

**Seminar 19: Marlowe and Jonson
Abstracts**

**The Typography of Transitions and Jonson’s “On the Famous Voyage”
Mathieu D.S. Bouchard, McGill University**

Ben Jonson’s 1616 folio *Workes* contained two books of poetry: *Epigrammes*, a collection made up of both biting satires and odes of praise, and *The Forrest*, a collection imitating the classical *silva* tradition and comprised of epistles and odes to Jonson’s various aristocratic patrons. While these two books of poetry have generally been treated as two distinct units, this paper argues that the typographical layout of the 1616 folio in fact invites readers to encounter them together, as a single, fractured sequence rather than as two discrete collections. Though Jonson’s poetry celebrates the individuated and bounded self, the two collections, when read side-by-side, resist generic boundaries. The typographical transition between the two collections is also surprisingly blurry: elsewhere in the *Workes*, Jonson signals the transition from one text and another with the word ‘END’ and a new title page, but these typographical demarcations are not used between *Epigrammes* and *The Forrest*. Combining a careful reading of ‘On the Famous Voyage,’ the final poem in *Epigrammes*, with an assessment of typographical details, this paper argues that the poems in Jonson’s 1616 Folio, a famous monument to Jonsonian stability and to early-modern authorial self-fashioning, deliberately resist clear categorization.

**“Curse Thy Fill!”:
Marlovian Historiography in *Richard III*
Lara Bovilsky, University of Oregon**

This essay explores Shakespeare’s purposeful experiments with his sense of Marlovian style and causal metaphysics to present novel history and historiography in his first tetralogy. I focus on scenes of joint lament and cursing in *Richard III*. In the past, these scenes were often derided as flawed, juvenile writing or as pandering to an aesthetically benighted public. More recently they have been explored for their humorally enabled voicing of female agency. I suggest that these scenes present ironic reversals of orthodox understandings of *Richard III*’s events, including readings of the play’s historiography as Tudor apologetic and/or providential chronicle. Instead, Shakespeare toys with history as both shaped and interpreted by surprisingly resourceful and powerful victims –as written, we might say, by the losers. This perverse historiography offers a Marlovian approach, favoring the Barabas-like underminer over the Tamburlaine-like overreacher, Margaret over Richard, and revealing the play’s most vulnerable figures, women, children, and those on the scaffold or dead, as having the most lasting shaping and interpretive powers.

**“Whitecraft” and Affect in Jonson’s *Entertainment at Britain’s Burse*
Mariam Galarrita, Arizona State University**

This paper considers the affective relationship between “lack” and white porcelain in Ben Jonson’s *The Entertainment at Britain’s Burse* (1609). While the masque opens with a colonial

fantasy of possessing goods from China, the Master of the chinahouse's seller's pitch, "What do you lack?" creates an affective stance that repositions the "colonial" audience in a state of deficiency and need. What the Master then proposes through the possession of white porcelain is a promise of happiness, to borrow from Sara Ahmed, or what I argue, a promise of whiteness. Through an examination of the affective relationship between "lack" and porcelain's whiteness, in light of a culture obsessed with white objects, I argue that the masque reveals one of the ways in which early modern English whiteness is possessed and ideologically embraced.

'Art hath an enemy called Ignorance': the Process of Judgment in Ben Jonson's *Every Man Out of His Humour*

Céline Magada, Université de Lausanne

In the early modern period, judgment is understood as a skill, something which can be applied in everyday activities, whether they be related to the public or private spheres. In this paper, I investigate how the process of judgment functions in Ben Jonson's *Every Man Out of His Humour*. To do so, I will be looking at the relationship between the practice of commonplacing and that of judgment. The practice of commonplacing was very popular in the period and was taught in grammar schools from a very young age. It was used particularly to teach young boys about rhetoric, an art to which both this practice and judgment belongs. Thinking of this practice together with the act of judgment helps to understand the latter as a process, one that can be reused and applied in different situations. I wish to understand how this process is represented in the narrative and how it may have helped construct theatrical plots. Ultimately, I wish to demonstrate that judgement was an active process not only undertaken by the audience, but also by playwrights. It was a practical and creative tool used in this case to construct the structure of *Every Man Out of His Humour*'s plot.

**Choreography for the Devil 2.0:
Dance in Productions of *Doctor Faustus*, 2005-2022
Linda McJannet, Bentley University**

When Faustus hesitates to sign the deed giving his soul to Lucifer, Mephistopheles exits and reenters with "DEVILS *giving crowns and rich apparel . . . ; they dance, and then depart*" (sc. 5.82sd). The dialogue implies that the gifts, the dance itself, and the promise of such conjuring powers convince Faustus to sell his soul. This essay considers how contemporary directors, such as Yukio Ninagawa, Toby Frow, Matthew Dunster, Elizabeth Freestone, and Ricky Dukes, realize the dance called for in this scene. I am also interested in other moments when dance is reprised or inserted as a director's choice. While the directors' approaches and effects vary, they all rely on and demonstrate the power of choreographed movement, an emerging subfield in Shakespearean studies, but so far under-analyzed in Marlowe's work.

The Second Face of *Sejanus*
Richard Preiss, University of Utah

This essay attempts to say something interesting about *Sejanus*, a play few modern critics find interesting, and noteworthy chiefly for how *uninteresting* its first public audience found it: booed and hissed off stage after (or possibly during) its first performance at the Globe in 1603, it was printed in 1605, in a revised version whose relation to the original Jonson leaves deliberately opaque. I come to this play, furthermore, in the context of a project to which it seems uniquely ill-suited: a study of reperformance – the default operation of the early modern repertory system – and its implications for both the phenomenology of theater and the nature of dramatic composition. How can a play staged only once (or even less than that) reflect a practice in which it never participated? With its clotted style, overbearing classicism, insufferable moralizing, and almost total lack of action, reinforced by the columns of dense bibliographic citation that fill the margins of the 1605 quarto, *Sejanus* has long been regarded as a retreat into absolute textuality, in which Jonson constructs his own dramatic authorship beyond the reach of time, collaborative compromise, and the limitations of theatrical embodiment. It is that, to be sure. But *Sejanus* also thematizes such embodiment: even as it unfolds in abstract, unstageable space, it remains fixated on the materiality of bodies and the power of theatrical representation, subjecting its protagonist to cycles of incorporation and disintegration even past the point of his death. In the same way, though *Sejanus* removes itself from performance, it looks constantly toward reperformance – indeed, it exists only *as* reperformance, a play that paradoxically follows itself. Precisely by virtue of its being (in Jonson’s words) “not the same with that which was acted on the public stage,” I argue, *Sejanus* demands to be read as a play rewritten not only to internalize the trauma of its failure, but to amplify and reproduce that failure – in essence, to give itself the encore performances it never got, by endlessly restaging the very reception that foreclosed them.

The Play of the Sacrament, The Jew of Malta and the Economic Stories They Tell
Brad Ryner, Arizona State University

This paper examines how the play traditionally known as the Croxton *Play of the Sacrament* (post-1461) and *The Jew of Malta* differently frame ideas about commerce and economic value. I argue that the question of whether or not we understand the earlier play to be recalled and reworked by the later play has important implications for the stories of economic and aesthetic change that we might tell about the period. My interest here is not in establishing a definitive aesthetic or economic history but in exploring the very different ways that these stories might be told and especially the ways that plays themselves shape different possibilities for construing these narratives. The *Play of the Sacrament* downplays the logic of commodity exchange and, instead, emphasizes the unique materiality of goods and the stability of money as a measure of value. By contrast, *The Jew of Malta* emphasizes the transformability of objects of exchange into varied pleasures and entertains the notion that spending on pleasure can be not only sustained but increased by means of an increasingly large set of transactions producing increasingly greater profits. While the ending of the play may be seen as nihilistic, it might, alternatively, have felt celebratory to an audience who, like Barabas, were willing to pay for pleasure and might even

have been optimistic that a growing merchant-capital-driven economy would allow them to continue to purchase more and greater pleasures.

Marlowe's Strangers and the Matter of Race
John Yargo, University of Massachusetts, Amherst

Barabas in Christopher Marlowe's *Jew of Malta* (c. 1589) and Tamburlaine in *Tamburlaine, Part One* (c. 1587) both strategically manipulate the sensory field of early modern race-thinking. Sixteenth-century theater-makers like Marlowe adopted "black-up" and whitening cosmetics such as quicksilver, cork, myrrha, and gall to visually represent racial and ethnic "strangers." Additionally, the representation of race depended on the smellscape and soundscape of the theatre as much as ideological views of whiteness and non-whiteness. In *The Jew of Malta*, Barabas's impersonation of a French musician reveals the thematic and tonal contradictions of early modern theater's racial sensorium. Philip Henslowe's playhouse inventories offer suggestive possibilities for how Tamburlaine's race was staged, namely, "Tamberlynes cotte," and "Tamberlanes breches of crymson vellvet." The indirect description of Zenocrate as visibly "milk-white" and "ivory" indicates the use of cosmetics, specifically the application of lemon juice or oil of poppy, to stabilize the meaning of her identity and subjectivity as "white." Taken together, this material and textual analysis contributes to our ongoing reckoning with the material production of race in early modern theater.