

Creative/Critical Approaches to Shakespeare – Abstracts

“A Creative/Critical Look at *Shakespeare’s Will*, a play by Canadian playwright Vern Thiessen.”

I will be looking at *Shakespeare’s Will* to see how it sheds light on Shakespeare’s work. It is my contention that by exploring how Thiessen consciously or unconsciously utilizes/exploits Shakespearean technique in his play, one can come to a deeper understanding of the Shakespearean canon itself, that the parsing of Thiessen’s methodology will suggest analytical and performance insights into the Bard’s collected work.

Caroline Dodge Latta

“Some Responses to Responses to Shakespeare’s Sonnets: More Sonnets”

Some of the earliest responses to Shakespeare’s sonnets were “creative” because they took significant liberties with the text (the 1609 quarto, or some more authoritative text, if only we had it). This essay briefly notes early creative responses (1640), and more recent ones, from the past 10 years. I’m interested in assessing what people are doing to the sonnets; I also try doing a few things to them myself.

Matthew Zarnowiecki

“Return Engagement: The Haunting of Hamlet and Dale Earnhardt Jr.”

Both Prince Hamlet and Dale Earnhardt Jr., of NASCAR royalty, are haunted by their fathers’ ghosts. Their similarities don’t end there. As a piece of creative nonfiction—with contractions and without notes!—“Return Engagement” explores the parallels between the stories of these two sons, who are passionate about fulfilling their dead fathers’ expectations and who must do so under public scrutiny. The elder Hamlet, conqueror of Fortinbras, and Dale Earnhardt Sr., who died driving car Number 3 at the 2001 Daytona 500, share traits of aggression and manipulation. (One of Dale Sr.’s many epithets was “The Intimidator.”) Although a fictional character, Hamlet touches the lived experience of children who lose parents prematurely and suddenly. As a character from life, the Dale Jr. we perceive is a fiction constructed partly from self-presentation and partly by the media. The two figures intersect in this essay, which is intended not for scholars, but for a generally educated and curious readership.

Cynthia Lewis

“Shakespeare: Modern High School AU”

I am exploring interpretive possibilities of Shakespeare through a fanfiction Alternate Universe (AU). Similar to *Kill Shakespeare*, my goal is to explore the limits and possibilities of a creative rewriting that nonetheless preserves fundamental aspects of original characterization. Fandom is an interactive discourse community where deconstructions and reconstructions of texts often arise from conversations and prompts similar to the one seen above. In answering this prompt I intend to model an atypical (and purposely non-academic) approach to Shakespeare that I hope will illuminate the multiplicity of pedagogical approaches to historically intimidating texts; it is also my intent to enter a conversation that considers fanfiction, Shakespeare, and praxis.

Jessica McCall

"Eight Scattered Reflections on a Shakespeare Course for Creative Writers"

Since for various reasons this planned team-taught course did not enroll enough students for it to go, I've composed a few proposals of activities and exercises that I might have assigned the students in the course. They are as follow: 1) "fun with in utramque parterm" --staging debates on trivial, non-controversial topics, 2) "sportification" --treating a play as a sporting contest of "teams," rather than significances, 3) linguistic creativity --making up words, novel grammatical uses, etc., 4) Excess--to write oneself into a corner, perhaps by a larger than life character like Falstaff, 5) use a minor or minimalist character to shift a scene's meaning, 6) mimicking people talking --use what linguists analyze as the messiness of "natural" conversation, 7) celebrity props (affect a scene by means of a stage prop, 8) cross-entertainment value--derive some theatrical pleasure out of a rival pleasure, such as animal bloodsports.

Don Hedrick

"ENTER NURSE or LOVE'S LABOURS' WON"

My creative/critical contribution—a fragment from a fictional future Arden edition—is entitled *ENTER NURSE or LOVE'S LABOURS' WON*. This mid-1590s work from Shakespeare's "lyrical period," is at once the long-lost sequel to *Love's Labours' Lost* and a porny but poignant prequel to *Romeo and Juliet*.

Scott Maisano

"Creative Responses to *The Tempest*: Illustrating the Lambs' *Tales from Shakespeare*."

Charles and Mary Lambs' *Tales From Shakespeare* has never been out of print since its first publication in 1807. A crucial but overlooked aspect of *Tales from Shakespeare* is the pictorial illustrations that accompany the narrative text. Over the past two hundred years, a tradition of illustrating *Tales from Shakespeare* has emerged with such famous illustrators as Arthur Rackham and Elizabeth Shippen Greene Elliot providing artistic work for early twentieth-century editions. This paper explores the evolution of pictorial illustration in *Tales from Shakespeare*, focusing on *The Tempest*. I explore how illustrators create and re-create the ways in which iconic images help to construct meanings in the interdependent experience of reading and seeing the text.

Darlana Ciraulo

"*Richard III*, CSI, and the lure of the alternate universe"

This hybrid paper considers the critical and pedagogical possibilities that arise from certain types of transformative fictional treatments of Shakespeare, particularly alternate universe fan fiction. I argue that these types of transformative works "converse" with Shakespeare in a manner closer to the other writers working with and around him in Elizabethan and Jacobean London, operating within gift economies and frameworks of patronage. The paper also includes an example of transformative fiction focused on *Richard III*.

Kavita Mudan Finn

“In the distance, smiling’: Searching for Shakespeare in Nabokov.”

Aside from his beloved Alexander Pushkin, the writer that probably had the most influence on Vladimir Nabokov was William Shakespeare. I am interested in Shakespeare’s role in the creation of two of Nabokov’s earliest works: the 1924 poem “Shakespeare” and the 1923-1924 play *The Tragedy of Mr. Morn*, which was never performed or published in Nabokov’s lifetime but which was frequently read aloud at literary gatherings of Russian émigrés in Berlin. Both of these works, written at the beginning of Nabokov’s literary career – the critic Thomas Karshan has described *Morn* as “Nabokov’s earliest major work” (vii) – show just how largely Shakespeare loomed in the young Nabokov’s imagination. Shakespeare would continue to illuminate and inspire Nabokov’s later works, and so an understanding of these initial bursts of inspiration will allow us to better appreciate just how prominent a role Shakespeare performed in Nabokov’s oeuvre and, by extension, how Nabokov responded to and played with this role.

Jackie Cameron