



**OLD MASTERS IN NEW INTERPRETATIONS
REDISCOVERING SHAKESPEARE**

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Poetic Transposition of Ophelia's Story
in Elizabeth Burns's Poem

The paper focuses on tracing the lyrical levels of intermedia (poetic, dramatic, narrative and painterly) transposition of Ophelia's story from *Hamlet* by William Shakespeare into a poem titled "Ophelia" by Elizabeth Burns (1957 - 2015). The discussed text marks the start of the literary career of the acclaimed Scottish poet, a descendent of Rabbie (as Robert Burns is affectionately called in Scotland) and a long-time resident of Lancashire. What might seem as a typical exercise in the shift of perspective, of the stock-repertoire of creative writing techniques (E. Burns in fact used to work as a creative-writing tutor) leads here to unexpectedly rich poetic transposition of insight into the story of the archetypal Shakespeare's heroine from *Hamlet*. The paper delves into the palette of poetic, dramatic and quasi-visual means used by Burns to tell a poetically concentrated and orchestrated story of a girl's/woman's entrapment in the multiply preconceived roles: the role scripted by Shakespeare, her position manipulated by Hamlet, her figure as visually reworked by painterly representations created by Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, and by other painters; finally, the female role as transposed by the adopted Old English elegiac tradition. The presentation leads to demonstrating how Burns engages in the feminine, poetic meditation on her future recurring themes and motifs of fragility, being held, being subjected or entrapped in relation to the social and individual dimensions of the self.

Eliza Gładkowska, MA

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Liminality in the Selected Plays of William Shakespeare.
State of Research

Liminality, a concept introduced by Arnold van Gennep in 1909, denotes the state of transition during the rites of passage in tribal societies. Almost sixty years later the notion became expanded by Victor Turner, who indicated the broad application of liminality in humanistic research. Turner described the attributes of an individual in the liminal phase in industrial society but also elaborated on the function of collective liminality in the development of civilization. Literature and theatre occupied a crucial role in Turner's divagations as his concept of social drama i.e. the universal model of critical moments in society was derived from theatrical plays. Bearing in mind the vast scope of Shakespeare's works and the manifold application of liminality, this paper aims at pointing out the most important aspects which refers to liminality in the current state of research on Shakespeare. The function of prologue, paradox, and the affinity of Shakespearean plays to ritual constitute some of these issues.

Karol Samsel, PhD
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Shakespeare Cypriana Norwida,
Shakespeare Juliusza Słowackiego,
Shakespeare polskich romantyków

W swoim wystąpieniu chciałbym dokonać porównania dwóch istotnych dla polskiego romantyzmu, fragmentarycznych przekładów Shakespeare'owskich dzieł: "Makbeta" przełożonego we fragmentach przez Juliusza Słowackiego w 1842 roku oraz jednej sceny z "Hamleta" przełożonej przez Norwida w 1855 roku. W jednym i drugim przypadku przekład stanowi ukryty, kryptonimowy sposób dezaktu-alizacji Shakespeare'owskiego pierwowzoru i jego przekształcenia, tak aby zaczął służyć polskiemu autorowi-poecie jako czerpane z literatury kanonicznej potwierdzenie cech jego własnego autorskiego idiomu. Wśród wątków wykładu pojawią się także kwestie następujące: 1. Szekspir a katolicyzm wobec katolicyzmu Norwida; 2. idea mordu założycielskiego w "Juliuszu Cezarze" Shakespeare'a a podobny motyw w twórczości Norwida 3. Szekspir jako pole gry intertekstualnej Słowackiego z czytelnikiem 4. Szekspir polskich romantyków.

Mathias Foit, BA
University of Wrocław

"Words, Words, Words": The Narrative Constraint of *let me tell you* by Paul Griffiths

Paul Griffiths's *let me tell you* (2008) demonstrates not only the undying influence and admiration for the work of William Shakespeare, but also the recent revival of interest in experimental literature. The novel is a modern reinterpretation of the story of Hamlet, which is told from the point of view of Ophelia, the protagonist's unfortunate lover. Although the author allows certain modifications of, and divergences from, the original plot, he remains faithful to *Hamlet* in that he uses no more than the 483-word vocabulary allotted to Ophelia in the play. The aim of this article is to compare Griffiths's literary experiment to Shakespeare's classic play and assess the former as a feminist rewriting of the latter in the postmodern tradition. The analysis of the novel will be situated in the context of experimental fiction and, more specifically, its subtype known as constrained writing.

Prof. Jacek Fabiszak

Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań

Did Lady Macbeth have children?
On murky aspects of Shakespearean tragedy and its film
adaptation

Macbeth comes last in the sequence of Shakespeare's 'great tragedies', after the most pessimistic tragedy, *King Lear*. Consequently, one can pose a question why Shakespeare composed the play, if his ultimately tragic vision (from a critic's perspective) is contained in an earlier work? I will try to answer this question looking at *Macbeth* as a play about (not having) children. I will argue that the tragic vision in *Macbeth* is founded on the way children (male children), as hopes for the future, as a guarantee of continuity, etc. are treated and shown in the drama. The murky nature of the play consists in how children are persecuted, tormented, and even killed as a family or a larger social aggregate without (defenceless) children faces extinction. Ironically, children become in Shakespeare's tragedy apparitions who mockingly (?) foretell the dark future to their tormentor. It appears that Justin Kurzel, who directed a most recent film version of the play (2015) also finds children a key to his interpretation of *Macbeth*. He, too, understands the loss of a child not only as a universal tragedy, traumatic for any parent, but also as ultimately eradicating the future. For this reason, in my talk I will also refer to Kurzel's adaptation and discuss the significance of child/children in the film.

Zbigniew Urbalewicz, MA

University of Warmia and Mazury

Shakespeare in/and Modern Graphic Design
Artistic Impressions of Zbigniew Urbalewicz

Shakespeare generally can be presented to the audiences in either classic or modern way. Therefore, on the one hand, we can find his works rendered in the theatre, film, literature, but on the other his oeuvre is also re-formulated or re-written by the branch of visual arts, i.e. graphic design. Modern computer arts, design thinking, combined with traditional drawing and calligraphy, allows an artist to find twofold fulfilment: as an illustrator and as an interpreter. This also allows for cutting himself off from stereotypical ideas and approaches that have been present in the realm of art for a long time. With time, the forms of artistic expressions have been developing, transforming, altering. Consequently, the changes are apparent in the visual language, its diversified tools and styles employed in the communication with the recipients. As for the works of Shakespeare, it seems that because they are timeless and thus read by successive generations, the Shakespearian verses will always be a reach source of inspiration for other artists eager to approach and interpreted them in their own, individual, unique ways. Following, the exhibition focusing on "Shakespeare in/and Modern Graphic Design", being a part of the second edition of the Old Masters in New Interpretations conference, is to present works of this Old Master filtered through my personal artistic experience, to some extent thus rediscovering them and reinventing for others.

„Szekspir i Bond. O *Skyfall* Sama Mendesa”

Wykład otwarty

prof. Krzysztofa Kozłowskiego

z Uniwersytetu Adama Mickiewicza

w Poznaniu

Katrzyzna Burzyńska, PhD

Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań

Bad ass boys meet the Swan of Avon: a rewriting of *Hamlet*
in *Sons of Anarchy*

Sons of Anarchy is an American TV series that revolves around an outlaw motorcycle club that literally “rules” a fictional town in California like an old royal family with its own brutal dynastic power squabbles and dark family secrets. As I would like to argue in my presentation, the popularity of the series lies not in its graphic scenes of violence, over-the-top Harley chases and sex intrigues but rather in its Shakespearean structure. SOA dubbed as “Hamlet on Harleys”¹ is an appropriation rather than an adaptation of Shakespeare’s tragedy². Yet it investigates a fascinating intersection of seemingly marginal elements of modern American culture and the canonical British tragedy. In my paper I wish to address the connections between the lifestyles of the so called outlaw MC clubs and the early modern family structure as presented in *Hamlet*, focusing on the issues of power and gender relations.

Dominika Kotuła. MA
University of Warmia and Mazury

Queer Shakespeare. William Shakespeare meets queer theory

As it was observed by Madhavi Menon, the editor of *Shakespeare: A Queer Companion to the Complete Works of Shakespeare*, “the Bard can not only ‘be queered’ but he can also in many ways ‘enrich’ queer theory”. Shakespeare was described by Harold Bloom as the “inventor of the Human”. This puzzling definition reminds about his versatility, language awareness and invention, including the “weird”, “strange” elements of reality in his plays. His characters are often ambiguous and struggle with their identities. The text mostly concerns power relations which are described, discussed and destabilised and non-obvious desires filling Shakespearean textual spaces.

Prof. Mikołaj Jazdon
Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań

Actors and Shakespeare in Polish film tradition

Polish cinema lacks any film adaptations of Shakespeare’s dramas except for their television versions made for TV Theatre programs. But there is a group of Polish films with certain reference to particular Shakespearian characters, or motifs. One can rate these films among the adaptations that Geoffrey Wagner labeled as *analogy*. These movies often present a character of an actor playing both – on stage and in life - a role from one of the main works by Shakespeare.

Magdalena Kizeweter, PhD
Anna Wojtyś, PhD
University of Warsaw

In the process of Translating Shakespeare's drama: a selection of problems on the way of rendering the tragicomedy *Two Noble Kinsmen* into Polish

The paper is an account of the dilemmas faced by the translator of the tragicomedy *Two Noble Kinsmen* (TNK) co-authored by Shakespeare and Fletcher, currently prepared for staging in a Polish theatre in the translation by Anna Wojtyś. The analysis of the problematic issues centres around metaphor, puns and ambiguity, realia, and idiomatic expressions, also reflecting on the usefulness of the available techniques in dealing with those elements. The difficulty with presenting the text in another language is strengthened by the fact that the play has not yet seen its rendition into Polish and that it has never been discussed to the extent other Shakespeare's works have been researched and interpreted. The talk also comments on the ever-present choice between source- and target-orientation of the translation in the context of making the text comprehensible for the contemporary theatre audience. The Polish rendition of TNK is in the making, with not all of the mentioned problems fully solved and some questions still awaiting an answer.

Prof. Joanna Kokot
University of Warmia and Mazury

"All the world's a stage...": Shakespearean allusions in *Hamlet, Revenge!* by Michael Innes.

While some of the Golden Age detective novels rather tend to concentrate on the social background or on the psychology of the characters, thus utilizing the novel of manners conventions (Agatha Christie, Dorothy Sayers, Margery Allingham, Martha Grimes), others concentrate on the criminal puzzle itself, presenting it as a challenge both to the fictional detective and to the reader. This is the case with Michael Innes's novel, where the context of the murder is a performance of Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, while quotations from this and other Shakespeare's plays function as clues. The paper explores both the utilisation of Shakespeare's play as a code to decipher the puzzle, as well as the theatricalization of the presented reality itself, turning - even as viewed from the internal perspective - into a stage on which a drama is played.

Dorota Gładkowska, PhD
University of Warmia and Mazury

William Shakespeare and John Donne – the extent of mutual influences

I have found the inspiration for this paper in Henryk Zbierski's book *William Shakespeare*, part of which offers reflections on Shakespeare's sonnets. As Zbierski points out, the cycle belongs to the Renaissance "golden" school of poetry with its melodious versification, harmony and accuracy of expression. However, the final sonnets: 153. and 154., as the author notices, resemble the metaphysical poems of John Donne (marked with irregularity of rhythm and excessively saturated with conceits); one would feel tempted to question Shakespeare's authorship if it was not for *Hamlet*, where the language has a number of features (both semantic and structural) typical of the 16th/17th-century metaphysical poets (see: Zbierski 1988, pp. 571-574). Without doubt, Shakespeare's turn towards Donne's manner of expression should be associated with noticeable analogies between the models of the world emerging from their verses, which echoes Donne's organising principle: "form gives being" (directly expressed in his elegy "The Bracelet," l. 76). Furthermore, it is worthwhile to observe that Shakespeare's poetry and Donne's verse were two parallel phenomena growing out of the same philosophical ground, which promoted a unique combination of apparent simplicity of form and complexity of concept. In the light of this noticeable thematic and structural likeness, it seems that the recent findings about the 16th/17th-century metaphysical poetry open new areas of research into Shakespeare's works. I will attempt to outline these areas on the basis of the conclusions drawn from my analysis of textual relations in Donne's poetry (carried out for my PhD thesis).

Aleksandra Ożarowska, MA
University of Warsaw

From the Elizabethan Era to the 21st Century: Romantic Operas
Based on William Shakespeare's plays and Their Contemporary
Libretti Translation

From the Elizabethan era to the 21st century: romantic operas based on William Shakespeare's plays and their contemporary libretti translations William Shakespeare's works have always had a great impact on opera, and this influence was particularly strong during Romanticism. There is a great number of romantic operas based on Shakespeare's plays and many of them present his work in a new light: for example, Giuseppe Verdi's *Macbeth* may be regarded as a reinterpretation of the Scottish play, *Romeo and Juliet* is presented in two quite dissimilar manners in the works of Charles Gounod and Vincenzo Bellini, and *Falstaff* by Verdi is extraordinarily based upon both *Henry IV* and *The Merry Wives of Windsor*. These operas are nowadays frequently staged as modernised productions, so the audiences are provided with unique new interpretations. Equally interesting can be the surtitles prepared for such productions: as the translations of the libretti shown during the performances are more and more often modernised and reinterpreted, they may subsequently vary considerably not only from the very libretto, but from Shakespeare's plays as well.

Agata G. Handley, PhD
University of Łódź, Poland

The Drunken Porter in Macbeth: The analysis of Tony
Harrison's "Them and [uz]"

Although the paper constitutes an integral analytical and critical piece it is in many respects a continuation of the discussion on Tony Harrison's verse initiated with my paper presented during last year's *Old Masters Conference*. Both texts try to describe the nature of poetic identity in Harrison's verse focusing on selected poems from his widely acclaimed sonnet sequence *The School of Eloquence* whose unique character stems partly from the fact that it constitutes an ongoing poetic project which has continued from 1978 onwards, reflecting the social and cultural changes of contemporary Britain.

While the first paper discussed the opening piece entitled "On Not Being Milton," in which the poet recognizes and establishes the source of his poetic inspiration through the relation with his poetic forefathers, the second one analyses two sonnets published under a joined title "Them and [uz]" often read by the critics as Harrison's poetic and political credo. Shakespeare's persona, seemingly insignificant and yet crucial for the understanding of the poem, is discussed in relation to conflicting attitudes of Harrison's speaker towards the past and the question of the importance of heritage in the process of identity construction.

Anna Kwiatkowska, PhD
University of Warmia and Mazury, Poland

"A rose is a rose".
Shakespearian Garden in Katherine Mansfield's Short Stories

The phrase "a rose is a rose" from the poem by the Modernist poet Gertrude Stein, seems to be a perfect bridge between the Renaissance playwright and the Modernist short story writer. This is because, on the one hand, it alludes to Shakespeare's fragment from *Romeo and Juliet*, and on the other, the phrase is tailored to the modernist needs and fitted to its frames. In a similar vane, Katherine Mansfield's references to Shakespeare and his works are overt and covert, at the same time. Moreover, we can find them on many levels. However, since the Shakespeare-Mansfield relationship is quite rich, multi-layered and multi-leveled one, I decided to mention merely one aspect, namely garden. The works of both Shakespeare and Mansfield brim with the descriptions of and references to this nature dominated space as well as the garden-related symbolism. Shakespeare's plays and Mansfield's short stories, respectively, abound in variety of plants and trees, herbs and weeds which are purposefully employed and arranged with care, often noticed, used and admired by the protagonists. Similarly to Shakespeare, in whose plays we encounter various types of gardens suitable for all kinds of situations (political, historical, social), Mansfield also endows her literary gardens with specific functions.