

A Queen of Infinite Space:  
Reimagining Ophelia in *Hamlet* Fan Fiction



Fig. 1. Millais, John E. *Ophelia*. 1851-52. Tate, London. *Tate*. Web. 20 June 2019.

Zilver van der Jagt

5972329

BA Thesis English Language and Culture, Utrecht University

Supervisor: prof. dr. David Pascoe

Second reader: dr. Roselinde Supheert

June 2019



## VERKLARING KENNISNEMING REGELS M.B.T. PLAGIAAT

### Fraude en plagiaat

Wetenschappelijke integriteit vormt de basis van het academisch bedrijf. De Universiteit Utrecht vat iedere vorm van wetenschappelijke misleiding daarom op als een zeer ernstig vergrijp. De Universiteit Utrecht verwacht dat elke student de normen en waarden inzake wetenschappelijke integriteit kent en in acht neemt.

De belangrijkste vormen van misleiding die deze integriteit aantasten zijn fraude en plagiaat. Plagiaat is het overnemen van andermans werk zonder behoorlijke verwijzing en is een vorm van fraude. Hieronder volgt nadere uitleg wat er onder fraude en plagiaat wordt verstaan en een aantal concrete voorbeelden daarvan. Let wel: dit is geen uitputtende lijst!

Bij constatering van fraude of plagiaat kan de examencommissie van de opleiding sancties opleggen. De sterkste sanctie die de examencommissie kan opleggen is het indienen van een verzoek aan het College van Bestuur om een student van de opleiding te laten verwijderen.

### Plagiaat

Plagiaat is het overnemen van stukken, gedachten, redeneringen van anderen en deze laten doorgaan voor eigen werk. Je moet altijd nauwkeurig aangeven aan wie ideeën en inzichten zijn ontleend, en voortdurend bedacht zijn op het verschil tussen citeren, parafraseren en plagiëren. Niet alleen bij het gebruik van gedrukte bronnen, maar zeker ook bij het gebruik van informatie die van het internet wordt gehaald, dien je zorgvuldig te werk te gaan bij het vermelden van de informatiebronnen.

De volgende zaken worden in elk geval als plagiaat aangemerkt:

- het knippen en plakken van tekst van digitale bronnen zoals encyclopedieën of digitale tijdschriften zonder aanhalingstekens en verwijzing;
- het knippen en plakken van teksten van het internet zonder aanhalingstekens en verwijzing;
- het overnemen van gedrukt materiaal zoals boeken, tijdschriften of encyclopedieën zonder aanhalingstekens en verwijzing;
- het opnemen van een vertaling van bovengenoemde teksten zonder aanhalingstekens en verwijzing;
- het parafraseren van bovengenoemde teksten zonder (deugdelijke) verwijzing: parafrasen moeten als zodanig gemarkeerd zijn (door de tekst uitdrukkelijk te verbinden met de oorspronkelijke auteur in tekst of noot), zodat niet de indruk wordt gewekt dat het gaat om eigen gedachtengoed van de student;
- het overnemen van beeld-, geluids- of testmateriaal van anderen zonder verwijzing en zodoende laten doorgaan voor eigen werk;
- het zonder bronvermelding opnieuw inleveren van eerder door de student gemaakt eigen werk en dit laten doorgaan voor in het kader van de cursus vervaardigd oorspronkelijk werk, tenzij dit in de cursus of door de docent uitdrukkelijk is toegestaan;
- het overnemen van werk van andere studenten en dit laten doorgaan voor eigen werk. Indien dit gebeurt met toestemming van de andere student is de laatste medeplichtig aan plagiaat;
- ook wanneer in een gezamenlijk werkstuk door een van de auteurs plagiaat wordt gepleegd, zijn de andere auteurs medeplichtig aan plagiaat, indien zij hadden kunnen of moeten weten dat de ander plagiaat pleegde;
- het indienen van werkstukken die verworven zijn van een commerciële instelling (zoals een internetsite met uittreksels of papers) of die al dan niet tegen betaling door iemand anders zijn geschreven.


De plagiaatregels gelden ook voor concepten van papers of (hoofdstukken van) scripties die voor feedback aan een docent worden toegezonden, voorzover de mogelijkheid voor het insturen van concepten en het krijgen van feedback in de cursushandleiding of scriptieregeling is vermeld.



Universiteit Utrecht

In de Onderwijs- en Examenregeling (artikel 5.15) is vastgelegd wat de formele gang van zaken is als er een vermoeden van fraude/plagiaat is, en welke sancties er opgelegd kunnen worden.

Onwetendheid is geen excuus. Je bent verantwoordelijk voor je eigen gedrag. De Universiteit Utrecht gaat ervan uit dat je weet wat fraude en plagiaat zijn. Van haar kant zorgt de Universiteit Utrecht ervoor dat je zo vroeg mogelijk in je opleiding de principes van wetenschapsbeoefening bijgebracht krijgt en op de hoogte wordt gebracht van wat de instelling als fraude en plagiaat beschouwt, zodat je weet aan welke normen je je moeten houden.

Hierbij verklaar ik bovenstaande tekst gelezen en begrepen te hebben.	
Naam:	<i>Zilver van der Jagt</i>
Studentnummer:	<i>5972329</i>
Datum en handtekening:	<i>21-06-2019</i> 

Dit formulier lever je bij je begeleider in als je start met je bacheloreindwerkstuk of je master scriptie.

Het niet indienen of ondertekenen van het formulier betekent overigens niet dat er geen sancties kunnen worden genomen als blijkt dat er sprake is van plagiaat in het werkstuk.

Contents

Introduction	3
I	6
II	12
III	18
Conclusion	27
Works Cited	29

## Introduction

*Hamlet* is filled with scenes that would fire the imagination of any artist: a ghost appearing on the ramparts of Elsinore; Hamlet on the verge of murdering his uncle as the man is praying; a perilous duelling scene between two fatherless sons; the foreign prince and his troops entering a hall strewn with bodies. And yet, the event that John Everett Millais decides to depict (reproduced on the front page of this thesis) is one that occurs offstage, and of which the audience is only made aware through the account of another character. Ophelia's death remains one of the ambiguous occurrences in the play.. The event Queen Gertrude describes witnessing is filled with almost excessive detail and suggests a madness-induced accident: poor Ophelia falls in the brook while playing with her flowers and, "incapable of her own distress" (Shakespeare 4.4.177), merely stays there, singing to herself until her heavy dress pulls her under. Later, however, she is denied a full burial, as the church suspects her death a suicide, and therefore a sin. The contradictory messages leave Millais with a blank space, a gap in Shakespeare's narrative to explore. In his depiction, attention is immediately drawn to her face, and to her strangely positioned hand, raised up out of the water, in the centre of the painting. She does not seem distressed, nor does she look particularly at peace. It is almost as if she opens her arms to the heavens.

By choosing to depict a scene outside of the ones directly included in the play, Millais' offers up an interpretation of this gap that Shakespeare has left. Even if his interpretation gives no definitive answer, he takes a fragment of Shakespeare's story and adapts it, giving the moment an entirely new form, and thereby making it his own. Adaptations of Shakespeare's text like Millais' painting, are not at all unusual. In fact, they have long been a way of keeping Shakespeare alive and lively: within a century of his death, the first adaptations of his plays appeared, and they have not stopped appearing since. These adaptations are not only manifestations of a lasting involvement and interest in a story, but

they are also invitations for audiences to continue seeking new ways of looking at and connecting with a text. This sense communal investment has only increased with the emergence and subsequent growth of the Internet over the past quarter of a century, as it has provided people with an ease of connection that has allowed whole new engagements to sprout and thrive. One of such relatively new engagements is the writing of fan fiction, a type of rewrite that is characterised by its amateur authorship and radical openness to any interpretation.

In order to illustrate the importance of examining fan fiction as a mode of writing deserving of serious consideration, Kavita Mudan Finn and Jessica McCall draw parallels between the process of writing fan fiction and academic writing. The links they establish build mostly on the fact that fan fiction, like academic work, relies on both close reading and contextual criticism. For writers of fan fiction, there is an inherent desire to completely understand and thresh out the source text, as well as a desire to revise and reimagine it in places where it did not meet expectations, or where there was a wish to further develop the source material. However, they point out that whereas academic writing is restricted by regulations that, while ensuring quality, also inhibit certain more radical discourses, fan fiction “exists in the limen between genre and myth” (28). The world of fan fiction is open to anyone to enter and participate in, either as a reader or as a writer, as long as they know where to find it.

While Finn and McCall’s focus is mainly on the authors of fan fiction, and how they create new meanings for Shakespeare’s works with their own, Valerie Fazel and Louise Geddes are more interested in the collaborative and cumulative aspect of fan fiction, describing how fan fiction reveals “not only the ways in which [works of fan fiction] are shaped according to a group’s interests, but also what occurs when they exist as part of a greater creative dialogue within a community of user-readers” (275). Unlike the act of reading

a book or watching a play, which are unidirectional and make their audiences passive recipients of their contents, the act of reading fan fiction relies heavily on the community surrounding the content as they create meaning together. Additionally, Fazel and Geddes point out that authors and readers alike use not only Shakespeare's source texts, but also the wealth of adaptations that have been accumulated over the past four hundred years to build their own Shakespearean universes.

Because of its association with a more amateur type of storytelling, fan fiction has had to fight to be seen as a type of engagement worthy of academic research. I argue that these engagements with Shakespeare's text should be seen as logical extensions of earlier adaptations. They create spaces for new audiences to discover Shakespeare and find meaning in his texts. As a play that is dominated by its male characters, whose commentary and actions can at points be seen as outright misogynistic by twenty-first century standards, *Hamlet* provides an entryway into seeing how fans today engage with these subjects and problems. By looking at three works of *Hamlet* fan fiction, this thesis sets out to examine how fan fiction authors approach these issues, with a particular focus on their depictions of Ophelia who, as a tragic romantic figure with an ambiguous end, has been a main subject of interest to explore for artists and authors alike.

In the first section, I will consider the position of women in sixteenth and seventeenth century England, how their position changed during this time and how these developments may have influenced playwrights like Shakespeare writing at the time. It will also give an overview of the only two female characters in *Hamlet*, Ophelia and Gertrude. The second section will briefly explore how adaptations of Shakespeare's work have evolved over the past centuries, and how this evolution has led to fan fiction, in order to discuss what fan fiction is in more detail. As well as looking into its development, the section will take a closer look at fan fiction's demographic, and its general as well as more Shakespeare-specific aims.

Finally, the third section will analyse the three works of *Hamlet* fan fiction. It will specifically examine the ways Ophelia is depicted in these case studies, and consider how to make sense of both the changes authors have made to the source text, as well as the parts they may have kept the same in their respective rewrites.



## I

To try to come to a consensus about how Shakespeare wrote about women would be madness without method. Over the course of his numerous plays, he has depicted women of all social standings; he has portrayed wives, daughters, maids, and queens; he has shown them to be curious, and passive, and wise, and witty. Dymphna Callaghan writes that “‘woman’ is never an already accomplished, cold, hard, self-evident fact or category, but always a malleable cultural idea as well as a lived reality that . . . *always already has a history*” (2). She argues that to look at women in Shakespeare’s oeuvre from a present-day, feminist perspective means mediating between the idea of women in the early modern age, as well as the idea of women today – to see them not as fixed characters but as ones that we are allowed to look at differently, from changing angles and perspectives, as time goes on.

From a twenty-first century perspective, it may appear as if the opportunities for women in the sixteenth and seventeenth century were unequivocally limited. As Neil Keeble states: “[Women] were never allowed to forget that they were the daughters of Eve, that they carried her guilt, and that any insubordination on their part was a mark of unregeneracy” (x). He explains that woman’s place was under man’s supervision, whether that was a father, brother, or a husband. Her identity as a good person was intrinsically bound to her identity as a good daughter or a good wife (xi). ‘Good’, here, means chaste, quiet, obedient, and restricted to the boundaries of the house. While this view is prevalent in scholarship surrounding more general overviews of the time period, as well as specifically about women within the Shakespearean canon, over the past couple of decades scholars have worked to counter this idea of the early modern woman as an oppressed, powerless being. Phyllis Rackin cites a number of studies that show women during this period to have an amount of agency over their own lives and circumstances that had previously been refuted. They reveal women living and supporting themselves independently, women being allowed to inherit money and

property, women actively taking part in daily labour, being part of guilds, entering apprenticeships or even taking apprentices of their own (68-69). In addition to this, Juliet Dusinberre explains that the rise of Puritanism in the late sixteenth century was very influential in the changing attitudes towards women: the Puritans' emphasis on the importance of a stable marriage environment meant "[attacking] customs such as forced marriage . . . in order to make the ideal viable by making adultery unnecessary" (4). While this ideal was meant to be an aim for both men and women, it was of greater effect on the position of women because it diminished the "exploitation made possible by [their] economic dependence" (5). Though these examples do not mean that women were not also in a marginalised position during this period, they do provide a counterbalance to the stereotypical idea of the early modern woman.

The change in attitude towards women reverberated throughout society, Dusinberre continues. The Puritans' specific address of a middle-class congregation in combination with the rise of the public theatre, which allowed playwrights to rely on employment from acting companies rather than only on patronage, meant that dramatists started to focus more on the interests of the middle-class. This also meant that the subject matter of the plays had to appeal to a broader, more diverse audience: "[The] commercialism of the public theatre . . . forced [playwrights] to leave the hothouse of academic school drama . . . and get in touch with the concerns of the London world at a time when it was seething with new ideas and activities" (Dusinberre 9-10). New ideas, for instance, about how women should be portrayed as individuals; not mere stereotype, but people in their own right.

With only two (named) female characters, *Hamlet* marks a relative low point in Shakespeare's oeuvre. Both Ophelia and Gertrude are part of key elements of the play: Ophelia plays an important role in the ploy to reveal Hamlet's madness, which indirectly results in her father's death, and Gertrude's remarrying is the source of a lot of Hamlet's

confusion and anger throughout. Still, scholars have noted how the focus, even within academia, often seems to be on how Hamlet, or other (male) characters, *perceive* the women in the play, rather than being on the women themselves (Marino 819). As such, the amount of information about Ophelia and Gertrude that is communicated through the play lacks both depth and substance, and remains mostly filtered through their male relations.

Queen Gertrude is characterised by an accumulation of ambiguities. The uncertainties about the degree of her involvement in King Hamlet's death, as well as the question of whether her ultimate alignment is with Claudius or Hamlet, leave audiences guessing about her true intentions throughout, and Shakespeare's text offers little relief. While she starts out the play at Claudius' side, as she asks Hamlet to move on from his father's death and "let thine eye look like a friend on Denmark" (1.2.69), she ends it with Hamlet's name on her lips, rather than Claudius'. When and where exactly this change in affiliation might come from, however, remains unclear. Most appraisals of Gertrude's character come from others, particularly from the ghost of her late husband, and from her son, but even these seem riddled with ambiguities. While the ghost of King Hamlet tells Hamlet: "Taint not thy mind, nor let thy soul contrive / Against thy mother aught; leave her to heaven" (1.5.85-86), this is immediately followed by: "And to those thorns that in her bosom lodge / To prick and sting her" (1.5.87-88). The ghost's conflicting messages about his judgment of Gertrude only serve to confuse Hamlet, who, up until this point has shown, if not glad acquiescence, at least compliance with her requests. While ambiguity and conflict are no uncommon themes in *Hamlet* and its characters, the doubt surrounding Gertrude's motivations and actions makes her a disconcerting character: she is no Lady Macbeth, clearly playing a key influential role in the plots of the play, neither is she Desdemona, tragic victim of circumstance. Instead, she remains ungraspable until her last moments.

In contrast to Gertrude's contradictory acts, Ophelia is characterised by an almost unnerving blankness. As the daughter of the counsellor of the King, as well as being on the receiving end of Hamlet's affections, Ophelia is shown from the start as being closely connected to some of the major players in the drama. Her relation to them is not only through familial or emotional ties, but also because they exert a certain amount of power and control over her. During Ophelia's first scene, her brother gives her a warning regarding Hamlet's increasing affections towards her – this, before the narrative has given any indication of a strange change in Hamlet's behaviour. Ophelia merely replies with assent. Later in that same scene, as Polonius demands to know what is going on between her and Hamlet, Ophelia tells him obediently. He, in return, infantilises her by saying: "You do not understand yourself so clearly / As it behooves my daughter and your honor" (1.3.95-96) and later following this up with: "You speak like a green girl / Unsifted in such perilous circumstance" (1.3.100-101) and "[Think] yourself a baby" (1.3.104). Unlike her brother, Ophelia is not allowed to rely on her own judgement – instead, she is constantly asked and expected to play parts in other people's lives and other people's plots. She is not allowed connections of her own, except the ones that are expected of her, that is, the relationships with her father and brother, whose orders she follows without question. In 3.1, when she is told to talk to Hamlet in order to let Polonius and Claudius witness the severity of his madness, she is even denied a response entirely. As Dusinberre states: "[Ophelia's] whole education is geared to relying on other people's judgements, and to placing chastity and the reputation for chastity above even the virtue of truthfulness" (94). She is not allowed to make any decisions of her own: even her death, a suspected suicide, is disguised as an accident. It is only in her madness that she is able to speak with her own voice. As she hands out columbines (a representation of marital infidelity) to the King, the Queen, and her own brother, she passes judgement, quietly, as she has passed through the rest of life. She leaves them holding their own sins, telling them: "I would give

you some violets [which represent faithfulness], but they withered all when my father died” (4.2.177-78). In spite of, or perhaps because of her madness, this might be her most, even only, authentic moment in the entire play.

David Leverenz argues that Ophelia’s end is a very deliberate move on Shakespeare’s side, a “microcosm of the male world’s banishment of the female” (303) that is meant to show what can go wrong when women and ‘female’ qualities are rejected. While her presence and death are undeniably meaningful, and possibly even instrumental in illustrating the deep-rooted rot present in Denmark, she is never allowed to become a fully rounded character, but remains static. She dies offstage, her grief over the death of her father masked by her madness, her voice only allowed to rise above those of the people around her when her state of mind is questionable. In a similar manner, Gertrude stays unfathomable. While the ambiguity surrounding her character leaves ample room to theorise about her intentions and motivations, the lack of substantial information about her also leaves her floating somewhere in between compelling and alienating. Both women stay out of reach, for the characters in the play as much as for the audience.

## II

As general cultures and beliefs change over time, so do interpretations of plays like Shakespeare's, or of characters like Ophelia and Gertrude. Adaptations are pre-eminently a way to approach these changes as they allow their creators to draw inspiration from a text but also to make changes based on one's own ideas. People have let themselves be inspired by Shakespeare's work for centuries, as Shakespeare let himself be inspired by past (literary) works as well: it is difficult to deny the similarities between *Romeo and Juliet* and Ovid's "Pyramus and Thisbe," or dismiss the ones (nominally or otherwise) between the tenth century Scandinavian myth *Amleth* and Shakespeare's *Hamlet*. To consider fan fiction of Shakespeare's work a logical extension of earlier adaptations of his texts means to consider what shape these earlier adaptations have taken, and how people have engaged with Shakespeare and his texts over the course of the past centuries.

In the decades following Shakespeare's death, he served as a source of inspiration for numerous of his contemporaries as well as his successors. As John Gross points out, if the playwright's influence on his fellow Jacobean dramatists was significant already, they were still able to imagine him their colleague: "For later generations [Shakespeare] assumed much more awesome proportions. . . . To set out to write like him was to invite the near-certainty of being crushed by the comparison" (634). Still, this intimidating example that Shakespeare had set did not stop others from imitating, transforming, or adapting his work. There are ample examples of these instances not only in England, but also in Germany and France: Shakespeare's work elicited the creation of a number of cult-like followings, which even major names such as Goethe and Voltaire were part of (Gross 636). While Shakespeare's influence spread across Europe steadily throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth century, the types of engagement that resulted from this were not uniform. As Gross notes, Shakespeare's impact lay not merely in leading dramatists away from the classic theatre rules,

such as Aristotle's unities of time, place and action, but it lay also in changing writers' interaction with other texts (636). Because Shakespeare's plays became a well-known component of the theatrical field for both dramatists and audiences alike, writers were able to invoke Shakespeare's plots, characters or even certain lines, secure in the knowledge that their respective audiences would understand these references. Shakespeare's influence, then, was not only significant in terms of structural changes to the theatre and the plays performed there; an important part of its significance lay in the way he opened up possibilities for intertextual engagement.

Over the course of the centuries that have passed since then, developments such as the emergence of the Internet have radically changed the way and the ease with which people are able to interact with content, as well as with each other, and fan fiction is a prime example of this. Karen Hellekson and Kristina Busse note that the meaning of and connotations attached to the term 'fan fiction' have also changed over the years; when it was coined by John Speer in 1944, it was to describe fiction *about* fans rather than fiction *by* fans (Hellekson and Busse 5). Hellekson and Busse evaluate a number of attempts to narrow down the meaning of fan fiction today: from it being a form of collective storytelling, in which case it could be grouped with works as old as *The Iliad*, to considering it in terms of the fan community surrounding it, which would mean that the cult-like following revolving around Sherlock Holmes and the resulting pastiches could be seen as the genesis of fan fiction. They finally decide on looking at the concept as a form of rewrite<sup>1</sup> that "[tends] to respond to a specific form of media texts, and [encompasses] a specific amateur infrastructure for its creation, distribution, and reception" (7), with the Internet having become a key feature of this 'amateur infrastructure'

---

<sup>1</sup> The term 'rewrite' can entail a number of different things: from exploring the exact storyline as it plays out in the original text through a different character's perspective, to radically changing certain parts of the original story and exploring how those changes affect the work, or transposing the entire story into a completely different time or place.

over the past twenty-five years. One thing that Hellekson and Busse do not note in this discussion of definitions, but that other scholars *have* drawn attention to, is that fan fiction is written with a love for the source text in mind (Finn and McCall 29; Yost 193). Love, in this case, refers to a sense of affection as well as a sense of care and respect. Even if there is a critical element to their fan fiction, as is not uncommon, authors feel enough of a connection to the source text or its characters to want to spend time exploring it further. This is also where the communal aspect of fan fiction recurs. As Henry Jenkins points out: “For most fans, meaning-production is not a solitary and private process but rather a social and public one” (75). This is contrary to other parts of the media landscape, which have become increasingly more focused on the individual, rather than the public experience. Whereas reading books has generally been seen as an individual act, these days it is also possible to watch movies and plays at home. While both the acts of reading and writing fan fiction might seem like similarly solitary experiences, there is an inherently collective aspect to it as well. Fan fiction writers are positioned within a community of other fans, and neither they nor their writing exist in a vacuum. As Jenkins explains: “Fan writing builds upon the interpretive practices of the fan community, taking the collective meta-text as the base from which to generate a wide range of media-related stories. . . . [Fans stretch the] boundaries to incorporate their concerns, remolding [the] characters to better suit their desires” (156). Fan fiction authors are therefore constantly participating in a three-way negotiation with the source text, other intertextual media related to that source text, and other fans who have their own similar or contrasting ideas and desires. In a way, this process of collective meaning-making parallels the way in which Shakespeare himself also collaborated with his contemporaries on several of his plays.

In addition, this ‘stretching of boundaries’ that Jenkins speaks of is also reminiscent of René Girard’s theory of mimicked desire. Girard theorises that people are always looking at



other people to establish their own desires, and therefore their wants will mirror other people's wants. Fan communities feed off of each other's desires, building on each other's ideas about a text. Girard sees desire not as a linear path from subject to object, but as a triangular dynamic in which the subject and object are joined by a third actor: the mediator, or the mimicked. He finds this mimicry to be a result of people's desire for the unknown, the unfamiliar, the Other, as represented by the mediator. Maria DiBattista explains that people "[look] to find in the Other what is so grievously missing in [themselves]" (5). While Girard tends to focus on the violent shapes that this can take when people try to resolve this desire by simply *taking* without negotiation, DiBattista looks at this desire not merely as a negative. According to her, desire "can metamorphose into a jealous zeal not merely to possess but to *know* the beloved" (6, emphasis mine). The existence of fan fiction exemplifies this longing for the unfamiliar sides of a story, to know and understand the liminal spaces; the Other; the unknown parts of a tale already told.

While fan fiction as a concept might be relatively new, especially when put on a timeline with Shakespeare himself, it has already changed and developed significantly since its emergence. In the eighties, interaction between fans happened largely through meetups at conventions or the exchange of hard-copy zines that contained art and pieces of writing of or about a certain text (Hellekson and Busse 4). These days, however, the Internet has made it easier for fans to connect through digital rather than physical spaces, with a number of sites being specifically created and designed to host works of fan fiction. These provide a space where writers can share their work and where readers can not only read these works but can also communicate with authors in the form of comments or likes. One example of such websites is Archive Of Our Own (often referred to as AO3), an archive created in 2007 by the Organization for Transformative Works (OTW), a "nonprofit organization established by fans to serve the interests of fans by preserving the history of fanworks and fan culture in its

myriad forms” (“What We Believe”). While some fan fiction websites are dedicated to fan fiction based on a specific text, AO3 is open to all, and thereby offers a space to a wide variety of writers and readers alike.

Making general statements about the demographic of fans online is difficult; the amount of different communities spread across a variety of platforms makes it complicated to narrow down a focus group that is representative of fans as a whole. Kavita Mudan Finn and Jessica McCall state that “fandom is a community overwhelmingly driven by marginalized readers: women, members of the LGBTQIA+ community, and readers of colour” (32) and particularly the skew towards young, female participants has been suggested by others as well (Barnes 74). While the amount of peer-reviewed, quantitative research to support this is lacking, preliminary statistics on these categories do seem to point to there being truth to these claims, especially with regards to a majority of users identifying as female, as well as a majority identifying as queer (centreftheselights, “Gender”; “Sexuality”). This assertion is important because, Finn and McCall argue, fan fiction is pre-eminently a place where these marginalised groups assert their own narratives, “actively agitating against white patriarchal epistemologies that have historically defined which texts have cultural value and how these texts should be interpreted” (32). Fan fiction lacks a strict gatekeeping practice; in principle, anyone can read works and publish their own, as long as they know where to look. There are no tickets to sell, nor will there be much subject matter that will scare off seasoned readers. This lack of censorship and radical openness is part of why fan fiction is often seen as trivial, and generally unworthy of serious literary study. At the same time, however, the openness is what makes it possible for marginalised people to enter these spaces without inhibitions. In fan fiction, people are able to explore the space off the stage and the space in between the lines. Writing fan fiction is, to a certain extent, exerting ownership over a source text, and for people that have historically seen themselves be grossly underrepresented in favour of white,

heterosexual, male-centric narratives, fan fiction is a way to make even those narratives personal by rewriting them. As Valerie Fazel and Louise Geddes note, Shakespeare's plays become a playing field for fans to insert themselves into "through the redirection of the narrative according to their interest, [or] the vicarious participation through newly created characters or scenario" (278). The topic of dislocation in *Hamlet* as it is explored through its main character's musings about his origins, and him questioning where he belongs, can take on an entirely different meaning when considered by for instance a person of colour, who might build on their own experiences of displacement in a predominantly white community. Similarly, a character like Ophelia might take on a completely different role when written by a woman who is actively trying to reject narratives of female disempowerment.

Fan fiction (re)opens the gates to a communal Shakespeare, "[signalling] the ways that Shakespeare adaptation evolves and is shaped by communities of users" (Fazel and Geddes 278). It offers as much a new insight into Shakespeare's texts as it offers an insight into the people reading and writing it. As such, it makes sense to see fan fiction as a (relatively) new development in the history of Shakespeare adaptations, and one that brings an inherently communal aspect to the field. It allows its writers to actively take part in the process of meaning-production in ways that reflect their own everchanging perception of the world around them. The ability to share their work directly with, and receive feedback from, a community of like-minded people, enables them to continuously redefine what Shakespeare might mean together.

## III

Works of fan fiction attempt to enrich an already existing narrative, and in the case of *Hamlet*, its range of characters, motifs and themes, as well as its plethora of gaps lend it well for fan fiction as it attempts to investigate and thresh out narrative threads from the perspectives of the previously unfamiliar, the unknown, the Other. I decided to work with the fan fiction archive Archive Of Our Own (AO3), mostly for its relative ease of use and its range of content. To narrow down the works for selection, I sorted the works from most to fewest kudos (AO3's equivalent of Facebook's 'likes') in order to get an idea of the most well-liked works in the category, and chose my case studies from the results that followed. Broadly speaking, works of fan fiction fall into one of two categories: either they are 'canon compliant', meaning the work adheres to (major) plot points as they occur in the source text, or they are 'canon divergent', which means that the work diverges from the source text at significant parts of the plot ("Canon Compliant"; "Canon Divergence AU"). A third term that is often used to describe works of fan fiction is 'Alternate Universe' (AU). An AU can be either canon compliant or divergent, but means the plot is transposed to a different setting from the one in the source text: it is set in a different time, in a different location, or, in some cases, both ("Alternate Universe").

Starting off with a canon compliant work, "Marry, I Will Teach You," written by user anxiousAnarchist<sup>2</sup>, covers the events in the play from Ophelia's first scene in 1.3 until her last (living) appearance in 4.5. In the author-issued notes preceding the fan fiction, anxiousAnarchist explains that the work is the result of a prompt from another user, who requested: "What I'd like most of all from this prompt is to see Ophelia making some kind of choice. . . . I would really like to see her portrayed as Hamlet's equal in intelligence"

---

<sup>2</sup> The three pieces of fan fiction discussed in this thesis have been put in an online storage in order to ensure their accessibility even if the works were to be deleted from Archive Of Our Own. They are all available through their respective links in the Works Cited list.

(anxiousAnarchist 1). While the work centres around Ophelia and her thoughts and experiences both during and surrounding the events of the play, it is written in second person. Using second person pronouns as a way to refer to Ophelia throughout, the author establishes both a connection between the narrator and the reader, as well as between Ophelia and the reader. The former is a way to draw attention to the fact that the readers of this work are likely already aware of the way this story will play out; like the narrator who is recounting Ophelia's thoughts from the outside, the reader is aware of where these events will lead. The latter functions as a way to connect the reader to Ophelia more closely. Considering her limited appearance in *Hamlet* itself, the second person point of view enables the reader to identify with Ophelia more readily because they are forced, by the narrative, to *become* her.

As mentioned previously, the work covers all of the scenes Ophelia is present in over the course of the play, often in summary, consisting more of description than dialogue. The shift from drama to regular prose is not only a stylistic one but also allows for different insight. *Hamlet* does not have a narrator, nor is it told from a particular point of view – there are no characters that are present in all scenes – but “Marry” does and is. In the fan fiction, the reader sees Denmark, its court, and its inhabitants through Ophelia's eyes. Whereas in *Hamlet*, her feelings on matters surrounding the plot are background information at best, in “Marry,” they exist on the surface. The very first scene ends with a reflection on Ophelia's side: “[Polonius] laughs, and pats your hair. An infantilizing gesture, but that's what you are now. A girl struck dumb by a few lines of poetry. No matter. You'll wear it with a difference” (anxiousAnarchist 2). The last sentence echoes Ophelia's line in 4.2, when she, in her madness, is handing out flowers to the King, the Queen, and her brother, and says: “You may wear your rue with a difference” (Shakespeare 4.2.176). As mentioned in section one, the only time Ophelia seems to truly be able to speak her mind is in these final scenes of madness. The fact that this phrase is mirrored in “Marry,” but is placed at the very start of Ophelia's

story, instead of at the end of it, is suggestive of the shift in Ophelia's agency in anxiousAnarchist's work: here, she will not meekly take up the role of naïve, innocent girl. She is not only playing part in her father's ploy, or playing into Hamlet's illusion of madness; she has her own plans. It is made clear from the start that the Ophelia that appears in "Marry" is very aware of how she is perceived by the people around her. Besides the passages that parallel Ophelia's scenes in the source text, there is also one entirely new scene that anxiousAnarchist has inserted. Placed early on in the work, right after her first appearance, it depicts Ophelia and Horatio forging Hamlet's letters to Ophelia together. The insertion of this scene suddenly puts some of the control over the situation in Ophelia's hands during the next conversation, during which she presents the forged letters to her father. Instead of her having to unwillingly show him those personal letters, she is now able to manipulate her own narrative, and decide what her father gets to know. Because of his assumption that she is only a naïve little girl, he does not doubt her resignation of the letters for a moment. Not only does the inserted scene give new meaning to the already existing scenes in the play, but it also functions to give Ophelia's relationship with both Hamlet and Horatio more depth. In only a few short sentences, anxiousAnarchist paints a picture of close friendship between the three as Ophelia reminisces about nights they spent together in Elsinore's library. *Hamlet's* Ophelia is characterised by one-sided connections to her father and brother, who both treat her like an obedient child rather than a human being with a mind of her own, as well as by a supposed romantic engagement with Hamlet himself, even though none of their interactions in the play testify to this. The inserted scene in the library, as well as Ophelia's thoughts during later interactions with Hamlet and Horatio, is suggestive of a friendship that extends beyond the events of the play. Showing her as having these relationships, as caring about her friends and having them care about her in return gives her personality a new layer.

Because of the gaps that Shakespeare leaves his audience, it is sometimes difficult to decide when a work starts being canon divergent, rather than it being a case of the author simply filling in some of those gaps with their own interpretation, especially with a character like Ophelia, about whom so much remains unclear. The second case study, “With a Difference,” written by user glioscarnach, walks the line between canon compliance and canon divergence, but undoubtedly ends up being the latter. While glioscarnach’s choice to imagine Ophelia as pregnant is not in and of itself an unheard of interpretation, the fact that it is Claudius’ child she bears, and not Hamlet’s, is a surprising reveal. Questions regarding the exact how and why are never answered directly, but Ophelia’s ambition is the clearest indication of her reasons behind starting an affair with Claudius. This is something she makes clear from the start: it was she who took the initiative. He is not using her, if anything, she is using him. By the beginning of the work, though, whatever relationship they did have is over. His cowardly distancing of her after he finds out about her pregnancy is enough to put her off entirely. In “With a Difference,” Ophelia is not afraid to desire, and what she desires is power. It is the main reason she goes after Claudius, and the main cause of her disdain for Hamlet, who in her eyes is only a confused, purposeless boy who shows up to her room looking crumpled at best: “[His] stockings are loose and spattered with black ink. His knobby knees, she notes with a vague revulsion, are knocking together” (4).

The canon divergence of the work becomes clearer as the scenes described stop merely mirroring those of the source text, and Ophelia starts speaking up and talking back. When at first, she only does so in thought, since “[no] other realm is free to her” (glioscarnach 2), as her frustration with the people around her grows, her caution abates. Slowly, she shows herself not to be a captured fly, but rather the spider at the centre of the web. She is aware that, pregnant with the Claudius’ child, with the man in question ignoring her, her days at court are numbered, but she is not satisfied to let herself fade from view as she knows will

happen if she does not act. So she starts daring more: she dares Hamlet to strike her, dares to look Claudius in the eye and tell him his secrets won't remain secrets forever, and dares to capture the entire story in the tapestry she's weaving, creating a tangible manifestation of the rot she sees all around. After witnessing not only her own contempt for the world, but through her eyes the inherent depravity of Elsinore's court and its members, it hardly comes as a shock when Ophelia reveals that it was she, with her knowledge of flowers and poison, who helped Claudius kill the old King: "She would write a last confession, if any would read it. Would write it in blood, and not her own. *I killed a King; lay with his brother. . . . I am the snake that bites in the orchard*" (7). The statement is suggestive of a desire for the rest of the world to know what she has done, so they would not be able to deny her intelligence or power any longer.

Where "Marry, I Will Teach You," mostly makes Ophelia a more rounded character, "With a Difference" makes her an entirely different person altogether. She snarls and growls and spits and bleeds. She weaves a tapestry of not only her own sins, but also those of all the people around her, and imagines pushing her sewing needles into flesh. In her final scene, she poisons herself: "[Not] for love . . . [and] not for mercy's promise. But I must end [Claudius'] line, I must end my own. This is no world, love, for the killers of kings" (9). In a softer version of Hamlet pouring poisoned wine down Claudius' throat, she kisses the King with venomous lips, thereby sealing his fate as well. She is eerily calm in her apathy for him, for her child, and for herself. "With a Difference," gives way to an ugliness and wickedness in Ophelia's personality that is entirely at odds with the daintiness of *Hamlet's* Ophelia. However, while this change might not make her more sympathetic, neither is it repulsive. She does not pretend to be a better person than she is, and her aversion for everyone around her is at least understandable when the reader is forced to see through her eyes how she is constantly belittled and underestimated. Even her end feels more satisfying when it is one she has so



clearly had a hand in herself: instead of crumbling into madness, she takes matters into her own hands, which gives her an amount of agency that *Hamlet*'s Ophelia was never allowed.

With over fifty thousand words, the third case study, "The Undiscovered Country," written by user indigostohelit, is significantly longer than either "Marry, I Will Teach You" or "With a Difference," but also significantly longer than *Hamlet* itself, which contains around thirty thousand words (Johnson). "The Undiscovered Country" is canon compliant for the most part in the sense that it contains all the major plot points from *Hamlet*, but it also contains some canon divergent elements, partly due to the fact that it is an Alternate Universe work and transposes the plot of *Hamlet* to 1950s Chicago. The royal line of succession of the Danish court becomes the Chicago mayoral race, which members of the Denmark family have been winning without fail for over seventy years. The story is told in a scrapbook style, making it almost a pastiche: it opens with a letter addressed to the reader, stating that what will follow is a testimony put together by an unknown person. A considerable part of the narrative are recounts of events told from Horatio's perspective, but these are regularly interspersed with descriptions of footage found on security cameras, as well as transcriptions of audio recordings, newspaper articles, and letters. The function of employing these different storytelling techniques is twofold. On the one hand it allows indigostohelit to include scenes from the source text that Horatio is not present for without having to significantly change those scenes by somehow imposing his presence. On the other hand, it allows for the illusion of the narrative including not only a subjective, but also an objective perspective.

"The Undiscovered Country" hits most, if not all, of *Hamlet*'s narrative beats, albeit with some adjustments to account for the change in setting. One such adjustments is the emphasis indigostohelit puts on racial inequality in the United States of the 1950s. While race is hardly a topic in *Hamlet*, indigostohelit presents Horatio as a black man in the midst of the white Denmark family. With Horatio as the main narrator, the narrative is able to break with

the way race is often communicated in Western literature, where whiteness is an assumed default, and all divergence from that default a noteworthy feature. Through Horatio's eyes, however, it is whiteness that becomes a noticeable element in every aspect of life: white are the people at Claudius' and Gertrude's wedding (an explicit contrast with the all-black staff); white is the poison that kills Hamlet's father; white is the dress Ophelia drowns in.

On the surface, the thematic focus in "The Undiscovered Country" is very different than in the other two works. Whereas those were written to explicitly forefront Ophelia's experiences, the "The Undiscovered Country"'s design of *Hamlet's* female characters is less protrusive. This is not to say, however, that the way they are treated is less significant. Because of the scrapbooked storytelling, the readers will get glimpses of their personalities from different perspectives. As in *Hamlet* itself, Ophelia's first 'appearance' is when her brother warns her about Hamlet before he leaves. The scene is no straightforward prose, but instead a transcript of an audio recording between Ophelia, Laertes, and Polonius. While the overall message of the scene remains analogous to the one it has in *Hamlet*, the way it plays out is slightly different. Instead of merely listening to her brother's judgement of *her* situation, Ophelia anticipates his response: "I know what you're going to tell me. . . . I'm not as stupid as Father makes me out to be" (indigostohelit 12). indigostohelit is explicitly drawing attention to the fact that in *Hamlet*, Ophelia is overlooked by the people around her. In "The Undiscovered Country" her intelligence and awareness show immediately. When Polonius talks to her, he tells her: "I can't imagine what might happen [at university] to . . . a slip of a girl like you" (indigostohelit 14), after which the narrative states that there is a silence in the recording before Polonius speaks again. Because the scene is only a transcription of audio, there is no description of Ophelia's physical reaction to the comment, but in light of her previous responses, the explicit insertion of the silence after another belittling comment is telling. It might denote defiance or frustration or resignation, but in the

end her response is left up to interpretation for the reader. Despite the fact that a lot of the narrative is told from Horatio's perspective, these scenes of implied objectivity allow Ophelia to speak for herself instead of her words only being filtered through Horatio's narration.

One particular theme that is prevalent throughout "The Undiscovered Country" is that of being watched. Not only are there ever-present guards all throughout Elsinore Mansion, but there are also hidden cameras everywhere: in lamps, in the ceilings, in the mirrors. Both Horatio and Ophelia show themselves to be extremely aware of the fact that they are constantly being watched. In a scene indigostohelit added to the narrative that takes place while Hamlet is gone in act 4, Horatio and Ophelia are walking through the mansion late at night. Despite having had no personal interactions before, they are able to speak to each other openly about their shared connection to Hamlet. That is, until they pass through a room full of mirrors and suddenly "Ophelia's face [goes] absolutely still, as if frozen" (indigostohelit 82). Horatio realises instantly why her disposition changes, and makes sure that while they are passing through the mirrored room, his wording is deliberately vague. Even if their positions are not the exact same, they are both Others in Elsinore. By emphasising not only their feelings of being watched, but also legitimising that feeling throughout the fan fiction by drawing attention to the cameras everywhere, indigostohelit is explicating the constant vigilance required from Ophelia and Horatio because of their Otherness.

In spite of all the changes and all the shifts in perspective, the works never forget where they came from. This is not only made apparent through their titles – all quotes from *Hamlet* itself – but also throughout the works themselves through subtle and less subtle references: "Marry, I Will Teach You" is filled with allusions to the theatre and with stage directions, Ophelia referring to herself as an actor on multiple occasions; in "With a Difference," glioscarnach winks at Shakespeare by giving Ophelia a cat she names Mousetrap; and despite Marcellus' famous, "Something is rotten in the state of Denmark"

(1.4.90) being absent in “The Undiscovered Country” the imagery of rot is persistent throughout. The authors make sure to include these instances because they understand that part of the joy of reading Shakespeare fan fiction is in recognising these glimpses of the source text, as much as it is in recognising how these instances might take on new meanings and create new layers when (re)appropriated by new minds. This only exemplifies further how writers navigate interlacing their own interests with Shakespeare’s work. It shows that they are not merely trying to revise Shakespeare. Instead, they are communicating both with him, responding to the messages they glean from his text, and through him, using his words to advance their own narratives.

## Conclusion

All three of the case studies discussed attempt to complicate, or in one case even entirely revise, the idea of Ophelia as a merely naïve, malleable girl who becomes a victim of a world filled by men refusing to listen to her. Perhaps more importantly, the authors of these works decide to give her a voice in a way that *Hamlet* does not. In some cases this means literally allowing her to speak up at times when she was silent or silenced in the source text. ““Go yourself, why don’t you?”” (glioscarnach 6) Ophelia says to Hamlet when he tells her to go to a nunnery in “With a Difference,” and the reader understands that she has decided that with the limited time she has left, her voice is worth more than staying in the prince’s good graces. If no one will listen to her, she will demand their attention, take up space. In other cases, as in “Marry, I Will Teach You,” the fact that the story is told with her at the helm is also a way of giving her a voice. Even if she never rises up the way she does in “With a Difference,” the entire work is solely devoted to elaborating on her thoughts and feelings. The reader is invited to witness how Ophelia understands and navigates the world she lives in. Whereas her thought processes and intentions are largely left undetermined in *Hamlet*, anxiousAnarchist offers the reader a more solid idea of who Ophelia is and why she acts the way she does throughout the play. Notably, filling in parts of her characterisation like anxiousAnarchist does, does not have to invalidate the source text in any way. Instead, the two dovetail perfectly, building on each other instead of one cancelling each other out. Even “The Undiscovered Country,” in which Ophelia is not the main focal point at all, manages to give Ophelia room to speak for herself, albeit in a different way. The manner in which indigostohelit uses documents and transcripts in a number of Ophelia’s scenes, instead of having these be narrated by Horatio, means her presence in these scenes is unfiltered. Describing Ophelia’s actions as seen on security footage or transcribing her voice heard on tape gives the reader a sense of objectivity. When Ophelia speaks in the recordings, the reader is assured that she says and does as the

narrative states, instead of her words and actions being interpreted through another character's point of view. In different ways, though, all of the works attempt to give her a degree of personhood that she is denied in *Hamlet*.

By changing parts of Ophelia's narrative, these works are not refusing Shakespeare: they are responding to him. Fan fiction is a conversation. Writing fan fiction is writing a response to an already existing story, whether that response is coming from a place of agreement, of dissatisfaction, or anywhere in between. Once the initial response has been given, the conversation continues between writers and readers alike. This means that if Ophelia's passivity was indeed a very deliberate choice on Shakespeare's side, in an attempt at making a point about the dangers of a male-centric world, fan fiction represents the reply to that message. Or rather, it represents *a* reply; it does not claim to be definitive in its interpretation. In fact, it is arguably one of the fundamental tenets of fan fiction that it is open to any interpretation. At the same time, the personal aspect of fan fiction means that at times, these responses will still be predisposed to highlight certain narratives over others. In the case studies discussed here Ophelia may have got the opportunity to be more of a focal point, but Gertrude's character on the other hand remains largely unexplored. In a similar vein, none of the works really touch upon the incestuous or Freudian subject matter that has been one of the common topics of study in academia. Further research could shed more light on what makes certain parts of *Hamlet*'s story or characters particularly appealing to fan fiction authors, while others are left neglected. Another possible path to explore comes from the explicit depiction of racial inequality in "The Undiscovered Country," a layer that its writer decides to add despite it being non-existent in the source text. The addition of a topic that is highly relevant in present-day society like that, opens up the possibility of looking at fan fiction as not only a specifically functioning as a way for people to grapple with social and political events or experiences.

In the end, fan fiction is practically limitless in its possibilities. It is continuously developing and growing as the communities surrounding it grow and develop as well. Undoubtedly, the case studies discussed here do not provide a conclusive overview of the ways in which Ophelia has been reimagined and will be reimagined in the future, but it has given a glimpse into the endless possibilities for new audiences to find new Ophelias. As Millais' *Ophelia* hangs in the Tate Museum to be admired for generations to come, Ophelia herself will continue to roam fan fiction's narratives and people's imagination, as a queen of infinite space.

Works Cited

“Alternate Universe.” *Fanlore*, Organization for Transformative Works, 29 Apr. 2019. Web. 11 June 2019.

anxiousAnarchist. “Marry, I Will Teach You.” *Archive of Our Own*, Organization for Transformative Works, 26 Dec. 2012. Web. 10 May 2019.

<[www.drive.google.com/open?id=1tQN3OM03LBBAeixsodVPyELPY2-YeheR](http://www.drive.google.com/open?id=1tQN3OM03LBBAeixsodVPyELPY2-YeheR)>.

Barnes, Jennifer L. “Fan fiction as Imaginary Play: What Fan-Written Stories Can Tell Us About the Cognitive Science of Fiction.” *Poetics* 48 (2015): 69-82. Web. 10 Mar. 2019.

Callaghan, Dymphna. Introduction. *A Feminist Companion to Shakespeare*. Ed. Dymphna Callaghan. 2nd ed. Chichester: Wiley, 2016. 1-18. Print.

“Canon Compliant.” *Fanlore*, Organization for Transformative Works, 18 Apr. 2019. Web. 11 June 2019.

“Canon Divergent AU.” *Fanlore*, Organization for Transformative Works, 20 May 2019. Web. 11 June 2019.

centreoftheselights. “Gender.” *Archive of Our Own*, Organization for Transformative Works, 1 Oct. 2013. Web. 12 May 2019. <[www.archiveofourown.org/works/16988199/chapters/39932529](http://www.archiveofourown.org/works/16988199/chapters/39932529)>.

--. “Sexuality.” *Archive of Our Own*, Organization for Transformative Works, 1 Oct. 2013. Web. 12 May 2019. <[www.archiveofourown.org/works/16988199/chapters/39932580](http://www.archiveofourown.org/works/16988199/chapters/39932580)>.

DiBattista, Maria. “Jealousy and Novelistic Knowledge.” *Mimesis, Desire, and the Novel: René Girard and Literary Criticism*. Ed. Pierpaolo Antonello and Heather Webb. East Lansing: Michigan State UP, 2015. *ProQuest*. Web. 20 May 2019.



- Dusinberre, Juliet. *Shakespeare and the Nature of Women*. 2nd ed. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 1996. Print.
- Fazel, Valerie and Louise Geddes. "'Give Me Your Hands If We Be Friends': Collaborative Authority in Shakespeare Fan Fiction." *Shakespeare* 12.3 (2016): 274-86. Web. 10 May 2019.
- Finn, Kavita M. and Jessica McCall. "Exit, Pursued by a Fan: Shakespeare, Fandom, and the Lure of the Alternate Universe." *Critical Survey* 28.2 (2016): 27-38. *EBSCOhost*. Web. 10 May 2019.
- glioscarnich. "With a Difference." *Archive of Our Own*, Organization for Transformative Works, 5 Jan. 2014. Web. 10 May 2019. <[www.drive.google.com/open?id=140pUhXJmD09--yiGjih8LQKH8zFHGaYa](http://www.drive.google.com/open?id=140pUhXJmD09--yiGjih8LQKH8zFHGaYa)>.
- Gross, John. "Shakespeare's Influence." *Shakespeare: An Oxford Guide*. Ed. Stanley Wells and Lena C. Orlin. Oxford: UP, 2003. 633-44. Print.
- Hellekson, Karen and Kristina Busse. Introduction. *The Fan Fiction Studies Reader*. Ed. Karen Hellekson and Kristina Busse. Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2014. Print.
- indigostohelit. "The Undiscovered Country." *Archive of Our Own*, Organization for Transformative Works, 1 May 2014. Web. 10 May 2019. <[www.drive.google.com/open?id=1N--hKsDvy8ww-DP2Tb4FCHezvosxGbt](http://www.drive.google.com/open?id=1N--hKsDvy8ww-DP2Tb4FCHezvosxGbt)>.
- Jenkins, Henry. *Textual Poachers: Television Fans and Participatory Culture*. 20th anniversary ed. New York: Routledge, 2013. Print.
- Johnson, Eric M. "Shakespeare's plays, listed by number of words." *Open Source Shakespeare*. George Mason University, n.d. Web. 26 May 2019.
- Keeble, Neil H. Introduction. *The Cultural Identity of Seventeenth-Century Woman: A Reader*. Ed. Neil H. Keeble. London: Routledge, 1994. ix-xii. Print.

Leverenz, David. "The Woman in Hamlet: An Interpersonal View." *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 4.2 (1978): 291-309. *ProQuest*. Web. 25 Apr. 2019.

Marino, James J. "Ophelia's Desire." *ELH* 84.4 (2017): 817-39. *ProQuest*. Web. 24 Apr. 2019.

Millais, John E. *Ophelia*. 1851-52. Tate, London. *Tate*. Web. 20 June 2019.

Rackin, Phyllis. "Misogyny Is Everywhere." *A Feminist Companion to Shakespeare*. Ed. Dymphna Callaghan. Chichester: Wiley, 2016. 60-74. Print.

Shakespeare, William. *Hamlet*. *The Norton Shakespeare*. Eds. Stephen Greenblatt, Walter Cohen, Suzanne Gossett, Jean E. Howard, Katharine E. Maus and Gordon McMullan. 3rd edition. NY: W.W. Norton & Company, 2016. 1764-853. Print.

"What We Believe." *Organization for Transformative Works*, Organization for Transformative Works, n.d. Web. 12 May 2019.

Yost, Michelle K. "Stratford-Upon-Web: Shakespeare in Twenty-First-Century Fan fiction." *Shakespeare and Millennial Fiction*. Ed. Andrew J. Hartley. Cambridge: UP, 2018. Print.