Senior Spotlight: Monica Fleischer

1) If you could take the place of a character in a novel, who would you be and why?
Keladry from Tamora Pierce's Protector of the Small series, because she is awesome: she's the first girl in her kingdom to openly train to become a knight, she fights with a glaive, and she raises a griffin. She is also good at archery; this being one of the only ways I could imitate her, I once took an archery class at summer camp, but it ended in misery and failure.

2) What is the single best English class you've taken at Carleton and why?
The Victorian Novel with Susan Jaret-McKinstry. Not only did it inspire my comps, but it also gave me the opportunity to fulfill my dream of creating a mini pop-up version of Wuthering Heights.

3) Tell us something that most of the other English majors don't know about you.
One of the reasons I decided to come to Carleton was that during my prospective class visit, Arnab Chakladar made a Wishbone joke and EVERYBODY LAUGHED. It was a moment that changed my life.

4) Which book would you be okay never reading again?
Bleak House. I tried to like it since it was assigned in my favorite class (see above), but it was just too bleak. I don't even remember many details of the plot...like Chesney Wold, the time I spent reading that book was abandoned to darkness and vacancy.

5) Six words describing your experience as a Carleton English major:
"May I be a silent participator?"

Quote of the Week

"O Agnes, O my soul, so may thy face be by me when I close my life indeed; so may I, when realities are melting from me, like the shadows which I now dismiss, still find thee near me, pointing upward!"

STUDENTS! Call in to ext. 4322 with the author and the name of the week. The first person to correctly name the quotation will win a special package of cookies with a faculty signature!
1. What Shakespeare play is or has been the hardest to put on film?
It’s a tie between Love’s Labour’s Won and Cardenio.
2. What makes film a particularly interesting medium for Shakespeare’s work? What does film do to Shakespeare that the stage and the text cannot?
At a practical level, film democratizes access. Tickets to see Al Pacino play Shylock in The Merchant of Venice on Broadway last year were going for $250, not to mention having to get to New York. Most people can find a way to watch movies for free.
Not that anyone watches Shakespeare movies. (That’s only partly a joke; you could count on two fingers the number of Shakespeare films that have made their money back.)
In terms of interpretation, there are both costs and opportunities. Editing, camera movement, and framing can all generate meaning in ways unavailable in the theatre. On the other hand, because film can show anything, one is tempted to replace “But, look, the morn in russet mantle clad/ Walks o’er the dew of yon high eastward hill” with a Vittorio Storaro shot of sunrise, or “The dragon wing of night o’erspreads the earth” with a shot of dusk. But what a loss! It’s the conundrum that every Shakespeare adapter faces.
3. If Shakespeare were alive today, what do you think would be his favorite movie or movie genre?
Shakespeare wanted to get paid, so he’d be talking to Bay, Cameron, and Spielberg about how to negotiate gross points. But film is a director’s medium, whereas television is a writer’s medium, so he’d probably be working at HBO. He’d be fired up about how good The Wire was, so he’d respond by writing something so rich and complex and true to life that it would make The Wire look like Glee.
4. What is the worst possible combination of director, star and play that you could imagine for a film adaptation of Shakespeare?
Brett Ratner directing Adam Sandler in King Lear. No wait, Uwe Boll directing Kristen Stewart as Hamlet. I love this game!

5. What would your dream Shakespeare film be?
With the exception of Orson Welles, great English-language filmmakers have avoided Shakespeare. I’d like to see Billy Wilder’s Hamlet, Martin Scorsese’s King Lear, Federico Fellini’s All’s Well that Ends Well, Kathryn Bigelow’s Macbeth, James Cameron’s The Tempest. These movies would all star Buster Keaton, Judi Dench, Denzel Washington, Humphrey Bogart, and Rachel McAdams, by the way. This is a fun game too.

6. If you could take any other A & I Seminar being offered in the English department this term, what would it be?
The oeuvre of Gregory Blake Smith, team-taught by the entire English department. What’s that? Not being offered? Majors should demand a refund.

7. What do you like best about teaching A & I Seminars?
The students, who impress and inspire me daily, though don’t quote me on that lest it go to their heads.

Thanks to all the readers:


and special thanks to arnab chakladar for being our master of ceremonies. old chuck would have been proud.