



ESRA SHAKESPEARE CONFERENCE SHAKESPEARE AND MYTH

MONTPELLIER (France)
Wednesday 26– Saturday 29 June 2013

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Deadlines for all seminars

Please submit an abstract (200-300 words) and a brief bio (150 words) by 1 October 2012 to the convenors of the seminar you choose.

All participants will be notified about the acceptance of their proposals by 1 November 2012. The deadline for accepted seminar participants to send their completed paper is 1 April 2013.

Information about plenaries, registration costs and other practical aspects will be given in due course.

<http://www.um.es/shakespeare/esra/index.php>

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1. Early Modern Nature: Shakespeare, Science and Myth

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Convenors:

Amy L. Tigner, University of Texas, Arlington, USA

Jennifer Munroe, University of North Carolina, Charlotte, USA

Taking an ecocritical approach to the conference topic, this seminar will consider the import of evolving approaches to nature in the period—in particular, how a mythic approach to nature changes to a descriptive mode that involves empirical observation and how these various approaches materialize in texts by Shakespeare and his English and European contemporaries. To what extent does classical myth enhance, distort, and/or re-present, the way that men and women in early modern Europe actually experienced the nonhuman world? How did either classical myth or science allow for early modern European men and women to express, as well as perhaps displace, their relationship to Nature. What are the limits of fictionalization of Nature in these texts? Of its materiality? What do we gain or lose by looking at Nature through the lens of myth and myth through the lens of Nature in texts by Shakespeare and other writers from this period? How much do early modern texts, including those of Shakespeare, depict scientific discourse as a fiction in its own right versus a re-materialization of Nature?

Papers might investigate the following (but are not limited to these):

- how transforming bodies in classical mythology are relevant to how the body participates (through transformation) in natural systems;
- how human bodies and plants are interrelated in material as well as mythic ways in Shakespeare and his English and European contemporaries;
- how human and animal bodies are combined in a kind of hybridity of nature;
- how classical myths raise questions about Nature and early modern understanding of the natural world;
- how the material and the metaphoric understanding of natural cycles, often described mythically, inform the early modern subject;
- how the mythos of nature informs Shakespeare's language and imagery, even as this vision begins to move to technological and scientific modes of thinking.
- how classical myth and/or science reveals a gendered way of thinking about the natural world

This seminar participates in the ongoing conversation in the burgeoning field of ecocriticism that concerns the literature and culture of the early modern period.

Deadline for Paper Proposals:

Please submit an abstract (200-300 words) and a brief bio (150 words) by 1 October 2012 to the convenors: Amy L. Tigner (atigner@uta.edu) and Jennifer Munroe (jamunroe@uncc.edu).

All participants will be notified about the acceptance of their proposals by 1 November 2012.

The deadline for accepted seminar participants to send their completed paper is 1 April 2013.

Assistant professor of English at the UT Arlington, Amy L. Tigner is the author of *Literature and the Renaissance Garden from Elizabeth I to Charles II: England's Paradise*, Ashgate, May 2012, and is currently working on her second monograph, *From the Garden to the Kitchen: Horticultural, Culinary, and Literary Practice in Early Modern England*. Her research interests are centered on Shakespeare, ecocriticism and food studies.

Jennifer Munroe is Associate Professor of English at UNC Charlotte and author of *Gender and the Garden in Early Modern English Literature* (Ashgate, 2008) and editor of *Making Gardens of Their Own: Gardening Manuals for Women, 1500-1750* (Ashgate, 2007). Most recently, she co-edited (with Rebecca Laroche) *Ecofeminist Approaches to Early Modernity* (Palgrave, 2011). Munroe is currently working on a monograph about the relationship between women, nature, and writing in the context of seventeenth-century scientific discourse.

2. The Early Modern Reception of Shakespeare in Print and Manuscript: The Rise of Shakespearean Cultural Capital?

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Convenors:

Lukas Erne, University of Geneva, Switzerland

Jean-Christophe Mayer, French National Centre for Scientific Research and University of Montpellier, France

In an appendix to a book that was to become a classic—*William Shakespeare: A Study of Facts and Problems* (1930)—E. K. Chambers listed a great number of contemporary and later allusions to Shakespeare and his works. The less reliable of these he grouped under the title “The Shakespeare-Mythos” suggesting that the circulation of Shakespeare’s name and of allusions to his works was—as early as the seventeenth century—beginning to form what we would now call a “charismatic economy” (Bourdieu).

The goal of this seminar will be precisely to look into the early formation of the Shakespearean myth—how, in other words, belief in the value of his works and in his significance as a writer was constructed. The eighteenth century is often seen as the moment of the true rise of Shakespearean cultural capital. As a result, the early modern reception of Shakespeare in both print and manuscript has received comparatively little attention. The quantity and quality of the early readerly response to Shakespeare, for instance, remains underestimated, despite the fact that it anticipates and initiates in crucial ways the process of Shakespearean myth-making which we more commonly associate with later centuries.

Participants in this seminar will thus be invited to reflect upon the early modern presence of Shakespeare in print and manuscript. Colleagues interested in book history, manuscript studies, early modern cultural studies, or the symbolic production, circulation and consumption of Shakespeare in the early modern period will be especially welcome to join the seminar.

Questions for discussion include the following: How can we measure the early modern reception of and response to Shakespeare in print and manuscript? What types of Shakespearean extracts (drama, poetry, songs) were most in circulation? What sort of texts participated in the reception of Shakespeare’s playbooks and poems (printed books, printed or manuscript miscellanies and commonplace books, diaries, letters, songbooks, collections of epigraphs, epitaphs, etc.)? What do the traces left by early modern readers reveal about their familiarity with Shakespeare? What do we know about early owners of books by Shakespeare, and what place did these books occupy in early modern collections and catalogues? To what extent can we speak of an early modern rise of Shakespearean cultural capital? Was this rise continuous? Can we identify crucial turning points? What can we infer from the evidence we have, and how does Shakespeare compare to other dramatists?

Deadline for Paper Proposals:

Please submit an abstract (200-300 words) and a brief bio (150 words) by 1 October 2012 to the convenors: Lukas Erne (Lukas.Erne@unige.ch) and Jean-Christopher Mayer (Jean-Christophe.Mayer@univ-montp3.fr)

All participants will be notified about the acceptance of their proposals by 1 November 2012.

The deadline for accepted seminar participants to send their completed paper is 1 April 2013.

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3. Local and Global Myths in Shakespearean Performance

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Convenors:

Alexander C. Y. Huang, Director of Dean's Scholars in Shakespeare Program and Associate Professor of English, Theatre and International Affairs, George Washington University, USA; Research Affiliate in Literature, MIT, USA

Aneta Mancewicz, Marie Curie Research Fellow, CSSD, University of London, UK; Assistant Professor of English Literature, Kazimierz Wielki University, Poland

Heiner Müller observed that in *Hamlet*, "The incursion of the times into the play constitutes myth." Over the centuries, intrusions of history have frequently invested *Hamlet* and other Shakespeare plays with a mythical status on stages in Europe and beyond. The Shakespearean plots have been used to construct the sense of nationhood, to voice political anxieties and to examine the meanings of power, heroism, and justice. Shakespeare's works were performed at critical points in the development of numerous nations, participating in crucial political and cultural transformations around the globe. The mythical position of Shakespeare's plays has encouraged the perpetuation of set images, ideas and values originating in the works themselves but also reflecting the times and cultures, into which they have been appropriated. As Müller explained, "Myth is an aggregate, a machine, to which always new and different machines can be connected." Having achieved a mythical status, Shakespeare's plots and protagonists have continued to generate myths that define, but at times also confine, the development of contemporary performance and culture.

Examining performances that have marked Shakespeare's plays as myths with a historical and political significance, we are bound to explore not only the complexity of the dramatic texts and their stage versions, but also the intricacy of cultural and social conditions in which they were produced. Studying myths generated in performances of Shakespeare around the globe, we might discover the "global kaleidoscope" of sources and influences (Margaret Litvin) through "locality criticism" (Alexander Huang) and theoretical models that defy the binary of empire and colony, master and slave, authority and adaptation. Comparing the functions of myths in performances of Shakespeare, we may also describe common patterns of appropriation, as well as define the distinctions in the treatment of Shakespeare's plays worldwide.

The topic encourages, thus, both case studies of performances rooted in local contexts, as well as investigations of the global nature of Shakespeare's myths. Are there similarities in European productions of Shakespeare in terms of shared historical or political myths? Can we trace common patterns across different regions of the world, comparing, i.e. European, Asian or American myths generated by the intrusion of history into the staging of Shakespeare? What are the implications of mythical structures in performances of Shakespeare for the development of theatre and society? Do myths help us to express and comprehend the world, or do they hamper the aesthetic and social evolution by imposing specific patterns of interpretation onto Shakespeare's plays and our experience of history?

We welcome papers that critically examine specific productions or engage more broadly with global and local myths in Shakespearean performance.

Deadline for Paper Proposals:

Please submit an abstract (200-300 words) and a brief bio (150 words) by 1 October 2012 to the convenors: Alexander C. Y. Huang (acyhuang@gwu.edu) and Aneta Mancewicz (aneta.mancewicz@cssd.ac.uk).

All participants will be notified about the acceptance of their proposals by 1 November 2012.

The deadline for accepted seminar participants to send their completed paper is 1 April 2013.

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4. "Myth" in Relation to Truth, Fable, History, Legend, Folklore [Back to list of seminars](#)

Convenors:

Richard Hillman, Université de Tours/Centre d'Études Supérieures de la Renaissance, France
Pauline Ruberry-Blanc, Université de Tours/Centre d'Études Supérieures de la Renaissance, France

The organisers of the 2013 ESRA conference have cast the net of myth wide indeed: the topics proposed range from the myths of antiquity, through Shakespeare as mythologiser, to Shakespeare and Shakespeareana mythologised. It may be opportune to incorporate in this panoply of approaches a specifically epistemological reflection, based on the fact that the central term "myth" has been in use only since the nineteenth century (see OED), and that the cultural category it designates was not available to Shakespeare or his contemporaries. This is by no means to deny the heuristic value of the category in various Shakespearean contexts, much less the legitimacy of "Shakespeare and Myth" as a theme. But it does seem worth considering, with regard to Shakespeare's practices, how this modern intellectual construct relates to early modern European conceptions of the various kinds of material that myth is generally taken to include, both narrative and symbolic.

The broad question is, of course, a pan-European one, and essential background to such a reconsideration will be the well-known twentieth-century reappraisals of early modern humanism, such as the work of Jean Seznec (*La Survivance des dieux antiques*), Edgar Wind (*Pagan Mysteries in the Renaissance*) and Leonard Barkan (*The Gods Made Flesh: Metamorphosis and the Pursuit of Paganism*). But the convenors of this seminar seek to encourage at once a still more inclusive perspective and the refinement of distinctions within it, some of which will obviously be specific to Shakespeare's time and place. The supplementary categories (or, if one prefers, sub-categories) proposed—Truth (with a capital to accommodate Christian belief), fable, history, legend, folklore—are not understood as rigidly defined or mutually exclusive; on the contrary, their elusiveness and porosity are part of the point.

Participants are invited to address issues along the lines of the following:

- the Christian resonances of pagan elements (*King Lear*, *Cymbeline*, *The Winter's Tale*)
- relations between history and legend: e.g., later vs. earlier Holinshed, or Plutarch's life of Caesar vs. his life of Theseus; the production of legend from historical raw material (*Henry V*, *Antony and Cleopatra*);
- the intersection or integration of folkloric elements with classical fable (Robin Goodfellow in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*) or with chronicle history (witchcraft in *Henry VI*)

These are intended as rough guidelines only, but whatever specific topics are pursued, contributors are asked to bear in mind a double perspective. Either local readings or theoretical aspects may be accentuated, but the overall objective is to present a balance between these, in the hope that a solid but supple typology of Shakespearean myth-related effects and practices may begin to emerge.

Deadline for Paper Proposals:

Please submit an abstract (200-300 words) and a brief bio (150 words) by 1 October 2012 to the convenors: Richard Hillman (rhillman@sfr.fr) and Pauline Ruberry-Blanc (pauline.r-blanc@sfr.fr)

All participants will be notified about the acceptance of their proposals by 1 November 2012. The deadline for accepted seminar participants to send their completed paper is 1 April 2013.

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5. Myth, Romance and Historiography

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Convenors:

Janet Clare, University of Hull, UK

Imke Lichterfeld, University of Bonn, Germany

Myth and history coalesce in Shakespeare's plays. The English history plays build on the Tudor myth, the Roman plays on myths of Rome while in *Cymbeline* and *King Lear* the myth of Britain is revived. The late plays, the so-called romances, deploy myths of royalty and succession familiar from folk tale.

One of the advantages of myth and pseudo-history is its malleable fictionality. Shakespeare's plays re-work myths for distinct ideological purposes and aesthetic effects. By the same token, Shakespeare's use of myth and his romance historiography are transcultural, lending themselves to national appropriations.

In examining the overlapping of myth, history and romance this seminar has then two axes. We will explore the late Elizabethan and Jacobean functionalism of myth in history and romance. Secondly, papers will analyse how history and myth have been re-cast or appropriated across time and place and read through the lens of other cultural and political environments.

Papers are invited on the following topics:

- myth and historiography;
- pre-history and the fashioning of the remote past in Shakespeare's plays;
- adaptations, appropriations and re-presentations of myth and mythological motifs;
- the uses to which folk tale motifs and customs are put in the romances;
- the theatre as an imaginative space for embodying myths of nation;
- the "afterlife" of Shakespearean myths as they are lifted from the historical contexts of their theatrical representations.

Deadline for Paper Proposals:

Please submit an abstract (200-300 words) and a brief bio (150 words) by 1 October 2012 to the convenors: Janet Clare (J.Clare@hull.ac.uk) and Imke Lichterfeld (lichterfeld@uni-bonn.de)

All participants will be notified about the acceptance of their proposals by 1 November 2012.

The deadline for accepted seminar participants to send their completed paper is 1 April 2013.

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6. Mythical Performance and its Afterlife

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Convenors:

Isabelle Schwartz-Gastine, University of Caen, France

Juan F. Cerdá, University of Murcia, Spain

Among the multitude of Shakespearean stagings of the past, some performances have acquired a special reputation, a kind of mythical status. Often, this is due to an actor's outstanding performance. From Burbage to Garrick, to Olivier and Gielgud, the British tradition of the Great Shakespearean Actor runs parallel to the iconic impersonations of Talma, Sarah Bernhardt or Ermete Novelli, to name but a few of the prestigious Shakespeareans in Continental Europe. With the emergence of the theatre director at the turn of the twentieth century, the list is supplemented with the likes of Granville-Barker and Bertolt Brecht, of William Poel and Giorgio Strehler, of Peter Brook and Peter Zadek. A few initial questions arise: What are the ingredients that make a production memorable? Why should one name, one title, or one experience be celebrated and remembered at all today? What is the relationship between the British and the Continental tradition? How can we establish the European paradigm of mythical performance? Can national experience be shared by other European nations?

Alongside actors and directors, the mythical status of a Shakespearean performance does not necessarily emerge from individual talent but from a range of largely disparate experiences. From the 1613 performance of *Henry VIII* that culminated in the burning down of the first Globe Theatre, to the passing out of spectators in Macready's performance of *Othello*, to the anti-democratic response in *Coriolanus* at the Comédie-Française, Shakespeare's plays have earned a mythical reputation through the most varied means. What material, phenomenological, or ideological reasons are responsible for such myth-making? Is it due to some trends in acting, staging, or performing which spread all over Europe? Can it be described as a national phenomenon or due to a broader set of circumstances?

Even when it comes to actors and directors, status does not emanate from unanimous success, so it is crucial to examine the way these mythical productions were recorded and transmitted, and the direct influence of record in the creation of the legend around the performance. Sarah Bernhardt's *Lady Macbeth*, for instance, is still remembered thanks to Nadar's beautiful studio-pictures; however it was fairly badly received on stage judging from the reviews and mostly from the small number of performances of the play. Is the fame which is transmitted up to our time a myth or a reality? Can there be a general agreement as to the criteria involved in this myth-making? What is the relationship between the initial theatrical production and its further fame? How have those myths circulated around Europe?

Another direction would be linked to the politics and value judgement concerning global myth-making. Is there a consensus as to which performances are fit to be remembered? Does nationality play a role in selection, and/or is there such a thing as a collective European imagination of Shakespearean mythical performances? When choosing which productions enter the hall of fame of Shakespearean performance, is academe replicating the attitudes that provoked debates about the literary canon in the 1980s and 90s? Considering the uneven presence of foreign performances in the editions of Shakespeare's works (Arden, Cambridge, Oxford), is the coverage of international Shakespearean performance a product of polite or political correctness? To what extent is Shakespearean academe interested in foreign mythical performances? How should mythical performances at the local level be incorporated to global discussion?

These are a few of the options that the seminar could deal with, but it would be quite open to other suggestions and variations on this theme. We are currently examining the possibility of having a publication gathering the most significant contributions.

Deadline for Paper Proposals:

Please submit an abstract (200-300 words) and a brief bio (150 words) by 1 October 2012 to the convenors: Isabelle Schwartz-Gastine (schwartz-gastine.isabelle@wanadoo.fr), Juan F. Cerdá (juanfcerda@um.es)

All participants will be notified about the acceptance of their proposals by 1 November 2012.

The deadline for accepted seminar participants to send their completed paper is 1 April 2013.

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7. Mythologies of Childhood

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Convenors:

Deanne Williams, York University, Canada

Richard Preiss, University of Utah, USA

This seminar interprets the conference theme of "Shakespeare and Myth" through the lens of childhood. In recognition of burgeoning scholarly interest in European Renaissance cultures of childhood—exemplified by recent studies of child actors and children's companies, of pedagogy in the humanist classroom, and of literary, dramatic and artistic constructions of the child—Mythologies of Childhood seeks to highlight the key narratives, paradigms or figures that informed Shakespeare's understanding and representation of children and childhood, and to explore how those categories operated (and may still operate) in concert with the discourses of classical myth and other national mythologies. Our aim is to place myth and childhood in dialogue, in order to reveal new or alternative ways of conceptualizing both subjects.

We welcome papers that consider some of the following topics and questions:

Mythologies of Childhood

How are children represented in and constructed by the various mythological narratives that serve as sources for Shakespeare? How was European mythology retold, reframed or repackaged for children in Shakespeare's time? How is mythology handled in adaptations of Shakespeare for the classroom today, such that school productions of certain plays still predominate over others? How have biographical accounts of Shakespeare's childhood, or of his children, inflected our own critical mythologies? Do Shakespeare's plays invite the mythologization of children—Mamillius in *The Winter's Tale*, for instance, or Arthur in *King John*, or the Indian Boy in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, or Romeo and Juliet—differently from those of his contemporaries?

Mythologies of Childhood and the Stage

Childhood and theater pervaded each other in the Renaissance: students staged amateur plays prepared by schoolmasters, children performed in court masques, and they participated in adult companies as both players and apprentices. Professional companies consisting solely of children catered to more select tastes and milieux, and eventually produced adult actors in turn. How were Renaissance appropriations of classical myth structured, in form and genre, by such performance conditions and their institutional pressures? Did early modern European theater need to develop, and continuously perform, its own mythos of the transition from childhood to adulthood? What local relations obtained between theater companies and their audiences – public vs. private, private vs. court, new plays vs. old plays, plays in performance vs. plays in print, royal patrons who were often themselves children, living or dead—and how did the language and topoi of classical myth mediate those relations?

Theorizing Childhood

Which mythologies of childhood and the child held particular fascination for Shakespeare and his contemporaries? Which did they draw upon, revise, or freely generate? What is the parallel place of the child in the European iconographic tradition? How can early modern drama be read in context to develop a more general theory of childhood in the European Renaissance? How do its mythologies of childhood differentiate, if at all, the particular experiences of girlhood or boyhood? What is the place of the child in critical or theoretical approaches to the subject of Shakespeare and myth?

Deadline for Paper Proposals:

Please submit an abstract (200-300 words) and a brief bio (150 words) by 1 October 2012 to the convenors: Richard Preiss (richard.preiss@utah.edu) and/or Deanne Williams (dmw@yorku.ca).

All participants will be notified about the acceptance of their proposals by 1 November 2012.

The deadline for accepted seminar participants to send their completed paper is 1 April 2013.

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8. Protean Shakespeare: Adapting, Tradapting, Performing Early Modern Plays

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Convenors:

Pavel Drábek, Masaryk University, Tche

Pascale Drouet, Université de Poitiers

Nathalie Rivere de Carles, Université de Toulouse

Shakespeare's plays are "mobile, fluid, and subject to change" (Andrew Murphy, *The Shakespeare Myth* [1987], 196) and were sometimes the result of a collaborative process that deepened their metamorphic adaptability to stylistic as well as scenic variations. Shakespeare drew his inspiration from translations of the Classics as well as from the original text and initiated the double movement associated nowadays with his plays of translation and adaptation. This seminar offers to explore three interlinked issues underpinning the creation and the circulation of the Shakespearean mythscape: adaptation, tradaptation and performance.

An essential aspect of Shakespeare as Protean myth is the inherent adaptability of his plays to a different historical, social and cultural context. This is what motivated the move from pure translation to a distant filiation which is adaptation. Mark Fortier defines adaptation as "a process of savaging and salvaging the undead who resides in the present" (*Shakespeare in Canada: a world elsewhere*, 2004) and underlines the ambiguity of the process regarding the original plays. This is what Djanet Sears has defined, after Salman Rushdie, as "writing back, talking back", and that is at stake in her palimpsest of Othello, *Harlem Duet* (1997). The seminar invites proposal about intralingual, interlingual and intersemiotic adaptations of Shakespeare and other early modern playwrights.

We would welcome papers considering plays in English (Paula Vogel's *Desdemona*, a play about a handkerchief, Djanet Sear's *Harlem Duet*, Tom Stoppard's *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are dead*, etc...) or in other languages—such as Jacinto Benavente's *Cuento de Amor, Comedia Fantastica de Shakespeare refundida y puesta en castellano* (1899)—and their relationship to a now elliptic Shakespearean script. Papers could study the genealogy of the metamorphosis of a particular play from practical and theoretical points of view. Choices of topic should not be limited to adaptations for the page (prose, poetry, dramatic forms), but could confront the original texts and various performance practices and performance contexts and theatre architectures. However, examples of stage adaptations should not be confined to theatrical ones but could include operatic, post-dramatic... performances.

The transformation of Shakespeare's *Macbeth* into Nikolai Leskov's novella *A Lady Macbeth of the Mtsensk District* (1865) which inspired Shostakovich's opera *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk* illustrates a new type of exchange, "the 'Tradaptation' of Shakespeare" (Leanore Lieblein), as the ultimate form of refashioning of the Shakespearean mythscape. A tradaptation is neither a literal translation of Shakespeare nor an adaptation that largely modifies the content of the source text. It involves both translation and adaptation in such a way that it defies distinctions between the two practices (Denis Salter, "Acting Shakespeare in Postcolonial Space"). Tradaptation will be observed in terms of linguistic differences and historical context as well as in the perspective of the timelessness of Shakespearean plays. The panel will examine adapters' choices regarding the original works and also how Shakespeare can be turned into a palimpsest to write new stories (the topic of prequels or sequels to Shakespearean plays). It will also be interesting to reflect on tradapted plays as born from Shakespearean ellipses (translating or adapting as filling in the blanks of the original texts).

Non-exhaustive list of suggested topics:

- Dramatic and/or Non Dramatic Adaptations of Shakespearean plays in English and non-English languages on the page and on the stage. Intersemiotic adaptations of a particular play: Theatre, opera, prose, poetry, post-dramatic forms etc...
- From the "anxiety of influence" (Bloom) to the "death of the author" (Genette): theoretical approaches of the relationship between Shakespeare and early modern playwrights and their adaptation; adaptation as evolution?
- Tradaptation and spectrality: prequels, sequels of Renaissance plays...

- Shakespeare, his works and multiculturalism: adapting, tradapting, performing Shakespeare for a multicultural audience, writing back / talking back
- Shakespeare, his contemporaries and new performing conditions: adapting Shakespeare and his contemporaries to other dramatic and non-dramatic media, non European dramatic traditions, multilingual audiences. The issue of surtitling as a new vector of adaptation of Shakespearean plays could be tackled as well.

Deadline for Paper Proposals:

Please submit an abstract (200-300 words) and a brief bio (150 words) by 1 October 2012 to Nathalie Rivere de Carles (nrivere@univ-tlse2.fr).

All participants will be notified about the acceptance of their proposals by 1 November 2012.

The deadline for accepted seminar participants to send their completed paper is 1 April 2013.

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9. Shakespeare and Classical Mythology: European Perspectives

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Convenors:

Charlotte Coffin, Université Paris Est - Créteil

Jane Kingsley-Smith, University of Roehampton

Agnès Lafont, IRCL, Université Paul Valéry – Montpellier 3

Classical mythology was one of the most fertile areas of exchange in early modern Europe, contributing to the emergence of a European culture. Copied, printed, translated, glossed, recycled, the Greek and Latin texts of Antiquity circulated widely all over the European continent, informing and inspiring literary forms of discourse, as well as the visual arts, even before the accelerating and proliferating impact of printing. This seminar proposes to explore the place of mythology in the dramatic and poetic works of Shakespeare and his contemporaries from European and interdisciplinary perspectives. Shakespeare offers his own versions of classical fables, submitting the mythological material to variations that depended on the sources he drew upon (whether classical, medieval, or early modern) and on their potential interactions. Approaching the Shakespeare canon from the works of English and other European poets, dramatists or mythographers (Batman, Fraunce, Conti, Giraldi, etc.) can serve to challenge or reinforce an understanding of his mythological appropriations. Investigating early modern culture through its use of classical mythology opens up multiple interdisciplinary perspectives.

Papers are invited to address any of the following topics:

- Shakespeare's place in the transfer and circulation of classical mythology;
- Shakespeare's interactions with his English and other European contemporaries in their use of mythological material;
- Shakespeare's use of mythology, as based upon and challenging English and other European non-literary works, such as commonplace books, emblem books or dictionaries;
- The contributions of European Renaissance mythography to the reading of Shakespeare's mythological material;
- Interactions of classical mythology, literature and other early modern art forms (painting, statuary, decorative arts, music, masques) in the context of not merely English but also more broadly European culture;
- Shakespeare and classical authors (Homer, Ovid, Virgil, Seneca, Plutarch, Plautus, etc.);
- Shakespeare and the medieval mythological tradition;
- Shakespeare and the interaction of the classical and medieval mythological traditions;
- The contribution of critical approaches on mythology (Claude Lévi-Strauss, Mircéa Eliade, etc.) to the study of Shakespeare and his contemporaries;
- The contributions of other critical approaches (gender studies, cultural studies, the politics of reception and circulation of art-forms, etc.) to the study of Shakespeare's classical mythology".

Submissions proposing other approaches are also welcome.

Deadline for Paper Proposals:

Please submit an abstract (200-300 words) and a brief bio (150 words) by 1 October 2012 to the convenors: Charlotte Coffin (charlotte.coffin@u-pec.fr), Jane Kingsley-Smith (j.kingsley-smith@roehampton.ac.uk) and Agnès Lafont (agnes.lafont@univ-montp3.fr).

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10. Shakespeare, Myth, and Asia

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Conveners:

Atsuhiko Hirota, Kyoto University

Dennis Kennedy, Trinity College Dublin

This seminar proposes to discuss the intercultural dialogue between Shakespeare and Asia by attending to myth, with "myth" interpreted broadly. The extensive geographical entity called Asia has never had the unifying cultural bases of the Greco-Roman and Judeo-Christian traditions of Europe. As a result, Asian responses to both European mythologies and Shakespeare vary from culture to culture. Nonetheless, Shakespeare provides a good platform for studies about the diverse contacts between Europe and Asia from the early modern period to the present. In some cases Western hegemony marginalized indigenous cultures, imposing European culture as the norm. In other cases the self/other and centre/margin dichotomies were modified and new interpretations appeared.

We welcome papers examining confrontations and negotiations between Europe and Asia from the sixteenth century until today. Comparative studies are particularly welcome, such as comparisons between Asian and non-Anglophone cultures in Europe; between Asian and other non-European cultures; and between different cultures in Asia.

Interculturalism, generally defined as the mixing or blending of elements of divergent cultures into an invented or hybrid form, is a familiar condition of globalism but remains a contentious topic. Its history is long, and it has affected many areas of life from the culinary and sartorial to the linguistic and aesthetic, driven by imperialism and colonialism as well as by peaceful trade and human interchange. We see its connection to Shakespeare and Asia in three principal areas (though others might well be offered):

Asia in European myths

How did Shakespeare and his contemporaries represent classical myths and legends created through the negotiations between ancient Europe and the East? How did they respond to the "myths of Asia" in classical, medieval and early modern travel literature? Fields to explore include:

- myths of deities originating in Asia (such as Artemis/Diana and Dionysus/Bacchus)
- literary traditions of the Trojan War and the Argonauts
- the relationship between Asia and Africa (as in Cleopatra and Othello)
- representations of the Scythians, the Amazons, the Ottoman Empire, Tamerlane's conquest, "spicèd" India, and Marco Polo's Cathay and Zipangu

Hermeneutic negotiations between Asia and Europe

How have Asian cultures with rich mythological traditions of their own responded to the representations of Greco-Roman myths in Shakespeare and his contemporaries in translations, adaptations and performances? For example, how do contemporary Asian productions (such as those by Ninagawa or Ong Keng Sen) dramatize the mythological elements in Shakespeare's plays? How do European audiences and critics respond to them?

The 'Shakespeare myth' in Asia

How did Asia react to Shakespeare as an already established icon of British political and cultural hegemony in the age of colonialism? More recently, how does Asia react to Shakespeare in a globalized world marked by the overwhelming influence of the English language? How does the status of Shakespeare in culture, in education and in commerce reveal the condition of the 'Shakespeare myth' in Asia? How does Shakespeare's global iconic status affect the choice and treatment of his plays on stage, on film, and in popular culture?

Deadline for Paper Proposals:

Please submit an abstract (200-300 words) and a brief bio (150 words) by 1 October 2012 to the conveners: Atsuhiko Hirota (hirota.atsuhiko.5e@kyoto-u.ac.jp) and Dennis Kennedy (DKENNEDY@tcd.ie) by 1 October 2012.

All participants will be notified about the acceptance of their proposals by 1 November 2012.

The deadline for accepted seminar participants to send their completed paper is 1 April 2013.

11. Shakespeare and the Myth of the Feminine

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Convenors:

Yan Brailowsky, Université Paris Ouest Nanterre La Défense, France

Victoria Bladen, University of Queensland, Australia

Iconic Shakespearean actresses such as Peggy Ashcroft (1988) have marvelled at the versatility and depth of Shakespeare's feminine roles. Lady Macbeth, Beatrice, Ophelia, Queen Margaret, Juliet, Paulina, Desdemona, Volumnia, Lavinia... all are characters which have been variously represented, or objectified in Western culture, and whose names have now become easily recognizable emblems or concepts—even myths.

Ophelia, for instance, was obsessively represented by nineteenth-century artists such as Benjamin West (1805), John Everett Millais (1851-2), Eugène Delacroix (1853), Dante Gabriel Rossetti (1868), John William Waterhouse (1889, 1994, 1910), or Odilon Redon (1905, 1905-8), which succeeded in transforming the luckless virgin into the epitome of the female victim in the Romantic imagination. Similarly, characters such as Lady Macbeth, Desdemona or Volumnia, have been used as case studies or illustrating clinical research, following Freud's example with Sophocles and the "Œdipus complex", to discuss the workings of castration, desire, jealousy, and so on. Others have used the feminine as a meaningful metaphor to discuss poetic genres (Berry 1999).

More generally, feminine characters in Shakespeare have arguably allowed critics and performers to discuss and explore issues constructing or affecting women, their identity, status or evolution both on- and offstage, in the early modern era or our own, giving rise to a host of novel interpretations of these questions in different disciplines, be it literary studies, gender studies, psychology, sociology and political science, or film and performance studies, among others.

Paradoxically, however, only male players were allowed onstage in the Elizabethan era, an age which also celebrated a "Virgin Queen" who spoke of herself as having "the body of a weak and feeble woman, but [the] heart and stomach of a king". With this paradox in mind, this seminar will discuss the various ways in which Shakespeare exploited, helped create or, conversely, undermine, the myth of the "feminine". To what extent can one speak of Shakespearian "women"? Should we equate gender distinctions with that between the feminine and the masculine? Can one distinguish the notion of the "feminine" from discussions on the relationship between "women" and "girls", sexuality and domesticity, agency and passivity? How did Shakespeare's portrayal of the feminine evolve, between his early characters such as the prophetic Queen Margaret and later characters such as the stern, parrhesic Paulina? How did the examples of female rulers in early modern Europe influence the playwright's depiction of women, notably queens and princesses? Is there a specifically English, British or Euro-centric approach to these questions both in the early modern era and in our own?

The seminar will welcome proposals on all of Shakespeare's works (poetry and drama), as well as performances or adaptations (on stage, television or film), and "mythic encounters" between Shakespeare and various "feminine" figures (Hackett, 2009). The aim of this interdisciplinary seminar is to explore new critical directions and approaches, questioning a range of ideas and assumptions that have surrounded the issue of gender in Shakespeare's works. We would especially welcome proposals with a European focus. [References: Ashcroft, Peggy, "Playing Shakespeare", in Wells, Stanley (ed.), *Shakespeare Survey* (Cambridge UP, 1988), 40, pp. 11-19; Berry, Philippa, *Shakespeare's Feminine Endings: Disfiguring Death in the Tragedies* (Routledge, 1999); Hackett, Helen, *Shakespeare and Elizabeth: The Meeting of Two Myths* (Princeton UP, 2009)].

Deadline for Paper Proposals:

Please submit an abstract (200-300 words) and a brief bio (150 words) by 1 October 2012 to the convenors: Yan Brailowsky (yan.brailowsky@u-paris10.fr) and Victoria Bladen (victoria.bladen@uqconnect.edu.au).

All participants will be notified about the acceptance of their proposals by 1 November 2012.

The deadline for accepted seminar participants to send their completed paper is 1 April 2013.

12. The Shakespeare Myth Reloaded: Demythologizing and Re-mythologizing Shakespeare Today

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Convenors:

Zeno Ackermann, Goethe-Universität, Frankfurt am Main, Germany

Zoltán Márkus, Vassar College, NY, USA

This seminar explores contemporary attempts at demythologizing Shakespeare, his work, and his cultural status in Europe. Shakespeare's iconicity—labeled as "Bardolatry" or "Shakespeare myth," and more recently as "Shakespeare effect" or "Shake-shifting"—has always incited significant resistance. Historically, the "horrid crew" of Shakespeare's detractors ranges from some of his contemporaries to prominent dissidents such as Tolstoy, Shaw, Eliot, and Wittgenstein. By looking at more recent ways of challenging Shakespeare's prominent cultural position, the seminar aims to map out a negative underside of Shakespeare's overwhelmingly positive reception in Europe from the middle of the 20th century through today.

We invite papers on specific acts, individuals, or groups that endeavour to critique, reject, or replace the so-called Shakespeare myth. They might elucidate the recent cultural vagaries of certain Shakespearean characters (e.g. Hamlet, Richard III, Shylock, Katharina Minola, Othello, Prospero) or look at aggressive cultural appropriations and rejections, including daring genre-changes, parodies, or politicized quotations. Other papers could pose uncomfortable questions, such as what happens when Shakespeare's status is challenged in the curriculum or when his local legacy is contested in the theatre (e.g. Bertolt Brecht, Heiner Müller, Ariane Mnouchkine, Daniel Mesguich, Luk Perceval, among others)? Is it at all possible to attack the Shakespeare myth? Or are attacks fated to be contained in the cultural complex that they target? Examining various forms of questioning the unquestionable cultural value of Shakespeare, we hope to reconsider the complex connections between dissent and tradition as well as between aesthetic evaluation and ideology.

Deadline for Paper Proposals:

Please submit an abstract (200-300 words) and a brief bio (150 words) by 1 October 2012 to the convenors: Zeno Ackermann (z.ackermann@em.uni-frankfurt.de) and Zoltán Márkus (zomarkus@vassar.edu). Send any questions and requests about the seminar to these addresses as well.

All participants will be notified about the acceptance of their proposals by 1 November 2012.

The deadline for accepted seminar participants to send their completed paper is 1 April 2013.

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13. Staging the Shakespeare Myths, 2000-2012

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Convenors:

Nicoleta Cinpoes, University of Worcester, UK

Florence March, Université d'Avignon, France

Paul Prescott, University of Warwick, UK

The explosion of Shakespearean appropriation over the past decade has led to multiple reconsiderations: of the issue of authorship, of the relationship between the source text and its stage adaptation, of the location of performance, and of the nature of the performance pact which binds stage and audience. Such trends have challenged the dialectic of 'faithfulness' and 'betrayal' that has traditionally haunted performance criticism (Hutcheon). In Europe and throughout the world, performance has become the locus of a transaction in which Shakespeare as myth and Shakespearean myths are being (dis)placed and (re)negotiated.

We would like to invite proposals for papers that debate the staging of Shakespeare myths in twenty-first-century productions by addressing one/some of the following questions:

- In the age of hi-tech multi-mediality, how have recent stage productions (English, non-English, multilingual) negotiated the myth of Shakespeare's unique dramatic language and the "sacred" role of the playscript?
- How do performing spaces—whether constructed or reconstructed thrust stages, or parks, churches, streets, studio spaces and amphitheatres—(re)locate early modern theatre conventions—another Shakespeare myth?
- How are "mythical" (i.e. canonical, "landmark", or even fictional) productions of Shakespeare cited, appropriated and remembered by practitioners, critics and audiences?
- After decades of undercover political work on the European stages, and indeed beyond, at the beginning of the third millennium Shakespeare's "political edge is blunted", comments Sinfield (2006). Is "Political Shakespeare" another displaced myth? What other politics – post-colonial, post-feminist, post-dramatic—are at work in recent stage productions? Against a backdrop informed by the theatre of war, international conflict and the rise of nationalism in Europe, does Shakespeare in performance still have a political agenda?
- How have gender roles been questioned, re-cast and redefined in contemporary Shakespeare productions? How are stage conventions—such as cross-dressing gender-bending – (re)negotiated in mixed, all-male and all-female casts?
- In this context of renegotiation, what strategies shape the relationship between stage and audience? What zones of transaction frame the pact of performance? What "mythologies"—to borrow a concept coined by structuralist anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss—build up during the performance and how do they affect spectating, both at individual and collective levels?
- What part do large organized performance festivals and events (the UK Cultural Olympiad 2012, Avignon, Gdansk, Craiova) play in propagating or challenging cultural myths about Shakespeare?

Deadline for Paper Proposals:

Please submit an abstract (200-300 words) and a brief bio (150 words) by 1 October 2012 to the convenors: Nicoleta Cinpoes (n.cinpoes@worc.ac.uk), Florence March (florence.march@univ-avignon.fr) and Paul Prescott (pushkinp@yahoo.co.uk).

All participants will be notified about the acceptance of their proposals by 1 November 2012.

The deadline for accepted seminar participants to send their completed paper is 1 April 2013.

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14. Translating Myths and Mythologizing Translations

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Conveners:

Anna Cetera, University of Warsaw, Poland

Jesús Tronch, University of Valencia, Spain

In tune with the general theme of the conference, we would like to propose a double-edged seminar focused on (a) the translation of Shakespeare's references to classical mythology, and (b) converting Shakespeare translations into myths of national cultures.

Translating Myths

"Widow Dido" said you? ... How came that widow in? The mythological reference to "Widow Dido" in *The Tempest* (2.1) is amusing to some of the characters, and serious for others. Some find it teasing and others obscure. Can this complex range of responses to the myth of Dido and Aeneas hold fast in translation? How can we retain the mythological subtext of Shakespeare's plays without allowing meaning to slide into the footnotes, there to remain? In search of possible solutions, we would like to invite papers focused on the translation of Shakespeare's references to classical mythology, be it a passing mention, structural similarity, or bold paraphrase of the classical source. In particular, we would like to discuss:

- accounts of specific translation strategies with regard to the mythological subtext in Shakespeare's plays (case studies and translators' policies),
- contextual analyses of the translation of mythological references employed for specific dramatic ends, such as comedy, argument or description,
- the ways of dealing with intertextuality in passages where the original mythological reference seems incompatible with the translations of the classical sources in the target culture,
- the treatment of the mythological subtext in translations for specific purposes (bilingual editions, literary translations, translating for performance).

Translations as Myths

Secondly, we would like to address the fortunes of translations themselves, and explore the notion of "mythical" translations and/or translators of Shakespeare. Here in particular we would be interested in:

- the mechanisms responsible for the establishment of canonical translations, both in diachronic perspective, and in synchronic studies,
- the impact of the phenomenon of retranslation on the composition and stability of the canon,
- the factors deciding about the long-lasting success of new translations (e.g. the relation to concurrent aesthetics, theatrical reception, the publication of a series, the number of translations by a single translator, media patronage and blogosphere),
- the impact of the translator's personal myth on the perception of translations (e.g. translator poets, the political commitments of translators, celebrity status).

And last but not least, can the myth of Shakespeare translations overshadow the Bard himself?

Deadline for Paper Proposals:

Please submit an abstract (200-300 words) and a brief bio (150 words) by 1 October 2012 to the conveners: Anna Cetera (a.cetera@uw.edu.pl) and Jesús Tronch (tronch@uv.es).

All participants will be notified about the acceptance of their proposals by 1 November 2012.

The deadline for accepted seminar participants to send their completed paper is 1 April 2013.

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