

SAA Seminar 01: Archival Violence and Early Modern Research:
Seminar Abstracts

Seminar Leaders:

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This informal paper brings together pieces of research from dramaturgical work on a professional theatrical production. It selects excerpts from my rehearsal notes and diaries that raise ethical questions about the intersection between practise and research, presenting them in a reflective format that considers what it means to create, analyse, and share archives that depict the process of theatre making. Please do not livetweet or share this paper.

Sally Barnden, Wadham College, Oxford (sally.i.barnden@gmail.com)

“Embodiment, stillness, and historical violence in Victorian Shakespeare tableaux”

Performing *tableaux vivants* was a popular leisure activity in the late nineteenth century, particularly among the elite. While many tableaux were conceived as transmediations of famous paintings into three dimensions, the popularity of Shakespeare’s plays (as well as, to a lesser extent, those of contemporary dramatists) inspired a subgenre of tableaux which functioned as a practice of communal, embodied theatrical archiving.

In this essay I will examine tableaux based on *King John*, *The Winter’s Tale*, and *The Merchant of Venice* as examples of a mnemonic practice which excludes key elements of the remembered plays’ histories, defers violence, and recruits the memory of Shakespeare to an imperialist imaginative project.

I will also address the contemporary institutional and political challenges of cataloguing Shakespearean tableaux, drawing on my experience of creating the data model and individual entries for the database ‘Shakespeare in the Royal

Collection'. In particular, I examine the problem posed by a Nazi princess performing in *The Merchant of Venice* to the competing linear and palimpsestic temporalities of the archive.

Jen Boyle, Coastal Carolina University (jboyle@coastal.edu)

I am currently working on a textbook, "**Approaches to Digital Archives and Cultural Memory.**"

The project is under contract with Palgrave; but a supplemental component to this is an entirely open source "classroom in a box" resource that serves as a guide to all types of groups and institutions seeking to construct a creative approach to local archives or cultural memory collections.

My product for this seminar is an overview and map of how this would work as a digital resource – and how it strives to disrupt the violence of appropriation and omission associated with certain archives.

Mel Harrison, King's College London (mel.harrison@kcl.ac.uk)

This paper will use a case study of a female performer, producer, and sex worker in seventeenth-century Cambridge to discuss the misogynistic violence of the archival record and the historical erasure of early modern female performers in institutional archives. Juda Hudson was arrested by the university authorities, along with three others, for organising an unauthorised fair with games and performers in the land outside Cambridge. The records of their arrest label Hudson and another woman 'noated whores', assuming any female public presence must be sexual in nature, and removing any acknowledgement of their performative skill or knowledge. Examining this case offers an example of how we might begin to undo these violences and construct a more inclusive language to develop our understanding of the diversity of early modern theatrical and performance culture.

Allison Machlis Meyer, Seattle University (meyera@seattleu.edu)

"Archiving the Collective: upstart crow and the Meanings of Feminist Performance"

This essay begins some introductory theoretical work necessary for a monograph project on the racially diverse, all-female and nonbinary cast performances of local Seattle theater company upstart crow collective. I've written elsewhere about the work of this company, its role in my pedagogy,

and its impact on Seattle theater and spectatorship, and aim to create a monograph about their contributions to contemporary Shakespeare performance through their production of the history plays. While I've considered how upstart crowd challenges barriers to inclusive theatre creation, I've not yet thoughtfully situated their contemporary performances in the context of either new archival work on gender and race in early modern performance (such as the Engendering the Stage project) or extended scholarly histories—both those reliant on exclusionary frameworks and those that challenge such frameworks—on cross-gendered and inclusive casting. This essay establishes an initial guiding scholarly approach for this work on performance and gender that mediates past and present, attends to the actual labor of marginalized bodies in the theater, and ethically considers the living archive of practitioner testimony, interviews, and reviews available. I seek to advance Bridget Escolme's call for scholars to "make dialogic archives," "use archives dialogically," and "make archives of the work of small companies . . . outside of the mainstream" (89-90). In doing so, I hope to continue my work of archiving the performance and reception histories of the collective, while also crafting a compassionate framework for a scholarly analysis of that archive.

Sandra Young, University of Cape Town (Sandra.Young@uct.ac.za)

"Charting English aggression on the high seas: early modern cartography and the emergence of English enslavement"

A challenge confronts scholars faced with an archive that would seem on first glance to have little to say about the historical violence of enslavement. The maps tasked with charting English newfound seafaring prowess in the latter half of the sixteenth century are not all they seem. Beneath the beautiful artistry, the show of triumph, and the demonstration of empirical knowledge practices, a canny reader may be able to decipher an unacknowledged complicity in the violence of enslavement and dispossession in the race to establish economic and political ascendancy. My essay considers the work of early modern cartography as a mode of knowledge production through which expansionist England was able to project mastery and legitimacy, despite its involvement in blatant warmongering of behalf of the emergent nation. It focuses on the series of maps which marked the occasion of Francis Drake's 1585 successful voyage to the West Indies, in particular Baptista Boazio's "The Famouse West Indian Voyage", a beautiful hand-painted map endorsed by Elizabeth I to make the case for English primacy in the Americas. The range of interrelated texts that chart the emergence of English aggression on the high

seas offer an opportunity, however obliquely, to reckon with the history of English enslavement and to consider the ways that early modern knowledge practices are implicated in this history.