

ESRA SHAKESPEARE CONFERENCE
SHAKESPEARE AND MYTH
MONTPELLIER (France)
Wednesday 26 - Saturday 29 June 2013

Organised by

the Institut de Recherche sur la Renaissance, l'âge Classique et les Lumières
(UMR 5186 CNRS, University of Montpellier)
Under the auspices of the Société Française Shakespeare
and the European Shakespeare Research Association (ESRA)

Conference announcement and call for seminar proposals

Conference announcement:

Shakespeare and Myth

A shaper of European identity, Greco-Roman mythology has been invoked down the centuries both to glorify and undermine rulers, to uphold or subvert political or social order, and to probe and question issues including those of gender, religion and history. Simultaneously, Europe has been the cradle of classical mythology, which has infused all modes of artistic creation and inspired influential theoretical and critical approaches well beyond the continent's borders, in the fields of history, literature, psychology and anthropology. In this process, the legacy of Antiquity encountered other European myths (Nordic, Celtic, etc.). Over the past fifty years or so, Europe has increasingly acted as an area of exchanges between its own mythologies, ideas and representations and those of other continents. Today, the continent's heritage is challenged, refashioned and reconsidered in the light of other cultural forms that reflect an increasing diversity, out of which a new European melting-pot of myths may be emerging that interacts with other cultures in an increasingly globalized world.

Within this process, Shakespeare enjoys a privileged position. Like myth, and through classical and other myths, his work "To whom all scenes of Europe homage owe", is "not of an age, but for all time" and, indeed, places, and has contributed to the building of a continental identity, providing tools to apprehend and comprehend, endorse and critique European history and culture. However, this European Shakespeare is to be taken not as confined to a Eurocentric vision but rather as pushing back boundaries, challenging assumptions and inviting a criss-crossing of perspectives worldwide. Reception and appropriation of his work has also involved its processing through non-European mythological and cultural prisms, drawing attention to, and inviting research into, a plasticity that is akin to the flexibility of myth.

Following upon the exploration of Europe's cultural landscapes and seascapes through Shakespeare's works at previous conferences of the European Shakespeare Research Association (ESRA), the Montpellier conference proposes a journey into Shakespeare's kaleidoscopic "Mythscape".

This journey can take three main directions:

- Myth in Shakespeare: classical mythology pervades the work of Shakespeare and his European contemporaries, like a kind of lingua franca or culturally bonding material; other mythological influences are also present in his work, or may be processed into it through stagings, adaptations or other forms of recreation.
- Shakespeare as Myth-Maker: Shakespeare has contributed to raise to the status of myth Mediterranean and (other) European locations (including Bohemia, Cyprus, Elsinore, Navarre, Roussillon, Verona, Vienna, as well as Stratford-upon-Avon) and figures (Hamlet, Romeo and Juliet, Desdemona) that have found a place in the collective imagination, alongside classical and legendary places and characters.
- Shakespeare as Myth: the paradox of his own elusive biography and the universality of his works have contributed to a process whereby Shakespeare himself is at the centre of a myth – his own, and that of all those who claim him as their own, through translation and other forms of appropriation.

Within these three directions, which are neither watertight nor mutually exclusive, the conference invites papers on a wide range of topics that include:

Theatre

- (Re)presenting myth(s) on Shakespearean stages and screens
- Shakespeare's mythology as a common ground for, or an obstacle to, understanding and exchange
- The (ir)relevance of Shakespeare's mythological references on the contemporary and global stage and screen.
- Processing Shakespearean performances and performers into "myths"

Translation

- Shakespeare's place in the transfer and circulation of classical mythology between Antiquity, the Middle Ages and Renaissance Europe
- Shakespeare as "translator" of Ovid, Virgil and other classical authors for his time
- The impact of translation on Shakespeare's mythological subtext
- Shakespeare's "translating" of the politics of Olympus and Rome into a critique of the Elizabethan and Jacobean context
- "Mythical" translations and/or translators of Shakespeare

Criticism

- Shakespeare's place in the transfer and circulation of classical mythology between Antiquity, the Middle Ages and Renaissance Europe
- Mythography as a key to Shakespeare
- Iconography in relation to myth, Shakespeare and the visual arts
- The relevance of classicist scholarship to Shakespeare studies (Claude Calame, Marcel Détienné, Jean-Pierre Vernant, Charles Martindale)
- Addressing 20th century critical approaches on the relation of Shakespeare and myth (Georges Dumézil, Mircea Eliade, Claude Lévi-Strauss)
- Shakespeare's mythical figures in interdisciplinary studies

Afterlives

- The “mythologizing” of Shakespeare’s world (characters, places, Stratford-upon-Avon)
- Representing and receiving the Shakespeare icon in contemporary cultures
- (Re)fashioning, perpetuating and/or subverting the Shakespearean myth through film, TV and the Internet
- Shakespeare’s myths as an enduring form of (re)creation
- Working on and with Shakespeare’s myths in the classroom

Call for seminar proposals ESRA 2013

From 26 June to 29 June 2013, the IRCL, under the Auspices of the Société Française Shakespeare, will organise the European Shakespeare Research Association (ESRA) Conference around the theme of “Shakespeare and Myth”

Members of ESRA are invited to propose a seminar that they would like to convene on “Shakespeare and Myth”.

Proposals of 300-500 words (stating topic, relevance, and approach) should be submitted by 2 or 3 potential convenors who agree to work together.

If you have ideas for a seminar, please submit your proposals to:

- Clara Calvo, ESRA conference liaison officer: ccalvo@um.es
- and to the IRCL organizing committee (Jean-Christophe Mayer, Janice Valls-Russell, Nathalie Vienne-Guerrin) : esraircl@univ-montp3.fr

by 15 March 2012

The board of ESRA will make its final choice of seminars in April 2012. By this time, all the convenors will be personally informed of the choices made, and the list of seminars will be made available on the IRCL, the ESRA and the Société Française Shakespeare websites.

<http://www.ircl.cnrs.fr/>

<http://www.societefrancaiseshakespeare.org/>

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