Considering Collaboration:

From Premodern to Contemporary

Early modern scholars Laurie Maquire and Emma Smith have considered the different kinds of collaboration in which Elizabethan and Jacobean plays were written for the stage. In their taxonomy below, they offer eight different categories and examples drawn from early modern drama. For scholars of this period, their taxonomy is revolutionary in describing diverse forms of collaboration in non-hierarchical ways. In describing forms of authorship before Romantic era ideals of the lone (male) genius, Maquire and Smith's work can be used to challenge later conceptualisations of the singular author/auteur. For those researching other periods and fields, this taxonomy invites, for example, feminist reframings of both the production of texts and the texts themselves.

Composition by Act
- *Tancred and Gismund*; *Jocasta*; *Gorboduc*; *Misfortunes of Arthur*
- Henslowe pays by the Act
- Daborne outsources by the Act
- Peele, *Titus Andronicus*; Nashe, *1 Henry VI*
- Nashe: induction and first act of *Isle of Dogs*
- Dekker: first act of *Keep the Widow Waking*

Composition by segment
- Rowley: 16 ll in *Changeling* 4.2

Composition by specialty
- Clowns: Heywood in *Sir Thomas More*, Rowley in *Maid in the Mill*, *The Old Law*
- Calm-the-crowd scene: Shakespeare in *Sir Thomas More*

Composition by continuation
- *Dido*: 'Nashe perfecit et edidit'
- Marston, *The Insatiate Countess*

Composition by plot
- Middleton/Rowley, *Changeling*, *A Fair Quarrel*
- Middleton, Dekker, Ford, Rowley, *Spanish Gypsy*
- Rowley, Dekker, Ford &c, *Witch of Edmonton*

Composition by speech
- Dekker: 'one speech in the last act' of *Keep the Widow Waking*
- Chettle: 12 lines in MS of *John of Bordeaux*

Composition by opening or framing
- Massinger: begins/ends plays with Fletcher
- Rowley: begins/ends *Changeling*, *A Fair Quarrel*, *The Old Law*

Composition by addition, adaptation
- Middleton in *Measure for Measure*, *Macbeth*, *All's Well*
- Bird and Rowley, *Dr Faustus*
- Jonson, *Spanish Tragedy*

In this workshop, this taxonomic model becomes a starting point to discuss collaboration in early modern English drama and beyond, with implications which reframe understanding of the author/auteur, adaptation, modes of academic engagement, contemporary theatrical production, and more. Considering collaboration also encourages reframing discussions in ways that decentres the author/auteur. For example, work such as Sara Ahmed's which explores the power relations of gender dynamics, can be further used to deconstruct either ahistorical constructs of authorship or challenge the ways in which sole authorship has often been used to affirm male author(ity).

Collaboration as a framework contains restorative potentials. This includes examining the influence of frequently unrecognised female creative work on canonised male authors or where one woman's work is tokenised as representative of all women in a period or creative position, such as directing or producing. Further potentials include challenging persisting ideas of the auteur in productions of theatrical performances, film, or television series. These forms of media rely on many people across multiple stages of creative processes whose work is often obscured by the form of a director or producer. To add a further category, translation may productively be considered a form of collaboration, further adding to Maguire and Smith's taxonomy and considering a form of work historically done by women.

PhD candidates and early career researchers (including professors within the first 1-3 years of their professorship) are welcome to submit abstracts for papers 15 minutes in length, along with a short biography, which focus on collaboration, either in content or reflecting on collaboration as a mode of production.

Date: 10-11 December 2026
Place: Online or In Person at the University of Bamberg
Deadline for CfP: 16 October 2026
Deadline for Registration (auditor only): 30 October 2026

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