**“Hast any philosophy in thee?”[[1]](#footnote-1):**

Subjecting Shakespeare to the Risks of Philosophy

**International Conference (in French and English languages):**

**Thursday 17th-Friday 18th MARCH 2016 – 400TH Anniversary of Shakespeare’s Death**

Co-organised by Pr. Pascale Drouet (Department of English Studies, University of Poitiers) and Pr. Philippe Grosos (Department of Philosophy, University of Poitiers), under the auspices of research laboratories

* FoReLL (Team B1 : « Poetics of Representation »), dir. Pr. Michel Briand
* MAPP (« German metaphysics and practical philosophy »), dir. Pr. Bernard Mabille

- With the participation of the Students from the Poitiers Conservatory of Drama, dir. Agnès Delume: Voicing Shakespeare’s texts translated into French by Yves Bonnefoy,

- With the participation of French poet, essayist and translator Yves Bonnefoy: conference and roundtable.

- With the participation of Paul A. Kottman, editor of *Philosophers on Shakespeare*: conference.

**Scientific Committee**

William C. Carroll (University of Boston)

Hélène Cixous (CIPH – Collège international de philosophie – et CCEFEG – Centre d'Etudes Féminines et d'Etudes de Genre, Université de Paris 8)

Pascale Drouet (Université de Poitiers)

Philippe Grosos (Université de Poitiers)

Paul A. Kottman (The New School, New York)

Marie-Madeleine Martinet (Université de Paris Sorbonne – Paris IV)

**Argument**

Although Shakespeare wasn’t a philosopher and in his work he showed little explicit interest in philosophy, whether ancient philosophy or in the thinkers of his time, his status in the philosophical world is decidedly different. Indeed, even if the reception of his work by philosophers wasn’t immediate, since the 19th century Shakespeare has attracted considerable attention, notably among major German philosophers such as Hegel, Nietzsche and Schelling. This fascination has continued into our age, to the extent that Jacques Derrida’s interest in the author of *Hamlet* has led to rich exchanges of ideas.[[2]](#footnote-2)

What do all these philosophers find in Shakespeare’s work, if not philosophy itself? It could certainly be argued, first of all, that behind all these important thinkers (and a great poet and playwright is an important thinker) lies an implicit philosophy. In this respect, to consider Shakespeare *philosophically* would involve a reappraisal of his philosophical assumptions regarding fundamental concepts, and an examination of his sense of modernity in the transition from the 16th to the 17th century.

Secondly, a philosophical approach to Shakespeare also takes seriously the description that he gave in his own work of the human condition, which embraces all of philosophical anthropology. In this regard, it involves not only studying Shakespeare *in his time*, but also in all time, in the hypothetical timelessness that he postulates.

Thus the role of the conference is threefold:

- a philosophical examination of Shakespeare’s thought as an example of the birth of modernity, in his critical and conflicting relation with an ancient world from which he irreversibly distances himself.

- an exploration of the reception of Shakespeare’s work within the philosophical tradition. Indeed, this tradition is so rich that one is obliged to acknowledge that philosophers recognized him as a *thinker* with whom they could engage. This reception has its own history, depending on whether philosophers have read Shakespeare’s work as poetry or drama – they have not found the same realities.

- a consideration of the fundamental concepts in Shakespeare’s work, notably the questions which, over the centuries, have exerted an ongoing fascination for philosophers.

Lastly, subjecting Shakespeare to the risks of philosophy involves rigorous conceptual interpretations, including, perhaps, reading more into his work than he would have intended. But isn’t that also a sign of the greatest thinkers, to be credited for more than they actually wrote? In the end, philosophizing about Shakespeare will also lead to a consideration of philosophy itself, with its pretention of putting into words and taking the risk to see what is always elusive and ever to be questioned. This is the dual requirement—the double risk—of this conference.

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**Deadline**

Proposals, with a short notice on contributor, are to be sent **by June 15th 2015** to

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1. William Shakespeare, *As You Like It*, ed. Alan Brissenden, Oxford, OUP, 1993 : Acte III, scène 2, 21. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Cf. *Shakespeare and Derrida*, *The Oxford Literary Review* 34.1 (2012), Edinburgh University Press, <http://www.euppublishing.com/toc/olr/34/1>; Jacques Derrida, *Spectres de Marx*, Paris, Galilée, 2006. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)