Nora Williams

Abstract: Layers of Form and Deformity in *The Changeling*

Thomas Middleton and William Rowley's 1622 play *The Changeling* has long been criticised for its supposedly deformed dual-plot structure: many feel that the subplot is grossly inferior to the main plot, and some have argued that scenes must be missing from the text that comes down to us. At the same time, one of the main plot's key characters, Deflores, is described in the text as having a facial disfiguration: he is variously referred to as having a 'bad face', a 'dog face', and a face which 'loathes one'. In many ways, the play offers multiple, overlapping subversions of neo-Platonic sensibilities: Deflores' outward deformity matches his inner villain, but the outwardly beautiful Beatrice-Joanna is also inwardly corrupt; the subplot features sane men disguised as madmen whilst the main plot reveals the madness of the apparently sane; and the play is meticulously structured, yet appears disjointed and imperfect. What is the relationship between deformity of character and deformity of structure in *The Changeling*? How have perceptions of Deflores' relationship to Beatrice-Joanna impacted perceptions of the dual plot structure, and vice-versa? And how are these relationships mitigated in performance?

Lisa Ulevich
Seminar: "Form and Deformity in Early Modern Literature"

In "Plucking Green Plums: Bad Timing and Death in Venus and Adonis," I argue that adaptation, which calls attention to intertextuality, likewise foregrounds process and development as an audience evaluates the adapted text against its source(s). Shakespeare's disposition of preexisting Ovidian material and his changes to it are essential to the poem's form, and the mechanisms of transformation are central to the poem's resolution. Adonis is preoccupied with process, dwelling on delay and his own immaturity; I emphasize that his response to Venus is not rejection, but a conditional acceptance predicated on his awareness of his own developing form, which is not yet ready for the role she wants him to play. Unfortunately, no amount of clever formal positioning—whether Venus swiping Adonis into an amorous embrace or the finality of each sixain's epigrammatic concluding couplet—can synthesize resolution and fulfillment: closure will not come by fiat. Shakespeare's epyllion offers satisfaction in its dramatization of tantalizing delay, and in this respect we can locate the poem's objective not in the ending taken from Ovid but in the act of adaptation itself, the conspicuous adjustments of form that suggest that the *means to* resolution are essential for the *meaning of* resolution.

Mary Adams

Abstract: Amazing Thunder: Deforming Chiastic Tropes in Richard II

How long a time lies in one little word?
Four lagging winters and four wanton springs
End is a word: such is the breath of Kings. –Richard II 1.3.206-9

In Richard II, the oft-noted diminishing of language's signifying function stems from its dislocation from the play's alternate, yet essential, articulations of justice and its re-enlistment in the service of power. The plays' characters frequently express nostalgia for a sense of disinterested justice that is already lost when the play begins. In the course of the play, characters express that nostalgia, as well as a nostalgia for a lost sense of historical Englishness, through a particular set of chiastic tropes and metaphors of inversion, predation, and undoing: "light vanity, insatiate cormorant, consuming means, soon preys upon itself" (2.1.38-9). Shakespeare mirrors this reflexivity in a chiastic play structure even as he ironizes his characters' nostalgic fantasies. Puttenham called these tropes "trespasses," and I believe in Richard's hands (or mouth) they subvert the discourse of power by freeing language from its signifying role as the servant of history and the "owners" of history in order to liberate its ability to "play." Finally, I would argue, Richard is able to re-imagine history and re-articulate his own place in it through these same chiastic tropes, which enact a stunning process of what Patricia Canning calls "transubstantiation in reverse" (17).

In the course of the intersecting fall of Richard and rise of Bolingbroke, both characters' actions expose their systems of justice as interested, mutually exclusive, and operating in service of power. The "free fall" or "stalemate" of competing articulations of justice is frequently figured with the repeating tropes Puttenham associates with "counterchange," "redoubling," and "cross-coupling," especially chiasmus /antimetabole but also anadiplosis, paradox, and antithesis (Puttenham). Other characters, especially women, complicate justice with the claims of kinship and family, and repeating tropes as well as metaphors of monstrous and abortive births (what Rosemary Garland Thomas has called "practices of enfreakment") not only manifest the sterility of this family conflict but also presage the civil war that must inevitably ensue from it. In the first half of the paper, I will investigate the intersections of justice and kinship as they are expressed through rhetorical tropes. In the second half, I will examine the same tropes as they are enlisted to negotiate the meaning of self and Englishness expressed in historical narrative.

Glenn Clark
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SAA 2015 – Form and Deformity in Early Modern Literature

Shakespeare's Beautiful Rebels: Romeo, Juliet and Hamlet

Stephen Greenblatt argues that in Shakespeare's era "identity and beauty are. . . distinct, even opposed. The smooth, unblemished, radiantly fair, and essentially featureless face and body is the cultural ideal. . . against which Shakespeare surprisingly fashions so many of his remarkable creations." For Greenblatt, Richard III is the most prominent of characters whose blemishes effect a rebellious alienation that approaches interiorized individuality. But Shakespeare is capable of imagining at least a degree of beautiful rebelliousness and individualization. Juliet, Romeo and Hamlet, for example, are all richly attractive figures who are nonetheless rebels against conventional moral and political orthodoxy. None of these, however, are consistently confident in their individualizing rebelliousness. One way of understanding the liminal characterization of these beautiful rebels is to recognize that the plays are as interested in the unappealing deformities of orthodox authority as they are in the only relatively formed beauty of their individualizing rebels. Contexts for the ugliness of orthodox authority in these plays can be found in English puritan politicizations of the traditional Christian concern with spiritual "deformity" as well as in humanist anxiety about the vulnerability to corruption of state and society.

Deformed Syllables
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This essay revisits the relationship between the English blank verse line and the dactylic hexameter of Latin and Greek poetry. My intention is to unsettle what we think we know about this relationship, about how a line of, say, Marlowe's *Tamburlaine* would have sounded to ears used to the sound of the Virgil and Ovid of the Elizabethan schoolroom. I am especially interested in putting pressure on Derek Attridge's account of that schoolroom and of Elizabethan quantitative experiments in *Well-Weighed Syllables*, still the definitive account of that body of poetry. I will attempt to use more recent work to accomplish this, and explore the significance of the results.

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Architectural faith: George Herbert's juxtaposition of immaterial faith and the
architectural church in *The Temple*

Abstract:

In this paper, I explore the relationship between early modern personal faith and the
architectural structure of George Herbert's *The Temple*. Early modern and medieval
Christian theologians theorize faith as a necessarily immaterial and inward
phenomenon. Aquinas, Luther, and Zwingli describe faith as "certainty", "knowing",
and "confidence", respectively. Faith also plays a constant role throughout *The
Temple*, and it is also addressed directly in the poem "Faith", in which Herbert
highlights the human incapacity to achieve faith as it is theorized. This poem takes
theories of faith to their logical material extremes, demonstrating that such faith
cannot, in fact, exist. The materiality present in "Faith" is also present throughout *The
Temple*, and as such I intend to demonstrate that the architecture of *The Temple*
extends the argument of "Faith" by juxtaposing early modern theories of faith and the
lived, material reality represented throughout.

Christopher Mead

Shakespeare's Swimmers

This paper offers a preliminary reevaluation of the relationship between paleotechnic machinery and early modern conceptions of the body. I argue that the scholarly focus on the mechanical qualities of diplomatic and unconscious bodies—a focus inaugurated by the humanists, as well as by Descartes and the anatomists—has obscured a series of alternative early modern visions in which the conscious body's mechanical potential is seized upon as a source of self-improvement and delight. I begin by showing how practical "how-to" books such as Everard Digby's *De Arte Natandi* (the first swimming manual published in England) engaged and often challenged familiar accounts of the body's mechanical properties. Moving through several negative examples in *The Faerie Queene*, I then offer a short reading of *The Tempest*.

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"Oh, to vex me, contraryes meete in one": The Seventeenth-Century Epithalamium as Devotional Lyric

When critics happen to turn their attention to seventeenth-century epithalamia, they often approach these poems as odd or strange, atypical of both usual epithalamia and other poems written by their authors. John Donne, Richard Crashaw, Robert Herrick, and other authors of late epithalamia are better known for their devotional lyric than their occasional verse. These refrain-fueled wedding poems, often both dramatic and narrative in nature, seem to defy critical consensus on both lyric in general and the epithalamia in particular. I will argue that the best way to ameliorate both the lack of scholarly attention paid to epithalamia in general, as well as to rethink their success or failure (even their status) as lyric poems, is to is to read them squarely within the context of lyric, especially sacrificial devotional lyric. Moving toward a larger scale critical reevaluation, this essay will take up one of the most negatively received and peculiar of these epithalamia, Donne's "Epithalamion made at Lincolnes Inne." David Novarr, perhaps the most outspoken critic of the work, cannot bring himself to think of the poem as anything other than a parody of Spenser: "to take a serious view of the poem," writes Novarr, "is to say that Donne's canticle here sings a song of sacrilege" (77). Rather, I will argue his epithalamium—like those written by his contemporaries—sings a song of sacrifice, its objects, and its objectives. These poems have long been found objectionable, both as examples of lyric and as poems celebrating the Christian rites of marriage. Rather than arguing for their poetic or religious orthodoxy, however, I will demonstrate that their very strangeness lends them lyric status that should inform any consideration of the genre.

Jessica R. Pfeffer
SAA 2015: "Form and Deformity in Early Modern Literature"

<center>"Material Remains"</center>

Sir Thomas Browne's Hydriotaphia†takes ashen remains as its inspiration. Part philosophical musing, part antiquarian oddity, part archeological identification, Hydriotaphia†attempts to read the body's material remnants in order to produce a knowledge that can never be verified. As Philip Schwyzer notes in Archaeologies†of†English†Renaissance†Literature, "If an unusually careful excavation provided the startingpoint for Hydriotaphia, its thesis and, no less importantly, its mood, depend on a misattribution" (180). Browne, as an archaeologist, surely fails in his mission to identify the ashes found within the urns he studies. Yet, I contend that Browne acknowledges his inability to properly identify the ashes. In so doing, Browne destabilizes the material through his metamorphic reading of the materials; or, another way, the ashes that Browne discusses are no longer simply ashes, but lost peoples, cultures, and histories. While Browne's text certainly could be read as a failed archeology project, I argue that Browne's work engages with the theoretical concerns of the material. By disrupting the association between material remains and their historical specificity, Browne insists upon the indeterminacy of the material both as a physical concept and a temporal object.

Deformed Thersites and Deforming Epic in *Troilus and Cressida*

Cynical Thersites in Shakespeare's *Troilus and Cressida* has an ambiguous body: the earliest editors of the play describe him as "deformed" in the *dramatis personae*, while more recent editors drop that designation. At the same time, recent performances of the play increasingly represent him as physically different and even disabled. Through a close examination of the text of *Troilus and Cressida*, as well as an investigation of Shakespeare's sources for the play and other early modern representations of Thersites, I will affirm his disability, asserting a connection between Thersites's physical body and his virulent language. This connection is a necessary part of Shakespeare's complex dramatic project in *Troilus and Cressida*, where the strategies of symbolism usually embodied only in disability are extended to non-disabled characters and even the text of the play itself. In materializing a rhetorical role—in this case, the role of critic—whose physical difference facilitates his bitter language, Thersites is uniquely equipped to maintain his subjectivity even against the deforming force of symbolic overdetermination that Shakespeare applies to the whole of *Troilus and Cressida* in order to reshape the myth of the Trojan War and deform the epic form.

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