

SAA 2022 Divided Shakespeare

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ABSTRACTS:

Andrew Barnaby

The larger project of which my seminar contribution is a part is called “Working Through: The Comic Endings of Shakespeare’s Tragedies.” Its core concept is that Shakespeare’s tragedies (messy and unruly as they so often are) are only truly completed in a subsequent comedy. That is, in the comic version Shakespeare must *work through* the problems not yet resolved in the tragedy.

For my seminar contribution I will focus on the movement from *Hamlet* to *Twelfth Night* with special focus on the notion of psychotheology as set out in Eric Santner’s *On the Psychotheology of Everyday*

Life. In relation to the topic of the seminar, I will focus on how the Freudian elements of psychotheology which Santner locates in the ethical implications of our relationship to the “other,” are in *Twelfth Night* particularly grounded in the self-other experience of being twins. Twin-ship then functions as a figure for the self-other elements of romantic love, which, in the guise of courtship, the various couples need to “work through” to achieve a resolution to the mourning with which the play begins.

Adam Faircloth

For our seminar, I will be circulating a piece addressing the rebel’s conclave episode in *I Henry IV*. My contention is that the Hotspur’s, Glyndwr’s, and Mortimer’s discussion of the ‘turning’ of the River Trent draws on Lucan’s image of the Rubicon. As I discuss, the likelihood of this intertext is underwritten by a previously undiscovered direct citation from Lucan. In addition to this direct citation, I take up the many shared aesthetic figurations between Lucan’s epic and Shakespeare’s figuration of Wales in the episode.

Marc Geisler

My contribution to the “Divided Shakespeare” seminar will explore what the recently developed structural dissociation model in the clinical application of behavioral medicine can expose about the internal psychological and social class divisions that abound in the play. Currently, my plan is to focus on how and why Menenius and Coriolanus end up crying at the end of the play and how representations of men crying provide a window into their radically divided inner and outer worlds. Near the end of the play Aufidius calls Coriolanus a “boy of tears,” to which Coriolanus takes great offense, still ashamed as he is of his eyes sweating compassion after being confronted by mother. The structural dissociation model asserts that when a child has been abused by their parent, as no doubt Coriolanus was by his mother, their defense system will naturally work to shield them from harm, but their attachment system will still want to be loved and cared for by the parent. The polarity generated by these two systems creates an internal tug-of-war where different motivational systems are working against each other simultaneously. The polarity can cause one’s conflicting parts to separate, leading to a radical split in the sense of self and a dysregulated nervous system. In a trauma-sensitive reading, I hope to unpack how a radically divided self, suffering from internal dysregulation, mirrors a similarly dysregulated body politic.

Tess Grogan

My contribution will be a portion of an in-progress chapter which focuses on the burial and ransoming of soldiers in the Henry VI plays (with some reference to 1 Henry IV and Henry V); the dissertation itself is provisionally titled “‘To book our dead and then to bury them’: War Dead in Early Modern English Literature,” and explores the aftermath of military conflict, particularly the treatment of remains (physical, monetary, literary).

“Division” comes into play in the chapter in several senses. My dissertation is broadly interested in how social differences are asserted in the aftermath of conflict, and this chapter in particular thinks about class distinctions in the context of civil war. The division that has been most pertinent to my work lately, however, is disciplinary or methodological. I’ve relied heavily on social and military history since the inception of the project, but have not yet found a satisfactory way of situating historical and

literary sources and concerns in relation to each other. I'm not really a drama scholar (my usual work is on Spenser, Sidney, Ariosto, etc.), and I'm excited to take advantage of the group's expertise to do some thinking about history and the stage.

Gabriel Lonsberry

My seminar contribution is drawn from a larger project called *The King, the Prince, and Shakespeare: Competing for Control of the Stuart Court Stage*, which puts Shakespeare's late plays into dialogue with the factional tensions apparent in the court masques and related entertainments of Prince Henry Frederick's short life. Immediately following James's accession in 1603, a popular, militant Protestant cult began to form around Henry, who, it was hoped, would one day reverse his father's pacifist policies and restore the vanished glories of chivalric England by leading a renewed crusade against the Catholic powers of Europe. The Prince came to embrace and consciously develop this adversarial role over the course of his teenage years, but factional crisis was averted when he succumbed, quite suddenly, to typhoid fever in November of 1612.

My seminar contribution will zero in on this moment, which marked not the end of this polarizing conflict but its climax: Henry had been closely involved in planning the festivities meant to celebrate his sister Elizabeth's marriage to Frederick V, Elector Palatine of the Rhine, and the 1612–13 holiday entertainment season would see his shows openly competing with those of the King to define the union's political significance. Shakespeare and Fletcher's *Henry VIII* and *The Two Noble Kinsmen* would have been staged at court soon afterward, and I intend to explore the court audience's possible reception of these plays in this delicate context. Not only would the mixed moods of these plays have resonated with the simultaneous tragedy and celebration of the preceding year, I'll propose, but their politics would have seemed divided along the same ideological lines as the audience itself.

Maria Isabel Maza

My dissertation examines the image of the non-volitional traveler in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century drama (re: vagrants, soldiers, exiles). My contribution to this seminar will be part of my second chapter, in which I will study the travel of soldiers in Shakespeare's history plays, among other primary and secondary sources.

The constraints of the stage limit what and how soldiers' travels and actions can be presented to an audience. In many cases, including in Shakespeare's *Henry V*, the audience is asked to use their imagination to travel from England to the continent, as part of an army of the past. David McInnis has termed this type of participation from the audience as "mind-travelling," which invites the audience to construct "a vivid psycho-physiological experience of distant lands." However, it is not only the theater that limits the visibility of travel (volitional or not) in these plays. Dramatic conventions sometimes shoehorn weeks and months of travel into scene and act divisions. I will explore how the "mind-travelling" that occurs for the audience and the actors playing the traveling soldiers on stage simultaneously divides the play from the historical reality of the travel created by war and still allows the audience to travel to lands and times not their own.