

March 2019

Front Matter

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Recommended Citation

Isaacson, Emily (2019) "Front Matter," *Selected Papers of the Ohio Valley Shakespeare Conference*: Vol. 10 , Article 1.
Available at: <https://ideaexchange.uakron.edu/spovsc/vol10/iss1/1>

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**Selected Papers of the
Ohio Valley Shakespeare
Conference**

Vol. X, 2017

Selected Papers of the Ohio Valley Shakespeare Conference

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“Shakespeare Now and Then”

Table of Contents

A Discussion of Dramatic Form through 20th and 21st Century Illustrated
Prose Adaptations for Children of Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's
Dream*

Rosann Gage 1

The Taming of the Shrew and *Coriolanus*: Re-interpretations and
Adaptations after the Major Western Ideological Revolutions

David George 13

The Cognition and Performance of Resonant Temporalities in *Richard III*

Joe Keener 29

You're Never Too Old to Laugh: An Adaption of Shakespeare's Fool in the
Modern Era

Tina Kramer 41

“Indeed, it is a strange-disposed time:” *Julius Caesar*, *A Game at Chess*,
and the Politics of Staging

Gabriel Rieger 53

From the Editor

The 41st annual Ohio Valley Shakespeare Conference meeting was hosted by Baldwin Wallace University from October 19 to the 21st, 2017, focusing on the idea of “Shakespeare Now and Then.” This conference brought together a number of ideas about Shakespeare and time, ranging from examinations of temporality within Shakespeare’s plays to contemporary adaptations of the plays at various moments in time. Plenary speakers – Lisa Starks and Hugh Grady – looked at the question of Shakespeare in our contemporary moment from different angles: Starks considered queer representations of Shakespeare in various biopics; Grady contextualized whiteness, past and present, in a reading of *Antony and Cleopatra* in the Obama era.

The essays in this volume represent a similar variation on this theme of time, temporality, and adaptation. The first, Rosann Gage’s considers adaptations of Shakespeare for children, looking particularly at illustrated texts of *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*. In her discussion, she moves beyond the dichotomy of printed text and staged play to consider how illustration creates the opportunity to navigate the complexity of introducing children to Shakespeare. Most particularly, she argues that *illustrated* versions of Shakespeare “contain the potential to expose children to dramatic form in conjunction with the prose adaptation.” That is, Gage argues, the illustrated scenes in the children’s adaptations allow children to interact with the work – and the work to interact with the audience in a way similar to that interaction we see during onstage performances of the work.

In considering historical adaptations of Shakespearean plays, David George begins with the provocation that “Many critics wish that Shakespeare had never written *The Taming of the Shrew* or *Coriolanus*.” George further argues that the adaptations have layered upon the plays valences of contemporaneous meaning that obscure the original production and meaning. To illustrate this, George traces direct various adaptations (such as Fletcher’s *The Tamer Tamed* and Sheridan’s *Coriolanus: Or, The Roman Matron*) and various stagings of both plays,

considering the ways that ideological shifts in concepts of gender and government influence the interpretations of these two troubling plays.

The third essay of this volume, Joe Keener's piece on *Richard III*, turns its attention not to adaptation, but rather to the very idea of time within the play itself. Keener sets out to examine the layering of times within the play, relating such temporalities to the cognitive conceptualizing of time itself. This leads to a discussion of the fluidity of Historical time, Fictive time, and Quotidian time, particularly the audience's epistemological experience of these three layered times in the single instance of the play's action.

Tina Kramer's work on Christopher Moore's *Fool* (a novel adaptation of *King Lear*) examines the shifts that adaptations make of historical and fictive time, as well as the way that contemporary linguistics layer new valences of meaning onto language. Thus, in Moore's novel, the fool becomes a character both of the Shakespearean moment and of our moment. Through considering Moore's fool in relation to Shakespeare's real fools Armin and Kempe, and considering contemporary overtones on the word "fool," Kramer explores Moore's new character, this "wise and raunchy" fool.

Finally, Gabriel Rieger's piece on *Julius Caesar* returns to staged versions of Shakespeare's plays. In this, Rieger contextualizes the New York Public Theatre's Trumpian staging of *Julius Caesar* with an examination of the original production of Thomas Middleton's *A Game at Chess*. Rieger considers the allegorical matter of Middleton's work alongside the allegorical staging of Shakespeare's tragedy, pondering the implications of such overt political interpretations for theatre companies.

The essays of this collection represent the fascinating work that goes on within the Ohio Valley Shakespeare Conference, and give us many ways to think about Shakespeare, his time, and our time. The contributors to this volume have assisted us with a great deal of time and work, but I have also had a great deal of help from others in the production of this volume. I want to thank, in particular, Hillary Nunn of the University of Akron; I want to thank the members of the OVSC who volunteered their time and expertise to read and respond to submissions; and I want to thank the Board of the OVSC for trusting me with this endeavor.