The brainchild of Daniel Fischlin, the University of Guelph's research chair and early modern professor as well as the founder and director of the Canadian Adaptations of Shakespeare Project, Outerspeares, a daylong conference about Shakespeare took place in the U of G's Peter Clarke Hall on Nov. 1.

Fischlin, alongside U of G PHD students Mark Kaethler and Mauricio Martinez, and Georgetown University PHD student Jessica Williams, organized the event. The four divided duties contacting potential sponsors to receive funding and setting up speakers to appear at the conference.

Operating under the premise that “a globalized, digitized media environment has truly become, in Shakespearean terms, a “brave new world,”” the conference strived to show how new media are changing the way Shakespeare is being understood, and in the process transforming understandings of history, culture, and media itself.

Featuring three panels, the day involved discussions about topics like Shakespeare after 9/11, Iranian adaptations of Shakespeare’s work, Facebook as an environment for discussion about Shakespeare, early 1930s radio representations of Shakespeare, and more.

Although she was scheduled to make an appearance and read from her paper “Shakespeare: Bard of Hindustan – A Semiotic and Cultural Perspective,” Surabhi Modi of India’s Lucknow University, absence illustrated just how crucial funding was to the facilitation of the conference.

“It was unfortunate, she sent her regrets and we tried to accommodate as best as we could, but unfortunately we couldn’t work the tech out in time,” Kaethler explained.

However, there is also a book in the works that will gather essays like the ones presented at the conference, and Kaethler suggested that hopefully she will end up being a part of that.
Apart from the three panel discussions, the event’s afternoon programming presented the conference with two plenary sessions. The first, provided by Anthony Del Col, Conor McCreery, and Andy Belanger was on *Kill Shakespeare*, a graphic novel adaptation that pits some of the playwright’s greatest heroes and villains against one another.

The second plenary consisted of a screening of *Mickey B*, an Irish adaptation of *Macbeth* set in an operating maximum-security prison and starring actually prisoners that were currently serving time for what were mostly life sentences. The screening was preceded by opening remarks about the film from director Tom Magill, who also answered questions after the screening.

“It was really important for us to have artists instead of just having a scholarly conference about how Shakespeare has been appropriated and adapted.” Kaethler explained. “It was a bit better to have artists and creators talk about that as well as scholars speaking on what’s been done at the same time. That was the best kind of conference we could have asked for.”

“We’d love to have another one. We really hope to have this again,” he said. “It was a tremendous success in my mind and the conference organizers’ and pretty well anyone I spoke to who came.”

Sponsors included the Canadian Adaptations of Shakespeare Project, the Central Student Association (CSA), the School of English and Theatre Studies’ (SETS) visiting speakers committee, School of Language and Literatures (SOLAL), The Better Planet Project, and the College of Arts. Their partnership allowed the conference access to guest speakers, AV equipment, catering, and more.

There is an error in the article. The third organizer for the conference was not Jessica Williams of Georgetown (although she presented an excellent paper), but rather U of G PhD Student Jessica Riley.

**Discussion**

1 Comment

*MAURICIO MARTINEZ NOVEMBER 6, 2011 AT 4:47 PM*

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