

SAA 2012 Seminar

Non-Shakespearean Drama and Performance: Critical Implications

Seminar Structure:

The Seminar is divided into four thematically connected groups:

1. Modern performance: Barker, Basso, Smyth
2. Early modern stage: Boyle, Dessen, Kimbrall, Mello, Wittek
3. Recovering theatre history/sense of performance: Ewert, Hyland, Perez Diez
4. Women (early modern and present-day): Meyer, Nesler, Solga.

Abstracts by Group:

1. Modern performance

Non-Shakespearean Drama and the Melodramatic Imagination (Roberta Barker, Dalhousie University)

Over the course of the nineteenth century, as lovers of Shakespeare's 'realistic' characterization created an image of the Bard as 'our naturalistic contemporary,' a parallel pejorative construction emerged of non-Shakespearean early modern drama (and particularly of Jacobean and Caroline tragedy and tragicomedy) as 'melodramatic.' The contrast between the 'realist' Shakespeare and his 'melodramatic' contemporaries was one of the means by which Shakespeare's work became bound to notions of modernity on the emerging mainstream 20th-century stage, especially in England and North America, while his contemporaries were linked to 'vulgar' styles and fixed firmly in the past. To this day, both scholars and theatre reviewers frequently use the term 'melodramatic' in order to describe the perceived failings of non-Shakespearean early modern drama in performance.

My paper will suggest, conversely, that the elements generally described as melodramatic in early modern tragedy and tragicomedy are not only among their most theatrically vibrant but also among those that can most easily bring them into close contact with today's audiences. I will consider recent productions of John Webster's *The White Devil* (1612) and their critical reception, arguing that a re-evaluation of the play's 'melodrama' may help us to rethink its stage history. I will then examine Dekker and Massinger's *The Virgin Martyr* (c.1620-22), a play that remained popular well into the Restoration but that has been only rarely performed since, in order to explore the ways in which an embrace of 'melodrama' could offer contemporary directors a

language with which to explore this disturbingly vibrant and all-too-relevant play in performance. Reclaiming the 'melodramatic' as a viable mode for the interpretation of early modern drama might help us, not only to rediscover the vitality of many non-Shakespearean plays, but also to look afresh at aspects of Shakespeare's own work ignored by many of his modern admirers.

**Douglas Morse's film of *The Jew of Malta*
(Ann Basso, University of South Florida)**

Shakespeare's plays have been widely interpreted by moviemakers, but unfortunately his contemporaries have gotten far less attention. I am happy to report, however, that Grandfather Films has recently wrapped filming of a cinematic version of Christopher Marlowe's *The Jew of Malta*. The film is currently in post-production and will be released sometime in 2012; it is directed by Douglas Morse and stars Seth Duerr and Derek Smith. Duerr is the artistic director of the York Shakespeare Company and has played Iago and Claudius, as well as many other Shakespearean roles. Derek Smith is a Broadway veteran, most notably for playing Scar in *The Lion King*, and this past summer he appeared as Antonio in the Shakespeare Theatre Company's production of *Merchant*. Morse's past projects include several general interest films, *The Adulterer*, *The Kindergarten Shuffle*, and *2000 Miles*. He also made his mark with films for academic audiences: a full-text production of *The Merchant of Venice*, with a video study guide led by Phyllis Rackin, and the well-received *The Summoning of Everyman*, which Douglas Bruster called "the most impressive film I have seen of a pre-Shakespearean drama in English" and Harry Keyishian, writing for *Shakespeare Bulletin*, said "beautifully captures the essence of *The Summoning of Everyman*."

Morse has generously provided me with an advance "rough cut" of *The Jew of Malta*, which was filmed in May of 2011 on Governor's Island in New York City. My paper will respond to the film, analyzing the interpretation of the director, actors, and designers. I have interviewed both Morse and actor Seth Duerr, who plays Barabas, and will incorporate their thoughts into the paper.

**'On cheating pictures': (Re)Making Massinger for the Modern Stage
(Conor Smyth, Queen's University Belfast)**

As part of the post-millennial rehabilitation of the non-Shakespearean canon on the British stage, the oft-neglected works of Philip Massinger have received new and

unprecedented attention from a variety of directors and theatre companies. Recent years have seen productions of *The Roman Actor* (RSC, 2002), *The City Madam* (RSC, 2011), *A New Way to Pay Old Debts* (Highly Strung Productions, 2011), as well as rehearsed readings of *Believe What You Will* (RSC, 2006) and Massinger, Fletcher and Field's *The Honest Man's Fortune* (University of Christ Church, 2011). This paper will explore some of the ways in which these plays register the opportunities and challenges of staging works by a Jacobean and Caroline playwright generally unknown to present-day audiences. Additionally, the plays may be located as a set of loci for critical questions about the processes of performing non-Shakespearean plays whose textual status is bound up with difficult issues of authorial collaboration (*Fortune*) and manuscript corruption (*Believe*). The paper will devote particular attention to the production of *The Picture* directed by Philip Wilson for the Salisbury Theatre, Massinger's town of birth, during November 2010, and the complex methods by which the production refracted the text's thematic and philosophical concerns through sets of (post)modern cultural anxieties and technologically innovative environments. Most noteworthy for critics of early modern drama, the production channels a theatrically self-reflexive dimension which is both central to Massinger's larger canon and prescient in a great deal of Shakespearean drama itself. As the production demonstrates, an expansion of the study of present-day Massinger performances have the capacity to shed light on the methodologies by which lesser known Renaissance playwrights are (re)constructed and (re)made to satisfy some of the expectations and assumptions of audiences whose understanding of the Renaissance is institutionally twinned with those of Shakespeare.

2. Early modern stage

"Part of this truth I know":

**Indeterminacy in John Fletcher's *The Night Walker*
(Nicola Boyle, Loughborough University)**

In John Fletcher's play *The Nightwalker* the question 'Shall we not believe Books in print?' is asked but perhaps a more relevant question to ask would be 'Shall we not believe the action in drama?' Fletcher's play, like many of those by his comedy-writing Jacobean contemporaries, relies upon indeterminacy throughout and the drive to resolve these unknowns moves the action of the play forward. Indeterminacy occurs throughout the dramatic process in many ways; it may occur from the playwright simply giving an indistinct stage direction which allows for alternate courses of action, but

which will not ultimately affect the plotting of the play, or it may occur where the audience is purposely left unclear as to what is going on; the collapse of Lady Macbeth, or of Hero in *Much Ado about Nothing* are examples of instances where Shakespeare has used this second mechanism and it is instances such as these with which this paper is mainly concerned. At its heart Fletcher's play is closely concerned with ideas of honesty and truth, but its many exhortations for characters to 'believe' what they are being told are undercut with lies and deceptions; within the word be[lie]f there is often a lie which is to be exposed. The audience is frequently in the dark during the performance of this play, not just in a dramatic way, with much of the action occurring in the dark of night, but in a metaphorical way too with events happening of which they are not fully informed; the audience is sometimes given full insight into the deceptions of the play but not always. These uncertainties can lead to deviances in the expected outcome of the plot as with the 'death' of Maria in *The Nightwalker*. Fletcher's play demonstrates other of these aspects of fooling the audience with visual lies for the staging of night, trickery of action with deaths that are not as they seem, deceptions of identity, and the staging of straightforward dishonesty which is then shown not to be so. The audience is asked to, and becomes complicit with a desire to, suspend their disbelief but their awareness of the truth of actions is only partial. Understanding how such duplicity is staged with, and without, the audience's knowledge impacts our knowledge of early-modern drama. This paper is interested in the ideas of dramatic indeterminacy involving the staging of these instances, and their resolutions as part of the dramatic process. Fletcher was not the only playwright to engage in theatrical indeterminacy, but concentrating upon one play gives an opportunity to examine in detail how such uncertainties affect plotting and staging of early-modern plays, and gives an opportunity to show links and contrasts between Fletcher's play with other early modern plays and playwrights, including Shakespeare.

Much Virtue in *O-Oh*: A Case Study
(Alan Dessen, University of North Carolina)

For a reader of the First Folio, Hamlet's last utterance is not the much discussed word "silence" but a sound, printed as "O, o, o, o" (TLN 3847) and followed by "*Dyes.*" A few scholars have paid attention to this phenomenon, most notably E. A. J. Honigmann who classifies it as a *crypto-direction* that "directed the actor to make whatever noise was locally appropriate. It could tell him to sigh, groan, gasp, roar, weep." Hamlet's four Os, however, have not fared well on the page or on the stage so that only the rare theatrical professional has experimented with the Folio signal. My goal in this paper is to suggest

the options generated by multiple Os (I have limited my search to sequences of three or more) as used by a wide range of playwrights as part of what I term the original *theatrical vocabulary*.

Those who do confront this usage single out three examples from the First Folio: Hamlet, Lady Macbeth in her sleep-walking, and Othello after learning the truth about the handkerchief. My first discovery was that there are additional examples in the canon: two more in Quarto *Othello* (from the dying Roderigo and from Othello later in 5.2) along with other uses by the dying Lear in the Quarto, Titus in Folio 3.2 at the killing of the fly, and Falstaff as Herne the Hunter being pinched by supposed fairies. Of the roughly forty examples from outside the canon some are predictable - e.g., when Os are linked to figures dying, sick, or in pain. Not anticipated, however, was the regular presence of such signals in the comedies of Jonson, Middleton, Brome, and others.

From my compilation I come to no startling conclusions. Multiple O-Ohs represent a playwright's response to a practical need in both tragedy and comedy, for the device serves as the equivalent to an open or permissive stage direction by which the dramatist leaves the implementation of a given effect to the actors. That reading highlights the danger of treating a Shakespeare passage or problematic moment in splendid isolation from the rest of the period (e.g., Falstaff's Os of comic anguish correspond neatly to Morose's comparable pained response in *Epicoene*). Moreover, today's theatrical professionals should have the same freedom with scripted O-Ohs as had their early modern equivalents.

My findings do not resolve the problem of what to do with those four letters that follow "The rest is silence." I can offer various options (e.g., the choice by Samuel West, RSC 2001, who died with a smile or quiet laugh), but the moral of my tale is that editors and other scholars should stop faulting Burbage for his dastardly interpolations of such abominations into otherwise pristine Shakespeare texts. As a dramatist Shakespeare was adept at using the tools at hand, but to understand his distinctive implementation of those tools requires a working knowledge of the plays of his contemporaries.

Personation and Performance: The Boy Companies and the Adults
Garth Kimbrell (Stanford University)

The "little eyases" passage in the Folio edition of *Hamlet* registers the increasing divide between the private hall playhouses, occupied at the time by boy actors, and the

amphitheaters used by adults. Though a number of critical and historical questions remain about this passage, such as when Shakespeare wrote it or how much business the boys actually took from the adults, this paper will take up the question of how the boy actors differed from the men as performers. Shortly after the “eyases” passage we see Hamlet lecturing a player on acting, asserting the primacy of holding “the mirror up to nature.” Shakespeare suggests here a theory of acting similar to Thomas Heywood’s ideal of performing “as if the personator were the man personated.” The idea of “personation” applies, I will argue, solely to the adult actors of the public stage; never is such a concept invoked to describe the acting of boys. Although Michael Shapiro speculates that the boy actors used a variety of acting styles, from the formal oratorical to the naturalistic, and Reavly Gair offers the compelling theory that the boys’ acting style evolved as they grew older, the idea that the actor becomes the person he pretends to be, that performance can pull you into the reality of the play, only describes the acting in the public theaters. Plays written for boys frequently allude to the youth of the actors, and the many metatheatrical moments in these plays render the dramatic performance essentially referential and topical. If “personation” indicates an immanent power of performance, plays for the boys rely on the nature of the script and its relation to the times (usually thought of as “girding” at the times, and sometimes “farting” at them). Thus, plays written for the boy companies contain so much early authorial self-fashioning and lead their authors, with striking inevitability, into personal quarrels or difficulty with the authorities over subject matter. The venues, their audiences, and their actors all contributed to the divide between the adults in the amphitheaters and the boys in the indoor theaters, but the possibilities and ideals of performance stand at the center of this process throughout.

Christopher Marlowe’s Hellmouth and Cauldron
Barbara Mello (University of Southern California)

This paper looks at the emotional forces invested in the hellmouth and cauldron as stage properties in Christopher Marlowe’s *The Tragical History of Dr. Faustus* and *The Jew of Malta*. Under Marlowe’s direction, these props invite critiques of the early modern stage as the physical space of the spiritual location of damnation. The boiling cauldron and the ravenous jaws of hell sits beneath the public stage waiting to rise through the trap door to cook and feed. Theater is a citational practice. Early English stage traditions demarcated stage space horizontally to delineate the three locations the soul travels through—heaven, middle earth, and hell. The playing area is citationally middle earth, above the stage, heaven and below the stage, hell—everlasting darkness and damnation. The entrance to this location of perpetual torment in the imagination of early modern peoples was the hellmouth and cauldron. I argue that in Marlowe’s plays

these stage props fuse the sacred and profane, creating a unique critical lens to better understand early modern culture's fear and fascination with the public stage. In other words, the performative powers of these portals to hell situate stage space in-between the super and natural worlds. Marlowe uses cues, stage directions, shadowy references, as well as the physical stage properties of the hellmouth and cauldron in *Faustus* and *The Jew of Malta*, respectively, to examine English Christian concepts on hell and damnation. He also seems to use these stage props to draw attention to the space below the stage as a literal and physical location of demonic power. The early modern stage, in other words, controlled this unstable space where the fierce and meaningful stage properties of hell culture await their cue to emerge out of demon space into the playing area of the stage. This paper first looks at how *Faustus* rehearses this collusion between the stage and demonic space through the constant moments of feeding in this play that leads us to the final act of the hellmouth devouring Faustus' soul. Next, I turn to the *Jew of Malta* to examine how the notions of cooking, feeding, and divine retribution in this play continues Marlowe's demonic experiment.

“The Play of Gondomar”: A *Game at Chess* and the theatrical public
Stephen Wittek (McGill University)

The NSDP seminar asks participants to consider how studying performances of drama by Shakespeare's contemporaries might impact critical understanding of Renaissance dramaturgies—including Shakespeare's. I plan to approach this question from a historical perspective by presenting my research on theatrical public-making practices relating to the King's Men production of Thomas Middleton's *A Game at Chess*, a notoriously popular theatrical event that attracted a spectatorship of 30,000 during the course of a wildly popular nine-day run in August 1624.

Game provides a unique window to early modern theatrical practice and reception because it has left a number of surviving documents that show it generating discourse that moved *out of* the theater and into a wide variety of spaces, thereby extending the limits of the theatrical public. This collection of documents includes six manuscripts, three quartos, fifteen reports of performances, ten official letters, and a comedy by Ben Jonson. Conversely, the play also offers a number of examples of movement *into* the theater. Rather than classical literature or history texts, Middleton mined material from inexpensive newsheets, polemical pamphlets, and other media deriving from the public centered on contemporary news. These connections to news culture are particularly significant because they document an evolution in meaning concomitant to publication.

As Michael Warner very helpfully makes clear, all public discourse not only postulates, but also characterizes a space of conversation. Attention to the ways that the meaning of discourse evolves as it moves from one space to another enables a specification of this process of characterization, thereby making it possible to construct a profile of a public making practice in distinctive detail. With this goal in mind, my methodology therefore regards the set of contemporary texts related to *Game* as the vestiges of publication, a fragmented but nevertheless legible record of a public-making process in action.

A clear picture of the public-making activities connected to the King's Men's production of *Game* contributes to a better understanding of early modern drama (including Shakespeare's) because it discloses an important aspect of how the commercial theater prompted the formation of a relatively new, novel social entity: a public—a heterogeneous group of adherents selforganized around an open invitation to exercise judgment in regard to the most important concerns of the day. This view of the theater builds on recent work by a number of prominent Shakespeareans, including Steven Mullaney, Lena Cowen Orlin, Michael Bristol, and (my thesis supervisor) Paul Yachnin. In their research for the MaPs project at McGill University, these scholars have argued that the eighteenth-century public sphere theorized by Jürgen Habermas in fact originated in the seventeenth-century with the development of a plurality of publics, most notably the public created by the early modern theater, an incredibly fertile space for conversation that Yachnin has described as “the leading arena of public-making practices and the most potent engine of social and political change in early modern England.”

3. Recovering theatre history and a sense of performance

Reading Performance: Shakes and Not-Shakes (Kevin Ewert, University of Pittsburgh at Bradford)

Palgrave is just about to release a new strand to its Shakespeare Handbooks series on Shakespeare's Contemporaries. Volumes on *THE CHANGELING*, *THE WHITE DEVIL* and *'TIS PITY SHE'S A WHORE* will be published in May 2012, with volumes on *DOCTOR FAUSTUS*, *VOLPONE* and *THE DUCHESS OF MALFI* to follow shortly thereafter. Leaving aside for the moment the rather provocative notions one might develop from Shakespeare's name being used not once but twice ("The Shakespeare Handbooks: Shakespeare's Contemporaries") in (re)branding this strand of non-Shakespearean plays ... the area of interest for this paper is how exactly the Handbooks shift and alter in

dealing with these "others". The heart of each Handbook is the Commentary that takes a reader through the entire play, exploring and unlocking the written text's theatrical potential by imagining how it might be rehearsed or performed on stage. This imaginative focus on the progressive experience of a production (and the continuous visualization of a play's physical narrative) while reading the text is the core feature of each volume, and it is here that I want to explore several key questions. How is the nature of the textual encounter in this new strand different from encountering Shakespeare? How is the (non-Shakespearean) text's theatrical potential explored/conjured in ways different from working with Shakespeare, in terms of: the imagined/implied physical narrative; the actor's subtext or opportunities for characterization or imperatives to making performance choices; and that "progressive experience" that an audience would have in the theatre? And are any differences due to differences between Shakespeare and not-Shakespeare, or more the result of imaginative freedom and ignorance -- states that both might be a part of visualizing performance from texts without the wealth and burden of performance histories that (most of) Shakespeare brings with it?

The bigger picture: why canons are bad for us
Peter Hyland (Huron University College)

The opening sentence of the description of this seminar states: 'Shakespeare's contemporaries have begun to compete with him for dominance in theaters, films, editions, and the study of Renaissance drama.' This is an agreeably optimistic opinion, but I would say that it seriously overstates the case in each of the categories. While it is true that such theatres as the Globe in London, the Swan in Stratford, England, and the Blackfriars Playhouse in Staunton, Virginia have increased the number of non-Shakespearean early modern plays staged, the Stratford Shakespeare Festival in Ontario, Canada, the major classical repertory theatre company in North America, has staged only three such plays in the past ten years, while it has staged about 40 Shakespeare plays in the same period, and I suspect that this is the more normal state of affairs. I should add that the company at the Staunton Blackfriars theatre, which has an admirable record of staging non-Shakespearean plays, is nevertheless called the American Shakespeare Theater. As to films, a lot of academic work has been done on Alex Cox's film of *The Revenger's Tragedy* precisely because there's not much else to write about. Editions? Setting aside Gary Taylor's monumental attempt to reconstitute Middleton as our second Shakespeare, there are not many new editions of plays that have not already got good editions. There are short collections like Daniel Vitkus's *Three*

Turk Plays, which is certainly a good thing, but try getting hold of an edition of Chettle's *Hoffman*, or the anonymous *Look About You*. I can have no informed opinion on whether non-Shakespearean drama is more studied now than it has been, but if it is I would guess that it is as much because of the need for subjects that have not been done to death for doctoral dissertations as because there is a competition for dominance against Shakespeare.

I don't want to appear to be churlishly negative here, but it seems to me that we are not doing very well in our attempts to get out of the shadow of Shakespeare, and insofar as we do, we stay with the small group of dramatists who have long been 'canonical.' In 2002 Karen Bamford and Alexander Leggatt published in the MLA's *Approaches to Teaching* series a survey of the non-Shakespearean early modern plays taught at the undergraduate level. What they discovered in effect constituted a canon of early modern drama. They found that the most frequently represented dramatists are Marlowe, Jonson, Webster and Middleton, though there are representative plays by other dramatists (for example, *The Spanish Tragedy*, *The Malcontent*, *The Shoemakers' Holiday*, *'Tis Pity She's a Whore*). While this canon fluctuates (*The Tragedy of Mariam* moves in, *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay* moves out), it does not expand much, and contains about 30 plays. In *The Cambridge Companion to English Renaissance Tragedy* published in 2010, Emma Smith and Garrett A. Sullivan Jr. included no tragedies that did not appear in that list, and even Sarah Werner's *New Directions in Renaissance Drama and Performance Studies*, strayed only a little way into the unusual.

I wish strenuously to argue that if we are to understand properly the meaning of performance in Shakespeare's time it is necessary not simply to decentre him, but also to look beyond the small canon of plays that are 'competing' with him to plays that are not competing because they are generally treated with scorn or indifference. There are many plays that were immensely popular in their own time, such as *Mucedorus* and *The Blind Beggar of Alexandria*; there are plays whose importance has simply been ignored, such as *Hoffman*; there are failed plays with huge ambition, such as *The Whore of Babylon*. There is, if we can get away from irrelevant concerns of 'literary' or 'artistic' value that I think have sometimes distorted our understanding of the field, no shortage of plays that can very usefully supplement our knowledge of early modern performance. And then we have to use our imagination.

**An editor's theatre: The impact of non-professional, experimental
and hypothetic performance on editorial practice.**

José A. Pérez Díez (Shakespeare Institute, University of Birmingham)

Over the past decades, Shakespearean textual editors have felt the need of paying greater attention to the theatrical life of the plays they were editing. From the timid 'Stage-history' sections written by Harold Child for the *New Shakespeare* (Cambridge University Press, 1929-61), which were appended to texts that often tried to recreate a naturalistic visual narrative in the stage directions, alien to actual performance, modern Shakespearean editions have consistently included a comprehensive performance history of the plays in the introduction. They have also felt an increasing awareness of the potential of these texts as scripts for theatrical performance, rather than just considering them pieces of dramatic literature devised for private reading. This awareness has had an impact not only on the introductions, but also on the formulation of stage directions, and on the annotations to the plays, as is the case of the third Arden Shakespeare series, in which editors footnote the text with actual or potential performance choices.

This practice has been taken up by editors of non-Shakespearean Renaissance drama for major series like the Revels Plays, Oxford English Drama, the New Mermaids and, more recently, the Arden Early Modern Drama series. The relative stage popularity of some of the plays over the last fifty or so years has enabled that the texts of a comparatively small number of plays may be illustrated and introduced with evidence from major professional productions.

However, the problem comes when the evidence of performance is scant, fragmentary or non-existent. If the editor is working with a play that has seldom been performed, or not at all, since it was first produced, only a few other options are available. A speculative reconstruction of the original performances, based on an informed perception of the original theatrical spaces and practices, seems to have been the predominant one. Some editors, in the absence of major professional productions, have tried to draw conclusions from the often critically neglected realm of amateur and campus dramatics, or from the results of staged readings and workshops.

My paper will be dealing with the ways in which recent editors of non-Shakespearean plays of the English Renaissance have conceptualised the awareness of performance in their editions, based on experimental staged readings, on full-scale semi- or non-professional productions, and on informed speculation on the original performances.

4. Women (early modern and present-day)

**“Your hope is gone”: Elizabeth’s Encomium in *The True Tragedy of Richard III*
(Allison Machlis Meyer, Assumption College)**

This paper will explore how non-Shakespearean playwrights—unlike the narrative historiographers who created their source intertexts—separated the political participation of historical female figures from their maternity, eliciting sympathy for royal women represented as apolitical mothers or alternatively constructing them as politically threatening to royal men and the national interest. The anonymous drama *The True Tragedy of Richard III* rewrites prior narrative accounts, including Thomas More’s *History of King Richard III*, of Queen Elizabeth Woodville Grey’s political influence on England’s monarchy. Numerous characters in the play, on both Yorkist and Tudor sides of the struggle, offer reports criticizing the widowed queen mother’s political decisions as illegitimate and harmful to her children, kin, and nation. Scenes where the queen herself appears represent her somewhat sympathetically as an ineffective mourning mother whose inability to protect her children from Richard’s tyranny nevertheless indicates that even natural mothers should not be primarily responsible for their children when the succession of the monarchy is at stake. This contradiction between Elizabeth’s staged and reported representations originates in the play’s dual attempts to relegate Elizabeth to a purely domestic space and to identify her involvement in state matters as damaging to the nation. The play rewrites rather than removes More’s sanctuary scene, but in doing so it transforms Elizabeth’s resistance into a mishandled, speedy acquiescence to her enemies. The author of *The True Tragedy* also adds, at the play’s close, a long encomium delivered by Elizabeth Grey recounting the Tudor dynasty and Elizabeth I’s place in it, thus using the figure of Elizabeth Grey to evoke England’s reigning sovereign directly. In doing so, it exhibits the difficulties involved in simultaneously praising a female monarch and promoting a vision of the nation consolidated in England’s citizens rather than its monarchy through the exclusion of women from royal influence.

**Feminine Education and Disruptive Compliance in *The Tamer Tamed*
(Miranda Garno Nesler, Ball State University)**

How might shifting critical attention away from Shakespeare’s *The Taming of the Shrew* and toward Fletcher’s *The Tamer Tamed* assist scholars in gaining a more complex understanding of women’s education in early modern England? Critics such as Heather James and Lynn Enterline have argued that *Taming* represents women in possession of humanistic, Latinate educations to query the dangers of female rhetorical power. Yet

Tamer, in contrast, positions female characters in proximity to more traditional, feminine education located in the domestic, didactic closet. By focusing on *Tamer*, I argue that we can see how women in possession of non-masculinized education still posed a threat to patriarchal systems—particularly because, via disruptive compliance, their performances of silence and enclosure undermined men’s ability to access knowledge about or control female interiority. What’s more, by presenting women’s private, closet moments on stage, *Tamer* heavily emphasizes cultural anxieties that women who obey closet injunctions toward privacy might gain a cover for their public educational endeavors, obtaining enough control over the closet’s exposure not only to educate one another within private spaces, but to publicize feminine knowledge in order to educate broader audiences through dramatic discourse.

"Shakespeare's Property Ladder"
(Kim Solga, Queen Mary, University of London)

In summer 2011 Katie Mitchell, Associate Artist at the Royal National Theatre, revisited Thomas Heywood's *A Woman Killed With Kindness*. Mitchell's 1992 RSC production of the play was her first professional gig as a director and quickly established her as a leading voice in contemporary British theatre; her unique blend of Stanislavskian and Grotowski-inflected technique has made what Roberta Barker and I have dubbed her "radical naturalism" a staple on UK and continental stages ever since. Returning to Heywood at this point in her career, Mitchell argued during a platform discussion at the NT in August, 2011, gave her the opportunity to approach the play's difficult "sexual politics" with more force and commitment than she had been able to do in 1992; by all accounts this was a revisiting with feminist difference. And yet Mitchell remains reticent about claiming too much for her or her team as feminist artists in this case: while their intentions, she noted at the RNT platform, were plainly to equalize the stage and challenge openly the patriarchal violence on which Heywood's play depends, she seemed unwilling to legitimate their choices as "correct" ones.

During the same platform discussion, Mitchell admitted to moderator Dan Rebellato that she does not enjoy directing Shakespeare. Doing *3 Henry 6* for the RSC in 1994, she realized that Shakespeare was "owned" - but not, and perhaps never, by her. "I realized that the production history, and the plays, are one hybrid," she told Rebellato, "and you dismantle it at your peril. [There's a] deep sense of ownership of this material, maybe related to gender, owned maybe by men more than women." Even after acknowledging

the excellent work on the Bard accomplished by directors like Deborah Warner, Mitchell claimed that she never wanted to deal with Shakespeare again.

Is Mitchell right? Even if she is, does she concede too much? And, if her alternative to renting Shakespeare is to take out a mortgage on Heywood et al, then why can't she *own* her claims about the feminist interventions (and they are deep and significant indeed) she, her actors, and her designer made in their 2011 production of *Woman Killed*? This paper will borrow Mitchell's "post-Shakespearean" economics to assess some of the advantages and disadvantages of claiming *not* Shakespeare as a site of gendered theatrical power.