

Lucy Matthews, PhD (Literature)
Thesis Proposal Review

Queer-daptation: A practice as research study of John Lyly's Galatea and William Shakespeare's Measure for Measure

By developing, and staging two adaptations based on early modern plays, Galatea by John Lyly and Measure for Measure by William Shakespeare, this project examines “queering” as a process of adaptation. Despite the fact that “queering” is regularly used to describe adaptation in theatre-making circles, there is little scholarship which demonstrates the intrinsic queerness of adaptation, drawing on contemporary performance practices. This project aims to fill this gap, considering ways to provide commentary on the silenced queerness of early modern dramatic texts. This project conceptualises queering as repetition with change, drawing on Pamela Demory’s definition of queer adaptation, the work of Judith Butler and gender performativity, and Linda Hutcheon’s Theory of Adaptation.

The research has three primary aims: (1) To examine the processes by which “silenced queerness” can be excavated from the texts through the manipulation of dramatic form. (2) To consider the manner in which fidelity is a part of creative processes, both in the way that it can be used as a subversive tool, and how personal fidelity influences collaboration. (3) To demonstrate the intrinsic queerness of adaptation by bring creative practice into dialogue with adaptation studies and queer theory. The research uses Practice as Research as its primary methodology and is guided by Melissa Tringham’s hermeneutic-interpretative spiral model, which frames the research as a cyclical, rather than a linear, process.

Zach Karpinellison, PhD (Literature)
Thesis Proposal Review

Versional Film and the Archival Practices of the NFSA

Despite significant under-resourcing, the National Film and Sound Archive remains an extremely powerful institution. Not only the largest repository of films in Australia, the archive also bears the responsibility of various public outreach programs including the NFSA Restores program which sees curatorial and technical interventions designed to collect, restore and exhibit iconic Australian films from throughout history. Moreover, the archive is empowered to choose which versions of these films are made most readily available, as well as diverting their limited resources to the celebration of certain versions over others. It is productive to frame this decision itself as the creation of yet another version. Many of the titles restored by the NFSA are not available in other commercial settings. In addition, the NFSA is the primary government resource through which galleries, cinemas and educational institutions can seek the distribution rights to screen these films. Thus, the NFSA’s staff make decisions that affect not only the access to important historical film texts, but also crucially which iterations of those films become the default, most exhibited versions. The NFSA’s power over the management and production of film

versions, despite a spirited public debate and discourse over the decline of state archive resourcing and support is the central provocation of my thesis work. This provocation, combined with a concentrated study of the film version as a concept provide a pathway to valuable insights about archival practice and the creation of film history and film heritage.

In other words, my thesis asks the question: how do staff and personnel at the NFSA contribute to decisions on the maintenance, preservation, and restoration of different versions of iconic Australian films held in the archive? Furthermore, what can be gleaned about this process, as well as about the nature of Australian film history, by exploring the differences between these film versions?

¹The term restoration is of course, complex and imperfect and this is will be another preoccupation of my thesis.

Scarlette Do, PhD (Lit/Screen)
Thesis Proposal Review

Lands of Sorrow: Melancholic Nationalisms in Films about the Vietnam War

The visual imagination of the Vietnam War has long been defined by Hollywood. Imbued with images of Americans' trauma, Hollywood films redefine the Vietnam War — originally an “active endeavour” in Southeast Asia — as a “passive suffering” inflicted upon the U.S. national community (Chong 2012:3). Given Hollywood's hegemony on the global stage, not much is known about Vietnamese perceptions of the War as they transpire on the cinematic screen. The growing body of literature on this very topic are often extensions of memory studies, with some works utilizing sociological and historical lenses to understand Vietnamese cinemas' significance.

My research project contributes towards this emerging scholarship through its use of psychoanalysis as the methodology and triangulation of American, state-sanctioned Vietnamese, and South Vietnamese refugees' perspectives. To read these national cinemas, I deploy a combination of Freudian melancholia and Lacanian the Imaginary, and hence reckon with the constitutive relationship between the Vietnam War and the films continue to be made about it. I argue that feelings of loss and grief incurred from the conflict shape the films just as these films perpetuate national perceptions of the war. I ultimately propose that these different perceptions stand not in isolation from one another but may coalesce considering increasing globalization.

The presentation first reviews literature on Hollywood and Vietnamese cinemas before offering starting research questions. The methodological section synthesizes the abovementioned psychoanalytic theory before transforming research questions into foundational hypotheses. The project's original contributions and structure will conclude the presentation.

**Geordie Williamson, PhD (Literature)
Thesis Proposal Review**

Romantic Antipodes

First- and second-generation British Romantic writers confronted a world in flux, yet each started out from different baselines in confronting that instability. My paper will explore how generational dispositions towards a signal aspect of the period, one whose presumed virtuousness became more vexed over time – Enlightenment-era exploration, particularly the voyages of Captain James Cook – track an evolution in Romantic sensibility.

Samuel Taylor Coleridge drew on accounts of Cook's voyages to furnish the eerie imaginative Wunderkammer that is 1798's 'Rime of the Ancyent Marinere'. Twenty years on, Mary Shelley used similar materials to very different ends in her 1818 novel Frankenstein. Those decades mark a change in literary emphasis, from poetry to prose – the lyric impulse to the novel form – a formal shift underwritten by real historical change. Coleridge's patriarchal, bucolic, monarchical, religiously inflected world gave way to the urban and secular world of Mary Shelley – one powered by machines and shaped by Capital, undergoing concomitant political and social upheaval.

Cook's voyages were remarkable achievements, the culminate act of a centuries-long quest to draw the entire world into a single web. Both Romantic authors drew on the raw material of these explorations in order to illuminate certain conflicts – between magical and material visions of the world, for example, and Enlightenment scientism and the spiritual impulse. The altered ground each writer found themselves fighting upon, however, and their differing understanding of what was at stake, reveals something of the changing place of the Romantic imagination in the construction of the modern world.

Biography

Geordie Williamson studied English literature at Sydney University and University College London. He worked in London's rare book trade for some years before becoming a literary journalist and has been chief literary critic of The Australian newspaper since 2008. Geordie is a former publisher of the Pan Macmillan's Picador imprint, has twice edited Black Inc's Best Australian Essays anthology, and won the 2011 Pascall Prize for criticism. His *The Burning Library (Text)* – a collection of essays on some neglected figures from Twentieth Century Australian literature – was published in 2012. He was also a founder member of the RSAA back in 2010-2011.