

successful blending of theory and practice (as the subtitle promises) that makes this book a model for future publications.

**RIC KNOWLES**, ed.

*The Shakespeare's Mine: Adapting Shakespeare in Anglophone Canada.*

Toronto: Playwrights Canada Press, 2009. x + 428 pp.

**LEANORE LIEBLEIN**, ed.

*A Certain William: Adapting Shakespeare in Francophone Canada.*

Toronto: Playwrights Canada Press, 2009. xvi + 332 pp.

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Knowles's and Lieblein's paired collections of contemporary Canadian Shakespearean adaptations will no doubt become seminal anthologies in the rapidly growing field of adaptation criticism. Both editors encourage us to consider how these plays help Shakespearean drama "take on new meaning and [...] continue to be transformed" (Lieblein iv) through the adaptation process. Some Shakespeare and adaptation scholars may see these collections as only partial "first folios" of important Canadian adaptations—that is, as initial and necessarily incomplete anthologies that should spur further anthologization. New readers, however, and students particularly will relish new access to a wide variety of plays either out of print or not translated into English. Lieblein and Knowles focus on unique francophone and anglophone adaptations of both popular plays (*Othello*, *Hamlet*) and more uncommon examples (*Julius Caesar*, *The Merchant of Venice*).

In highlighting the use-value of Shakespeare to Canadian playwrights, Knowles historicizes how "playwrights from a broad spectrum of backgrounds piggyback on [Shakespeare's] cultural capital, using his name to gain access and recognition" (iii). His collection starts with Ken Mitchell's *Cruel Tears* (1975), a prairie version of *Othello* replete with Ukrainian cultural intertexts and country music. Two radically different *Hamlet* adaptations follow: *Claudius* (1993) by Ken Gass and *Mad Boy Chronicle* (1995) by Michael O'Brien. Gass focuses his adaptation on incestuous, domestic, and sexual politics, while O'Brien's "raw Viking world" (145) accentuates Scandinavian history and cultural claims to Shakespeare's most famous revenge tragedy.

Knowles's title, *The Shakespeare's Mine*, appears in Sears's *Harlem Duet* (1997) when Billie takes Shakespeare's collected works from her ex-husband Othello, an action mirroring how "Djanet Sears at once *claims* Shakespeare for the people of African descent and 'talks back' to him" (240). Vern Thiessen's *Shakespeare's Will* (2005) speculates on Shakespeare's personal reasons for leaving his second best bed to his wife Anne Hathaway. Rather than focusing on a particular play, Thiessen's exceptional one-woman show adapts our knowledge of Shakespeare's life, encouraging a reconsideration of the person behind the plays. Yvette Nolan and Kennedy C. MacKinnon's *Death of a Chief* (2008) adapts *Julius Caesar* to a First Nations context to create unexpected associations between Roman and Native social identity politics.

Identity politics also emerge throughout Lieblein's volume of French-language Quebecois Shakespearean adaptations, many translated into English for the first time in this collection. Lieblein's title, *A Certain William*, comes from a common Quebec slang term for Shakespeare "specific to francophone Canada" (x). Themes of nationalism emerge across these adaptations due to increasing Shakespearean popularity in Quebec "at a time when the idea of the Quebec 'nation' was subject to immense pressure and debate" (vi). Robert Gurik's *Hamlet, Prince du Québec* (1968) transforms Shakespeare's text into a powerful socio-political adaptation full of nationalist symbolism. Jean-Pierre Ronfard's *Lear* (1977) transplants Shakespearean themes and ideas into a starkly modern Quebecois setting. *Shakespeare's Merchant of Venice in Auschwitz* (1977) by Tibor Egervari explores the historical anti-Semitic influence of Shakespeare's Shylock.

*Saved from the Waters* by Daphne Thompson appears to be "constructed not by a single author, but by many Voices" (187). Her adaptation enlarges Ophelia's story as characters recount her life in a play that "dismantles the process by which generations of Ophelias have been written and releases her from victimization" (188). Yves-Sioui Durand and J.F. Messie's *The Maleceet Hamlet* (2004) tackles the extinction of linguistic identity on the First Nations Reserve of Kinogamish. Shakespeare speaks to Maleceet Dave, an outsider who is the "product of *métissage* and 'too white to play an Indian'" (212). *Burger Love* (2004) by Larry Tremblay shows us a world where Shakespeare stands to lose his cultural pre-eminence unless he can be repackaged for today's youth. Tremblay fills his *Romeo and Juliet*-inspired adaptation with tattoo artists, gay and straight couples, and even Shakespeare himself in

this wildly reconfigured modern “midsummer night’s fantasy” (265).

The publication of these volumes could not be more timely; new and forthcoming Canadian scholarship in the field of Shakespeare adaptations, particularly by emerging scholars, is zeroing in on identity-driven adaptations that use the Bard to explore national, sexual, linguistic, racial, and other social identity formations. While some noteworthy adaptations are missing from these volumes—plays like Peter Eliot Weiss’s *The Haunted House Hamlet* (1986) and Robert Lepage’s *Elsinore* (1993)—both editors consciously introduce their choices as part of the on-going work of anthologizing major Canadian adaptations. Adaptation scholars and enthusiasts will appreciate the range of examples in these paired collections; future volumes like them will be encouraged and anticipated. These two anthologies are essential additions to any collection of Shakespeare adaptation and criticism.