



Fracking Shakespeare

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Shakespeare's work is so frequently shortened in adaptation, that audiences can be altogether unaware of this artistic process and view the product as an accurate representation of the perceived original. The purpose of this seminar is to explore the ethical, political, and historical implications and long-term impacts of Shakespearean abridgement in the twenty-first century. This is a practice which dates back to the sixteenth-century drolls of the interregnum period, became especially popular in nineteenth-century through burlesques and vaudeville performance, and is a tradition which continues to thrive today in the work of theatre companies like the Reduced Shakespeare Company (RSC) and writers such as Rajat Kapoor and Tim Crouch. Though frequently an element of Shakespeare adaptation across the globe, abridgment is often dismissed as a necessary step in the process of transferring Shakespeare from one cultural and historical context to another. By using 'fracking Shakespeare', an expression coined by the other RSC, as a launchpad for our discussion, we hope to discover and explore new terms and consider the appropriateness of each as a metaphor for abridgement which links them to negative connotations and destructive practices against nature. We therefore invite submissions for papers on topics including but not limited to:

- Shakespearean abridgement throughout history and its origins;
- Examples of reduction in the plays of Shakespeare and his contemporaries;
- The lexicon of Shakespearean adaptation and appropriation;
- Prominent figures in the history of Shakespearean abridgement;
- The dramaturgy of reducing Shakespeare;
- The relationship between parody and homage in Shakespearean abridgement;
- Gender and sexuality in abridged Shakespeare;
- Race and 'othering' Shakespeare in abridgement;
- Translation theory and Shakespearean abridgement;
- Eco-criticism and Shakespearean adaptations;
- Shakespearean adaptations and global contexts;
- Metaphorical language used to describe practices and products of adaptation.

Keywords: abridgement, fracking, adaptation, parody, reduction