

Thursday 25 July

1pm Milgate Room, AD Hope Bldg, SLL



Luisa Moore

Textual Critique Through the Artist's Eye: John Austen's 'Hamlet'

Through the Artist's Eye: John Austen's Hamlet explores the way in which the visual art can subtly reflect unique and partially transgressive interpretations of characters' implied interiority in Shakespeare. It takes taking John Austen's highly aesthetic, art nouveau illustrated edition of *Hamlet*, dating to 1922, as a case study, paying close attention to symbol, gesture, expression and overall artistic composition as they reflect Austen's close reading of the play as text. Ahead of his time, the artist anticipates late twentieth-century critical and performative interpretations of, in particular, Hamlet and Ophelia. Thus, this thesis sets out to demonstrate Austen's artistic ingenuity and foresight, and to highlight the critical value of interpreting artistic renderings of Shakespeare's characters as a form of literary critique. The republication in 2010 of Austen's *Hamlet* signals a renewed appreciation for illustrated editions of Shakespeare, making this project a timely contribution to the field of research pertaining to Shakespearean visual art. Prior to 2010, Austen's contribution to the visual artistic world of *Hamlet* had gone unnoticed for much of the twentieth-century, most likely because his copies had been, before this time, extremely limited in number. Provocative and imaginative, his illustrations present an unprecedentedly dark prince, a complicated and independent Ophelia, a diabolical Ghost, and host of disturbing, deeply symbolic, supernatural, feminine entities. Women are no longer relegated to the background in his *Hamlet*, as in so many onstage, visual artistic and filmic adaptations of the twentieth-century; instead, they are granted a position centre-stage, with the Greek goddess Nemesis ('Vengeance') as their fierce, relentless representative.

Luisa Moore is a PhD student in the School of Literature, Languages and Linguistics. Her research focusses on twentieth-century visual artistic representations of *Shakespeare*, and how these images shed light on an artist's reading of the text and the implied interiority of Shakespeare's characters. Her written thesis takes John Austen's highly imaginative, art nouveau illustrated *Hamlet* (1922) as a case study.

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