1. M. G. Aune

"Shakespeare and High Culture Fandom"

"Adherents of high culture don't have nicknames. … My (entirely unproven) assumption is that Bach and Shakespeare fans would reject … semi-derisory nicknames; I suspect (again with no evidence…) that most would also reject the term 'fan.'" Roberta Pearson*

On the one hand, the Shakespeare cultural formation breaks down easily into those who produce (theater people) and those who consume (audiences). Unfortunately among those complicating this tidy binary are academics who might fit into either side or neither. Or collectors who see Shakespeare as a way to satisfy a desire to collect. If, rather than production and consumption, we regard Shakespeare as a kind of commodity to be gathered, accessed, and deployed, then academics and collectors might seem similar in that they both occupy gatekeeping positions.

In this paper I intend to think about Shakespeare's cultural positioning in a way that tries to incorporate all of the ideas above. To do so, I plan to start with Pearson's assumptions about fandom and Shakespeare beginning with the question, "are there Shakespeare fans?"

Ceci n'est pas une fan

2. Robert C Beshere

"A Lannister By Any Other Name: Echoes of the Onomastics of Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* in George RR Martin's *Game of Thrones*."

In an interview with Radio Times Magazine, Adrian Dunbar – costar to Benedict Cumberbatch in BBC's *Hollow Crown* – claimed that "Shakespeare is now easier to understand because they have grown up on a television diet of *Game of Thrones*. This isn't the first equivalency made between the two authors' bodies of work, and much of this project is inspired by a new pop-cultural resurrection of Shakespeare's narratives. I will analyze this comparison specifically through onomastics and the meanings of characters' names. Just like Shakespeare's seemingly endless play on the word "will" in his sonnets, the names of his characters themselves hold context clues in their linguistic, historical, mythological, and teleological roots. In his seminal novel series *A Song of Ice and Fire,* George RR Martin also perpetuates meaning through the "House" names and first names of major political players in the narrative. These context clues inform readers, scholars, and even directors and actors of elements of the characters' personae, behaviors, and possible involvement in the plot. This essay will propose that Shakespeare (and Martin) reverses a derivation of character in which authors first determine a form for a character's name that does not necessarily reflect the character's purpose. The authors, instead, create a purpose-driven form, in which their characters' names reflect their individual functions in the plots. The characters' names are journeys for themselves, whether they earn the name's meanings or, not unlike the great tragic figures, fall from the grace, glory, and power that has been afforded to and associated with their names. All the while, Martin and Shakespeare are investing in the "psychology of the audience," having the audience witness and join the journey rather than dictate the journey's destination at the outset. Thus, Juliet's inquiry -- "What's in a name?" -- carries much more than just a bemoaning of unfortunate and unlucky circumstances. This essay will also examine the ways in which Martin recapitulates elements of *Romeo and Juliet's* narrative and how these moments coincide with the onomastics unique to *A Song of Ice and Fire*.

3. Keith M. Botelho,

Vulnerable Geek Masculinity in Recent Shakespeare on Film

Twenty-first century Shakespeare on film has embraced a geek ethos, one where a male geek (often a marginal artist or collector) occupies the film's center, signaling how millennial geek culture is ultimately compatible with Shakespeare. In particular, these Hamlets and Romeos are direct appeals to geeks, those people, according to Alex Pappademas, who are "collectors, enthusiasts, keepers of obscure flames." The male geek in recent Shakespeare film not only showcases passion run amok and an attentiveness to an activity (both as creators and consumers), but also reveals a certain vulnerability in their failures to escape into a community of the like-minded.

The filmic depictions of geek vulnerability align with textual interpretations of the obsessively devoted (Romeo) and aloof (Hamlet) protagonists in the plays. Two instances of Shakesgeek masculinity illustrate this point (the longer paper will take up two other

adaptations)—from the "sensitive undead slacker" R in *Warm Bodies* (2013), who is an avid collector of vinyl that makes him feel "more alive," to the titular character in *Hamlet* (2000), who is an obsessive independent filmmaker. We might define these characterizations as hipster artists or (perhaps) obsessive fanboys, meant to be very Shakespearean and very contemporary at once. Yet instead of creating community, these geeks escape from reality, creating safe spaces of their own surrounded by their obsessions, vulnerable to the world around them.   Finally, the paper will engage Richard Burt's notion of a "loser feminism" and consider how female geeks find community within these worlds of male geekdom by examining two roles played by Julia Stiles at the turn of the century—Kat, an underground music aficionado, in *10 Things I Hate About You* (1999), and Ophelia, an obsessed slacker photographer, in *Hamlet* (2000).

4. Brandon Christopher

Star Trek's Shakespeare Problem

There is likely no entertainment franchise that is more closely related to concepts of fandom and geek culture than *Star Trek*, the five-decades-old space opera spanning thirteen feature films, six television series (with at least one more on the way), and countless novels, comic books, technical guides, and others, to mention only official entries in the canon. Within the world of *Star Trek* and its creators, characters, and actors, though, there is strong evidence of a fandom centred on another figure: Shakespeare. Shakespeare and his works are cited repeatedly through the series, with thirteen episodes and one film, *Star Trek VI: The Undiscovered Country*, deriving their titles from Shakespeare's plays; another handful of episodes loosely borrowing Shakespeare's plots; and characters repeatedly quoting from and acting out a number of scenes from Shakespeare. Add to this other paratextual associations between Shakespeare and Star Trek, especially Patrick Stewart's pre-*Star Trek* career with the Royal Shakespeare Company (1966-1982), but also William Shatner's tenure at the Stratford Shakespeare Festival in the 1950s and early 1960s and Christopher Plummer's appearance in the aforementioned *The Undiscovered Country*, and a clear pattern of association between the franchise and Shakespeare emerges.

But what does it mean to send a ship full of (and created by) Shakespeare geeks into space? What does Shakespeare mean for the franchise and for its characters? This essay reads these various and persistent citations of Shakespeare as exemplars of the franchise's investment in and championing of a Western humanist philosophical ideal. In it, I argue that knowledge, and perhaps more importantly comprehension, of Shakespeare is used in the series as a sign of the purported superiority of a worldview informed by European philosophical traditions. Through its citations of Shakespeare, and of other artifacts of Western European art, literature, music, etc., *Star Trek* reveals itself as a fantasy of unending European expansion, the near-universal superiority of which marks the franchise's vision of the future as one dominated by an ethos of, if not white supremacy, then at least Euro-North American supremacy.

5. Vernon Dickson

Shakespeare and the Renaissance of Board Games

As board games have what is being called a new Renaissance of popularity and growth—with over a 1,000 new titles released each year and over 85,000 board game entries on boardgamegeek.com (BGG)—Shakespeare has enjoyed his own small Renaissance within the burgeoning hobby. With about 34 entries specifically related to Shakespeare at BGG (though many more games make some reference to him), Shakespeare currently only has only a small part to play on the new stage of board games. Nonetheless, one game (*Shakespeare*) ranks 414th out of nearly 13,000 ranked games at BGG. This paper examines three of the most well regarded Shakespeare-themed board games—*Council of Verona*, *Kill Shakespeare*, and *Shakespeare*—looking at how Shakespeare is invoked within very different styles of games, the significance of how he is used, and the larger role Shakespeare may play within this growing corner of geek culture.

6. Matt Kozusko

"I can Geek upon Occasion"

Developing an exercise for undergraduates on the roles of science and politics in debates over climate change, I worked my way backwards to a familiar question: how "correct" does the public need to be about Shakespeare? Professional Shakespeareans agonize over getting Shakespeare right, but we also compulsively refrain from shutting down or foreclosing other kinds of Shakespeare knowledge in the public sphere. Our commitment to open access and to the principle of a multiplicity of meanings is, on the whole, stronger than our need to manage Shakespeare for the general public in a way that separates the responsible from the responsive. If there is an imperative (especially in the wake of the 2016 US presidential election) to rehabilitate the notion of fact vis-à-vis issues like climate change, are there analogous imperatives that fall upon professional stewards of Shakespeare?

It may be a question that's more important to ask than to answer. Either way, being a geek when it comes to Shakespeare involves moving between/among different subject positions as we address different audiences—being able to care as a theater historian, for example, about what *was (probably) done* on early stages as versus what works on stage today. But it also involves moving among the different subject positions we occupy as consumers of Shakespeare—positions defined not so much by the audiences we address as by the pleasures we seek, the desires we indulge, the personal preferences we have (do you prefer to hear verse in performance, or do you prefer naturalized delivery?). To what extent are these latter subject positions, ostensibly private or neutral, also in fact political, or otherwise charged with a social significance or social obligation?

7. James Mardock

"Worst. Lear. Ever.": Shakespeare's gritty reboot and its reception

The Lear/Leir/Lir story, regardless of its mode or context, had one thing its fans at the turn of the 17th century could agree on: a happy ending. When Shakespeare's version killed Cordelia and broke her father's heart on stage, Lear geeks in his audiences could understandably be thought to wonder with Kent "Is this the promised end?" When Nahum Tate restored the redemptive ending in his adaptation of *King Lear*, it held the stage for 150 years. The Lear with the Hollywood ending is a favorite anecdote to trot out to amuse undergraduates, but what might we learn from reading the relationship of Shakespeare's play to its audience in the framework of modern geek culture? More broadly, how might we better understand the relationship of company to audience through comparison to the modern blockbuster, with its culture of spoiler leaks, test screenings, and tonal experimentation?

8. Dr. Ann Martinez

May the Bard Be with You: Shakespeare in the World of Sci-Fi / Fantasy

While there have long been fantastical elements to some of Shakespeare's plays, the Bard has also been welcomed into the world of science fiction. As speculative fictions, both sci-fi and science-fantasy deal primarily with imaginative technological advances, space travel, the occasional parallel universe, and, more often than not, the future. Why, then, and how, do literary works from the past find such a fitting home in the far distant future?

What I plan to explore in my paper for this session is precisely the "celebratory engagement with areas of popular culture" between Shakespeare and sci-fi/fantasy. I am particularly interested in examining the incorporation/recasting of Shakespeare in the highly popular sci-fi television *series Star Trek: Next Generation* (1987-1994), in Stan Lee's *New York Times* bestselling sci-fi graphic novel *Romeo and Juliet: The War* (2011) – soon to become a major motion picture through Lionsgate – and in Ian Doescher's *William Shakespeare's Star Wars* science-fantasy series (2013). From futuristic space travel, to superhuman soldiers warring over love, to a past distant galaxy, Shakespeare fits in perfectly. What does it say about his work, about scifi/fantasy, and about what we might call "Sci-fi/fantasy Shakespeare fandom"?

9. Jessica McCall

I Became A Shakespearean Because of Star Trek.

Star Trek VI: The Undiscovered Country is a rollicking tale of intergalactic racial tensions, politics, power, and betrayal. During an early scene the Federation Officers led by the stalwart Captain James T. Kirk invite the Klingon delegation to dinner aboard the Enterprise. Here the positioning of General Chang, played by the inimitable Christopher Plummer, is

established as Shakespearean in his scope and villainy. His lines are littered with quotes from *Hamlet* and *Henry V* throughout the movie. Chancellor Gorkon, the Klingon Ambassador for peace, even states "You have experienced Shakespeare until you have read him in the original Klingon" to which General Chang responds, "taH pagh, taH be?"

There's something happening in this intersection of *Star Trek* and Shakespeare, and it's more than intertextuality. Geek culture and academia remain plagued by a toxic masculinity. There is an unspoken, but still very real expectation, that serious scholarship doesn't get over excited. In order for academia to justify itself it must exert distance between the "amateur" and "emotional" engagement of geek culture, and in order for geek culture to rise in power and prestige it must demonstrate an "expert" and "logical" position. In both cases women fans and women academics—who are seen as inherently less intelligent, more emotional, and always slightly less capable—are left out.

You don't get much more "old, white dude" than Shakespeare. As a female fan of both Star Trek and Shakespeare my entry into both started as a moment of love and wonder, but my identity within both has become double-sided. My passion for and analysis of the text is informed by my subjective experience—is Hamlet a relevant character to twenty-first century women or the misogynistic geek who demands his right to the throne and while shoving me out of the comic book store? Even in areas of geek culture, my geekiness is required to present itself "appropriately" where emotion is subsidized to a "logical expertise" that more often than not means "status quo." Textual interpretation, the first step to critical scholarship, often begins at the moment of emotional fascination and catharsis, so why is the love of a thing to be shelved rather than analyzed?

As scholarship and the humanities continue to redefine themselves in the twenty-first century, and more and more curriculums ask the question, "Why Shakespeare?" I think a rediscovery, or at the very least an unabashed release of our passions, provides a fascinating moment for consideration. Shakespeare arguably makes *Star Trek VI* a better movie, and *Star Trek VI* made Shakespeare, at least for me, accessible, interesting, and relevant. I propose to deconstruct this relationship and its intersections with gender in the hopes of pursuing a discourse of scholarship that embraces the subjectivity, love, and passion of the scholar rather than apologizing for them.

10. Robert S. Miola

Geeks, Greeks, and Super Geeks: Notes from the Front

"Going to a conference", I replied to the efficient customs official at Heathrow Airport, who asked about the reason for my travel. "What sort of conference?" he continued. "Shakespeare," I smiled. "Riveting, I'm sure," he said with a downturned mouth, as he stamped my passport.

The encounter suggests that Shakespeare study certainly qualifies as "obsessive devotion of an unfashionable pursuit, shared fully only with like-minded obsessives." But of course, as

teachers of Shakespeare we meet such skepticism in various forms every day. One way we overcome such resistance, oddly, is by becoming ourselves even more obsessive and unfashionable. We express our devotion in various forms of self-denial, sacrificing years to master arcane languages, disciplines, and materials in hope that somehow we will become hierophants (Super Geeks), privileged interpreters of the sacred mysteries. I propose to look at three such arcane pursuits and materials—Classical languages, textual editing, and digital databases—and reflect a bit on their practical value in our battle against skepticism and resistance. This essay may lead to some reflections on possible connections between elite and popular cultures.

11. Romana Mullin

Popular Geek Culture and Online Nostalgia: Towards a Digital Shakesphere?

For much of the past decade, geekiness has been closely tied to a sense of nostalgia. From hipster glasses and vintage clothes to the medieval setting of *Game of Thrones*, from the comic book adaptations of Marvel Studios to the return of *Doctor Who* and the spin-offs from *Harry Potter*, the cultural moment has affirmed that nostalgia is geeky and geekiness is cool. The digital zeitgeist of Web 2.0, and in particular the explosion of social media sites such as Twitter, and blogging platforms like Tumblr, has propelled and nurtured acts of geeky interventions into the past, via the framework of popular geeky texts: fan fiction, fan-made trailers on YouTube, and video blog reviews of cult TV shows mean that the geek has moved from the margins to the digital mainstream.

Circulating within this digital milieu is the seemingly irrepressible cultural force that is Shakespeare. Shakespeare appears in various guises across numerous geeky cult favourites: inspiring a thematic motif in *Game of Thrones*, the first folio forming part of the *mise-en-scene* in *The Avengers*, or acting as a disruptive memory for the rebellious androids of HBO's sci-fi-cum-Western remake, *Westworld*. That Shakespeare is summoned in these texts is unsurprising. What is interesting is how these echoes, allusions and citations are taken up, and expanded upon, within online creative forums, where fans utilise their own geeky knowledge of cult TV, comic books, sci-fi and history to regenerate Shakespeare and his plays via a plethora of online platforms that privilege the creative potential of intertextuality.

This essay will explore the role of such intertextual 'geeky' Shakespeare within the milieu of a digital arena that privileges fan-made works as authentic, and which underlines nostalgia and past-ness as an 'authentic' governing category of interpretation. By exploring Shakespeare in fan fiction, fan art and through the fan-made visual medium of YouTube, this essay will argue that a distinctive and thoroughly geeky digital Shakesphere is emerging online, one that removes the Bard from the academy and the theatre, and reanimates him within the parameters of a popular digital culture striving to find authenticity in the past.

12. Kyle Pivetti

Shakespeare Unfocused in Time: The Problems of Memory and Anachronism in Terry Pratchett's *Wyrd Sisters*

Terry Pratchett makes obvious his Shakespearean geekery. His novel *Wyrd Sisters* mixes *Macbeth* and *Hamlet* into a tale of three bickering witches, annoyed ghosts, and hapless murderers. Yet Pratchett does not simply quote Shakespeare; he creates a number of anachronistic curiosities with significant implications for collective memory. Through a spell, Granny Weatherwax makes the world skip fifteen years. An infant – granted exceptional memory by magic – quotes lengthy monologues before he learns to speak. Later, the witches disrupt a *Macbeth*-like play and replace the written material with something closer to the truth. Suddenly, the actor Tomjon forgets his original lines and is stunned to recall new language. It is a profoundly paradoxical moment: Tomjon remembers Shakespeare, before Shakespeare has the chance to write.

This essay examines such moments through the lens of queer theory and alternate history. In doing so, it explores constructedness of cultural memory, especially memory of Shakespeare. Queer history – as articulated by Madhavi Menon, Carolyn Dinshaw, and others – eschews understandings of the past as distinctly different than the present, an approach that produces fluid conceptions of linearity, chronology, and causality. Pratchett's magical inversions of time resolve the inherent logical contradictions. Memory, his speculative fiction suggests, must be anachronistic. It operates as a time-traveler, overcoming the difficulties of historical situatedness and exposing the machinations of cultural appropriation. The geeks can rest happy, knowing that their memories of Shakespeare have always preceded Shakespeare. As contradictory as it appears at first glance, their geekiness creates Shakespeare himself.

13. Johnathan H. Pope

"Let's kill Claudius in the church!": Fans, Geeks, and Wish Fulfillment in Ryan North's Chooseable-Path Adventures, *To Be or Not to Be* and *Romeo and/or Juliet*.

In Ryan North's two chooseable-path narratives, readers are given the opportunity to 'play' *Hamlet* and *Romeo and Juliet* as a role playing game. Readers choose a character at the beginning of the narrative and determine his or her actions based on options offered by the author, options that range from fidelity to the Shakespearean original to the outlandish: as Ophelia, you can murder nearly every character in the narrative, or as Hamlet, you can transform into an irradiated green monster. Throughout these two texts, North mashes up numerous geek cultures, and genres, incorporating elements of videogames, comic books, science fiction, cosplay, and trading card games, effectively 'geeking' Shakespeare by creating participatory texts that offer the wish fulfillment of fan faction. In doing so, North himself plays with dual ideas of canonicity – geek and literary – in which fandom's non-canonical readings/writings *rely*

on the authority of the original text (and the fan's sense of investment in that text) but *deny* that authority by democratizing access to the world and characters of that text.

14. M. Tyler Sasser

No Fear Shakespeare: How SparkNotes and Graphic Novels Helped to Define Contemporary American Boyhood

In this conference paper, I consider the relationship between the advent of SparkNotes (especially the No Fear Shakespeare comics), the popularity of Shakespeare-themed graphic novels, and the cultural debate that begin in the late 1990s known as the *boy crisis*. Studying this intersection allows us to recognize how Shakespeare surfaces as a complex signifier amidst these comics and graphic novels during the boy crisis and in turn begin to understand how such geek adaptations of Shakespeare represent and fail to represent various expressions of youthful American masculinity.

The *boy crisis* entered the American psyche during the closing years of the twentieth century, and there are two key moments in 1998 that serve as likely candidates for the first utterances of the phrase: a NPR interview with Michael Gurian on *The Merrow Report* and a May issue of *Newsweek*. Three interrelated concerns generally dominate this debate: 1) that boys are neither reading as much nor performing as strongly as girls in school; 2) that boys are at risk of becoming feminized by contemporary educational practices; and 3) that boys need to have access to more diverse depictions of masculinity in their reading.

I wish to consider the influence of geek culture, as it appears in graphic novels, especially the No Fear Shakespeare series, on the production of these adaptations. So doing will allow me to consider the declining literacy rates amongst male students during the last twenty years and how graphic novels influence how male students often assign gender roles to various reading habits, especially concerning Shakespeare.

15. Andrew Tumminia

Not Now: The Present in Shakespeare's Past and Science Fiction's Future

Discussing the historian's job in "History: Science and Fiction," Michel de Certeau argues that historical writing "constantly mends the rents in the fabric that joins past and present" (205). De Certeau's image of rent fabric certainly fits with the violence characterizing Shakespeare's history plays. As we well know, the histories allowed Shakespeare to circumvent restrictions on subject matter and allude indirectly to contemporary national politics. The politics of Shakespeare's present were, quite simply, difficult to talk about legally.

In one sense, science fiction addresses our present's difficult-to-talk-about similarly; it projects present conflicts forward along the timeline. Like Shakespeare's past, science fiction's future affords the safety of temporal distance. Yet, as I will explore in my contribution to this

seminar, the consequences of the placing the present in the past versus situating it in the future are exactly opposite. Science fiction, even in its cheeriest settings, reveals a deep pessimism toward the present because it shows that, even if the rent social fabric of the present is repaired, that fabric will eventually, inevitably rend again. Shakespeare's references to historical precedent for the conflicts and intrigues of his time, however, become fundamentally optimistic when considered in light of science fiction's pessimism. England's rent fabric has been mended before; England's rent fabric will be mended again.