien and citizen—offer audiences in the present moment? How can Shakespeare's late-Elizabethan preoccupations map onto 21st-century authoritarian and neo-imperial political formations, legacies of religious conflict, and the continuity of forced migration as an instrument of state violence? How might the dramaturgical techniques of adaptation and appropriation reimagine Shakespeare's plays? This essay turns to such questions by examining Theatre Dybbuk's *The Merchant of Venice (Annotated), or, In Sooth I Know Not Why I am So Sad*, which works (and reworks) its Shakespearean source text, scene by scene, continually breaking the fourth wall to thread connections and transpose patterns of state violence from the early modern moment to our own. In so doing, *Merchant Annotated* unsettles pleasures of plot and suspension of disbelief to instead offer its audience a sharp uppercut of both radical performance and political exigence. Developing a distinct grammar of movement and employing Brechtian techniques of audience alienation and touching on issues as varied as climate change, censorship, and global capital flows, the drama brings into relief the habits of thought that underpin political violence, highlighting genealogies of exclusion and dispossession that extend into the present. It not only rejects the notion of Shakespearean drama as solely demonstrative of its historical moment but suggests that mimetic representation itself is an insufficient form to engage the horrors of history in the longue durée. This essay centers the radical performance of *Merchant Annotated* and its adaptive strategies in a broader inquriy into how we might continue to make Shakespeare new.

Internal Exile and Leaving Oneself: The Duke's Escape in *Measure for Measure* (Sean Kevin Lawrence)
Measure for Measure may seem a strange choice of play for a seminar on exile: everything takes place in the city of Vienna. The duke, nevertheless, is thrice exiled. Two of these exiles are feigned. In the first scene, he claims to be leaving, but without giving any explanation other

than that he's in a hurry (1.1.54-56). Not only does the duke avoid foreign exile, but also as Friar Lodowick he claims to be "Not of this country" (3.1.473), and therefore an exile in Vienna. Finally, he lives a sort of internal exile, in disguise and the underworld. The motives of this last and only real exile of the duke are only partially explained. His disguise emphasizes the distinction between the duke's two bodies, as a head of state and a man, to borrow the distinction of which Ernst Kantorowicz traces the history at exhaustive length. *Incognito*, the duke never bothers to specify Lodowick's personal origins, but they hardly matter: as a representative of the church, he places himself outside the law of the city. The duke, as incarnation of state power, opposes and even threatens his own *alter ego*, who responds by defying him. One might say that the duke goes into exile not only from his office, but also from himself. On the other hand, he finds himself for the first time liberated from his office and its constraints. Rather than being dismissed as mere slumming, the Duke's internal exile in *Measure for Measure* may be taken as an effort to establish an identity beyond his legal role. Much as exile threatens in Shakespeare's plays, it can also liberate, offering new identities.

Young Exiles of the Late Plays: Displaced Children in *Cymbeline* (Lori Humphrey Newcomb)

This paper extends previous work on exile in Shakespeare from adult characters to those experiencing loss and displacement in childhood, as found throughout the late plays. While children are not yet the political actors that are typically associated with banishment or voluntary exile, displaced children in early modern culture do possess imminent agential status, most consequentially when they are of high birth. The late plays repeatedly end with the recovery of young people to their families and homelands, resolving but of course not erasing their earlier displacement. Traditional scholarship on the late plays treats the lost-child motif from the point of view of the patriarch, whose psychic crisis is healed by reunion with his issue. More recently, Jane Kingsley-Smith has pointed out the "violent separation of mother and child" is an "anxiety of exile" common in (but not unique to) the late plays (156). In the romance tradition beyond Shakespeare, such lost youths are often protagonists; their wanderings return to identification with their family of origin in order for their new lives to begin. In looking at Shakespeare's late plays, I too center youngsters' affective experiences, including abandonment, adoption, captivity, exposure forced labor, or unfree travel, to suggest that a formative experience of dislocation becomes an essential precondition of drama. This paper explores the new urgency of displaced youth and their experience of bifurcated identity as a force driving generic innovation. Attending especially to the new emphasis on girls in exile, I suggest doubts about reproductive futurity under imperial expansion as a core concern of all the late plays, not just *Tempest*. The recovery of the patriarch's family line that ends the plays seldom ends the traffic in children, especially daughters; as *The Tempest* imagines for Claribel, a future dynastic marriage may lead to an adulthood at far remove from home. To better register the particularities of gender and marriage practice, this paper will concentrate on *Cymbeline*, where multiple dislocated sons and daughters problematize the very contours of Britain as nation and empire.

S33.
Vindicta mihi!
The Performance of Revenge from Classical and Italian Drama to Shakespeare

Organisers: Michele Marrapodi, Graham Holderness

This seminar proposes a critical journey through the idea and performance of revenge, from its origins in classical and Senecan tragedies to the various Italian Renaissance forms until Shakespeare, and extending where appropriate to the modern world, where revenge remains a primary driver of human conflict around the globe. This shift in mentality is reflected in variants in early modern English plays when the revenge myth is used as retribution for political intrigue and societal corruption. Papers are requested to investigate this topic from a moral-historical or presentist viewpoint, examining the contrasts and controversies in early modern English drama before and after Shakespeare.

Physical Ghosts: Female Revenants in Early Modern Revenge Tragedy (Jessica Charest)
Works of classical and early modern revenge tragedy, particularly dramatic works, typically draw upon elements of the supernatural, perhaps most frequently, vengeful ghosts, or revenants, who take to haunting the theatrical stage in an effort to enforce and witness vengeance. Notably however, female ghosts, in the sense of the spiritually dead, seem to be all but absent within the genre. Although this lack of female spectrality has contributed to the view of early modern revenge as a largely masculine space, I argue that female revenants are actually abundant on the early modern stage. Based on the *OED*'s definitions of revenant as having "returned from, or as if from, the dead; resembling or reminiscent of, a ghost" and the term's origins in the French *revenir*, meaning "to return," I argue that these definitions present space for an expanded conceptualization of spectrality in order to shed light on the gendered implications behind revenants in early modern drama. Neither term declares that a revenant must be dead or even spiritual. I will specifically look at the case of Lavinia in Shakespeare's *Titus Andronicus* in order to demonstrate how the female body can shift in order to serve a similar role to the classical ghost figure of revenge tragedy. Rather than following their male counterparts in incorporeal spectrality, women perform acts of what I term "revenance" or *the act of embodying the role of a revenant*, through their physicality and bodily presence, appearing not as spirits but as bodies, parts of bodies, or corporeal objects of memento mori, before those whom they seek to haunt and drive to revenge. While male revenants, as ghosts, tend to remain in spiritual form, serving only as a visual and verbal reminder to the revenger, female revenants use their physical forms not only to enact remembrance as male ghosts do, but to actively participate in the vengeance themselves, operating as the punishing figures that the classical furies have always been.

"The Sense of an Ending" in Revenge Tragedies: The Revenger's Suicide and Renaissance Ethics (Yuki Nakamura)
The typical ending of a revenge tragedy is the death of the protagonist who has completed the act of revenge. As in William Shakespeare's *Hamlet* or Thomas Kyd's *The Spanish Tragedy*, it is characteristic of the genre that the drama concludes with the death of the protagonist. Elizabethan and Jacobean revenge dramatists learned much from Senecan tragedy; yet in Seneca's plays, as well as in the Greek tragedies he adapted, the revenger does not die. The decision to kill off the revenger is thus a distinctive feature of Renaissance drama. Many critics have explained the revenger's death as a form of poetic justice. Nevertheless, the possibility of

new interpretations still remains. This paper analyzes the ending of drama as the site where authors and audiences arrive at a final judgment based on their respective values. If the ending is understood as a conclusion in this sense, Frank Kermode's concept of *kairotic* fulfillment, proposed in *The Sense of an Ending* (1966), proves particularly useful. There are various patterns in the death of the revenging protagonist. These include suicide, mutual killing, accidental death, and endings in which the protagonist survives but is expected to face execution. This paper focuses in particular on the pattern of suicide. In works such as Francis Beaumont and John Fletcher's *The Maid's Tragedy* (1610) and Thomas Middleton's *The Changeling* (1622), the revenger takes his or her own life. Although the circumstances surrounding each suicide differ, evidence found in a range of revenge-tragedy texts and historical materials suggests that, in audience reception, these endings may have converged toward an understanding of suicide as poetic justice. The ending is the point at which the ethical values of both author and audience are articulated. In order to understand the distinctive nature of endings in Renaissance revenge tragedy, valuable insights can also be gained by comparing later adaptations that alter their conclusions, as well as modern revenge dramas that continue the conventions of early modern revenge tragedy.

"Cruell reuengement": Exploring the Ethics of Revenge with *Horestes* (Erin E. Kelly)
John Pickering's *Horestes* – published in 1567 and possibly written that year as commentary on purported involvement by Mary, Queen of Scots, in the murder of her husband, Henry Stuart, Lord Darnley – explicitly stages revenge. That is, the play not only presents events first dramatized in the Oresteia, specifically the killing of Clytemnestra by her son Orestes in retribution for the murder of his father Agamemnon; it also features a Vice who initially identifies himself as Patience and then as Courage but who ultimately reveals his true name is Revenge. Much of the play's action is occupied with Horestes seeking advice about whether it is ethical to sentence his mother to death, even if she is clearly guilty of murder and regicide. The fact that *Horestes* ends with its title character cementing the approval of kings and nobles by joyfully marrying Menelaus's daughter Hermione suggests that the execution of Clytemnestra is morally sanctioned. (Perhaps *Horestes* might be called a revenge comedy?)
But the question remains as to whether the play rejects the idea that Horestes's actions are a form of revenge or, more interestingly, suggests there are different kinds of revenge, some more ethically problematic than others. The play's long title promises "A NEWE Enterlude of Uice Conteyninge, the Historye of Horestes with the cruell reuengment of his Fathers death, vpon his one naturtll Mother," but numerous scenes in which Horestes seeks counsel and invites deliberation about his actions seem to counter any sense that his treatment of Clytemnestra is "cruel." My essay for this seminar argues that the overall point of this play is to distinguish between "cruel revengement" and the ethically necessary forms of revenge that it, at key moments, associates with judicial punishment, the duty of political leaders, and even God. *Horestes* thus explores revenge in ways that engage with sixteenth-century English arguments about when punishment crosses into cruelty – a concern most notably explored in both Protestant and Counter-Reformation discussions of the deaths of individuals celebrated by some as martyrs. Furthermore, tracking the category of "cruel revengement" introduced by *Horestes* across later revenge tragedies might also help us understand the implications of these plays becoming increasingly bloody even as their self-identified revengers (including Hamlet) express a variety of attitudes towards cruelty.

Hospitality and Revenge in Shakespeare's *Troilus and Cressida* (Patricia Wareh)
This paper argues that two conflicting social paradigms inform Shakespeare's *Troilus and Cressida*. The first is hospitality, demonstrated by the striking number of connections made between the Greeks and the Trojans, showing that even enemies can "find the welcome of a

noble foe" (1.3.308). This economy of generosity is empathetic and humane; as Ruben Espinosa and David Ruiter assert in their introduction to *Shakespeare and Immigration*, "to welcome the stranger is to be civil, to be civilized, to be ethical and human" (4). Both intertwining and competing with this spirit of "human gentleness" (4.1.22) that recalls classical examples of guest-friendship is the model of revenge, which the play increasingly emphasizes. While courteous hospitality demands giving more than is owed, revenge is part of an economy of payback that would appear to offer comparable, satisfying exchanges (an eye for an eye) but is in actuality a practice without end; as Pat Barker's Clytemnestra contemplates in the recent novel *The Voyage Home,* "The hunger for retribution can't be satiated; one episode of bloodletting merely supplies the justification for the next. And the next" (244). In *Troilus and Cressida*, I argue, the craving for revenge is revealed as both antisocial *and* as deriving from the disruption of valued social connections. In connecting revenge with beastliness and illness, I argue, the play demonstrates how the spirit of vengeance grows out of a perversion of human values. *Troilus and Cressida*'s increasing focus on revenge over welcome offers a deflating view of heroism, illustrating how the desire for retribution has a self-defeating logic that destroys the social connections that ostensibly give it meaning.

***Vindicta nostra*? Collective Revenge and Choral Agency in *Erophile* and *The Spanish Tragedy* (Clio-Ragna Takas)**

This paper begins from the closing scene of Georgios Chortatsis' *Erophile* (c.1595), the most celebrated tragedy of the Cretan Renaissance. The play concludes with its chorus collectively assuming the role of avenger and murdering the tyrant king, Filogonos. Instances in which the chorus itself becomes the agent of retribution are rare; a notable precedent lies in *The Bacchae* (405 BCE), where vengeance is chorally enacted through the ecstatic violence of maenadic murder rather than individual intention. A suggestive point of comparison in the English canon is *The Spanish Tragedy* (c. 1587), where choric function and revenge are closely aligned in the figures of Don Andrea, the revenant ghost, and Revenge personified. Here, vengeance is distributed across ghostly, allegorical, and theatrical registers, structuring the play's action from a position of spectatorship. Rather than approaching revenge through the psychology or role of a single revenger, this paper treats it as a structuring device that organizes character function and dramatic action. Placing these works in dialogue, it suggests that early modern drama experiments with distributing revenge across figures, voices, and frames, but that *Erophile* is most unusual in assigning not only the logic but the act of vengeance to a collective body. In doing so, it reconfigures revenge as choral and communal, inviting a reconsideration of how early modern drama imagines agency, justice, and political violence when vengeance is no longer the property of a single subject.

"Beastly and Devoid of Pity"? Revenge and Redemption in *Titus Andronicus* and *Gran Torino* (Katherine Hennessey)

This paper examines the idea and performance of revenge in Shakespeare's *Titus Andronicus* and in the 2008 Clint Eastwood film *Gran Torino.* In line with Eric S. Mallin's observation, in *Reading Shakespeare in the Movies* (2019), that it is possible for "a film [to not] know it's a Shakespeare play"—that is, for Shakespearean elements to be "absorbed into cinematic culture unexpectedly, unconsciously, or unpredictably"—I argue that *Gran Torino* can be productively read as an adaptation of *Titus.* In both, an aging veteran returns home after the war, only to find that a gang of his enemies have infiltrated his homeland. After an escalating series of reciprocal acts of violence, the "barbarians" gang-rape and brutalize his daughter, leaving her bleeding and unable to speak. This prompts the protagonist first to a berserk outburst of rage, and then to a carefully calibrated final act of vengeance, in which he makes common cause with other members of the group that he had previously perceived as an undifferentiated enemy horde.

This paper focuses on the acts of violent revenge with which the play and the film both culminate. The former shows us Titus' execution of Chiron and Demetrius, the grisly banquet scene, and the rapid-fire murders of Tamora by Titus, Titus by Saturninus, and Saturninus by Lucius—all of which is followed, in the final scene, by Lucius' punishment of Aaron and his refusal to grant Tamora's body a burial, on the grounds that "her life was beastly and devoid of pity." But where the play's ending conveys, at best, a sense that the acts of reciprocal revenge have come to an end and order is restored in Rome, the film's conclusion is unexpectedly uplifting: Walt lures the gang members into killing him in front of witnesses and the police apprehend them for murder, thereby removing the threat they pose to Walt's neighborhood and to the young man who has become like a son to him. His final act can, therefore, be read as redemptive self-sacrifice, animated as much by care or "pity" for his loved ones as by fury at his enemies. This paper thus explores this complex nexus of revenge, anger, self-sacrifice and compassion, as evoked in Shakespeare's play and Eastwood's film.

***Hamlet*, Hamletism, and the Universal Value (Michele Marrapodi)**

Hamlet is the most frequently read, examined, debated, and staged revenge tragedy in the history of Western civilization. What has contributed to its distinct fame? What traits have favored its enduring success over the centuries, to the extent that they have overshadowed other classical and modern works in the portrayal of revenge? What, in the end, are the changes implemented by the playwright in Prince Hamlet's characterization, in the avenger's actions, and in the play's structural form that diverge from tradition, thereby rendering the appeal of this theatrical piece to audiences and readers across all times and cultures so engaging and captivating? Building on these reflections and referencing the text edited by Harold Jenkins, this paper aims to examine the primary thematic and formal characteristics that differ from earlier and modern drama, emphasizing the universal nature of this play. It resonates with each individual's conscience through the tragic hero's thoughts and uncertainties, challenging our humanity and the morality of vengeance in the context of today's widespread culture of violence. The paper will initially examine the layers created by the history of criticism that have frequently built a dramatic aspect that does not align with textual evidence, ironically challenging the notion of a play often regarded as Shakespeare's most famous and extensively studied. The analysis will focus on the changes the dramatist introduced regarding former theater conventions and the new path the text takes with Hamlet's interrupted voyage to England, where his awakening results in a crucial didactic turn, liberating him from the heavy burden of a bloody ending through a powerful and strategic use of retributive imagery, thereby providing a significant and thorough overturning of the orthodoxy of bloodthirsty revenge.

'Wild Justice' in *Titus Andronicus* and the 'Rape-Revenge' Film Genre (Graham Holderness)

This paper attempts to confront some of the more controversial aspects of revenge, notably the relationship between revenge and justice, by comparing Titus Andronicus to the 'rape-revenge' genre of films that appeared in the 1970s, coinciding with 'second-wave feminism', and has been, in the age of 'fourth-wave feminism', more recently revived. 'Rape-revenge' engineers precise equivalences between the initial violation, and the retributive punishments meted out by the victim (or on the victim's behalf) on the attackers. These acts of reparative violence bear witness to female experience, assign agency to victims, and according to some feminist critics become 'ethically justifiable' (Evans, 2017). Revenge in Titus Andronicus shares the same formula of imitation, emulation and excess; and while a liberal critical consensus condemns such retribution for creating an endless and destructive 'cycle of violence' (Weber, 2015, 701), entailing deep psychological damage to the revenger (Willis, 2002), the above comparison suggests ways of understanding vigilante revenge as witness, reparation and 'wild justice'. The

paper draws on discussions of revenge from literary, philosophical, religious, and legal perspectives, registering for example Solomon Schimmel's case that 'the desire for revenge is natural and at times moral' (Schimmel 2002, 22); Jeffrie Murphy's assertion that 'retributive hatred is … neither irrational nor immoral' (Murphy 1988, 110); and Susan Jacoby's endorsement of 'the legitimate aspects of the human need for retribution' (Jacoby 1983, 362).

S34.
Without Words: Dance Adaptations of Shakespeare

Organisers: Lynsey McCulloch, Emily Winerock

Description: "Shakespeare and Dance" is having a moment. Alan Brissenden's seminal *Shakespeare and the Dance* (1981) now sits alongside a plethora of publications on the topic. This seminar invites scholars and practitioners to explore the relationship of dance, language, and meaning in Shakespearean performance, with special attention paid to dance-centred productions and dance adaptations across the globe. From Kathakali to hip hop, tango to ballet, opera to musical theatre, danced Shakespeare asks questions about authorship, authenticity, identity, and the relationship between text and movement. Researchers working in this area alongside "dance curious" theatre practitioners, musicologists, and literary scholars are warmly welcomed.

Story-Telling, Ballet *Macbeths*, and the Failure of Adaptation (Meredith Beales)
Ballet adaptations of Shakespeare famously are, as the title of this seminar reminds us, Shakespeare "Without Words," as the story is told through choreography. Most often, this is successful: *Romeo and Juliet*, for example, is one of the most popular ballets from the twentieth century; clearly, audiences have no difficulty understanding the plot. But what happens when the Shakespearean plot does not translate so easily into dance? Adaptations of *Macbeth*, for example, struggle with the complex plot expositions demanded by a narrative steeped in prophecy and political machination. This paper will consider two adaptations of *Macbeth*: the 2013 workshop performance by the Nashville Ballet, and the 2022/2024 productions by Ballet Kelowna. Both performances recorded challenges in translating the full narrative they attempted to portray, relying instead on program notes to fill in gaps left in the audience's understanding. This paper will argue that the challenges of translating *Macbeth* to the dance stage reveal the difficulties inherent in translating Shakespeare's knottier plots into dance.

"Fire-eyed fury be my conduct now": Embodying Violence in Matthew Bourne's *Romeo + Juliet* (2019) (Ilaria Diotallevi)
Exploring *Romeo and Juliet*'s text and its performance history, it appears evident that violence plays a primary role in its dramaturgical architecture; recurrent explosions of fights, brawls and duels provide the story with a dynamic movement-based engine, that cannot but be staged through carefully choreographed combat sequences that support and expand the textual elements. The visionary choreographer Matthew Bourne, founder and artistic director of the *New Adventures* dance company, exploits to the fullest the pervasive physical undertone of *Romeo and Juliet* in his non-verbal rendition of the play (*Romeo + Juliet*, 2019), enhancing its narrative potential by interweaving raw and unfiltered fighting sequences with contemporary dance elements, and shaping the characters' personalities through their moving and, more specifically, combat style; the result of this interdisciplinary choreographic operation is a compelling dance appropriation of the original play, that finds its way to expressing its atemporal themes infused in a new, dystopian-inspired plot, exclusively told through the performers' bodies and their unique non-verbal acting skills.

The aim of this proposal is to conduct a multimodal analysis on two relevant scenes of the written text (1.1, 3.1) and their choreographic rendition, focusing on how stage violence is portrayed and its potential meanings.

Dancing Juliet's Desire: Seattle Dance Collective's *Gallop Apace* (Kristine Johanson)
In April 2021, the Seattle Dance Collective (SDC) premiered its short film *Gallop Apace*. The film offers a choreographed sequence for Juliet's Act Three Gallop Apace soliloquy and thus produces a rare cinematic and dance interpretation of this speech. As the SDC stated, Juliet's speech is one that "most dance and film interpretations leave by the wayside"; the most famous ballets of *Romeo and Juliet* do not choreograph the speech. Film adaptations have struggled with how to represent Juliet and particularly how to shape her own physical engagement with her sexuality. In contrast, the play's dance adaptations require constant attention to Juliet's body and its movement as the expression of her psyche (Bührle 2019). How striking, then, that the Gallop Apace speech has never been choreographed for mainstream ballet. Unlike film adaptors of Shakespeare, prima ballerina Sara Mearns and co-choreographer and co-director Bobbi Jene Smith had no previous ballet adaptations of the speech with which to enter into an explicit dialogue. My paper considers how the SDC's *Gallop Apace* and its film's star intentionally intervene in a larger tradition of adapting Juliet's desire. Mearns produces a Juliet that has never been seen before in western film or dance.

"I'll make the statue move indeed": *The Winter's Tale* in Speech and Dance (Lynne Magnusson)
This paper explores the embeddedness of Shakespeare's play, *The Winter's Tale*, in the realm of dance and the play's re-imagination *as* dance in Christopher Wheeldon's modern-day ballet, *The Winter's Tale* (as co-produced for the Royal Ballet and National Ballet of Canada). Reading from the margins, I show how Shakespeare's dance references and semiotic prompts (such as frisking, tripping, grace) early in the play help orient interpretation of later dance episodes – including the herdsmen's leaping satyr dance and Perdita's admired pastoral dancing in 4.4 – in a way that opens up a fresh reading of the miracle of movement in Hermione's reanimation. Wheeldon's modern ballet responds in the "speechless dialect" of dance movement to some of the textual prompts in Shakespeare's script as it re-interprets the place and importance of movement in the tragicomedy. The ballet's restructuring and scenic design elaborate the wider role of the arts, intensifying the "wonder" at the heart of the tragicomedy. Both play and ballet call our attention to the significance of dance in dialogic and rhetorical terms, as "moving" (the inter-animation of dance participants, whether human or non-human) and as "being moved" (the affective force of dance on spectators).

Without Words: Partnership and Resistance in Matthew Bourne's *Romeo and Juliet* (Mattia Mantellato)
Premiered in 2019, Matthew Bourne's *Romeo and Juliet* reimagines William Shakespeare's tragedy as a dystopian fable set in the Verona Institute, a reformation centre for non-conforming adolescents. Here, young love unfolds within regimes of surveillance, medicalisation and coercive discipline, where the body becomes a site of ideological control. Drawing on Riane Eisler's theory of "dominator" versus "partnership" models, the first part of this paper reads Bourne's world as an androcratic order structured by hierarchy, rigidity and control, reflected in mechanical unison, gender segregation and recurring images of the blade. The second section examines Bourne's choreographic strategies, focusing on the contrast between adult rigidity and youthful kinetic release. The casting of young dancers (16-19) enables moments where regimented synchrony fractures into improvisatory surges of touch and vitality, briefly reimagining the ensemble as a community grounded in partnership. The final section turns to

the central couple, whose reconfigured balcony *pas de deux* articulates reciprocity through shared weight, lifts and gaze. Yet this fragile partnership ultimately collapses under systemic pressure, exposing the violence of dominator structures while foregrounding partnership as an urgent ethical alternative.

Unexpected Partners – Dancing with Words, the Audience, and Technology: Transmedial Collaboration, Movement, and Participation in the Royal Shakespeare Company's *Dream* (Maria Marcsek-Fuchs)
Dream, a one-hour piece combining theatre and gaming technology, is a (virtual) adaptation of Shakespeare's comedy. It thematizes isolation and natural disasters, while at the same time offering a multimodal experience full of magic and participatory entertainment. This paper explores the many ways in which interdisciplinary collaboration, physical theatre, and dance help evoke the various illusions and wondrous creatures in *Dream* while at the same time foregrounding relevant issues of the 21st century. It will not only show how movement and dance are part of a mosaic of formative processes blending various strategies of adaptation but investigates the many forms in which dance works as a medial, technical, and dramaturgical catalyst in shaping the new story of *Dream*. Furthermore, the paper will also study the ways in which movement and Shakespeare's lines engage in a mutually enriching 'pas de deux' of meaning making. It sheds light on the power of crossing boundaries, such as those between verbal and kinetic signification, analogous and digital creativity as well as acting and choreography in Shakespeare adaptations. Thus, this paper looks into *Dream* as a physical, pluri-medial, and pluri-technical adaptation that is neither a dance piece without words, nor a theatre work with dance.

Surprising Juxtapositions: Angelin Preljocaj's *Roméo et Juliette* (Nona Monahin)
Angelin Preljocaj's ballet *Roméo et Juliette* (premiered in 1990 by the Opéra Lyon Ballet; recreated in 1996 for the Ballet Preljocaj) re-imagines Shakespeare's tragedy as a conflict between social classes, set in a surreal, totalitarian dystopia. Instead of warring families, the clash is between the oppressors and the oppressed, with Juliet belonging to the former category and Romeo to the latter. Many of Shakespeare's characters are cut, or given different functions. Preljocaj's story nevertheless preserves the tragic core of Shakespeare's play, highlighting its universality. The music is the well-known Prokofiev score, but parts of this too are cut, or reassigned to new contexts or to different characters. This paper continues work I co-authored for the Dance Studies Association conference in Valletta, Malta, in 2018. In the Malta paper I concentrated on the main dancers, Romeo and Juliet; here I extend my analysis to other characters. My main focus, as before, is on Preljocaj's manipulation of Prokofiev's music to underscore his reworking of Shakespeare's play, and on the resultant surprising juxtapositions that confer upon familiar pieces of music a radically different significance and effect.

Boris Eifman's Shakespeare ballets: The Preface to Hamlet (1983) and Twelfth Night (1984) (Nataliia Shabalina)
The paper is dedicated to Shakespeare ballets by Boris Eifman, which were produced during the Soviet era and are not currently included in the repertoire of his theatre. These are the one-act ballet *The Preface to Hamlet* (*Shakespeare Passions*) from the *Metamorphoses* cycle (1983) and the two-act production *Twelfth Night, or What You Will* (1984), both staged by the Leningrad New Ballet. Boris Eifman (b. 1946) is a world-renowned choreographer. His company, which was founded in 1977, has successfully toured in Western and Eastern Europe, the United States of America, Australia, Asian countries and others. He introduced an alternative to the classical ballet style that dominated the country's leading stages during the Soviet era. Nowadays St. Petersburg Eifman Ballet is one of the most famous and significant

dance companies in Russia. The sources from the Archive of St. Petersburg Eifman Ballet were used to study the productions. These are chronicles, photographs, programmes, reviews and other documents. The unique video recording of the ballet *The Preface to Hamlet* became an important material for its analysis. The author of the paper discovered this video in 2025 in the private archive of Rustam Kupriev (a former soloist of the Eifman company). The ballet *Twelfth Night* was analyzed by watching the preserved ballet film with the same name (1986), studying the sketches of costumes and sets by Marina Azizyan (in the archives of St. Petersburg Eifman Ballet, St. Petersburg State Museum of Theatre and Music and St. Petersburg State Theatre Library) and other materials, as well as interviewing Rustam Kupriyev (Malvolio) by the paper's author. The choreographer's approaches to interpreting Shakespeare plays, choreographic language, artistic design and musical score of the productions are examined as well. The paper concludes on the place of Boris Eifman's Shakespeare legacy in the Russian ballet Shakespereana.

S35.
World, Fate, Time, and Space in Shakespeare's Sonnets

Organisers: Avraham Oz, Jyotsna G Singh, Camilla Caporicci

Description: The lack of narrative in Shakespeare's sonnet sequence, distinguishing it from Shakespeare's plays, allows for a wider focus of the texts on abstract notions and pointed views of 'planetary' and universal themes. Our wide scoped seminar seeks to invite fresh contributions on perspectives the sonnets may throw on themes from space and spatial practices, time, fate and fortune, earth, vegetation, or the elements, to passion, desire, and humanism. Our planet is challenged by crises of practice and thought: fresh readings of the sonnets may involve political, performative, or psychological issues, and range from re-interpreting individual sonnets to relating the sequence to current aesthetic thought or other literary genres or artistic forms.

Sun and Moon: Love and Fate in the Sonnets (Dan Decker)
WS's mom, Mary Arden Shakespeare, was a distant cousin of Lady Mary Montague Brown Wriostheley, the widow Countess of Southampton. Still young and beautiful, and notorious at court since her very public and very tawdry divorce from her now-deceased husband, Lady Mary was the mother of the "fair youth" Henry, the 3rd Earl of Southampton. When WS arrived in London, 1588-89, the lad Henry was 16 years old and betrothed by Lord Burliegh, his guardian, to marry Burleigh's granddaughter. Henry refused the marriage and was unmoved by his mother's pleas. If, by his 17th birthday, the boy refused, Burleigh could and would handsomely fine the House of Wriostheley. Proposed: that Lady Mary engaged WS to write sonnets to convince her stubborn son to if not to embrace the marriage, then at least marry this girl to produce an heir and save the House of Wriostheley (from Burleigh's wrath). One year later, Henry refused the betrothal. Proposed: a romantic/sexual relationship began during that year between Lady Mary and WS. He refers to himself and his lover in the sonnets as Sun and Moon. Unfortunately and unbeknownst to WS, Lady Mary was infected with the pox. WS' contraction of syphilis and Lady Mary's reaction is chronicled in sonnets 32-35. His consequent global view of love, lust, infidelity, and jealousy are carried forward throughout the Works as demonstrated in the Black Lady sonnets, in 129, 99, Othello, etc. continuing the use of planetary references in his contemplations of love and fate.

Sonnet 61 in Derek Jarman's *The Angelic Conversation* (Huw Griffiths)
This paper offers a close reading of Shakespeare's Sonnet 61 ('Is it thy will?') as it is placed within Derek Jarman's 1985 film, *The Angelic Conversation*. I consider Sonnet 61's poetics of distance, alongside Jarman's filmic reimagining – in the first years of HIV/AIDS – of the histories of gay men's relationships. In some ways, I ask some very basic questions: what does it mean that one man's love for another is made visible at the moment of its disappearance? And, how do you express your love for another man as you wake to the discovery that he is no longer there? On my way to considering Jarman's re-working of those questions, I invoke the ghosts of Tennyson and Wilde. *In Memoriam* and *The Portrait of Mr W.H.* also draw on the Sonnets, their protagonists waking to cruel mornings in which their lover is, 'from me far off' (Sonnet 61). Emerging within this transhistorical consideration of the Sonnets is a way of thinking about our lives that is not co-opted by other people, in which our lives do not make ready sense to other people: 'It is *my* love that keeps my eye awake' (Sonnet 61). "At the edge of doom" (Sonnet 116) – beyond the night and into the morning – how *will* the love of one man for another survive and be remembered? How do we resist being turned into somebody else's story – allegorised, reduced, or even required not to speak, not to have written, and not to have loved (Sonnet 18)?

Chronometries in Shakespeare's Sonnets (Stephen Guy-Bray)
Time is one of Shakespeare's main preoccupations in his sequence. While he initially presents time in personal ways—the fleeting time of a young man's beauty, the renewal of that beauty in the young man's hypothetical children, for instance—he becomes increasingly concerned with time in the sense of his own poetic survival. Both the young man's beauty and Shakespeare's poetry will survive throughout time, indissolubly linked. or so the theory goes. But as he considers his poetic practice and the relationship between his poetry and its subject matter, which is the man he loves, Shakespeare deepens and complicates his presentation of time, or at least his own connection to time. In *Laokoon: oder über die Grenzen der Malerei und Poesie*, Gotthold Ephraim Lessing presented visual art as primarily spatial and poetry as primarily temporal. While paintings and sculptures—or, at least, paintings and sculptures of the sort Lessing means—typically show us a single event or scene, poetry is concerned with the movement from one event or mental state to another. That is, poetry is concerned with and presents us with sequence. And of course, the sonnets are both sequential and a sequence (whether they were originally intended to be one or not). In this paper, I want to look at some of the ways in which Shakespeare considered the idea of the sequence, his writing practice, and the relationship of these two things to time.

Carpe Diem Undone in Shakespeare's Sonnets (Jane Kingsley-Smith)
In Spring 2026, when the French health ministry is writing to 29 year-olds urging them to hurry up and have babies, the arguments of Shakespeare's procreation sonnets take on new relevance. This paper explores the Sonnets' uneasy relationship with the *carpe diem* tradition, drawing on Sarah Gilead's brilliant essay on Robert Herrick's 'misreading of carpe diem'. The paper will explore how the Sonnets remove all possibility of pleasure from reproduction; how they associate the need for succession with the erasure of the individual, making 'his experiences, his consciousness, and his very existence, superfluous, expendable' (Gilead, 134); and how formal features of the Sonnet enervate and waste the desire to seize the day. Looking beyond the canonically-accepted 'procreation sonnets', I want to explore how Shakespeare's use of *carpe diem* performs the Young Man's death as an act of murder (Sonnet 126), and how he creates a carpe diem lyric for persons who are already dead (*The Passionate Pilgrim* 10). Finally, I will consider how the post-1609 reception of Shakespeare's sonnets demonstrates an effort to make the Sonnets more 'carpe diem compliant' and how this failed.

The Vanishing Furrow: Cognitive Distance and the Loss of Agrarian Logic in Shakespeare's Sonnets (Carol Parker)

Overview: As a Shakespeare professor teaching predominantly urban and suburban populations, students gloss over the power of Shakespeare's agrarian metaphors and conceits because they lack a connection to farming, land, animal husbandry, and food production. While the Covid pandemic and lockdown awakened some knowledge of the connection between production and consumption, agrarian metaphors lose their power and urgency for many modern students. Reconnecting students with locus and methods of agricultural production then and now restores some of the lost power of these metaphors.

Outline:

I. Meager Harvest
   a. Agrarian metaphors in sonnets required shared knowledge
   b. Natural Law and artificial means

II. Scarcity and Abundance
   a. Maximum utilization of available resources
   b. Excess as expectation
   c. Hoarding and Sharing
   d. Preservation and time

III. Temporal Structures in an Era of Instant Gratification
   a. Agrarian calendars as dominant marker of Elizabethan time
   b. Labor, production, and time
   c. Loss of seasonal dependency as instant gratification and rewind alter time

IV. Waste and Recycling
   a. Necessity of using time, materials, labor, and natural resources
   b. Disposable materiality, recycling, and superstores

V. Gendered Labor and Reproduction
   a. Proscribed gender roles in Elizabethan society
   b. Artificiality in production and reproduction weakens boundaries of gender roles for modern readers

VI. Increasing the Harvest
   a. Methods of reconnection to animate urgency and force of agrarian metaphor

The Sonnets' Observing Eye/I: The Universe, Mysticism, and Quantum Physics (Kay Stanton)

One observation that we can certainly make about Shakespeare's *Sonnets* is that the "I" persona is particularly interested in eyes—his own, those of his addressees, and in the eye as symbol. First-person pronoun forms are the *Sonnets*' most frequently occurring word group, and puns on "I"/"eye'" abound. Spevack's *Concordance* shows that, among Shakespeare's complete works, the highest number of instances of the word "eye," 38, is found in the *Sonnets*. For mentions of the word "eyes," again the *Sonnets* have the highest total, 51. Another observation is that the *Sonnets* begin with the first 17 arguing for human reproduction as an imperative to an uninterested young man. A third is that the *Sonnets* seem to end oddly, with two sonnets that appear to be versions of one another, concluding with the interaction among the powers of love, chastity, and eyes, both of the persona and the persona's mistress. These elements can be seen as 'entangled' with both mysticism and quantum physics. In this paper, I/eye will look at the I/eye of the *Sonnets* persona, seeing him as a mystical version of the quantum physics Observer. In accepting the role of Observer, the persona attempts to develop his 'third eye,' recognizing that he is 'entangled' with what and whom he observes and that in some sense his observation produces the distinguishing

results. The "sacred fire" becomes 'entangled' with time, the Word (his poetry), and his heart as expressed in human relationships in his quest to comprehend the universe through observation.

Workshops

W01.
The Distributed Performance of 'Character' in *Antony and Cleopatra*

Organisers: David Schalkwyk, Elena Pellone.
Participants: Tom Bishop, Dominique Goy, Eric Nicholson, Clio Takas

This workshop will investigate a different notion of character through performance: exploring Cleopatra's 'infinite variety' by dividing the character among at least three different actors, each speaking a different language, each bringing out different aspects of the linguistic and gestural indications provided in the speeches prefixed by the name 'Cleopatra'. (The same experiment might be conducted with multiple embodiments of Antony, Octavian and Enobarbus.) Participants should be prepared to participate in the performances and bring a copy of the play in a language of their choice that is not English.

W02.
Found in Translation:
Elevating the Global Accessibility of Shakespeare in Research and Practice

Organisers: Lue Douthit, Jonathan Hope, CJ Ochoco, Ben Spiller.
Participants: Joanna Erskine, Marinela Golemi, Melinda Gough, Maureen McDonnell, Alfredo Michel Modenessi, Katy Charles Otto, Beppe Roncaro, R. Crom Saunders

Description: Led by thought leaders and Shakespearean artists, the 'Found in Translation: Elevating the Global Accessibility of Shakespeare in Research and Practice' workshop invites audiences to examine Shakespeare through translation. For over ten years, the international company Play On Shakespeare has been translating, producing, and teaching Shakespeare through modern verse English translation. With the goal of revitalizing Shakespeare for new audiences, introducing accessible Shakespeare for pedagogy and productions, and reaffirming that Shakespeare's work is for everyone, this workshop invites you to hear modern verse translation—and then try it out yourself. Together, we can reclaim Shakespeare and present his works on a global scale, finding discoveries with accessibility at the forefront.

W03.
Shakespeare and Early Modern Theatre: Wikipedia Editing Workshop

Organiser: Kitamura Sa
Participants: Margie Burns, Maristella Gatto, Joseph Haughey, David Joseph Kathman, Sarah Olive, Joseph F. Stephenson, Rob Wakeman

In this workshop, participants will learn about Wikipedia and edit Wikipedia articles related to Shakespeare and early modern theatre. This workshop has three primary goals: offer

researchers an understanding of Wikipedia, especially Wikipedia articles about Shakespeare; discuss how Wikipedia could be utilised in educational contexts; and teach participants how to edit Wikipedia articles related to their research appropriately. The first part is an introduction to Wikipedia, followed by a question-and-answer session. The second part is an editathon, or Wikipedia editing event, during which the participants will edit Wikipedia articles about early modern English theatre under the organisers' guidance. Participants need to create a Wikipedia account and bring a laptop.

W04.
Shakespeare in Veneto:
Unveiling Historical Heritage and Culture Acting Shakespeare Works

Organiser: Ornella Naccari. Co-leader: Solimano Pontarollo.
Participants: Lekan Balogun, Laura Biason, Tara Broadway, Emily D. Bryan, Anna Maria Griseri, Simona Nanni, Emily Louisa Smith

This workshop will examine how Shakespeare's works can be used to reveal cultural and historical heritage through immersive performances in historically significant sites. It will explore how blending theatrical art with cultural activities can enhance understanding of both Shakespeare's plays and their settings. Participants will explore the potential of interactive, performance-based learning, especially for students, while addressing key challenges such as the need for multilingual performances and managing audience expectations. The discussion will provide insights into how these elements can be effectively balanced for successful implementation and enriched educational experiences.

W05.
Rewilding Shakespeare: Creative Methods in Pedagogy and Performance

Organisers: Alys Daroy, Joshua Zeunert, Myriam Di Maio.
Participants: Jacek Fabiszak, Jean E. Feerick, Jennifer Flaherty, Mohd Fadhli Shah Khaidzir, Melanie Munt, Ana Luiza Ribeiro, Raffaella Valeria Sero

This workshop invites participants to rewild their imaginations by engaging Shakespeare's plays as an ecological archive. Across the canon lie thousands of references to trees, herbs, flowers, spices, birds, insects, mammals, minerals, waters, and elemental forces—traces of an intricate ecosystem that early modern audiences would have recognised with both wonder and familiarity. Our aim is to explore how these references can be reassembled into patterns, webs, and visual constellations that inform pedagogy and performance today. By drawing on biophilic design principles and the tradition of cabinets of curiosity, participants will investigate how Shakespeare's ecosystemic imagination may be visualised, embodied, and performed as a way of generating new ecological insights and practices.

Open Sessions

O1.
AI for Shakespearean Research

Organisers: Gabriel Egan And Heejin Kim

This hands-on and demonstration event is intended to show what is possible in the use of Large Language Models (LLMs) by researchers seeking to generate new knowledge in the field of early modern drama. Our concern is with how researchers can train and/or fine-tune their own models to address their own particular research questions. The session will start with an overview of how LLMs work before getting into the details of fine-tuning one and discovering exactly how it reached its decisions (the well-known interpretability/explainability problem).
1. WHAT IS A LARGE LANGUAGE MODEL AND WHAT IS 'TRAINING'? by Gabriel Egan (Minutes 1-15).
    1.1 Building a Markov Chain of probabilities from a short text
    1.2 Markov Chains expressed as matrices
    1.3 Neural networks and back propagation
2. USING WORD EMBEDDING TO CAPTURE MEANING by Gabriel Egan (Minutes 16-35).
3. WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO "FINE-TUNE" A LARGE LANGUAGE MODEL? by Heejin Kim (Minutes 36-50).
4. HOW CAN WE GET A LARGE LANGUAGE MODEL TO EXPLAIN ITS OWN WORKING? by Heejin Kim (Minutes 51-70).

O2.
Отело

By and with Petra Bjelica, Marta Bjelica, Igor Benčina, and Tamara Joksimović

Отело (*Othello*) is an immersive lecture-performance by Petra Bjelica (University of Verona/Threepenny Company, Serbia) that reinterprets Shakespeare's tragedy through a contemporary Balkan lens, utilizing augmented reality (AR) and live biodata as its core scenography. The performers' biodata—breath, pulse, movement—is translated in real-time into a responsive digital environment, forming a 'digital net' that materially embodies Iago's manipulative schemes. This technological framework drives the production's central interrogation: Is truth visible? Is the visible real? By focusing on the male gaze and the control of bodies, the performance critically explores the construction of Balkan identity, ultimately asking: if Balkan masculinity is framed as Europe's 'barbaric other', how then is femininity positioned as the 'other's other'?

O3.
Antony and Cleopatra

Production: V.enice S.hakespeare C.ompany (Italy)
AD, V.enice S.hakespeare C.ompany – artistic director: Elena Pellone
Sound designer/actor: Sarah Sayeed

Lighting designer/set designer: Philippe Berthome
Dramaturg: David Schalkwyk
Starring Andrew French

A new production experimentally and experientially prepared without a single director, to create an egalitarian, actor-led creative process similar to how Shakespeare's theatre worked. The production is multilingual and intercultural – main languages will be Italian and English – with artists from the UK and continental Europe. It will use Shakespeare's text as a starting point, but will be cut and improvised, focusing on interdisciplinary approaches and cross-cultural influences. The elements of sand and water will take the place of furniture and inhibiting sets allowing for the fluidity and metaphorical story telling of Shakespeare's words. We will draw on the theme of the WSC to use the planetary spheres in the sound design and change the worlds through a sound scape. This will be an intimate re-telling of an epic story. This script-in-hand performance laboratory. Bringing to life the humanity of Shakespeare's tragedy, but also speaking to the terrifying rise of imperialist expansion, invasion and conquest, by narcissistic autocracies in the current world order.

O4.
turning the green one red – A Devised Adaptation of *Macbeth*

With the students of the SaM – *Shakespeare and the Mediterranean* Summer School 2026
Directed by Jaq Bessell and Andrea Coppone

Actors in training at undergraduate and masters level will spend a week together devising a response to *Macbeth*, incorporating live and recorded sound, movement, and text. Led by Jaq Bessell and Andrea Coppone, the work will include various physical theatre techniques and will culminate in a 30 minute sharing of the work at Teatro Fucina Culturale Machiavelli.

O5.
Incubating New Classics: Shakespeare and Chinese Literature in Cross-Media Performance. Fusion Theatre Practices in the Digital Age

Organisers: Baoyi Bi, Wenxuan He
Delegates: Jilan Dai, Chunli Zhang, Xiaorui Hao, Xiaoxia Yang, Zhen Qin, Junye Zhang, Ranqing Jin, Yitian Zhang

Held in Verona—the city symbolically associated with Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*—this forum takes Shakespeare as a model of intercultural adaptation in order to explore how classical literature may undergo cross-media transformation in the digital age. For more than four centuries, Shakespeare's plays have been continually reinterpreted across different cultural contexts and media technologies, from the early modern stage to cinema, and more recently to immersive digital forms such as virtual reality performance and AI-driven interactive storytelling. The remarkable adaptability and global circulation of Shakespeare's works offer a compelling reference for understanding how canonical texts acquire renewed cultural life through technological change and intercultural exchange. Using Shakespeare's long tradition of adaptation and global dissemination as a comparative framework, this forum places major works of Chinese classical literature—*Dream of the Red Chamber*, *Journey to the West*,

and *The Peony Pavilion*—within the broader field of intercultural theatre studies. It explores how these texts might be reinterpreted through contemporary performance technologies and digital media. Particular attention is given to how artificial intelligence, projection mapping, real-time interactive systems, and virtual reality environments can expand the performative possibilities of classical narratives, allowing the poetic spaces, mythological imagination, and emotional dramaturgy of Chinese literature to enter into dialogue with the long-standing cross-media adaptation tradition of Shakespearean drama. Bringing together scholars, theatre directors, and digital artists, the forum aims to examine how theatre can function as a dynamic site where literary heritage and emerging technologies intersect. Inspired by Shakespeare's global circulation and enduring adaptability, the forum further considers whether Chinese classical literature may similarly gain renewed cultural vitality through cross-media performance practices, enabling these works to participate more actively in international cultural exchange in the digital era and to generate new forms of 'classics' for contemporary audiences.

O6.
"Take Hands with me": Dancing Shakespeare in a Midsummer Night's dream

Organiser: Sidia Fiorato
In Conversation with: Davide Bombana, and Giulia Orlando, Niccolò Poggini (COB Compagnia Opus Ballet, Firenze)

The open session will present Davide Bombana's adaptation of Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, created in 2024 for Compagnia Opus Ballet (Florence). His interpretation presents an interesting experimentation between tradition and innovation which combines movement, music, lights and scenes. This gives life to an engaging performance which addresses the innermost nature of feelings in the dark setting of the forest, amplified through Oberon and Titania's quarrel, and focussed on Hermia. Davide Bombana, internationally renowned choreographer of the ballet, will be present together with dancers Giulia Orlando and Niccolò Poggini.