Authorizing Shakespeare on Film and Television: Gender, Class, and Ethnicity in Adaptation (Studies in Shakespeare)

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Authorizing Shakespeare on Film and Television examines recent film and television transformations of William Shakespeare's drama by focusing on the ways in which modern directors acknowledge and respond to the perceived authority of Shakespeare as author, text, cultural icon, theatrical tradition, and academic institution. This study explores two central questions. First, what efforts do directors make to justify their adaptations and assert an interpretive authority of their own? Second, how do those self-authorizing gestures impact upon the construction of gender, class, and ethnic identity within the filmed adaptations of Shakespeare's plays? The chosen films and television series considered take a wide range of approaches to the adaptative process - some faithfully preserve the words of Shakespeare; others jettison the Early Modern language in favor of contemporary idiom; some recreate the geographic and historical specificity of the original plays, and others transplant the plot to fresh settings. The wealth of extra-textual material now available with film and television distribution and the numerous website tie-ins and interviews offer the critic a mine of material for accessing the ways in which directors perceive the looming Shakespearean shadow and justify their projects. *Authorizing Shakespeare on Film and Television* places these directorial claims alongside the film and television plotting and aesthetic to investigate how such authorizing gestures shape the presentation of gender, class, and ethnicity.

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