

**2018 SAA Seminar: Shakespeare and Peace 1**  
**Leaders: Lawrence Manley, Yale University**  
**Maggie Vinter, Case Western Reserve University**

**Seminar Description**

What, in Shakespeare's work, are the attributes and benefits of peace, and what does Shakespeare's work contribute to understanding and making peace? This seminar involves work on Shakespeare and peace, including concepts and definitions of peace; peace as a desideratum in relation to others, such as justice; peace as personal and interpersonal felicity; peace, as moral, religious, social, legal or political ideal. Possible topics include the invocation of peace in praise, prayer, and greeting; peace and peacefulness in character, form, and genre; dramaturgical aspects of peace on stage; and such contexts of peace in Shakespeare as civil peace, early modern geopolitics, sources and motives of early modern pacifism, Shakespeare in/and the history of pacifism and global peacemaking, and non-Western terminologies and traditions that illumine the connections of peace to Shakespeare.

**David Currell, American University of Beirut**

**At Peace, At War, and the Time Between in *The Two Noble Kinsmen***

I'm interested in two classical tropes that counterpose states of war and peace as they appear in Fletcher and Shakespeare's *The Two Noble Kinsmen* (TNK). One is the synchronic representation of the city and war and city at peace through ekphrasis, as on the shield of Achilles, the other is "stadial history," the division of human civilization into diachronic stages in which (typically) peace gives way to war. Lucretius is an intriguing touchstone for the latter idea, especially in view of recent criticism arguing that *De rerum natura* is an antiwar poem and the poem's use of Venus and Mars as governing divinities (as in TNK). While the kinsmen appear divided by their separate dedication to Mars and Venus, I argue that the play emphasizes instead the paradoxes and mutual implication of the states of war and peace. While certain rhetorical set-pieces from the play have appeared regularly in the critical tradition as exemplifying early modern thought on the transition from peace to war, Fletcher and Shakespeare's handling of the Theban material, the Chaucerian plot, and the full imagistic and poetic scope of the play tend to erase the sense of a clear ideology of war or of peace, or even of a clear distinction between the two.

**John Garrison, Grinnell College**

**Peace and Neutrality in Sonnets 75 and 107**

This essay examines the instances of the word "peace" in Shakespeare's sonnets 75 and 107 (the only two times the word is used in the sonnets). While the term does seem to have martial and political valences in the poems, the speaker ultimately uses the word to describe his relationship to unrequited erotic desire. The concept of peace functions as a means to bridge the physical gap between the speaker and the addressee and to mitigate the inevitability of physical aging. In one sonnet, the speaker longs for a "peace of you" that could resolve the kind of tension as "twixt a miser and his wealth." In the other,

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“peace” describes the reconciliation of the speaker to the fact that he and the addressee will age. In both cases, the term describes a type of moderation achievable through an early modern sense of pacifism, one that must reside in the self or domestic relationship before it can be extrapolated to the larger community. By positioning peace as achievable through love and indeed resulting from it, the sonnets thus suggest strategies for avoiding the prophecy that Venus promises at the end of *Venus and Adonis*: that love will be forever the cause of strife and war.

**Katharine Goodland, College of Staten Island, CUNY**

**The King’s Peace**

My essay explores how Richard II’s personification of peace in 1.3 of *Richard II* articulates a pacifist ideology that, as Shakespeare’s tragic king prophesies, was an inevitable cause of the English Civil war. When Richard II banishes Bolingbroke in the third scene of Shakespeare’s tragedy, he justifies his decision by personifying peace as a baby that, in England’s “cradle / Draws the sweet infant breath of gentle sleep” (1.3.133-4). He perceives that “eagle-winged pride / Of sky aspiring and ambitious thoughts” have “set on” Bolingbroke, “to wake our peace” (1.3.130-31). Though the king implies that the banishment is intended to prevent rousing the infant, he also suggests that “peace” has already been awakened. The plural pronoun indicates that it is Richard himself, a cradle king, who has been roused: when he speaks of “our peace,” he means the peace of his royal, divine, person as well as England’s peace, which he comprehends as continuous with himself. In short, Richard II’s ideology of peace is unsurprisingly of a piece with the ideology of the divine right of kings. In this carefully staged performance Richard thus counters the threat to his authority with an appeal to peace that simultaneously displays his authority and serves as counter-threat. As many have noted, the subject and object of the sentence are the same: once “roused up” this peace “Might from our quiet confines fright fair peace / And make us wade even in our kindred’s blood” (1.3.13, 139-145). The dramatic irony here creates the sense of tragic inevitability in which, as Richard foresees, “civil wounds” will be “plowed up with neighbor’s sword” (1.3.129). Beyond the play, the image engages with contemporary debates regarding the limits of sovereign power in the final years of Elizabeth’s reign. It is also prescient with respect to James I’s figuration of himself as *rex Pacifus*.

**Maurice Hunt, Baylor University**

**The Physiology of Peace and *Coriolanus***

Written in the midst of the eight-year Jacobean Peace (1604-1612), *Coriolanus* turns the physiology of war and peace inside out. “No body can be healthfull without *Exercise*, neither Naturall Body, nor Politique,” Francis Bacon had written. “And certainly, to a Kingdome or Estate, a Just and Honourable Warre, is the true *Exercise*. . . . [A] Forraine Warre, is like the Heat of *Exercise*, and serveth to keepe the Body in Health: For in a Slothful Peace, both Courages will effeminate, and Manners Corrupt.” Many militant

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lords complained of these ills and the decay of an English warrior class during James's Peace. Thomas Nashe, Barnabe Barnes, and Fulke Greville echoed Bacon's claims, which were based upon Galenic medical theory that asserts that bloodletting purges the human body of debilitating toxins so that the four humours achieve a balance insuring both physical and psychological health. The Rome of *Coriolanus* is a body politic with personified members: a patrician belly, a counselor heart, equine legs, and warrior arms (of which Coriolanus is the strongest) (1.1.87-154). Shakespeare shows Coriolanus, repeatedly likened to a disease or toxin, disturbing the public body's peace. The playwright transforms the standard physiology of war and peace when Coriolanus—in keeping with the tail-end of his name—is vented through the Roman equivalent of London's Dungate. Then Romans enjoy a harmonious peace (4.6.2-9). When he returns to Rome leading a Volscian army, Coriolanus, advised by Volumnia, negotiates a peace that, while costing his life, appears to persist at play's end when a calm Aufidius, all passion spent, never utters hostile words concerning Rome. The social importance of peace in other late plays—*Antony and Cleopatra*, *Cymbeline*, and *The Life of Henry VIII*—agrees with Shakespeare's revaluation of war and peace in *Coriolanus*.

**Sheiba Kian Kaufman, University of California, Irvine**

**A Persian Paradigm for Peace in *King Lear***

Discovering strides toward cooperation seem impossible in an “age of persecution” known for witch hunts, inter-confessional massacres on the streets of Paris, and burning dissenters at the stake. But, it is such ostensible hostility that prompts early modern writers to develop conceptions of toleration and conceive of acts of hospitality toward others. Early modern authors such as Émeric Crucé (*The New Cyneas*) conceived of peace proposals advocating universal solidarity and these neglected voices are vital aids in building an archive of thoughts and acts of collaboration that define the alternative history of our “undivided past” in David Cannadine's terms. In turning to the social potentialities of the work of peace done on stage, this paper characterizes the enabling qualities Shakespeare includes in his allusions to Greco-Persian history in *King Lear*. This paper draws upon an interdisciplinary discourse from the field of Human Development, and its language of empowerment and capacity-building, to consider the possibility of Shakespeare entertaining the idea of a Persian persona for Edgar in *King Lear*, and how this conceptual configuration accommodates hospitable bonds between Lear and Edgar on the heath in Act 3 scene 6. The transformation of Edgar into a Persian garbed figure signals towards Shakespeare's interest and knowledge of both ancient and early modern Persia, yet glosses on the Persian clothing reference are often minimalist, equating the sartorial allusion with Eastern luxury. This paper considers the evolution of editorial practice from the eighteenth-century to account for a reading of Shakespeare's Persian figure in *King Lear* that reveals Shakespeare's ongoing interest with Persia as a both a place and a concept invoking notions of hospitality, sovereignty, and dignity for the distraught monarch. Such a characterization of an Islamic Empire in the period challenges assumptions about the fraught relationships between the East and the West

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and contributes to a more cooperative, and ultimately hopeful, vision of our collective cross-cultural heritage.

**Justin Kuhn, Ohio State University**

**Playbooks and Peace:**  
**The Drama of Political Settlement in the Mid-Seventeenth Century**

This paper will examine how drama took part in a broader peacemaking process following the English Civil Wars. William Davenant's efforts in the 1650s to both legitimize and perform his operas have long been recognized by scholars as comprising a unique programme to reform the stage for a godly republic, while drama written and translated by other playwrights as well as play-texts printed by stationers such as Humphrey Moseley have typically been regarded as encoding a Royalist, oppositional stance to the Interregnum government, with the implication being that drama served as a discreet means of continuing to wage war—at least ideologically—once formal conflict had concluded with Parliament's victory over the King. Davenant, however, was not the only figure to position drama within, rather than against, the republican polity during the 1650s, and in this paper, I will explore how drama had an irenic function in Cromwellian England. In particular, I intend to demonstrate that writers accommodating themselves to the Interregnum government routinely argued that plays could be a stabilizing force amidst the turmoil of the mid-seventeenth-century. As a case study, I will consider Richard Brome's *Five New Plays* (1653), a collection of drama staged prior to the ban on public performance. This playbook features prefatory material that carefully negotiates the regime changes of 1653 while expressing hope that the new governing authorities will realize the instructive, moral value of plays like Brome's. Such attempts to recast drama for the nascent republic helped open up a discursive space in which plays, including printed texts by Shakespeare, could participate in postwar political settlement more generally.

**James Kuzner, Brown University**

***A Midsummer Night's Dream* and the Art of Love**

From its first scene, characters in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* conceive of love in terms of violence and war. Theseus woos Hippolyta by doing her injuries, Demetrius wants to slay Lysander and feels like Hermia has slain him, and Helena for her part seems happy to be beaten. Indeed, one of the play's principal solutions to the violence that structures love itself involves violence: Puck forcing characters into sleep and drugging them. We can, of course, find a more peaceful love in Helena's portrayal of what her relationship with Hermia once was. But do peace and love ever go together in the play's present? This paper argues that they do, particularly when love involves what we often think that love ought to overcome: serious doubt. We see this when the play's central quartet of lovers awake in the play's fourth act. Until then, they are always utterly, belligerently certain, about their own hearts, about their beloveds, about who does and should belong to whom.

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But when they awaken into peace, Demetrius, Helena, and Hermia all speak in ways that undo the certainties which have defined their love hitherto. The scene suggests that we do well to assume that we do not understand why our own hearts are the way they are; that the beloved is at best ours and not ours, and only so for a time; and that if love is to be peaceful, precious little in it can or should be taken for granted. The art of love, in this play, is an art of doubt.

**Sean K. Lawrence, University of British Columbia, Okanagan**

**Peace and War in Shakespeare's *King John***

Shakespeare's *King John* renders redundant any critical effort to reveal true, political motives obfuscated beneath ideology. The title character makes an exaggerated and anachronistic claim of royal supremacy and the divine right of kings, but his own mother admits the weakness of his claim to the throne in the play's first lines. Claims to legitimacy, moreover, cancel each other out in the play, most eloquently when John and Philip make duelling appeals to the citizens of Argiers. Peace in the sense of order or good government seems reduced to the most transparent of pretenses. Indeed, the few and temporary peace treaties in the play imply infidelity to earlier agreements, undermining the principle of law or at least the honour of kings. One might expect that the failure of ideologies of legitimacy to establish political power leaves only a recourse to violence to determine political relations, but in this play violence also fails. Putting their disputed claims to the arbitrament of the sword, John and Philip fight to a draw.

If the supposedly natural order reveals itself as so much hypocrisy (personified in Cardinal Pandolph) and even the arbitrament of violence proves impotent to bring about order, where are we to find peace in the world of the play? Rather than finding peace in hierarchical structure --- as does, famously but in another play, Ulysses --- or in the destruction of such a hierarchy --- perhaps like a nineteenth-century anarchist or, less explosively, Immanuel Kant --- we must seek it in moments of human concern, which interrupt the ubiquity of violence in the world of the play. The foremost such moment, of course, would be the sparing of Arthur. This anticipates the blinding of Gloucester in *King Lear*, but with the important difference that it doesn't happen. Rather than blind Arthur, Hubert places the appeal of Arthur's pleading eyes before either his own rage or his political self-interest. Peaceful relations begin, I shall argue, not with an ideal hierarchy or the authenticity of violence, but with a concern for the Other.

**Eric S. Mallin, University of Texas, Austin**

**“Shake!”: The Problem of Peace in *Romeo and Juliet***

The problem of peace in the play, loosely defined, is that almost no one in Verona wants it. The Prince orders it, on self-undoing pain of death (or somewhat more effective exile). He demands it because calm rule and civic obedience might justify his reign, but it also renders him superfluous: the head of the city requires discord to make himself integral to

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the notion of “rule.” The aristocracy or the “magnates” do not want it; peace might threaten their attempts to win distinction from one another. The citizenry do not want it, either—or if they do, their only solution is riot and further insurrection (“Down with the Montagues!” etc.). We know about Tybalt and Mercutio, of course, who strike out for different reasons; but even good-willed Benvolio is “drawn” as he talks of peace, which would seem to indicate at least an ambivalence on his part.

The essay by Stephen Marx (cited by several people in our seminar) tracks Shakespeare’s developing pacifism, assigning a rooted martial sympathy in the plays of the early and middle career. But Marx misses a chance by not discussing the young lovers of Verona, whose thwarted urge for peaceful reconciliation is the ground upon which Shakespeare builds his play. They surely foretell the irenic philosophy of post-Elizabethan policy, in that they construct a desire that is entirely irenic, not erotic: their magnetic attraction is towards peace, towards cessation of conflict. And that is a problem: because this urge can easily be conflated with the need to escape, and particularly with the *liebestod*, the desire for death.

Peace in the play is the deep, unreachable substrate of the plot. Inevitably a bad thing—it robs Verona of its character, sucks passion from the world—it also, paradoxically, injects a kind of dread in the hearts of its participants. Calm cannot be imagined, and most significantly, it cannot be staged—because erotic, political, and social interest is representationally agonistic.

**Nick Moschovakis**

***Macbeth* and the Terms of Peace**

For our seminar, I set out to learn how the word “peace” behaves in *Macbeth*. How do its uses there comport with its varied functions in early modern discourse? What is made of this pregnant word, at once so familiar and commonplace, yet extending to such lofty ideals and transcendent goals — a word whose special importance for King James shone through verse, masques, and pageantry in the early 1600s? “Peace” is a resonant word in this play, though its eleven occurrences are not obtrusive enough to make it a key word. (Others such as “blood,” “time,” and “sleep” deserve that distinction.) As “peace” is uttered with a series of meanings — each with a distinct charge — it strikes unexpected sparks. Notably, the semantic currents flowing from “peace” mostly do not arc outward toward matters of state and official concern, such as domestic conflict resolution or international pacts and treaties. Even in the few instances where “peace” in *Macbeth* has a likely bearing on public matters, it is spoken in private dialogue or soliloquy.

Three broad senses of “peace” matter for *Macbeth*. The most commonplace is silence, as in “hold my (thy) peace.” Stripped of the imperative verb, this becomes the humble interjection “peace!”, equivalent to our “quiet!” or “shh!” A second meaning is calm: a state of comparative contentment, undisturbed by physical violence, or by fears of being harmed or suffering loss. In the daily life of people and communities, “peace” as calm

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inevitably denotes relative as opposed to absolute tranquility. But “peace” can also mean calm in a less qualified sense, as in the peace of a sound sleep — or calm without qualification, as in the peace of death, or of God. Third is the more collective sense of “peace” as concord — social, political, communal; institutional, national, international. As noted, *Macbeth* mostly eschews this sense. Where found, its influence can be indirect or indistinct. While informing discussions of a play’s politics or Shakespeare’s beliefs, it can also occlude these questions.

In exploring *Macbeth*’s often referentially vague, semantically rich uses of “peace,” I argue that Shakespeare throws light on the word’s intensity of meaning, not so much to fix its value as — more uneasily — to intimate the heavy costs our need for peace can exact.

**Sonia Perello, Universidad de Murcia**

**Pablo Neruda’s Pacifist Version of *Romeo and Juliet*: Shakespeare without his language in post-war Spain**

Known as “the pacifist translation”, Pablo Neruda’s Spanish rendition of *Romeo and Juliet* was informed by his belief that the play was a fervent plea in favour of peace among humankind and a denunciation of war. In 1971, induced into action by the poet’s presentist reading of the tragedy, the Spanish theatre director José María Morera staged *Romeo y Julieta* in Madrid, a much anticipated production which followed Neruda’s version. Thirty-two years after the end of the civil war that tore the country apart (1936-1939), the staging was a response to the prevailing post-war climate in which nobody was pardoned, and many were still punished. The paper follows the critical reception of the production, which despite taking place in the so-called “liberalizing” years of Franco’s fascist regime, was brutally lambasted by critics due to its use of Neruda’s pacifist text. At a time when the “peaceful transition” of the eighties is being contested, the reaction emerges now as the birth of a political and journalistic commitment that would dominate the ensuing transitional years which led to democracy: a tendency to silent those subversive voices that wanted to talk about the horrors of war.

**Kyle A. Pivetti, Norwich University**

**Another World Was Possible:  
Shakespearean Speculative Fiction as Peace Protest**

In their 2001 manifesto, the World Social Forum pronounces a vision of alterity. “Another world is possible,” they declare, “if based on values, radically opposed to those that dominate the world today. We cannot forget, however, that the future begins now.” This group deliberately opposes the World Economic Forum and instead casts itself as a collection of “utopian schemers” who hold “opposition to war ... at the heart of our movement.” In this paper, I put their proclamation “another world is possible” into the mouth of Shakespeare. Science fiction adaptations of his work, I propose, use the

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playwright's towering presence to proclaim not just for a peaceful vision of the future but for a paradoxical view of the past – paradoxical in the sense that re-imagining the future with Shakespeare allows these writers to re-envision humanity's past as one of cooperation, hopefulness, and pacifism.

The treatment of Shakespeare as counter-intuitive “astrofuturist” focuses on Emily St. John Mandel's novel *Station Eleven* (2015). This work imagines a post-apocalyptic landscape beset by disease, greed, and paranoid violence. In that world, the protagonist leads the Symphony, a travelling band of Shakespearean actors who offer the plays as a means of hope. The caravan in which these actors travel is emblazoned with the line “Survival is Insufficient,” a summation of Shakespeare's meaning in the imagined future, and a line stolen from the flagship of astrofuturism that is *Star Trek*. The apocalypse inspires renewed hope for peaceful futures. This novel, I then show, infuses the apocalypse with a number of allusions to the plays, most notably *The Tempest* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Through these references, St. John Mandel also creates a new past, for the world is forced into an archaic experience of horse drawn carriages and crossbows. This past takes on the same hopefulness of “a brave new world” we find in *Star Trek*. It allows readers to envision human history anew, to discover that another world was possible.

**Randall Martin**

**“Is this not an honourable spoil?”: Calculating the Benefits of Peace**

My paper will consider new epistemologies of pacifism and peacemaking that resulted from emergence of gunpowder manufacturing and warfare.

The classical and early modern theory of war and peace posited that these states operated in naturally alternating cycles, modelled on the humoral fluctuations of the human (and especially masculine) body. Peacetime conditions were assumed to be prone to excess and corruption which needed to be purged and brought back into balance by war.

Gunpowder warfare disrupted this spatially and temporally contained paradigm by its disproportionate levels of human and environmental devastation, its militarization of nation-states, and its globalizing economy of capitalized resource exploitation and transnational trade (Martin). These new conditions of growth and progress generated empirically based rethinking of the concepts, arts, and policies of peace and war. They also diversified the largely ethical and human-centred knowledge-systems of Christian Humanist pacifism (which, as current scholarship has shown, is intermittently visible throughout Shakespeare's career and intensifies after James I's accession; Marx, White).

Comprehending the extravagant human and material costs of gunpowder militarization (which reached unprecedented levels at the end of Elizabeth's reign), and justifying the superior productivity of peace, invited new techniques and mentalities of calculation and accountancy. These are exemplified by Sir Robert Cotton's remarkable *Warrs with*



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*Forreign Princes Dangerous to our Common-wealth: or, Reasons for Forreign Wars Answered* (written ca. 1610, printed 1657). Countering pro-war arguments presented to Prince Henry and drawing on his famous library and government archives, Cotton historicized and quantified the financial gains and losses of civil and foreign wars, reign by reign, from Henry II to Elizabeth. In particular, he refuted the longstanding political and chivalric rationalization that the spoils of war pay for or outweigh its expenditures. My paper will argue that Shakespeare demonstrates a similar calculating and sceptical attitude in representing the spoils of war. These moments subvert traditional naturalizations of war, and materially re-found the ethical and social benefits of peace in gunpowder's alarming new era of unprecedented threats and costs.

**Selections for seminar bibliography:**

- R. Martin, "Gunpowder, Militarization, and Threshold Ecologies in *Henry IV Part Two* and *Macbeth*," *Shakespeare and Ecology* (2015). [Apologies for the self-citation.]
- Steven Marx, "Shakespeare's Pacifism," *Renaissance Quarterly* 45.1 (1992), 49-95.
- R.S. White "Renaissance Pacifism" and "Shakespeare's Pacifism," *Pacifism and English Literature: Minstrels of Peace* (2008).