**TRANSLATING METATHEATRICALITY TO THE SCREEN**

**JUAN CARLOS HIDALGO CIUDAD**

**Title: “The play’s the thing”: Shakespearean Performance and Gay Affirmative Action in Alan Brown’s *Private Romeo* (2011) and Tom Gustafson’s *Were the World Mine* (2008)**

Far from intending a ‘faithful’ adaptation of Shakespearean texts, directors Alan Brown and Tom Gustafson have opted for citing and, consequently, assimilating the Bard’s materials into their own narrative projects. Both films present an initial situation absolutely alien to Shakespeare that will be gradually modified once the Shakespearean element enters into action. In *Private Romeo* the life of a group of male military cadets will be transformed thanks to the reading and performance of *Romeo and Juliet*, in the same way as the life of the population of a small American town will be deeply affected, in Gustafson’s film, by the local high school students’ rehearsals of *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* and the unexpected consequences of applying Puck’s magical potion to their real life. Shakespeare’s theatre, then, functions as a transformative force that changes the world for the better in what can be read as an attempt to stop anti-gay discriminatory practices in contemporary American society and institutions.

*Private Romeo*, with a complete young all-male cast, and *Were the World Mine*, which, again, makes use of a predominantly young male cast are examples of the same American kiddie culture Richard Burt has already dealt with in *Unspeakable Shaxxxspeares* (1998). Using Burt's notion of the loser as a cool figure and Mark Thornton Burnett's concept of the Shakespeare film's engagement with globalization (*Filming Shakespeare in the Global Marketplace*, 2007), this paper discusses how the Elizabethan playwright, while metadramatically overcited, remains unspoken in what seems to be a strategic turn to claim and/or celebrate pro-gay legislation and anti-bullying pedagogy in contemporary American and, by extension, First World political and educational agendas.

**Bio**

Juan Carlos Hidalgo is Senior Lecturer at the Department of English and American Literature (University of Sevilla, Spain), where he teaches Cultural Studies and 16th -17th Century English Literature. His main research areas are Film Studies (16th-17th century adaptations), Contemporary British Theatre, Popular Culture and Queer Studies. He has published on Masculinities, Feminisms, Gay and Lesbian Studies, Queer Issues, Film Adaptations of Shakespeare and Marlowe, Contemporary Women Playwrights and Theatre History

**RETO WINCKLER**

**Title: Seinfeld/Armin/Shakespeare. Going meta in person**

In the NBC sitcom Seinfeld, stand-up comedian Jerry Seinfeld, plays a fictionalised version of himself, also called Jerry Seinfeld and, also, a stand-up comedian. This fictionalised Jerry Seinfeld inhabits a show that is allegedly ‘about nothing’, while actually being about ordinary life, so ordinary that nobody would ever think of making a TV show out of it – and which turns out to be anything but ordinary. This scenario is itself fictionalised further in season 4 of the show, but in the direction of reality. Jerry and his fictional friend George Costanza pitch a TV show based on their fictional lives to the NBC network – which thereby becomes both the fictional and real producer of the show itself. In trying to write their own show, the characters end up writing their own lives, with unintended and hilarious consequences.

In this paper, I will try to understand *Seinfeld*’s meta-fictionality as a return to modes of performance and storytelling which were already present in medieval and early modern theatre. There, the ancient idea that the world is a stage found a performative equivalent in interactive and self-consciously theatrical modes of drama. In the fools Will Kempe and Robert Armin, Shakespeare had two comedians who simultaneously served as inspirations for fictional characters and contributed themselves to their own fictionalisation on the stage and in reality through writing and acting. Drawing inspiration from the scholarly work of Andrew Gurr, Robert Weimann and Douglas Lanier, as well as from the BBC sitcom *Upstart Crow*, this paper seeks to bridge the temporal, spatial and medial gap between *Seinfeld* and Shakespeare’s plays to investigate the interplay between humour, fiction and, for lack of a better term, real life.

**Bio**

Reto Winckler studied English literature and philosophy at the University of Hamburg, Germany, and King's College London. He then went to China to teach English, literature and drama at universities in Xi'an, as well as working for the British Council. Since 2014, he has been reading for a PhD in English literature at the Chinese University of Hong Kong under the supervision of Professor Julian Lamb. His research focuses on madness and folly in Shakespeare's plays. His articles have been published in *The Journal of Adaptation in Film & Performance* and in *Cahiers Élisabéthains.*

**VÍCTOR HUERTAS MARTÍN**

**GREGORY DORAN’S *MACBETH* (2001): FILMING METATHEATRE**

This article contends that Gregory Doran’s production of *Macbeth* (2001) was, when translated to television, transformed into a metaplay. Though analyses of Shakespeare’s *Macbeth* have explored its metatheatricality, this artistic concept has not been tackled in this production. I am reading Doran’s laying bare of the film’s theatrical apparatus and the film’s refractions of the crises occurring at the Royal Shakespeare Company while the film and the stage production were in process. I will address the main characters’ statuses as players in a theatricalized microcosm, explore the film’s backstage−onstage dynamics and discuss how the production’s visual meanings illuminate the company’s institutional crisis at the turn of the century.

**Bio**

Víctor Huertas Martín studied English Philology at the Universidad Autónoma de Madrid. He wrote his PhD “Hybridity in John Wyver's BBC Shakespeare films: a study of Gregory Doran's *Macbeth* (2001), *Hamlet* (2009) and *Julius Caesar* (2012) and Rupert Goold’s *Macbeth* (2010)”. He has published various articles on televisual and filmic Shakespeare. He is teaching at several universities including the Universidad Autónoma and the Universidad Nacional de Educación a Distancia.