The Shakespeare User:

Critical and Creative Appropriation in the Twenty-First Century

Valerie M. Fazel and Louise Geddes, eds.

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Introduction

The Shakespeare User

Valerie M. Fazel and Louise Geddes

New uses are always being found for Shakespeare. When innovative communication platforms emerge, Shakespeare use appears almost on point with the arrival of the new medium. The quartos and first folio, for instance, mark Shakespeare's early intersection with commercial print ventures, and *King John* (1899) is a salient example of Shakespeare use in cinematic film's nascent moment. As Philip Davis notes, the "capacity to burst into ever-new activations of itself is a crucial evolutionary component in Shakespeare's 'original text'" (Davis 7). The question mark that Davis places next to the idea of 'original text' is one recently echoed by a several Shakespeare critics, including Graham Holderness, W.B. Worthen, and Sujata Iyengar, whose works draw attention to Shakespeare's dependence on the technology that shapes his words.[1] Shakespeare is no less Shakespeare when he is performed as opposed to read, and the recent expansion of appropriation[2] theory further challenges the notion of an 'original' work, or Shakespeare as a singular or fixed entity,[3] instead, recognizing the extent to which he is activated by new platforms. Shakespeare's failure to make a decisive authorial presence in a curated edition of his works[4] has resulted in a conceptualization of Shakespeare that emerged out of an early modern conflation of two different media—the stage and page.[5] As such, what is collectively represented or defined as Shakespeare is continuously being reimagined and reconstructed in accordance with the affordances of the medium in which he appears and the purposes to which he is put to task.

New platforms bring with them renewed pressures on theories of appropriation and reading reception. Our book specifically attends to Shakespeare use in the digital age and principally turns its critical attention to user agency and authority in the face of shifting cultural practices that take place in both offline and online contexts. One consequence of digital media's ubiquity is that characterizing the act of reading has become increasingly complex as digital interfaces encourage interactivity in their readers, changing the experience of textual encounters. For example, e-reading devices such as iPads

make switching between offline reading and online sources as easy as a tap on the screen. Hyperlinks in online texts alert and redirect readers to textual notes, visuals, images, videos, blogs, and online web pages that host additional reading content (often replete with their own hyperlinks).[6] Frequently, hyperlinks enable and facilitate asynchronous discussion groups through comment threads, or passage to real-time discussion sites. Furthermore, many online platforms, particularly those that support social connectivity, make user interactions visible—sometimes traceable—and therefore provide access to a discursive network of Shakespeare users. This new praxis of hyper-reading not only changes the way in which we read Shakespeare, but also the ways in which access to the Shakespeare texts, and textuality itself, is constructed. And it is here where the authors in this volume find Shakespeare, as hyper-read, as praxis, as perpetually in the state of becoming.

In addition to making more visible the cultural and materialist pressures that shape our intellectual play with a work, digital texts are saturated with transmedial and cross-cultural overlay. Quoting Jerome McGann, W. B Worthen succinctly asserts, "'we no longer have to use books to analyze and study other books or texts' . . . altering the understanding of textuality on all fronts, including those where the use of text is not limited to reading them but is more akin to 'processing' them, using them as one input in a multiplex armature of creation."[7] And yet, as Worthen notes in his critical approach to Shakespeare apps, the corpus of the dramatist's work is, unsurprisingly, the center of gravity for appropriative use: "the text provides a template around which other activities can be mounted, and which can be represented in different ways: as speech, as character, as object of note taking and sharing, as the moment for instruction or experimental activity."[8] It is the latter of these—experimental activity—that drives the content of this volume: ten essays exploring but a small sample of a wide array of innovative uses, and users, of Shakespeare.

The rise of digital culture, particularly Web 2.0, has foregrounded user participation as one of the central tenets of its organizational structure[9] and Shakespeare, as has been the case for the past four hundred years, has nimbly responded, yielding new iterations and acquiring new users who enthusiastically curate, and/or recreate additions to the Shakespeare archive. Web 2.0 and its proliferation

of interactive interfaces and digital tools, however, provide the means for online users to (re)create, collect, and share Shakespeare apart from the hegemony of the "'educative and civilizing agencies'" of academia and theatre.[10] To define engagement with Shakespeare online as use, then, consents to the inclusion of a wide range of actions beyond reading and performing, and potentially changes Shakespeare into data that can be broken down and manipulated at will. Use also implies movement and fluidity, drawing attention to the ways vestigial traces of online use might register as contributors to a reconstitution of Shakespeare that exceeds traditional notions of a text and its subsequent iterations. A conception of Shakespeare as use imagines a continuously expanding archive that accommodates the far-reaching permutations of a network of linguistic, aesthetic, and cultural associations. Such use necessarily reads the material conditions of textuality with as much care as it does the content of the plays themselves. Yet online users do more than read texts: they contribute to the cultural phenomena we think of as Shakespeare through "isolating, then manipulating, revising, and reworking specific elements" that represent the dramatist's work.[11] With "zero barriers to entry for all who can connect to the Internet," Shakespeare is seized in service of a potentially limitless archive of cultural memory, constructed through its willful disregard for the traditional avenues of canonicity.[12] As the essays in this volume demonstrate, the value of Shakespeare lies in its usability, in that the texts, as well as the myth of the man, can be broken down and reassembled by a body of users whose valuation of Shakespeare is unpredictable and often resistant to pre-conceived notions of cultural hegemony.

This collection explores the implications of a theoretical shift from 'reader' to 'user' currently underway as Shakespeare perpetually rebuilds itself in response to the changes in (user) practice and platforms. The chapters in this book suggest that such a reorientation not only redefines the parameters of what we mean when we refer to 'Shakespeare,' but challenges us to rethink what constitutes use, and who might be defined a user, as we consider the ways reworked Shakespeares manifest and function on heterogeneous platforms. While the Shakespeare user historically includes readers, performers, or academics, for instance, the contemporary user might also be a gamer, a programmer, an online shopper, an Instagrammer, a patron, a student, a self-proclaimed fan, a corporation, a search engine, or a software

program; users and uses expand in response to new, emerging platforms. The term "user" implies varying levels of expertise that are potentially exploitative: a user employs extant resources in service of specific, targeted goals. User is almost exclusively linked to software culture, indicating, at its most fundamental level, someone who employs a computer program to create, read, shop, or play online. If not parasitic, at the very least, user has consumerist connotations, which is potentially troublesome to literary criticism because it implies a reason for consumption that destabilizes scholarship's preference for the illusion of timeless analysis generated by the detached critic. And yet, as the contributors to this book suggest, understanding the user offers the opportunity to construct all acts of interpretation as acts of appropriation, and to embrace the dialogic opportunities Shakespeare offers scholars and enthusiasts alike.

To call a Shakespearean a user is to assert a claim about reader agency that pushes against the traditional scholarly notions of objectivity as the defining quality of value. Instead, use assumes the right of access to Shakespeare on behalf of the consumer, necessitating an expansion of the definition of "Shakespearean" far beyond the reach of the academy. Working under the assumption that almost anything online is up for grabs, users take "the initiative to design, found, and run their own cultural memory institutions [often] without waiting for traditional institutions to set any precedents for online archiving, and achieving a degree of democratic inclusion."[13] The essays in this collection argue that the concept of Shakespeare scholars as users expands and diversifies the boundaries of what constitutes critical inquiry, encouraging discovery and exploration, and increases in scope the Shakespeare knowledge economy by destabilizing the values of intellectual goods, eschewing traditional models of cultural capital in favor of a more contested and variable exchange determined by scope and volume of use. That is to say, the network of associations that we deem Shakespeare can more freely shift in response to the needs and desires of its interpretive communities. User infers an agency that speaks more pointedly to researchers' culturally responsive immersion into the needs and desires of their interpretive communities, not only to the theoretical turn in literary studies, but a larger culture of intellectual practices that exceed conventional models of scholarship and knowledge dissemination. To study use is to

acknowledge the role that affective experience, non-human agents, and digital practices play in thought production, and recognize that academic criticism has indeed plenty of room for speculative thinking and creative production.

Centralizing the user necessitates an inquiry into these affective experiences and digital practices that shape one's encounters with Shakespeare. As such, the debates that the book stages identify a network that more overtly articulates the relationship that artists, scholars, readers, and fans have to Shakespeare. As the various instances in this book affirm, to use is not to create, but recreate; use suggests a recalibration, exploitation, and consumption of something that is already there, and builds connections between the traditional conventions of critical and creative practices that are deemed appropriative. Use expands the understanding of appropriation by recognizing the Gordian Knot that is Shakespeare and its media, and by expanding Worthen's claim that "the platform remakes the data," use is as equally applicable to editorial and critical practices as it is to creative endeavors.[14] Thus, to talk about Shakespeare is to talk about the manifestation of the text (or the man) under discussion, the way in which it is constructed and accessed, and the external data that affective engagement positions alongside, or within the text, building new interpretive structures for interfacing with the text. As David Weinberger observes, "whereas Shakespeare used to look like a writer and his work used to look like publications, now Shakespeare and his works are showing themselves to us as networks."[15] (399). The erratic and unstable constitution of networks then becomes a basis for new patterns of learning, and even builds new Shakespeares. Networked use on transmedial and intercultural digital platforms builds energetic, ever-shifting networks of association, which resists the more linear "adaptational chain"[16] that assumes a temporal-spatial stability progressing from a core textuality, and ultimately throws Worthen's textual template into doubt. To view the evolution of Shakespeare as a progressive movement overestimates the stability of both Shakespeare and the user, and steers away from an appreciation of the erratic intentionality that drives use. Because of its intermediate nature, the user could be a contested term, an entity oscillating between creativity and consumerism.

The essays in this collection expand the parameters of appropriation to include critical

methodologies, research practices, and textual editing. They also recognize the more expressive categories that are deemed appropriative, such as creative criticism, performance, and textual remixing. Appropriation is the simultaneous practice of consumption and production, which turns the reader into an agential user networked into connections with other user cultures. Douglas Lanier's definition of appropriation illustrates the power of collective thought, and draws attention to the materialist uses to be made of the texts:

> Rooted in the concepts of ownership (from Latin *appropriatus*, 'made one's own'), the term conceives of Shakespeare as a kind of property to which groups claim control. The term springs from Marxist analysis and retains the connotation that this struggle to claim Shakespeare is contentious, a matter of a weaker party wrestling something of value from unwilling or hostile hands."[17]

Web 2.0's emphasis on participation undercuts the notion of control over a text. Texts fluctuate according to the shifting barometers of cultural value, a phenomenon equally subject to twenty-first century users' whims and their unprecedented access to global culture. As such, the monolithic literary Shakespeare that has already seen itself fragment into diverse sub-topics in service of the nuanced, niche readings that literary theory facilitates finds itself further appropriated as it is used in discourses that do not directly feed into the academic avenues of Shakespeare knowledge. Increased access to the data that constructs Shakespeare highlights the extent to which every interpretive, critical, or editorial act is an appropriative transformation. What is now at stake is the question of who, if anyone at all, represents the 'weaker party.'

Appropriative theory, with its due emphasis on process, or transformation, presses for an approach that illuminates the way the text continuously proliferates to accommodate the critical perspectives that attach themselves to Shakespeare's drama. Likewise, since the critical shift from work to text, theory has seized on the notion of plurality of text creating the plays anew with each critical engagement that rebuts the "myth of filiation."[18] In acts of conscious appropriation, Shakespeare is set in a collision against an interpretive tool,[19] whether that be a creative or theoretical framework that absorbs

or propels Shakespeare into a greater or newer discourse. In the postmodern era, finding the "truth" of Shakespeare's text is no longer the endgame of literary criticism. Instead, Shakespeare is the conduit for the exchange of ideas, a facilitator for explorations of methodologies, in much the same way that Hamlet is a star vehicle for a celebrated actor. In this sense, Shakespeare is routinely absorbed into a greater intellectual or artistic hegemony, facilitated by the available technology and the subsequent network identity marked out as 'discourse.' Shakespeare is not a source to be parsed, but a "signifier, with rich and unstable connotations"[20] that finds itself at play within and without the academy. To use Shakespeare is not to merely reproduce or recycle but to engage in a larger discourse that channels Shakespeare into users' designs, and their instruments of use.

There are significant challenges to fully realizing the desire to track the processes that provide new iterations of Shakespeare. Appropriative criticism, by default, often falls into an assessment of artist and artifacts, examining each point of contact as static because the most substantive evidence available is the artifact itself. Although Christy Desmet suggests that an appropriation and its text "exist only in dialogic relation to each other, creating multiple permutations of faithfulness and unfaithfulness within appropriations,"[21] the emphasis on the cultural production of a Shakespeare text too often leans towards interpretation, directing the critical gaze away from the way the text can only exist in flux. Appropriative study, directly or indirectly, maps out the network of influences and associations that an artist uses to articulate an iteration of the text, transforming the text into a network that "can get very big [but] does not insist on drawing strict lines around topics or disciplines."[22] Digital culture allows us unprecedented access to this process as it occurs, animating Shakespeare and opening the Shakespeare network up to a variety of transformative practices. What this collection offers, then, is a glimpse into the methodologies—user acts, for better or worse—that construct the Shakespeare network.[23] Carson and Kirwan contend that "Shakespeare studies in the digital age is significantly and specifically different to its previous incarnations" (2), and there is more to be gained from applying such thinking directly to Shakespeare. Shakespeare itself is significantly and specifically different in the age of online cultures, because of the varied agency of the user, which not only challenges us to redefine methical practices of

accessing Shakespeare, but to think about how that access constructs Shakespeare for future users.

Shakespeare users are diverse not only in their particular interest in Shakespeare, but in their level of engagement with the dramatist's work. Some users are incidental tourists,[24] visitors whose interest in something other than Shakespeare—an actor, a new film adaptation, an adjacent discipline, or a culturally eclectic website—drives them circuitously to the corpus. Their use may be occasional, spontaneous, offhand, drawn to the text for the length of time it will take to satisfy an adjacent interest. The second array of users are intentional or deliberate seekers of Shakespeare, like the authors in this collection, who purposefully parse the texts and their surrounding history and scholarship, in order to expand critical discourse and articulate the ongoing relevance of Shakespeare study. Some users of Shakespeare are not even human, but are algorithms, search engines, or collectively constructed social media timelines that reorganize and restructure Shakespeare to accommodate popular requests, machine-recognizable linguistic trends, or sponsored material. Social media networks construct avatars that create a virtual presence through a composite of comments, likes, and forwarding of others' work. The only constant among the diversity of users and their multivalent uses is a Shakespeare in flux, manifest in an ever-shifting network of Shakespeare use, which offers the opportunity to trace the "historical condition of thought."[25] At the risk of over-simplification, for many users, Shakespeare's status is an incontrovertible cultural watermark ostensibly anchored in a shifting economy of cultural value that allows the texts to be pressed into the service of the dominant (sometimes capricious) aesthetic, intellectual, or political discourse of the moment. The salient truth is that Shakespeare is as it has always been—since the first moment the dramatic lines were uttered in the early modern playhouse—a construction of user engagement and networked activity.

Since Henry Jenkins' 2006 call for a recognition of "media convergence, participatory culture, and collective intelligence,"[26] media theorists have included the media user within their theoretical purview as they train a steady critical eye on "media change as an accretive, gradual process, always a mix of tradition and innovation, in which emerging and established systems interact, shift, and collude with one another."[27] Such inclusive reckoning of user with use positions participatory practice as

transitional rather than transgressive and raises a host of questions about the possibilities of new practices where use is accepted as transitional rather than transgressive: what might we gain from applying cross-disciplinary theories of users, appropriation, and cognition to Shakespeare studies? What does the day-to-day convergence of (incidental and intentional) Shakespeare cultural use tell us about what defines the essence of the work? How might we determine, if determination is even possible or necessary, the aesthetic boundaries that define the work as Shakespeare in a context where the "checks and limits of the works . . . are provided informally by communities of users who accept, reject, or more often, debate as genuine" any new utterance that claims to identify as Shakespeare?[28] How does the concept of the Shakespeare user matter? And perhaps more importantly, what does "network" mean for future Shakespeare studies? How might we restructure our own literary theories and methodologies to accommodate the delicate unease that comes with thinking of the Shakespeare network as connected first by use, and then second (or not at all) by the text? Our collection makes no claim to definitive answers to such queries, but instead offers a glimpse of the debates these questions engender.

Theorizing the user allows us to see the Shakespeare in circulation as we can access the metadata that allows us to draw conclusions about the evolution of Shakespeare, and apply the principles of use elsewhere. The Shakespeare network of users constitute an infinitely more heterogeneous body than any theatre audience, and their uses leave traces of their interaction at many points of contact, from clicks on a site, to circulation of received material, to acts of self-publication. Such evidence accumulates and constructs digital spaces of assembly, encouraging scholars to observe how various groups understand and make meaning out of Shakespeare. As materials of Shakespeare continue to form "a verifiable and distinct cultural entity of considerable weight,"[29] users likewise converge at particular points of contact, often (but not always) self-aware of their acts of consumption. The first step to understanding use is to more carefully engage with the platform employed to access Shakespeare, examining how Shakespeare transforms in service of the context of use and in the presence of different communities. Although there might seem to be an insurmountable gulf between the intentional user of the World Shakespeare Bibliography and the Shakespeare fanboy, the deliberate use of these two parties, the manipulation of data

with the ultimate aim of comprehension, magnetizes the individuals involved, building connections that contribute to a shared intellectual endeavor that manipulates Shakespeare's cultural value and offers new perspectives on the texts themselves. Understanding the fault lines in Shakespeare's value, however, cannot happen without considering the conditions of the thought-production that shapes the work, which once more returns us to the importance of understanding the user.

The shift in perspective from 'reader' to 'user' makes evident that what we bear witness to is not the potential for "democratization catalyzed by new media,"[30] but the hyper-politicization of textual artifacts, a process catalyzed by new media. That the product, and the profit, is immaterial does not discount the fact that it is created as a result of cultural outpouring that exists in an unrestrained discursive space. As a work in constant flux, the text finds its relevance through its capacity to respond to its socio-political moment of creation. The outcomes of use are both material and immaterial; material in that it responds to the socio-economic conditions of its own production, and immaterial not only in the sense that much of it exists in cyberspace, but housed in a network of ephemeral archives. The "immaterial investment" (140) that economist Yann Moulier-Boutang sees as a combination of creativity and knowledge from networked individuals manifests itself in and around new transformations of Shakespeare is a result of the massive expansion of the already heterogeneous body of users intersecting with Shakespeare on their own terms. Of course, such knowledge is necessarily dependent on the affective experience that has shaped the user's identity and in the Shakespeare network's new manifestations of materialism, the "layers and shades of implications suddenly available here and now within the *plays*, subtly challenging, changing and adding to our sense of what they are able to tell us."[31] Yet, unique to Shakespeare use, it is not only the texts, but also their ghosted history that is unpacked through the user. Instead of building a bridge between the Elizabethan past and our present, this new model of cultural materialism recognizes a palimpsest that does not only move vertically, placing the present on top of the past, but also branches out geographically, technologically, cross-culturally.

The rise of digital culture has engendered new modes of delivery that have reaffirmed the use-value of Shakespeare by recognizing its ongoing mediation with new cultural interests and technological

tools. Yet Shakespeare, by virtue of being Shakespeare, continues to be tightly bound to elite institutions of intellectual prestige, limitations also reflected in nodes of use. As points of user convergence, network structures are increasingly reorganized to reflect institutionalized cultural values and divert the unregulated exchange of ideas. Slowly, nonmaterial "elements" of capitalist development have become increasingly hegemonic and are additionally becoming "the dominant part of the exchange value of goods."[32] These non-material elements are codified by cultural signifiers, including Shakespeare, and when put to use, have the potential be converted into material value, once again reifying Shakespeare's canonical status. Moulier-Boutang notes that "we call these [immaterial] elements by different names: research and development (R&D) potential, intellectual capital, organization, customer databases, intellectual property rights, image, confidence, stock exchange surplus value and so on"[33] —terms that many academics going through the rigors of university-mandated self-assessment are undeniably familiar with. Corporations that produce material goods have begun to take into account the immaterialities of capital accretion in their models of production. While texts are appropriated and shared by incidental users in innovative and fresh ways, others, frequently the more deliberate users, find their work commissioned and repackaged as part of an academic Shakespeare industry whose existence behind paywalls makes it vulnerable to the not-misguided charge of insularity. What we hope to demonstrate in this book are the opportunities in place that can reinvigorate the position of the arts in global discussion by the radical expansion of what constitutes the humanities in a digital world and a recognition that users are bringing Shakespeare to their lives in innovative and exciting ways.

All networks are not created equal, and the degree of use by individuals is conditioned by not only their own interest, but also the social, technological, and cultural constraints that inhibit them. Power relationships continue to exist, and as "technology in itself has no political program and may be used for oppressive purposes as easily as for liberatory purposes,"[34] it is more important than ever to pay attention to the user. The immaterial manifestations of use that include research and development, intellectual copyrights, customer databases, and a forward thinking expansion that includes social media avatars, library databases, academic journals, and mass market publications, become part of a greater ideological

dialogue as they are coerced into avenues of material revenue accumulation. As production costs mount,

and university budgets shrink, paywall access becomes an effective measure of "professional" value,

closing networks against prospective users. The rallying cries of "what about the text?" often insist on the

diminished status of nonprofessional circulation and contributes to an ongoing devaluation of many

hybrid appropriations that give equal weight to pop cultural interests. In order "to keep all of the

meanings, references, and ambiguities in play"[35] when we encounter multivalent Shakespeares we must

rethink our categories, hence our prioritizing of the more inclusive "incidental" and "intentional" over the

restrictive categories of "amateur" and "professional," "creative" and "critical." Moreover, to recognize

the value of networks, we must also place them in a frame of material production. That is, we must

recognize that structures of use are platformed by two central components: the technology that facilitates

access, and the subjective critical interests of the users.

The user's politicized subjectivity is further magnified when manifest as part of an identifiable

interest group. As users, "we participate *in* something, that is, participation is organized *in and through*

social collectivities and connectivities,"[36] and connections formed by shared interests result in a rich and

ideological collective identity. The self-identification of an interest that may embrace or resist the concept

of Shakespearean hegemony, moreover, often reveals the belief-structure that drives use. Espen Aarseth's

dispensation with "the singularistic concepts" of author-reader in favor of the user becomes necessary

because within computer technologies "there is a complex continuum of positions, or functions" that

complicates and politicizes notions of author and reader as distinct entities.[37] User, therefore, becomes a

"practical and ideological" term denoting those engaged in interactive media for it encompasses all the

"textual practices that can be observed or imagined, including reading and writing [and] . . . a wider range

of behavior and roles across the field of media, from the observing member of a theater audience to the

subcreator of a game world,"[38] centralizing the more active interpretive role that use demands. The nature

of use

> [H]as the ability to transform the text into something that the instigator of
>
> the text could not foresee or plan for. This, of course depends much

> more on the user's own motivation than on whatever political structure
>
> the text appears to impose. These transformations may occur in any
>
> medium and are not governed by the 'laws' (technical and social
>
> conventions) of that medium but, rather, exploit and subvert such laws
>
> for esthetic satisfaction directly connected to this kind of trespassing and
>
> subversion."[39]

Shakespeare's own rich history of transmedial remediation makes any individual approaching the work a user, rather than a reader. Furthermore, Aarseth suggests, "the political connotations of the word *user* are conveniently ambivalent, suggesting both active participation and dependence, a figure under the influence of some kind of pleasure-giving system" (emphasis Aarseth).[40] This suggests that use is a process in which a culture is absorbed, remodeled, and dispatched out into the network with a new form and directive. Aarseth's definition is further complicated by internet's ability to collapse temporal and spatial separation, which demands active engagement from those who interact with the material available, creating a networking process even through the simple act of file-sharing: "as people listen, read, or view shared content, they think not only—often, not even primarily—about what the producers might have meant but about what the person who shared it was trying to communicate."[41] As users becoming increasingly aware of their place within a network, their interactions change and evolve to suit the political dynamics of the community within which they self-identify, transmitting conscious and unconscious messages about their ideological relationship to culture.

The necessary recognition of an elision between consumer and producer creates causality in the recirculation of Shakespeare, and *poiēsis*—the acts of production, making do, making and doing—distills, expands, and poaches from "systems of 'production' (television, urban development, commerce, etc.)" in ways that draw attention to how users function with the cultural contexts constructed by dominant agents in political, economic, and media production.[42] User consumption of such devices, de Certeau argues, is

> An entirely different kind of production . . . characterized by its ruses, its fragmentation (the
>
> result of the circumstances), its poaching, its clandestine nature, its tireless but quiet activity, in

short by its quasi-invisibility, since it shows itself not in its own products (where would it

place them?) but in an art of using those imposed on it.[43]

Again, Shakespeare is fragmented and offered up as objects to be assembled at will. De Certeau's claims

about the user are prescient to the explosive development of Web 2.0, speaking to the literary criticism,

cultural studies, and adaptations that Shakespeare continues to generate. Most relevant are the

speculations about what users *do*, that is, users' "*ways of using* the products imposed by a dominant

economic order" (emphasis de Certeau).[44] Such conjectures have reconfigured the consumer as active,

subversive user, and shifted awareness that the critical space that exists between producers and consumers

is not only important to measure, but it also bears witness as it unpredictably shifts subject to the needs

and desires of the culture that negotiates its reality. Although Shakespeare exists primarily as part of an

"interest-based network,"[45] the cultural value of Shakespeare transcends these more limited social

configurations accommodating other interest-based networks that recruit Shakespeare along the path to

another place. Shakespeare's ubiquity and the assumptions of superlative cultural capital threaten to

render much of the users' work irrelevant, because the doxa assumes that Shakespeare is always the end,

and rarely the means.

The essays in this collection offer differing perspectives on how to process this shift in

modalities, and theorize how shared practices shape Shakespeare, illustrating the various ways in which

both accidental and intentional users construct and disseminate new Shakespeares. Matthew Harrison and

Michael Lutz explore multiple interactive *Hamlet* games to suggest that game theory can illustrate the

tension at the limits of Shakespeare interpretation. By examining the interactive literature, *Elsinore*, as a

means of finding kinship between narratological games and intellectual attempts to master the

Shakespeare interpretive network, Harrison and Lutz foreground the illusion of free and unbridled

exploration of a Shakespeare text that critical practices promote. As users finds themselves returned to the

familiar avenues of narrative construction, Harrison and Lutz suggest that the pleasure of Shakespeare

exploration is a product of rediscovery that occurs as the user progresses through the various alternatives

without exceeding the text itself. The Shakespeare text cannot change, they contend, but as our approach

to it varies and pushes back against the inevitable path forward, our experience of the text continues to evolve. Graham Holderness' essay expands Harrison and Lutz's theoretical foray into gaming-as-criticism through a careful reflection on his own identity as a creative critic in an essay that outlines the intellectual framework behind his own creative-critical output. Unlike Harrison and Lutz, who find that game theory returns the user time and again to the text, Holderness approaches the text obliquely, orbiting Shakespeare in such creative-critical endeavors such as his novel, *Black and Deep Desires: William Shakespeare, Vampire Hunter,* though alternative narratives that imagine thematic points of origin for Shakespeare's text. While Harrison and Lutz find pleasure in the errant wanderings of the reader-user of the interactive game, Holderness' essay pushes back at the affirmation of the amateur by carving out a carefully curated space for the scholarly auteur, driving the alternative spaces of narrative or character exploration, and making a clear distinction between amateur fan fiction and professional creative criticism.

There are, of course, ethical questions that arise when we approach Shakespeare through the lens of use. In the time of use, the consumer cannot afford to uncritically accept the conditions of access. In their essay, Courtney Lehmann and Geoffrey Way assert the presence of an exploitative corporate force at the heart of the attention economy that underpins the lauded participatory practices of "outreach" that monolithic institutions such as the Royal Shakespeare Company and Shakespeare's Globe promote. Lehmann and Way challenge us to more critically engage with the dominant models of corporate sponsorship, which both seizes on the educational and artistic value of Shakespeare for its own monetary purposes. For Lehmann and Way, mass-marketed arts advocacy has made educational institutions susceptible to compromised business practices, and only through recognition of such compromise can the Shakespeare audience use their power as consumers to open up larger debates about the corporations' influence on artistic and educational outreach. The ethics of use are also of concern to Nicole Edge, who, like Lehmann and Way, draws attention to the implications of cherry picking quotes from the Henriad trilogy for use in commercial business executive management training sessions and manuals, suggesting, perhaps in an even more radical critique than Lehmann and Way, that users bear a moral responsibility not only to the text they appropriate, but to the marketplace into which Shakespeare is dispatched. These

essays affirm the necessity for more careful critical scholarship that accounts for the institutional and capitalist pressures that would position participants as consumers, and obfuscate the agency that drives the creation of these Shakespeares.

The question of ethical use also manifests itself in the essays that critique the more accessible platform for Shakespeare use—YouTube. As extraordinary archive and site of alternative Shakespeare use, the video-sharing website YouTube is the focus of two of this volume's contributors. Ruben Espinosa offers YouTube as a window into Shakespeare on the U.S.-Mexico border, facilitated by student-created videos that articulate what Shakespeare means to young students living in the borderlands of El Paso, Texas. The "multilingual energies" that are unleashed in student amateur videos stage the complexity of Latino/a identity in America, rejecting linguistic assimilation in favor of a more pithy appropriation that demands Shakespeare's subjection to cultural experience. Moreover, Espinosa's case study ably demonstrates the embarrassment of riches available on YouTube for the rigorous researcher willing to dive deep into the platform's repositories. Stephen O'Neill's contribution theorizes the methodologies on display in Espinosa's reflection, examining the way in which Shakespeare is curated according to the algorithms of YouTube and offering a critical methodology for scholars who participate in YouTube Shakespeares. Like Espinosa, O'Neill forcefully articulates the value of a critical consumption of digital Shakespeares that accounts for the network of influences, ideologies, and agendas that manifest themselves not only in vloggers' agency, but the content-generating software that shape users' browsing experiences.

While the aforementioned essays approach the intentional Shakespeare critic, other essays in this collection debate the construction of the "professional" Shakespearean, set against a popular, fannish amateur representation, and suggest a fertility in the interplay between the two constructions of the Shakespeare user. Drawing connections between *Much Ado About Nothing* film director Joss Whedon and Shakespeare fangirl/fanboy communities, Jennifer Holl traces the development of fan networks that absorb Shakespeare into part of a larger multiverse of fan-generated taxonomies, and in doing so, use fan-play to reshape Shakespeare according to the priorities of their particular fandom. Holl argues that that

fandom encourages a blurring of the boundaries between work and play, and by implication, the amateur and the professional in a way that opens up Shakespeare to a new body of users. Danielle Rosvally interrogates the conflation of professional and enthusiast further by speculating on the identity of the tweeter, @WilliamShakespeare, suggesting that the overlap of academic and fan knowledge that is manifest in @WilliamShakespeare's voracious and delightful tweets provides a sense of authority to the acts of playful micro-appropriation that occur on the social media platform. Rosvally's essay suggests that appropriation theory need not limit itself to the works alone, and explores how the brevity of Twitter's format allows for the construction of a digital ghost through which the Shakespeare network becomes clearly visible.

The idea that the works of Shakespeare can be analyzed as data in order to add to the complexity of Shakespeare in other academic uses is evidenced in the contributions by Laura Estill and Eric Johnson. Laura Estill not only suggests a shared academic language created by Shakespeare, but also illustrates the value of electronic databases, in this case, *The World Shakespeare Bibliography* as a repository that makes visible this particular model of use. Estill's essay interrogates the value of Shakespeare as it is used in the sciences to affirm professionalism, suggesting that the most fleeting of references represents an opportunity (in many of the sciences, at any rate), to signal an author's status as one located inside the walls of the academe. Eric Johnson explores a different approach to this question of Shakespeare use as a marker of professionalism, instead suggesting that Shakespeare use is its own avenue into particular communities. Johnson creates a narrative that extols the benefits of raw digital data, and open access, evidenced by his own movement from the desert (literally) to the very heart of the professional Shakespeare world—the Folger Shakespeare Library. Johnson's essay models a different path to professional Shakespeare use, suggesting that widespread and easy access to texts invites a technological participation that is its own form of critical inquiry.

As with any network, these essays converge at unexpected points, complementing or contradicting each other in a robust debate over what constitutes use. Rosvally's argument for the microcriticism of digital ghosting, for example, theorizes the value of excising and manipulating minutiae

of Shakespeare as critical practice, while Edge suggests that the same practice, enacted in a commercialized context, is ethically troubling, and Estill suggests that such use becomes a hallmark of academic use. Likewise, Holl's, and Espinoza's affirmation of amateur reading practices is at odds with Holderness' valuation of a more academically oriented brand of creative criticism. Estill, Johnson, and to an extent Rosvally, break Shakespeare down to data, suggesting informatics as the basis for the definitions of Shakespeare, and O'Neill proposes that the Shakespeare we receive is as much shaped by inhuman algorithms as it is by the popularity that Johnson sees manifest in google analytics. Together, these essays represent the broad and intersectional interests of an array of Shakespeare users, and highlight the challenges faced by those claiming to seek Shakespeare for the zeitgeist in the twenty-first century.

New technologies that use Shakespeare and enable use are shifting our understanding of not only the dramatist's oeuvre but also the people who participate in its perpetualization, abolishing the traditional, romantic image of the "slit eyed armchair interpreter,"[46] in favor of a vast network of connected users in constant negotiation with their technology, their culture, and each other. Our book does not engage in a valorization of open-access, democratized Shakespeares, nor does it aim to articulate an elision of high/low that cyber-Shakespeare may seem to offer. We cannot promise a digital utopia - there is far more uncertainty in the outcome of the Shakespeares we discuss. What this collection offers, however, is a gateway to a new method of understanding the multiplicity of Shakespeares and our own place, as users, in the creation of such texts. The works in collection begin to explore conditions where Shakespeare users range from empowered to disenfranchised. The notion of communities of users is commonplace in fan theories, but Shakespeare's cultural ubiquity privileges us to examine the work as a complete cultural and global spectrum that ranges from Twitter to the Folger Shakespeare Institute. Most twenty-first century online users of Shakespeare transcend geographical, cultural, generational, and social separations, spurred on by ever-expanding technological capacities, and bounded only by the reaches of imagination.

Notes

[1] See Graham Holderness, *Creative Collisions: Tales from Shakespeare* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014); Sujata Iyengar, "Shakespeare Transformed: Copyright, Copyleft, and Shakespeare After Shakespeare," *Proceedings of the French Shakespeare Society* (2017); and W.B. Worthen, *Shakespeare and the Force of Modern Performance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

[2] Although Desmet and Iyengar suggest that "we should explore the oscillation between these concepts [of] adaptation [and] appropriation" (8), we, the editors of this volume, strive to expand the definition offered by Huang and Rivlin, who assert, "appropriation carries strong overtones of agency, potentially for the appropriated as well as for the appropriator, it can convey political [and] cultural . . . agency" (2). The uses and the users explored in this volume evince such agency, aggressively engaging with Shakespeare works at a level of force that not only upholds Huang and Rivlin's concept of appropriation, but welcomes the imposition of agency that makes appropriation ostensibly a more forceful than adaptation . See Christy Desmet and Sujata Iyengar, "Adaptation, Appropriation, or What You Will" *Shakespeare* and Huang and Rivlin, *Shakespeare and the Ethics of Appropriation* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2014).

[3] "Performed" in the context of this chapter points to both live and mediatized Shakespeares, although we recognize that the discourse debating live versus mediatized Shakespeares is an ongoing concern. From our vantage, most critics agree that performance and text both have authority over what constitutes Shakespeare. A (partial) list of critical works that evince this stance include Lukas Erne *Shakespeare as Literary Dramatist*, Margaret Jane Kidnie *Shakespeare and the Problem of Adaptation* (New York: Routledge, 2009), Daniel Fischlin, ed. *OuterSpeares: Shakespeare, Intermedia, and the Limits of Adaptation* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2014), Sarah Werner, ed. *New Directions in Renaissance Drama and Performance Studies* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010).

[4] As David Weinberger succinctly states, "With Shakespeare we have not only the various editions, but also performance, recordings, film, and early quartos and folios. The one thing we don't have is a single manuscript recorded in the author's hand from which all other versions and variations can be seen to flow." David Weinberger, "Shakespeare as Network," in *Shakespeare and Textual Studies*, ed. Margaret Jane Kidnie and Sonia Massai (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016): 400.

[5] See for example Robert Weimann, *Author's Pen and Actor's Voice: Playing and Writing in Shakespeare's Theatre* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), Nora Johnson, *The Actor as Playwright in Early Modern Drama* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003) and Tiffany Stern, *Making Shakespeare from Page to Stage* (London, Routledge, 2004).

[6] See Katherine Rowe for a discussions on the "disruptions" that may occur through reading texts online in "Living With Digital Incunables," in *Shakespeare and the Digital World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014).

[7] W.B. Worthen, "Shax the app," in *Shakespeare and Textual Studies,* edited by Margaret Jane Kidnie and Sonia Massai (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016): 216-217.

[8] Ibid., 221.

[9] Tim O'Reilly and John Battelle, "Web Squared: Web 2.0 Five Years On," *oreilly.com (*paper presented at the 2009 meeting of web 2.0 Summit, San Francisco, California, 2009). https://assets.en.oreilly.com/1/event/28/web2009_websquared-whitepaper.pdf

[10] Tony Bennett as quoted in Abigail De Kosnik, *Rogue Archives: Digital Cultural Memory and Media Fandom* (Cambridge (MA): MIT Press, 2016): 1.

[11] De Kosnik, ibid 4.

[12] Ibid., 3.

[13] Ibid., 2.

[14] Worthen, "*Hamlet* at Ground Zero: The Wooster Group and the Archive of Performance," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 59, no. 3 (Fall, 2008): 303-322, 304.

[15] Weinberger, 399.

[16] Lanier, "Rhizomatics," 31.

[17] Lanier cautions, however, that not all instances of Shakespeare appropriation are a matter of "wrestling" but can also be "explained in terms of negotiation, collaboration, exchange, or other models"; we argue for "use" as another, perhaps more inclusive, model. Lanier, *Popular Culture*, 5.

[18] Roland Barthes, "From Work to Text," in *The Rustle of Language*, trans. Richard Howard (New York: Hill and Wang, 1986) 56-68, 60.

[19] See Holderness, Graham. *Creative Collisions: Tales from Shakespeare*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016.

[20] Alexa Huang and Elizabeth Rivlin, eds. *Shakespeare and the Ethics of Appropriation* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2014), 2.

[21] Desmet, "Rethinking Fidelity," 43.

[22] David Weinberger, "Shakespeare as Network," 403.

[23] For a list of "prominent characteristics" of Internet networks see David Weinberger, "Shakespeare as Network," 401.

[24] Barbara Hodgdon, "The 9:59 to Dover Beach, Stopping at Fair Verona and Elsinor" *Shakespeare Bulletin* 28, no. 3 (2010): 313-30. Citing her own "accidental tourist" experiences "looking (again) for Mr. Shakespeare" on YouTube, Barbara Hodgdon points out that intentional searching for Shakespeare online also yields "accidental tourist" discoveries. Hodgdon also demonstrates how the online video site's affordances encourage movement from one video to another, "stumbling" on new-to-the-viewer options unintentionally illustrating, via the microcosm that is YouTube Shakespeares, our claims about network relations as sites of knowledge making. Hodgdon argues that YouTube "operates as a self-organized, totalizing 'public'," a condition, we assert, is characteristic of a diverse range of social interactive websites (314).

[25] Jonathan Dollimore. *Radical Tragedy: Religion, Ideology and Power in the Drama of Shakespeare and his Contemporaries* 3rd Edition. (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2004), xv.

[26] Predominate in media studies in recent years is the user as fan. Borrowing the term from Pierre Levy, Jenkins argues for facilitating knowledge through convergence practices: "none of us can know everything; each of us knows something; and we can put the pieces together if we pool our resources and combine our skills" (Henry Jenkins, *Convergent Culture: Where Old and New Media Collide* (New York: NYU P, 2006), 4. Print.); Matt Hills theorizes the role and actions of "fan-scholar" (as opposed to the 'scholar-fan'), seeking to extend the "imagined subjectivity of fandom . . . into the cultural spaces and institutions of academia" Matt Hills, *Fan Cultures* (New York: Routledge, 2002): 8. Boyd and Ellison's work on Social Networking is emblematic of the field of computer mediated communications and the social strong and weak ties users form via online social platforms (Danah Boyd and Nicole B. Ellison, "Social Network Sites: Definition, History, and Scholarship." *Journal of Computer-mediated Communication* 13 (2008): 210 - 230.)

[27] David Thorburn and Henry Jenkins. "Introduction: Toward an Aesthetics of Transition." *Rethinking Media Change: The Aesthetics of Transition* (Cambridge, MA: MIT P, 2003), x.

[28] Margaret Jane Kidnie. *Shakespeare and Problem of Adaptation* (New York: Routledge, 2009), 7.

[29] Christie Carson and Peter Kirwan. *Shakespeare and the Digital World: Redefining Scholarship and Practice*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), kl243. Kindle.

[30] Sharon O'Dair, "'Pretty Much How the Internet Works': or, Aiding and Abetting the Deprofessionlization of Shakespeare Studies," *Shakespeare Survey* 64 (2011): 85.

[31] Hugh Grady and Terence Hawkes. *Presentist Shakespeares* (London: Routledge, 2006), 5.

[32] Yann Moulier-Boutang, *Cognitive Capitalism*, trans. Ed Emery (Cambridge, UK: Polity, 2012), 32.

[33] Ibid.

[34] Espen J. Aarseth, *Cybertext: Perspectives on Ergodic Literature* (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997), 166.

[35] Ayanna Thompson. *Passing Strange: Shakespeare, Race, and Contemporary America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 4.

[36] Ibid., 163.

[37] Aarseth, 162.

[38] Ibid., 173.

[39] Ibid., 164.

[40] Ibid., 174.

[41] Jenkins, Ford, and Green, *Spreadable Media*, 13.

[42] Michel de Certeau, Michel. *The Practice of Everyday Life*. Trans. Steven Rendell. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), xii. Print.

[43] Ibid., 31.

[44] Ibid., xiii.

[45] Jenkins, Ford, and Green, *Spreadable Media*, 13.

[46] Harry Berger. *A Fury in the Words: Love and Embarrassment in Shakespeare's Venice* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2013), 3. Print.