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Leader: Nina Levine, University of South Carolina 1**

**Dr. Walter W. Cannon, Central College**

**Making Change: Market and Mobility in *Measure for Measure***

If a play speaks, *Measure for Measure* may be Shakespeare's mobility manifesto. If we consider the "plurality" of the city in all of its possibilities, a city like London can be seen as a place of variety and flux wherein dissimilar characters collide, connect, and transform. As an integral part of the larger metropolitan scene, the theater offers a place for a dynamic refraction of urban life. As J.-C. Agnew has pointed out, "The early modern stage did more than reflect relations occurring elsewhere; it modeled and in important respects materialized those relations. Elizabethan and Jacobean theatre...did not just hold the mirror up to nature; it brought forth 'another nature'—a new world of 'artificial persons'—the features of which audiences were just beginning to make out in the similarly new and enigmatic exchange relations outside the theatres" (47). And drawing on similar insights into the historical dynamic, Lars Engle argues that 'what we might call an actual economy was visible to Shakespeare as a social and political force for the deconsecration and, often, destabilization of hierarchies. Shakespeare's interest in figuring various processes in economic terms might therefore very plausibly arise from his immediate experience of life" (8). In the spirit of Nina Levine who calls for "the story of the particular and personal" (8), I wish to show how the theater articulates the multiple pressures on Isabella's character in *Measure for Measure*, her subsequent transformation, and the audience's intervention in that change, a change which suggests that identities are multiple, severed from a necessary connection with either act or intention.

**Dr. Laurie Ellinghausen, University of Missouri, Kansas City**

**The Lord Mayor's Pageant and the Fisherman's Labor in Early Modern London**

For the past several decades, scholars of early modern English drama have characterized the London Lord Mayors' pageants as elaborate arguments for "unity" among the city's various interests. However, such scholarship tends to overlook the reality of competition among London's industries and the way in which guilds' specific interests showed up in the pageants they commissioned. This paper complicates the unity aesthetic by analyzing representations of English fishing in pageants commissioned by the Fishmongers' Company, an ancient guild of merchants whose prestige depended on the humble labor of disenfranchised fishermen. I trace these representations across three pageants – Nelson's *The Device of the Pageant: Set forth by the Worshipfull Companie of the Fishmongers* (1590), Munday's *Chrysanaleia: The Golden Fishing: Or, Honour of Fishmongers* (1616), and Settle's *The Triumphs of London for the Inauguration of the Right Honourable Sir Thomas Abney, Kt.* (1700) – to show how one company used pageant conventions to argue for its continued relevance in an economy increasingly dependent on the long-distance trade of luxury goods. I argue that these shows affirm sea labor in a way that anticipates the maritime nature of British Empire and the Fishmongers' importance within that economic scheme. In doing so, this paper suggests that the London guilds, although frequently characterized by historians as being fossilized in a kind of willful "nostalgia," were in fact highly responsive to change and, more specifically, attuned to

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the representational possibilities of the pageant for imagining a specific industry's role in a prosperous national future.

**Professor Musa Gurnis, Washington University**

**Creative Reception, the Theatre Scene, and Local Celebrities in Early Modern London**  
**(with Jeff Doty)**

Pub life in early modern London helped create a theatrical public, that is, an ongoing association of strangers sharing an engagement with the stage. Drinking houses offered a cultural arena for the unofficial exchange of perspectives among ordinary people, in so doing they fostered a public sphere organized not around print but performance. Places of sociable drinking invited "expressive freedom" on matters of interest from local gossip to questions of church and state, to the cultural products offered in the commercial theaters. Pubs nurtured the development of a theatrical public sphere not only because theater was an interesting topic of conversation, but because the medium of exchange—bar banter—shares commonalities with playhouse performance. Under the anachronistic term "pubs" we refer to alehouses for the poor, taverns catering to a more mixed or middling clientele, as well as to more upscale Inns, because we maintain that early modern English drinking culture encouraged dialogue with and about theater among individuals from a wide range of social classes. While scholarship on the cultivation of a regular, self-conscious theater audience has largely focused on the critical judgments of elites such as students at the Inns of Court, the theatrical public consolidated through pub culture was open to a wider demographic and a wider range of receptive faculties. Theatrical reception in pubs afforded sociability, imaginative exercise, and the development of taste and amateur skill to both the literate and illiterate. The wits of the Mermaid Inn and the real-world analogues of Christopher Sly in the alehouses were not equally positioned, but the early modern theatrical public was equally constituted by the attention of all of these participants. The ludic and communal aspects of early modern pub culture were especially valuable to the growth of a theatrical public. Because drinking and theatrical establishments both foster discursive communities that prize sociability and performance skills, and because of the common association between the two pleasure businesses, pubs formed a special, mutually shaping, contact zone between the playhouses and the city. The afterlives of plays that took shape in pub conversations and games helped to extend the experiences of particular audiences into a more sustained and open field of shared cultural attention. The circuit between playhouse and drinking house helped create a 'theatre scene': the local publicity hub where audience members processed and re-performed what they saw in the theatres, where playwrights observed local life they could stage back to their patrons, and where the makers and partakers of this theatrical public mixed in post-play conviviality. In pubs as in playhouses, social definition was a two-way process between the stage and its urban fan base.

**Mr. Drew Heverin, University of Kentucky**

**Angelo's Frustration: An Apprentice Heuristic and *Measure for Measure***

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As they looked on from their place in the pit, the apprentices of London must have seen a lot in *Measure for Measure*'s Angelo with which they could identify. In this severe character, Shakespeare has depicted a young man who, while trained in a craft (statecraft), is restrained by custom and commission to maintain the public reputation of an enigmatic master and prove himself worthy of his (s)election. While modern scholarship continues to debate the role of "equity" in the treatment of Isabella, the Duke's commitment to "see If power changes purpose, what our seemers be" (1.3.53-4) falls to the wayside, and Angelo is seen less as an aspiring citizen and more as an arrogant monarch. But this concern with public reputation was not easily dismissed in early modern London, especially by the young men in the audience. In examining the power dynamics that define the relationship between the Duke and Angelo, this paper will argue that *Measure for Measure* employs an apprentice heuristic as a means to explore the problematic assessment of credibility and public perception in the guild's of early modern London. Angelo's faults – his lust, his concern for an economically-advantageous marriage, and even his public attack on the Viennese stewes – may conform to an early modern stereotype of a riotous apprentice, but this riot has a source in the deferred ambitions that the play highlights. In the repeated assertion of Angelo's subordinated role as the Duke's "imprint," the audience is left to question just who is to blame for Vienna's problems – the enthusiastic if misguided apprentice or his critical but absentee master?

**Professor Heather Anne Hirschfeld, University of Tennessee**

**Shakespeare and Urban Hell**

"Our house is hell," says Jessica to Lancelot in a gesture meant to reinforce the play's conspicuous linking of her father and the infernal. This paper studies Jessica's gesture as a Shakespearean instance of a broader early modern construct for engaging with or imagining the city: the convention of the metropolis and/as hell. I begin by examining the convention in some of its most vibrant forms, the Tudor morality play and the Elizabethan and Jacobean "descent narrative" (e.g., *Pierce Penniless*, *The Black Book*). I pay special attention to the ways in which hell is mapped, literally and figuratively, onto London, and to the ways in which hell is used, again literally and figuratively, as an intertextual site to organize print publication and dramatic performance. I then turn to two particularly concrete Shakespearean residues of this construct in *The Merchant of Venice* and *Macbeth*. I look first at the ways in which *Merchant* toys with the formulas of the descent to/ascent from hell tradition, providing new ways to understand the geography of Venice as well as pamphlet literature on London. I then consider *Macbeth* and its allusions to the Gunpowder Plot, which was discussed relentlessly in contemporary discourse as "coming from hell" (John Rhodes, *A Briefe Summe*, B1v). I suggest that, particularly in the Porter scene, the play imports contemporary London -- a city whose very topography made it both vulnerable to and productive of conspiracy -- into eleventh century Scotland. I conclude by considering other ways in which Shakespeare might have "thought with" hell as both model and metaphor for urban life.

**Mr. Arthur MacConochie, Boston University**

**Shrewd Wives and Kissing Shrews on the Shakespearean Stage**

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This essay considers how depictions of kissing in Shakespeare's plays engage with changing or contested practices of kissing in public and private London life, with a focus on how the plays engage the female members of Shakespeare's audience. In *The Taming of the Shrew*, Katherine's objections to kissing "in the street," along with her husband's coercive use of such an apparently intimate gesture to enact his power, indicate a possible revision to scholarly understandings of prescriptive divisions between public and domestic spaces as restricting female agency. Another shrew, Beatrice, resists and critiques such coercive intimacies in repeatedly figuring the marital kiss as silencing the other's speech. But Shakespeare's plays do not only present the kiss as restrictive. Mistress Ford in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, in exploiting the conventions of the neighborly kiss to mock her husband's jealousies, presents a counter-narrative of the hospitable kiss between the sexes. Farah Karim-Cooper has argued that such neighborly gestures come under increasing scrutiny because of their similarity to erotic contact, allowing for a home invasion conducted in plain sight. In satirical depictions of hospitable kissing in *Bartholomew Fair*, or Alice Arden's use of kissing to carry on her affair in *Arden of Feversham*, such a view makes sense. However, Karim-Cooper's focus on semiotic instability implicitly adopts the perspective of the anxiously observing patriarchal male. By contrast, in this essay, I argue that many of Shakespeare's plays not only question patriarchal views of neighborly tactility (as in Leontes's tragic misunderstanding of friendly touch), but offer female audience members gestural scripts that either contest masculine power or, more often, employ patriarchal discourses of space and tactile behavior to allow for the strategic exercise of female agency or even moral authority.

**Dr. Roderick H. McKeown, University of Toronto**

**Prostitution and the London Civic Imaginary in *Bartholmew Fair***

Henry VIII's 1546 closure of the London civic brothels and Edward VI's 1553 bequest of Bridewell to the City of London mark a sea change in attitudes towards prostitution. Prostitution moved from being a regulated, if vilified, trade to a prohibited activity. Yet Bridewell's status as a hospital married its penal role to rehabilitation.

This essay takes *Bartholmew Fair*'s invocation of Bridewell as an invitation to read Justice Overdo's determination to uncover enormities and his wife's accidental slide into prostitution as commentaries on the civic authorities' approach to eliminating prostitution, and indirect reflections of the implications of Bridewell's ideology and practices. Overdo's evidentiary standards and jurisdictional vagueness invoke the controversies surrounding Bridewell at the end of the sixteenth and beginning of the seventeenth centuries. His wife's excursion on the game foregrounds a key problem for early modern theorizing of prostitution: where medieval regulation of the sex trade mostly imagined prostitutes to be *sui generis* category, the idea that a hospital might correct them led to the corollary that any woman might become a "whore." From being "wilful and unrepentant sinners, driven by lust, avarice, and malevolence to sell themselves" (Semple), prostitutes instead become *possibly* repentant sinners, driven by manifold reasons to sell themselves. Drawing on the history of Bridewell and other early modern plays (*Three Ladies of London*, *Measure for Measure*, *Timon of Athens*, *2 Honest Whore*), this

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essay will illustrate the extent to which civic institutions such as Bridewell Hospital shaped popular imaginings of early modern social problems.

**Dr. Vanessa L. Rapatz, Ball State University**

**Sub-Urban Exchanges: Novices in the City in Shakespeare's *Measure for Measure***

While the Viennese Catholic setting of Shakespeare's *Measure for Measure* might not immediately call up an increasingly metropolitan London, the relocation of characters from suburban liberties into an urban center of monitored spaces and the performance of women within these spaces call up re-zoning and everyday experiences familiar to Shakespeare's audience members. I argue that Shakespeare's Vienna is not merely a setting defined by its iconic places (palace, prison, convent, brothel), but a city in Michel de Certeau's sense, created through networks of passage, the traces of people moving from one place to another. Shakespeare's setting may not fully call up the modern city network described by de Certeau—its places being more generic than those of early modern English city comedies, for example—however, the experience of his female characters, including Isabella, Mariana, and Mistress Overdone, add dimension to and in many ways create the cityscape that we imagine at the center of its iconic places of political and religious authority. Indeed, Certeau's description of the city might just as well be applied to the dynamics of stage performance. *Measure for Measure's* staging of Isabella and Mariana, in particular, unmoors them from their proper places (convent and moated grange, respectively), leading them to new (potentially improper) places that emphasize their lack of defined social titles and status. Their movements and experience of such new places emphasize simultaneously mirror the disorientation incurred by the rezoning of bustling and diverse urban centers.

**Dr. Christi Spain-Savage, Siena College**

**“She whom the Spital House”: London's Spital Houses and *Timon of Athens***

When Timon abandons Athens for the woods in Shakespeare's *Timon of Athens*, he digs for roots to eat and unexpectedly finds gold. He then proceeds to rail on this gold, exclaiming, “This is it / That makes the wappened widow wed again; / She whom the spital house and ulcerous sores / Would cast the gorge at” (4.3.41-44). Timon's use of the “spital house” is no random allusion. The compound “spittle house,” stemming from “spittle” or “spital” (the archaic slang for “hospital”), was first used c.1315 and became a general term denoting a house for reception of the indigent or diseased. Though the play is set in Athens, Timon's word choice would have invoked three actual London spital houses familiar to early modern audiences: St. Mary Spital, St. Bartholomew's Spital, and St. Thomas' Spital. The reference would have also called to mind the London neighborhood, Spitalfields, which derived its name from the hospital located there, St. Mary Spital, situated on the east side of Bishopsgate Street fronting the King's Highway. In my seminar paper, I argue that Timon's invocation of the London “spital house” helps to articulate his desire to infect the populace and clarifies his conflation of diseases, namely leprosy and syphilis, since the perceived ambiguity of the two ailments played out historically in these hospitals. His usage encapsulates the evolution of the spital house's reputation, as its

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original purpose of aid to the poor and needy shifted to an association with the idle and sexually immoral.

**Dr. Cristine M. Varholy, Hampden-Sydney College**

**“My house is not a grange”:  
Containing Female Disorder in the Early Modern Urban Space**

Contact among early modern urban dwellers could be a source of security at the same time that it could produce a sense of vulnerability or unease. For early modern women, city life offered an opportunity for circulation and social contact outside their homes. Within their neighborhoods and social groups, women felt authorized to speak out and to enforce communal standards of morality and neighborly behavior; however, at the same time, the women themselves were subject to communal surveillance and censure. This essay examines moments—from Shakespeare’s *Measure for Measure* and from the Bridewell Court Books—when female misbehavior is articulated in the public space. These incidents reveal an interpretive space between actual events and the stories told about them, a space that becomes a site of struggle. Because of the slippery discourse of whoredom in early modern English culture, female figures have difficulty creating stable interpretations of their own behavior, thus empowering male authority figures to assert control over them and over the interpretation of sexual activity in the urban space.