SEMINAR PARTICIPANTS

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SEMINAR RESPONDENT

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SUMMARY

This seminar seeks to examine the links between counterfeiting as cultural practice, literary motif and theoretical framework in relation to Shakespeare. Papers will investigate the intertwined history of Shakespeare and counterfeiting, from the plays' own representation of forgery to the modern critical idiom surrounding the author's cultural value.

In early modern England, 'counterfeiting' had both positive and negative connotations, inflecting how people understood the processes of artistic fashioning, imitation and creation. According to Philip Sidney, mimesis was 'a representing, counterfeiting, or figuring forth' (*An Apology for Poetry*). For authors, counterfeiting offered a rich cache of metaphors to explore notions of selfhood, value and authenticity. Shakespeare's characters make full use of its semantic range, from portraiture ('Fair Portia's counterfeit!'), to forgery ('some coiner with his tools / Made me a counterfeit'), to acting ('Tut, I can counterfeit the deep tragedian').

Counterfeit Shakespeare is the inevitable flip-side of the First Folio's claim to be 'Published according to the True Originall Copies'. In terms of cultural currency, the interrelated discourses of counterfeiting and authenticity have long been central to the construction and policing of Shakespeare's canon. In the wake of Bardolatry, high-profile forgery cases such as those of W.H. Ireland and J.P. Collier fed an appetite for authenticity even while exposing such an idea as a fallacy. More recently, debates over the 'right' way to (re)produce Shakespeare – textually, theatrically, cinematically, digitally – continue to engage with the questions of value and debasement.

- How do Shakespeare and contemporaries such as Jonson and Middleton engage with the idea of the counterfeit?
- What is the value of considering Shakespeare as a counterfeiter (imitator/plagiarist/actor, etc.)?

- How was the concept of counterfeiting used to construct/contest notions of authorship and publication in the early modern period?
- How productive/misleading is counterfeiting as a critical idiom in Shakespeare studies today?
- To what extent is Shakespeare's cultural value predicated on the exclusion of reproductions that are 'counterfeit', 'debased' or 'spurious'?
- Is there such a thing as a counterfeit Renaissance?

ABSTRACTS

Intertextual Counterfeiting

Yasmin Arshad (Independent Scholar)

"Shakespeare & Iconic Counterfeiting:
The influence of Mary Sidney's & Samuel Daniel's Cleopatras"

Cleopatra VII, Queen of Egypt, is widely perceived to be among Shakespeare's most powerful characterizations. The image that dominates popular culture now derives mainly from Shakespeare and is that of the sultry siren of the East, lounging on a burnished golden barge. This is, however, a crude and reductive version of Shakespeare's characterisation. His subtly complex description of Cleopatra's 'infinite variety' has become a term so well-known, that it has been emptied of meaning. This paper seeks to examine how Shakespeare's Cleopatra was inflected by Mary Sidney's and Samuel Daniel's Cleopatras. Rather than ambient intertextual echoes between *Antony and Cleopatra* and the 1590s Cleopatra plays, Shakespeare's borrowings can be seen as a type of counterfeiting or imitation, which also lend the topic another layer, in terms of iconographic counterfeiting. Although it is Shakespeare's Cleopatra who permeates our consciousness today, there is a need to look back beyond his Cleopatra to understand the sources and cultural contexts that produced her.

Maggie Vinter (Case Western Reserve University)

"*The Atheist's Tragedy* And The Ghosts Of Hamlet's Father"

Cyril Tourneur's *Atheist's Tragedy* has commonly been read as a Christianized revision of *Hamlet*. The play's action centers on a protagonist who is visited by the spirit of his murdered father and commanded to leave justice up to heaven rather than pursue revenge. By insisting upon his ghost's compatibility with Christian orthodoxy, Tourneur ostensibly reverses the usual hierarchy between original and copy, casting his own play as normative and Shakespeare's as a deviant variation. Yet the religious impulse behind this adaptation is undercut by Tourneur's peculiar method of composition, which isolates images from their original Shakespearean context and iterates them to increasingly ambiguous effect. Where *Hamlet* shows the singular ghost of the father, for instance, *The Atheist's Tragedy* depicts the ghost of the father, a comedy

puritan disguised as the ghost of the father, the son disguised as the ghost of the father, and a cloud mistaken for the ghost of the father. The initial orthodox revision of Shakespeare is supplanted by a parade of irreverent, mistaken and/or strategically faked hauntings. As they point back to *Hamlet* in ever more distorted ways, Tourneur's ghosts recast authorial appropriations as characterological forgeries, and scramble distinctions between textual, verbal and embodied modes of counterfeit. Their appearances can help us understand the particular difficulties a multimodal and corporate medium like theater poses for any religious, legal and critical schema that purports to distinguish counterfeits from other forms of licit and illicit imitation.

Daniel Blank (Princeton University)

"Jonson's Academic Counterfeit: *Volpone* and the Drama of the Universities"

Jonson's *Volpone* is deeply interested in modes of performance and disguise. This interest is embodied especially in the title character's relentless compulsion towards playing parts: from his repeated simulations of illness to his portrayal of the Italian mountebank Scoto of Mantua, Volpone's desire to perform remains constant throughout the play. In this paper, I will consider the connection between *Volpone*'s depictions of acting and Jonson's interest in the theatrical culture of the English universities. The 1607 quarto edition of *Volpone* was dedicated to the "two famous universities," Oxford and Cambridge, where the play was apparently well received. For Jonson, the universities offered shelter from the "ribaldry, profanation, blasphemy" of London's public playhouses and the "stage poetry" performed there, as he wrote in his dedication. I will show how the Oxford and Cambridge theatrical culture, deeply rooted in the classical tradition and repeatedly at the center of academic debates about the merits of dramatic performance, was particularly attractive to Jonson, who never himself received a formal university education. By designing a title character in *Volpone* whose uncontrollable urge towards counterfeiting eventually leads to the character's downfall, Jonson crafted a play that would resonate with university audiences, thus allowing him to fashion himself as a university playwright. *Volpone* and its dedication, this paper will ultimately argue, reflect Jonson's desire not only to be part of a theatrical culture closely aligned with his own interests and concerns, but also to style himself as a counterfeit member of the university.

Counterfeit Creation

Kathryn Crim (University of California, Berkeley)

"'What is your substance?': Counterfeit Material in Shakespeare's Sonnets"

Where the word "counterfeit" appears in the Sonnets, it seems to suggest mere description, either in paint or in words: In Sonnet 14, for example, the speaker suggests the young man's "living flowers" will be "much liker than your painted counterfeit"; and later he writes, "Describe Adonis, and the counterfeit is poorly imitated after you" (Sonnet 53). It has sometimes been argued that Shakespeare makes a strong claim for his own lyrical power over

and against visual modes of representation, a claim which simultaneously sets the Sonnets in the Romantic and post-Romantic traditions of reading lyric as a sincere expression of personal attachment. This paper argues that the invocation of feeble portraiture, hardly an iconoclastic elevation of the word over the image, rather helps us to see how the sonnet itself is a form of bad copy—one that nevertheless compels our interpretative attentions. I suggest that the capacious signification of "counterfeit" at the end of the sixteenth century offers us a way of reading a number of intersecting concerns about lyric propriety—about what can be written and who can be addressed. At the same time, the counterfeit helps to figure two intersecting hermeneutic modes: one views copying as a devotional and formative process inscribing both speaker and beloved as social subjects and the other looks for the individuating mark and clue to a historically specific "real" addressee—the object of so much theorizing about this sequence by critics from Oscar Wilde to Elaine Scarry.

Anthony R. Guneratne (Florida Atlantic University)

"'Such stuff As dreams are made on':
Haydocke's *Oneirologia* and Shakespeare's Arts of Deception"

From Lyly to Greene, early modern stage characters practice the arts of trickery and deception, and often receive a chastening comeuppance by plays' end. A spectacular, much discussed historical parallel occurred with the 1605 exposure of translator and nocturnal preacher Richard Haydocke's fraudulent divinations. His defense upon confession, copied in a fine scribal hand, exists as *Oneirologia*, a manuscript carefully bound together with King James's devastating response in the same hand. Clearly intended to quash the matter and to circulate in manuscript form, James's rigorously logical dismissal of the theological import of dream states, or the possibility of narcoleptic divine revelation, removed it from the sphere of dangerous hallucinations (i.e. daemonology). The king's rebuttal coincides with more than a decade of "dangerous" writing in which Shakespeare, in such plays as *Richard III*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Hamlet*, and *The Tempest*, showed increasing sophistication in drawing distinctions between theological and aesthetic realms, between dangerous revelation and enchanting illusion. While modern scholars frequently find reflections of James's politics and court culture in Shakespeare's stagecraft, the present work seeks to link the king's demarcation of the limits of representation – banishing dreams to the realm of aesthetics – to the playwright's sanctioned arts of deception.

Jane Wells (Muskingum University)

"The Counterfeit Trap in Shakespeare's Comedies *Twelfth Night*
and *The Taming of the Shrew*"

Counterfeiting another person through disguise, invention, or dissembling creates a kind of trap in Shakespeare's comedies. "Trap" applies to counterfeiting and comedies in two different senses. It can refer to the unintended consequences to self and to others that adopting a

disguise brings about. In many ways, these consequences are the bases of the comic disguise plots with which we are familiar. Comedies with plots based on counterfeiting pursue complications to the point of greatest disorder before restoring the world back to harmony, often in a way that is or seems magical. This new order is more promising than the world left behind, the one that necessitated the disguise to begin with. As Shakespeare plays go, *As You Like It* might be the paradigm case of potential consequences and romantic transformations. But counterfeit's "trap" can also more directly refer to the confines of the disguise itself. In this way, being trapped means the perpetrators of counterfeiting are caught permanently in their disguise, in the very fictional world they create to escape their troubles or achieve their goals. Put another way, in this second form of counterfeit trap the means of achieving a goal unintentionally become the end, or the dead-end. In the most extreme version of this trap, the character actually becomes her or his disguise, incognizant of any existence outside the self that was formerly mere pretense. It is this second form of trap that I am mainly concerned with here. The Shakespeare comedies in the title both have a tendency to trap counterfeit's practitioners in the roles and the worlds they create in a way that goes beyond unintended consequences and collapses the ready distinction between that character's fiction and reality. I say "tend' because the phenomenon takes place much more subtly than the first trap of unintended consequences. Counterfeit's trap in these plays has two qualities of note. The first is that not fully complete: Characters do not fully and directly become the counterfeit figure that they put forth. And the second is that it persists, often even at the closing of the plays, when the loose ends of the first kind of trap are all being tied up. By allowing for this persistence, the ends of Shakespeare's comedies are not so much resolved as transformed into another version of tension, one that intensifies the palpable nature of dramatic fiction.

Historical and Material Counterfeits

Chris Laoutaris (Shakespeare Institute, University of Birmingham)

"Shutting Down Shakespeare: Authenticating the Blackfriars Petition"

In 1831 John Payne Collier published the contents of a sensational document which, as he boasted proudly, "contains the name of our great dramatist", claiming that it had "never seen the light from the moment it was presented, until it was very recently discovered". Apparently a counter-petition to Queen Elizabeth I's Privy Council by William Shakespeare and his fellow players, it represented an act of defiance against the residents of upmarket Blackfriars in London who had waged a successful campaign to prevent a new theatre from being opened on their doorstep in November 1596. The locals' insurrection is enshrined in a later scribal copy of a petition headed by a woman who signed herself grandiloquently "Elizabeth Russell, Dowager" and is preserved, along with the Shakespeare petition which seems to respond to it, in the National Archives in Kew, London.

By 1860 the country's leading palaeographers and archivists had assembled in the State Paper Office in London to scrutinise the "players' petition" again. Their conclusions were damning. The document was found to be a forgery. As news of the scandal spread it tainted other

documents which had passed through Collier's hands, including the Blackfriars petition itself. Today most scholars agree that this petition of the neighbouring residents to what would become the Blackfriars Theatre is genuine. Collier, having stumbled upon it, had been frustrated to find that it contained no mention of Shakespeare. His counterfeit Privy Council missive gave the world what it wanted: the dramatist's reaction to what must have been a threat to the playing company and hence to his career. But how do we know that the Blackfriars petition is authentic and that it really was led by the formidable self-styled Dowager Countess of Bedford, Elizabeth Russell? This paper will reveal the evidence.

Jane Kingsley-Smith (University of Roehampton, London)

"Shakespeare's Spurious Sonnets"

This paper examines the identification of Shakespeare's sonnets as 'spurious', 'apocryphal' and 'supplemental' throughout their editing history, from 1599-1790. It explores the shift between these terms, and the way in which the Sonnets' history relates to that of the apocryphal plays, drawing on Peter Kirwan's recent study. It then moves on to examine the Sonnets' relationship to Shakespearean forgery at the end of the eighteenth century. Following Malone's edition of *Plays and Poems* (1790), it looked as though the Sonnets had gained canonical status, and yet in counterfeiting Shakespeare's 'pretty verses', William Henry Ireland and Edmond Malone ignored the Sonnets in both form and content, suggesting that they were still too marginal to have any value as fakes. More intriguing still is the success of John Armstrong's *Sonnets from Shakespeare* (1791), poems of his own composition based on the plays, which imply that sonnets should supplement the dramatic works—just not those which Shakespeare apparently wrote. The paper concludes with a brief discussion of how this history of the Sonnets might impact on the way that we approach them today. In light of the critical dismantling of firm distinctions between the canonical and the apocryphal, with John Jowett proposing 'a gradualist model of Shakespeare's works that recognises that even the play of purest Shakespeare authorship is susceptible to minor modifications …' (66), the 'authenticity' of the 1609 Quarto begins to look more dubious.

James Francis (George Washington University)

"Cozenage and Counterfeiting *The Comedy of Errors*"

This paper examines the ways in which Shakespeare conceives of fraud as an ideological rather than an ethical problem. In his plays, the processes of social production and mercantile exchange necessarily entangle subjects in acts of counterfeiting and deception, and the functioning of the market seems predicated upon the misperceptions of supposedly self-aware agents. As a result, we frequently come across characters who become unwitting or unwilling counterfeiters and cozeners. For instance, the first time we encounter the Syracusian Antipholus and Dromio in *The Comedy of Errors*, they are listening to advice from an anonymous merchant about the necessity of dissimulating their identities. However, despite their conscious resolution

to misrepresent who they are, they spend the rest of the play exasperated at the consequences of being counterfeits of themselves.

Because the market economy seems to reduce value to nothing more than appearance, there is no reliable criteria to distinguish between the counterfeit and the authorized. Consequently, we see that the fraudulent has the potential to produce unexpectedly real effects. Autolycus in *The Winter's Tale* is acutely conscious of himself as a rogue who embodies the disintegration of the traditional political and economic order. Yet, for all his cynicism about his own ethics and the decadence of the court, his counterfeiting has as its final end a kind of magical restoration of order and prosperity to himself and the kingdom. Shakespeare seems to be arguing that the circulation of commodities and the expansion of markets depends upon a fundamental misrecognition of the true nature of exchange — that the abstractions which make it possible are based not upon rational estimations of value but instead upon an unconscious fantasy.