THEATER WITHOUT BORDERS

19th Annual Conference 13-16 JUNE 2023
"Early Modern Theater in Our Time: Transnational Urgencies"

Verona University, Skenè Research Centre
Piccolo Teatro di Giulietta / Teatro Nuovo

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ABSTRACTS

David J. Amelang (Universidad Autónoma de Madrid)
Measuring Protagonism in Early Modern European Drama

A recurrent descriptor in literary analysis, the term 'protagonist' is commonly understood to mean a character perceived as playing a leading role in a story. It remains a somewhat elusive term, though since there are many different ways in which a character can exert influence over a plot's development: a protagonist can be the catalyst of action or the subject of others' efforts and desires, a protagonist can be constantly present or only punctually-but-perfunctorily seen and/or heard. Depending on the literary genre, the period in question and the type of story being told, what makes a 'protagonist' may be defined and measured by one set or criteria or another. In the particular case of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century European theatre, for instance, one of the most reliable markers of protagonism is speech share. Perhaps more so than at any other point in time, the dramatic style of

Shakespeare, Lope de Vega, Molière and their peers is almost exclusively driven by dialogue, and thus a character's role length is often a good and easily measurable indicator of their centrality. There are, however, other prominent forms of drama during this period in which role length does not adequately reveal a character's degree of protagonism, such as the English court masques which revolved around the static and silent display of aristocratic ladies at the centre of the spectacle. With these and other similar exceptions in mind, this paper explores a variety of quantitative methods of measuring protagonism in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century European theatre. After developing a comprehensive list of possible 'indicators of protagonism' based on a wide selection of dramatic texts from across the European continent, this presentation will provide a comparative test case by applying these barometers to two plays based on the same source story, John Webster's The Duchess of Malfi and Lope de Vega's El Mayordomo de la Duquesa de Amalfi.

Silvia Bigliazzi and Emanuel Stelzer (Verona University)
The *SENS* Project – *Shakespeare's Narrative Sources: Italian Novellas and Their European Dissemination*
Although Shakespeare's sources have long been identified and extensively studied, their early modern editions have not been thoroughly examined in relation to their European dissemination, translation, and adaptation. While we tend to take for granted the textual stability of the sources, compared to the radical instability of Shakespeare's plays, a closer exploration of the actual editions that may have been available at the time shows relevant textual differences bearing upon their reception. What did Shakespeare and his contemporaries actually read? Which were their reading practices, interests, and purposes? To what extent do cultural similarities and differences emerge from a comparison of these texts? How can we read them today? The *Shakespeare's Narrative Sources: Italian Novellas and Their European Dissemination* (*SENS*) digital project (https://sens.skene.univr.it/) aims at providing a flexible and freely accessible database which, as a research tool, allows for a comparative study of Shakespeare's Italian sources and their European mediations. The archive offers diplomatic editions, semidiplomatic and modernised editions. These allow the reader an easier approach to the texts, also through the use of popups, while preserving the possibility of moving back and forth between different editions and intertexts. The multilingual concept of SENS guarantees the kind of diversity Lori Humphrey Newcomb invoked when she underlined the need to decolonise Shakespeare source studies, to revise the "model of cultural history that is teleological, axiological, nationalist, evolutionary, colonial, exploitative" (2018, 27) a model eventually resulting in Shakespeare as the ultimate fulfilment of the potential value of all that came before.

Christian Billing (University of Hull)
'All the World's a Grave': Hamlet's Transnational Heterotopias
In his influential essay on the formulation of cultural space: '*Des Espaces Autres*' (1967), Michel Foucault brought into critical play the concept of the heterotopia. These literal and metaphorical spaces, Foucault argued, are created by all cultures — figuring themselves as hetero-chronic as well as hetero-topological formulations of the human need to construct multi-layered sites of crisis, deviation, synchronicity, superimposition, archaeology, revelation and reflective connection to all that exists as remaining space.

Foucault's work formed part of a movement of space/place-related Marxist philosophy (in which Henri Le Febvre was one crucial axis) and that has, more recently, been developed in the discipline of Cultural Geography towards a framing of 'third space' by thinkers such as Doreen Massey and Edward Soja; Massey, in particular, invites us to think of 'space as the dimension of coexisting difference' and, in doing so, to deconstruct the structural inequalities that propel globally both historic and current systems of oppression.

My paper will close-read Act V scene i of Shakespeare's *Hamlet* through the lens of the heterotopia — pointing out the capacious transnationality of Hamlet's appropriations of space and time, whilst also using critical race theory (particularly the recent work of Ian Smith) to consider the

ways in which Hamlet's assertive claims to transnational time and place do not reveal the play's concerns with solipsistic inwardness – but rather the pervasive power of colonial capital, violence and white dominion.

Petra Bjelica (Verona University)
Remediating Hamlet: Experimenting with Visual Regimes of Virtual Theatre and Intermediality
This lecture-performance will discuss and demonstrate ongoing research on the staging of *Hamlet* while using mixed reality technologies such as VR, HoloLens glasses, and 3D scenography. The main goal is to explore whether VR and intermediality can liberate the performance from visual regimes of masculine specular and optical power economy in a new remediation of *Hamlet*.

The starting point and inspiration for this project are Edward Gordon Craig's Moscow *Hamlet*, his modernistic ideas on *Hamlet* "as a monodrama" in which he wanted Hamlet constantly on stage and "in whose mind this vision was played out" (Innes, 2004, 153), as well as his concept of actors as *automatons*. Since in Giannachi's opinion the medium of virtual theatre operates by creating a flickering balance of "*appearance and disappearance*" (2004, 5, my italics), it might be a perfect form for addressing the "representational, ontological, and epistemological anxieties of the twenty-first century" (Fiorato, 2021, 6), Craig's vision of the new theatre, and one of the most important themes in *Hamlet* - the border between the virtual and real, seeing and being.
In the lecture-performance, the actor playing Hamlet will wear HoloLens glasses, being immersed in VR that consists of Craig's virtually recreated drawings of one scene: the encounter between Hamlet and the ghost. The audience will be guided by the lecturer on how to surveil the actor's vision that will be projected on a screen in the theatre and how to interact with the actor. The spectators will collectively co-create the performance by participating in the game of choices about Hamlet's actions through a specially designed application for Shakespearean scholars.

The lecture-performance will include interaction with the audience and will offer a sample of an experimental work in progress.

Dennis Austin Britton (University of British Columbia)
The Politics of Grief in *Troades* and *Titus Andronicus*
At the end of Seneca's *Troades,* the messenger states "uterque flevit coetus" [both groups wept] after collectively witnessing the death of Astyanax. The needfulness of Astyanax's death is rendered ambiguous in the play, and at the play's end, the shared emotions of the Greeks and Trojans casts further doubt on Ulysses' insistence that the gods require this particular sacrifice—the play indeed shows political expediency conveniently cohering with the will of the gods. But at the play's end, the shared *miseria* of the Greeks and Trojans establishes a tension between human emotion and divine will, as well as between human emotion and political divisions. In this paper, I read Shakespeare's *Titus Andronicus* alongside Seneca's *Troades*, suggesting, like Curtis Perry, the need to read Seneca's influence on *Titus* beyond *Thyestes.* As I look to *Troades,* I consider how the aftermath of the Trojan War haunts *Titus* not only through Virgil's *Aeneid*—with its own take on the tension between *miseria* and *pietas*—but also through Senecan tragedy. (The emotional mandates of epic are not the same as those of tragedy.) Whereas in Seneca's *Troades miseria* works to undermine political differences, in *Titus* Lucius attempts to mobilize pity in ways that shore up divisions between the Romans and a Gothic queen and a Black Moor.

Simona Brunetti (Verona University)
Seduction, Ambiguity, and Cross-dressing at the Basis of the Commedia dell'Arte Performances

Starting with the numerous attempts at regulation and censorship, the aim of this paper is to show how erotic fascination, gender ambiguity and transvestitism are not only motives behind the success of Italian comedians' performances throughout Europe, but also represent an effective and highly remunerative business model in the spectacular sphere for at least two centuries.

The talk will be accompanied by a short performance by performer Andrea Coppone.

Lucia Cardelli (Leigh University)
The Homonormative Negotiation in Pietro Aretino's *Il Marescalco*

In queer theory, the term "homonormativity," coined by Lisa Duggan, defines the sexual logics of neoliberalism, identifying queerness's incorporation within systems of consumption and reproduction. Despite the contemporary context of Duggan's definition, homonormativity's delineation of sexual regulation and assimilation presents numerous early modern antecedents. My presentation will explore the ramifications of this theorization in Pietro Aretino's 1936 comedy *Il Marescalco*, which offers a satirical elaboration of homonormative anxieties on the Italian Renaissance stage. In Aretino's play, the Duke of Mantua is posed as a sexual and reproductive authority whose power forcibly underlines and destabilizes the protagonist's homosexuality. *Il Marescalco*, despite its narrative adherence to conventions of the Italian Cinquecento—most notably, its *beffa* resolution—adopts a salacious, but often political approach to sexual mishaps. In the comedy, Mantua's networks of class, status, and commerce construct a system of value-making that extends to the play's logic of reproduction. Aretino challenges the machinations of sex and matrimonial duties through the precarious figure of the Duke, effectively showcasing the system of sexual reproduction through marriage as an artificial and unstable structure. However, *Il Marescalco* also reinstates naturalized modes of class division, antisemitic hierarchies, and misogynistic notions, often opposing these to homosexual existence. My paper investigates Aretino's construction of male homosexuality in *Il Marescalco* as a form of homonormative narrative negotiation through an ambivalent logic of reproduction that seeks to mediate its own fallacies.

María M. Carrión (Emory University)
Homographic Mountain Girl, or Gila's Female Masculinity

This paper hinges between the demons of canonic misreadings of Gila, the protagonist of Vélez de Guevara's play *La serrana de la Vera* (*Mountain Girl of Vera*) and more recent theoretical engagements on sexualities, such as Lee Edelman's homographesis and Jack Halberstam's female masculinity. In line with the question proposed in the TWB CFP "what is modern about early modern theater," this paper proposes a reading of both the play and the poorly understood blockbuster character of the Spanish Comedia, the *mujer varonil* (oftentimes translated as 'manly woman') that will allow us to rethink queerness and non-binary gender identity as the urgent critical and ethical issue of Gila's times, as it is of ours. The paper argues that Gila's inscription in *La serrana*, one of writing as difference which constitutes the homosexual body as text (homographesis), opens a path for her performance of female masculinity, which, if read properly, dismisses the panic and perversion which have traditionally characterized readings of the staging and representation of queer bodies onstage that 'inevitably' have to meet the "conservative and predictable end" of being executed by the State. "Homographic Mountain Girl" traces how Gila engages homographesis to deploy female masculinity not as a mere act or pretense, but as a deployment of humanity beyond all gender technologies, expectations, myths, and regulations. A humanity that lives in her own homographic being, speaking eloquent queernes and non-binary gender knowing and being at odds with the Universal Catholic Monarchy of Spain.

Fernando Cioni (Florence University)
Refashioning Italian theatrical and dramatic conventions: Prologues, Epilogues, and Inductions in Early Modern English Drama

The relationship of early modern English drama to Italian comedy has been extensively studied in terms of borrowings, debts, verbal echoes, etc. This paper will study how also theatrical conventions such as prologues and inductions are indebted to Italian theatre. The induction as dramatic and theatrical device was a way to overcome the gap between stage and audience, between make-believe and actuality, aiming at making the audience accept dramatic illusion. The induction, even though it possibly followed the Italian custom of turning prologues into a conversation, seems to gather and develop the characteristics of other introductory forms such as prologue and dumb show. The former, normally, does not contain dramatic action, whereas the latter lacks dialogue. The induction could have been influenced by the Italian prologues and epilogues, in particular by the dialogical prologues, such as Bibbiena's *La Calandria*, even though in Italian Renaissance plays prologues were mainly used to disclose sources and plot, in the Terencian and Plautine traditions. Even though the introductory scenes so popular in Early modern English drama such as prologues and inductions (along with epilogues and choruses), have certainly developed from a medieval tradition, they represent a device which derives also from Italianate comedic conventions.

Sidia Fiorato (Verona University)
Performing and negotiating queenly identity: Queen Anna of Denmark's *The Masque of Blackness*
In the court of King James I's, Queen Anna rebelled against a purely symbolic role as Queen consort and appropriated the masque form for her own political self-fashioning against the court's gendered ideology. In particular, by including noblewomen as performers she asserted the existence of a queen's court and by performing Pallas Athena in *The Masque of the Twelve Goddesses* she presented herself as a warrior queen, implicitly identifying with Queen Elizabeth. Furthermore, in *The Masque of Blackness* by performing with exposed blackened skin she staged an aesthetic transgression that claimed her foreignness and posited herself as an unassimilable part of monarchy. Her black(ened) femininity, in the complex context of the Renaissance conception of blackness, became a polysemic site of resistance and contributed to engender her own queenly identity.

Cora Fox (Arizona State University)
Imagining Happy Communities in Shakespeare's *The Winter's Tale* and its Intertexts
Considering *The Winter's Tale* as an entry in what Sara Ahmed has described as Western European culture's "unhappiness archive," this paper traces the ways the play constructs a particular fantasy of happy community through adaptation of Greene's *Pandosto* as well as Ovid and Euripides. The play is metatheatrically constructed as unhappy when Mamillius announces that "a sad tale's best for winter" (2.1.26), and it produces an emotive intertextuality that decontextualizes happiness, dilating on its contingency and costs. In doing so, it traces an emergent notion of happiness that is recognizably modern, as well as developing fantasies of individual wellbeing and healthy community.

Barbara Fuchs (UCLA)
Vernacularity and the New Classic
This paper explores how language, in particular, might help promote the *comedia*. This may seem counter-intuitive, given that early modern Spanish verse is difficult even for native speakers in Spain and Latin America, not to mention for heritage or second-language learners in the US. The key, I think, is to conceive broadly of *comedia* in translation as a *new classic*, one that can be adapted to the particular Spanish skills of its intended audience, as necessary, while offering an accessible vernacularity overall.

　　　Much of the professional theater world in the US operates within a bifurcated model, of the *new play* and the *classic*. The latter is most often Shakespeare, with a slot reliably dedicated to the Bard in the season line-up of many more theaters that those willing to tackle the Greeks, Molière, or Calderón. An important insight to bring to the table as we seek to make *comedia* a more regular part of theatrical offerings in the US is that translation itself affords vernacularity, making the classics

more accessible and bridging the gap between *classic* and *new play*. A powerful new translation is both. The paper concludes by exploring how the "new classics" work in performance, via an account of the Globe Theater/Diversifying the Classics performance-as-research workshop on humor in the *comedia*/humor in translation held at the Sam Wanamaker theater in June 2022.

Jessica Goethals (University of Alabama)
Staging the Sack of Rome: The (Re-)Performance of Gender and the Future of Italian Literary Culture
Within the field of theater, the 1527 Sack of Rome by the Spanish, German, and Italian troops of Charles V is most commonly associated with the Accademia degli Intronati's comedy *Gl'ingannati* (The Deceived), and for good reason. The heroine Lelia's presumed violation at the hands of her Spanish captors liberates her from the constraints of convention and decorum, catalyzing the plot and freeing her to pursue her chosen beloved from behind the shield of male garb. However, *Gl'ingannati* is but one of the works that explores questions of gender, agency, and the face of Italian literary culture in the wake of Rome's terrible – and, arguably, traumatizing – fall. Drawn from my in-progress book on the cultural repercussions of the Sack, my talk places *Gl'ingannati* alongside other relatively familiar works, such as Pietro Aretino's post-Sack rewrite of his courtly comedy *La cortigiana*, as well as forms of popular literature and street performance about this and other conflicts within the Italian Wars in order to consider the then urgent question of Italy's literary future – and the place of both men and women therein – in a moment of acute crisis.

Tom Harrison (Independent)
'Playing the Astrologer': Tomkis' *Albumazar* and Porta's *Lo Astrologo*
Thomas Tomkis's university comedy *Albumazar* (1614) follows the exploits of a group of thieves led by the eponymous Albumazar, an astrologer and con-artist who uses his 'deepe skill in Art'' to trick those gullible enough to employ his services. While the play focuses on the gulling of the lecherous old man, Pandolfo, and a foolish farmhand apparently 'transformed' into his neighbour Antonio, the play is shadowed by the mysterious Barbary, a place of wealth and allure but also danger. The play presents some of the period's most familiar comic tropes but it also owes a direct debt to a single source: *Lo Astrologo* (pub. 1606) by the Italian polymath Giambattista della Porta, whose interests in philosophy, science, and the occult echo those of his and Tomkis' titular characters. This paper explores some of *Albumazar*'s links with *Astrologo,* in particular the plays' presentation of their mysterious titular characters and of the equally mysterious Barbary, and considers what the adaptation of an Italian source text in an English university play may tell us about Continental influence in the 'amateur' theatre of the early seventeenth century.

Robert Henke (Washington University, St. Louis)
Shakespeare's Italian Resources: Scripts, Scenarios, and Stories
A full study of Shakespeare and the Italian intertexts animating his plays must pursue both the "deep source" approach of the "theatergram" method and the close reading of proven as well as probable Italian sources. Play and novella sources should not be read merely for content of plot and character (which the genius then transforms into great art) but can reveal much else: the framing presence of women as analyzed by Melissa Walter; proto-dramatic rhythms; and narrative alternatives--"roads not taken"-- that can appear as vestiges in Shakespeare's texts, or can be realized in film versions and theater productions years afterward. (Baz Luhrmann's showing of the two doomed lovers briefly alive together in the crypt reprises the endings of the Da Porto and Bandello stories. If some recent *Twelfth Night* productions have Viola and Olivia kiss, the Italians were there first.) A comprehensive approach also considers Italian scripts, scenarios, and stories behind Shakespeare's plays as an interlocking system, with narremes, theatergrams, and situations continually shuttling between scripted plays, improvised theater, and novellas.

Alani Hicks-Bartlett (Brown University)
Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, "Matermorphoses," and the "Force of the Imagination" in Vélez de Guevara's "Virtudes Vencen Señales"

Vélez de Guevara harbors few qualms about critiquing kingship; and yet, his ideation of race, heredity, and political succession often represent an epistemological crux. In many of his works he inveighs against the tradition of theocratic kingship and absolute monarchy and considers attendant problems of hereditary monarchy, while simultaneously delineating highly skeptical visions of successful governance with unconventional succession arrangements. In "Virtudes vencen señales," Vélez explores these alternative possibilities for governance through his staging of race, gender and exemplarity.

Although it is read to his detriment as "monstrosity," the protagonist's blackness helps decipher the meaning of political and familial legitimacy throughout the play. As sole "appropriate" heir to the throne, his presence challenges the very notions of teratology, prodigiosity, and exemplarity that the play puts forth. Yet the protagonist's skin and dramatic representations of color terminology have received the bulk of critical attention while the play's equal investment in gender (specifically as regards maternity) has often been disregarded.

As I propose, by considering Vélez's reworkings of Ovidian intertexts and his inquiry into the "force of the imagination" alongside the reworking of various maternal tropes, it becomes clear how race and gender *together* condition the intrigue of the play, especially since gender is situated as the catalyst that determines exemplarity and ideal succession. In particular, Vélez's telling reworking of gender norms and key critical discussions related to maternal imagination point precisely to the fragility and variability of the "señales," or "signs" that are situated as defining (albeit problematic) characteristics that gauge an exemplar's excellence. The main characters' recognition of the subjectivity of "señales," subsequently abets Vélez's pointed critique of problems related to political continuity, hierarchal understandings of inheritance, and limited tolerance of racial and gender difference.

Erith Jaffe-Berg (University of California, Riverside)
Migratory Patterns for Minority Performers in the late Sixteenth and Early Seventeenth Centuries

Early-Modern minority groups played a larger role than we suppose in the creative output in the Italian Peninsula. Turkish acrobats and Jewish actors, among others performed at court and in the piazzas. These groups were especially susceptible to the vicissitudes brought on by war and plague. In this presentation, I discuss some of the migratory patterns for early-modern performers in the wake of "disasters" such as the War of Mantuan Succession (1628-1631), and the waves of plagues of the late 16th and early 17th centuries. The sack of Mantua resulted in the slaughter of one third of the population, including a significant number of people who took an industrious part in both the court and popular, Carnival-time theatre productions. As a result of the war, many artists fled the city, venturing elsewhere in search of theatrical employment. One of the destinations was Venice, which benefited from the refugee artist population and welcomed theatre performers and musicians to its midst. However, the plague of 1630-31 killed of many of these new arrivals and had disastrous effects on the theatre scene. In this presentation, I explore how despite this catastrophic migratory path, theatre in Northern Italy survived and was sustained by the theatrical networks of exchange that war, migration and even plague occasioned.

Serena Laiena (University College Dublin)
Amateur Theatre and Homosexuality in Early Modern Rome: a Case Study

This paper looks at the organisation of plays within the cultural circles of the late Cinquecento Roman aristocracy and investigates more specifically issues of sexual identity. By bringing to light previously unremarked archival sources, it reconstructs the making of an amateur comedy during carnival

festivities in Rome in 1590, identifies the figures involved in the process, and shows how this pastime was strictly connected to homosexual practices. Finally, it considers the relation between these productions and those by professional actors and actresses in the frame of the new policy on spectacles issued by Sixtus V.

Ellen MacKay (University of Chicago)
'All for your delight we are not here': "Sponsus" and the Production of Social Insignificance
"When a stage crew comes on during an intermission to change scenery or props in full view of an audience, it announces in effect, 'we are here and not here, doing real things that you see, but do not see as representational because they are actual. We are here working, but we are not signifying.'"

<div align="right">Alice Rayner, "Rude Mechanicals and the Specters of Marx"</div>

The fact that theatre emerges from the tenth century Christmas and Easter liturgies has long been taken as proof of the demonstrative virtuosity of mimetic performance. It stands to reason that for bishops to sanction it, acting out the most sacred episodes of the Bible must have been understood as an effective way to facilitate understanding and belief. This standard view attributes to the post-classical, pre-modern European theatre a fundamentally involving, agentive capacity, easily compatible with the production of "proto-democratic scripts"—a phrase I take from this year's Conference Statement. But there are other modes of social instruction that hitch a ride on early Biblical dramaturgy, and that lodge in the signifying systems of later European stages. By way of engaging the deep roots of a theatrical infrastructure that deprives specific populations of a speaking role, this paper shifts the emphasis in the story of medieval theatre's emergence from the "Quem Qaeritis?" trope to *Sponsus*, a 13th century dramatization of the Parable of the Ten Virgins, compiled at the monastery of Saint Martial at Limoges. Because it is the first ecclesiastical dramatic work to treat a theological analogy ("*for it is as if*" Matt 25:14 NKJV) instead of a biblical episode (such as the Visitation of the Sepulchre), *Sponsus* is fascinating for its concrete expression of spiritual signs. The effect is ungainly. While its eschatological meaning has fueled centuries of debate, the parable's dramatic action amounts to the banal task of lighting, or failing to light, ten lamps on cue. By dramatizing business more commonly assigned to the technical production of a play, *Sponsus* makes visible the enactment of labor that will be effaced by the conventions of the public stage. By presenting it within the hermeneutic constraints of a parable that strains its many exegetes, the play makes the logic of work as the basis of divine reward all but inscrutable. I will argue that for this reason, the play is exemplary of a mode of theatricality that is not explanatory, but instead confers insignificance. Because who is saved and who is damned is both procedurally fraught (since the punctual ignition of lamps cannot be assured) and theologically vague (since it's not clear why some virgins lack the oil to light their lamps), spectators are led to recognize their interpolation within a system that values them on a basis whose relation to merit or effort is merely ostensible. In the final section of my paper, I refer to the robust representation of The Wise and Foolish Virgins by German and Dutch engravers to address the lesson in dispossession that attaches to the maintenance of the theatrical house. My aim is to recover something like a script of precarity as a social effect of the medieval and early modern theatre.

Clare McManus (University of Roehampton)
Hoop, rope and stage: embodiments of witchcraft in *The Masque of Queens*
As part of the panel on *The Masque of Queens*, this paper will explore the connection between the feminine embodiments of tumbling and witchcraft. The tumbling and rope-dancing women of early modern Europe inhabit an agile, muscular, flexible and often explosively dynamic embodiment that sits at the intersections of gender, race-making, age, ability and class. This paper triangulates the production of femininity by the ubiquitous European female acrobat and rope-dancer, the courtly women masquers of *The Masque of Queens*, and the boy-actor of court masque and commercial English playhouse. It does so to bring alternative embodiments of femininity to bear on the performance of witchcraft in the antimasque of *The Masque of Queens* (1609).

Bernadette Meyers (New York University)
Coalface: Staging Air Pollution in Renaissance England and France
This paper explores an understudied performance tradition that contributed to an ecological consciousness around smoky air in sixteenth and seventeenth century England: what I call "coalface," or the impersonation of the laborers responsible for transporting and selling coal. As my terminology suggests, coalface had much in common with early blackface performance, or the impersonation of black-skinned Africans. This paper aims to clarify this relationship by examining literary and visual evidence of blackened coal-workers in English plays, pamphlets, and broadsheets alongside the representations of coal-black "*Mores*" found in seventeenth century French court ballets. Ultimately, I argue that these overlapping performance traditions amplified blackface's racializing power, while simultaneously exposing conflicting attitudes toward one of the increasingly common sources of energy on which it depended.

Karen Newman (Brown University)
Hamlet*: Shakespeare, Dumas, and *grand opéra
My paper (20 minutes) considers Ambroise Thomas's opera *Hamlet* (1868), with a libretto by Michel Carré and Jules Barbier, based on Shakespeare's play as translated/adapted by Alexandre Dumas, père, and inspired by his experience attending performances of Shakespeare and *Hamlet* by the English actors who visited Paris over a ten month period in 1827. Harriet Smithson's portrayal of Ophelia's mad scene was a sensation and inspired Dumas and subsequently Thomas's *Hamlet* which played not only in Paris, but in London (though there its tragic ending was restored) and in major houses across Europe, as well as New York and Saint Petersburg. This spring it is being mounted by the Paris Opera for the first time since 1938 in a production directed by Krzysztof Warlikowski, the Polish director (who apprenticed with Peter Brook, and worked with Ingmar Bergman, and Giorgio Strehler, among others). Thomas's version of *Hamlet* cuts Fortinbras and the political rivalries that drive the play and its recent criticism, expands Ophelia's role, and ends triumphantly, with Hamlet avenging his father and being crowned king. The opera is an example of French "Grand Opera," the nineteenth-century operatic genre on a serious or historical theme featuring large-scale casts, orchestra and spectacle in which all the dialogue is sung.

Shormishtha Panja (Delhi University)
'The isle is full of noises, / Sounds and sweet airs': Hindustani music and the colonial encounter in Hemchandra Banerjee's Bengali adaptation of *The Tempest* (1868)
Just as the interpretation, interpolation and adaptation of Shakespeare's works on stage and in Indian translation are witness to the heterogeneous effects of the colonial encounter, Hindustani music too was deeply affected by the colonial encounter. What does the music composed by Madan Mohan Barman and others for a 19th century Bengali adaptation of *The Tempest* tell us about the process of making Hindustani music Bengali, of giving it its own identity, distinct from the Mughal tradition on the one hand and the Anglophone influence on the other? The issues of slavery, subjugation and liberty explored in Shakespeare's play find an apt expression in the music of Hemchandra's *Nalini Basanta* that seeks to mix elements from western and Hindustani music with the street music of Bengal to create a music that is independent and recognizably Bengali.

Performance of excerpts from *The Masque of Queens,* with Elia Nichols, Roberto Andrioli, and Eric Nicholson
Retaining the title of "A Renaissance Masque: Queens, Crones, and The Power of Women" and Elia Nichols as The Dame (Mischief), today's performance is a downsized, experimental variation on the version of *The Masque of Queens* directed by Eric Nicholson, and performed by the NYU Florence La Pietra Players on 9 May, 2023.

ROUNDTABLE: Silvia Bigliazzi (Verona University), Cristiano Ragni (Verona University), Emanuel Stelzer (Verona University), Silvia Silvestri (Bari University), Carla Suthren (Verona University)
Gascoigne From The Margins: Mediations, Translations, Appropriations

In 1990, Jonathan Crewe voiced a general critical difficulty in placing George Gascoigne in the Elizabethan literary context, calling him "an appreciable poet of the English sixteenth century, with whom . . . no one has known quite what to do . . . Where he fits in remains a problem". Rather than trying to fix Gascoigne into any single category, this roundtable wishes to discuss his works from a variety of perspectives, privileging his role as intercultural mediator. Time and again, we find that Gascoigne's works constitute loci in which the local and the international, the personal and the public intersect. In the *Masque of Mountacutes*, his appropriation of the Romeo and Juliet story, which he could find in Brooke's poem, foregrounds issues of race and nationhood, putting in dialogue the Italian novella with contemporary Mediterranean political contexts. His *Jocasta*, collaboratively written with Francis Kinwelmersh, uses a contemporary Italian work as a lens through which to bring the prestige of classical Greek tragedy to an English stage. His *Supposes* shows an eccentric approach to translation developing an original take on Ariosto's prose and verse versions of his comedy. Meanwhile, his probably unperformed didactic drama *The Glass of Government* stages English humanist educational theory against the backdrop of contemporary Antwerp, informed by Gascoigne's own experience as a soldier in the Low Countries during the 1570s. As also in *Jocasta*, issues of gender become significant, if we work to excavate the submerged story of the Prodigal Daughter in this otherwise male-dominated work. Finally, approaching Gascoigne's dramatic works through their printed marginalia offers a further level of multivocality, exploring the ways in which they interact with the texts, engaging the reader in a dialogic relationship with author and text.

Lisa Sampson (UCL)
War, Invasion and Captives in the Sienese Comedies for Habsburg Emperor Charles V

This paper examines theatrical responses in early sixteenth-century Italy to pressing concerns of foreign invasion, wartime mobility and the taking of enemy captives, as the peninsula was repeatedly ravaged by invading 'foreign' armies. The focus falls on the comedy *L'amor costante* (*Constant love*, set in 1536, printed 1541) by the Accademia degli Intronati of Siena. This play was designed with the sponsorship of the Republic for the elaborate ceremonies to welcome their traditional ally, Emperor Charles V, after his victory in Tunis over 'Barbarossa' (1534). In an earlier comedy (*I Prigioni*, *The Captives*, ms c. 1530), probably designed for another intended visit of the Emperor, the Intronati had problematized the real and ethical differences between 'masters' and 'captives' in the fluid warzone of the Italian peninsula. *L'amor costante* plays out some of the same concerns on a transnational stage, engaging with the audience of Spanish overlords and local elites. This paper will explore how such shifts of perspective affected the representation of invasion and taking of captives, and the comedy's proposed resolution through the purging of tyrannical passions and domestication of 'others'.

David Schalkwyk (Queen Mary University of London)
"Many a purchased slave": Shylock in South Africa

This essay traces representative uses of Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice*, focusing on Shylock, in South Africa in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Beginning with a performance of the play at the "Kafir Institute" in Grahamstown in 1872, it discusses Sol Plaatje's uses of Shylock's "Hath a Jew not eyes?" speech; the staging on the play for the 1916 centenary celebrations in Johannesburg, the relative absence of performances during apartheid; the South African actor, Anthony Sher's depiction of Shylock for the RSC in 1978; and the Robben Island Shakespeare.

Zoé Schweitzer (Université de Saint-Etienne)

Crimes and Genres in the Tragic Theater of the 16th Century. The Example of Infanticide and Rape

How do tragedies define the perpetrator and victim? To what extent are violent actions indexed to the gender of the criminal? To what extent does gender identity inform the representation of tragic crimes? The question is particularly acute, and thus the investigation interesting, in sixteenth-century tragedy because the distinction and definition of identities is at the heart of the gender quarrel while ancient figures are common material in tragedies and treatises. This theoretical context invites us to postulate that if fictional crimes reflect the hesitations and debates of their times, they also contribute to the clarification of gender identities and prerogatives.

My hypothesis is that dramatic violence, through the play of plot and the relationships between characters in particular, exacerbates the distinctions but also the convergences and points of friction between identities and thereby contributes to their definition.

To conduct the study, we propose to focus on a few plays that show violence by men on young girls, such as Iphigenia (Erasmus, 1506; Sébillet, 1549), Iphis (Buchanan, *Jephtes*, 1554) or Philomela (*Procne* from Correr, *ca*. 1426, ed. 1558, and from Parabosco, 1548). How is the violence motivated - sacrificial infanticide or rape - and how are the perpetrator and the victim represented respectively? We will also be interested in this perspective in the consent of the young girl. We will ask, in particular, if violence can be aggregated to gender, that is to say, if it can be generically compatible or if, on the contrary, it contributes to de-gendering or even to dehumanizing. With its bloody revenge and its final metamorphosis, the adventure of Philomela and Procne constitutes a privileged material to compare masculine and feminine crimes.

In order to refine and test the first results of the investigation, it seems interesting to compare this first corpus with tragedies featuring more mature female characters, guilty of the same crime, such as Medea infanticide (La Péruse, 1555 and Galladei, 1558), or of an equally reprehensible sexual act, such as Philanire consenting to adultery (Roillet, *Philanire*, 1556 and 1563).

It is, in short, the notion of sexed/gendered crime that this corpus of 16th century tragedies leads to propose and reflect upon.

Ramie Targoff (Brandeis University)
Dancing Egyptian: Lady Anne Clifford and *The Masque of Queens*

This paper will use a single performer in *The Masque of Queens,* Lady Anne Clifford, and her role as the Egyptian queen Berenice, to think about the role of Egypt in the English imagination of the early 1600s. Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra* and Elizabeth Cary's *Tragedy of Mariam* will be in put in dialogue with Jonson's masque to create a larger picture of the representations of foreign queens in the first decade of James and Anna's rule.

Jane Tylus (Yale University)
"Keepe you this forrest well, keepe every tree": The Woods in Tasso and Shakespeare's *Tempest*

What's the role of the woods in Shakespeare's *Tempest?* Non-existent, it would appear, particularly when we consider Gabriel Egan's claim that "Prospero's main activity since his arrival on the island has been its deforestation." Egan's broader argument that deforestation is tied to colonization, much as was the case in Ireland in the 17th century, can be deepened by turning to the Italian work that influenced a generation of English writers, especially after its 1600 translation: Tasso's epic of the First Crusade, *Gerusalemme liberata*. While the "isola disabitata" of the *maga* Armida might be suggested as a possible source for Shakespeare's "un-inhabited island," the enchanted forest in Canto 13 and its supervising (male) *mago* Ismeno offer another connection to *The Tempest*. Ismeno's directive to Ariel-like "sprites" to "Keepe you this forrest well, keepe every tree" (in Fairfax's translation) is pointedly at odds with the Christians' determination to cut down the forest outside of Jerusalem so as to procure material for their war machines – and provides an interesting context for rethinking Prospero's insistence on the constant procurement of wood by Caliban and Ferdinand. My paper will explore this Italian connection by noting some of the echoes of Tasso's poem in

Shakespeare's play as related to "sprites" and the power of magic to preserve the natural world. I'll argue more broadly that Tasso's ambivalence about cutting out (*troncare*) episodes in his poem such as that of Armida's island or the enchanted woods reveals his own resistance to the epic dynamics embraced by his main protagonist – as well as by the future Prospero. Such a conversation, I hope, will have implications for thinking about the relationship of human and non-human in these works, and the role of nature in an early modern epic/theatrical world increasingly dominated by "machines" and a lack of respect for what other cultures deem sacred.

Melissa Walter (University of the Fraser Valley)
"Welcome to Padua": Female Characters, Narrative Sources, and the ***Commedia dell'Arte*** **in** ***The Two Gentlemen of Verona***
In the Folio text of *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, Speed greets Launce with "by mine honesty, welcome to Padua" (2.5.1). Editors have emended to "Milan," where the scene is set. But in an oblique sense, the clowns are occupying a kind of Padua, the place celebrated as the originary location of the professional theatre. This essay will ask what difference it makes if the *commedia dell'arte* of the second half of the 16th century is taken as a source alongside the narrative and play-script sources that are commonly recognized for this play. Geoffrey Bullough mentions off hand that "it was Shakespeare's primary source for the story of Julia that made him switch the main interest from Proteus to a woman in love" (205). This source, the pastoral narrative *Diana* of Jorge of Montemayor, circulated in Spanish, French, and English during Shakespeare's life and was likely also reflected in the lost play *Felix and Felismena* (1585), as Bullough notes. Indeed, although *Two Gentlemen* disturbs with the way it silences the female characters at the end, the vivid, witty, devoted female characters are far from marginal to this play. Moreover, their risky sincerity is part of what makes the tone of this play waver from sentimental pathos to farcical comedy and back. It doesn't seem enough to credit the *Diana* alone for the power and prominence of these characters. I've argued elsewhere for the importance of novella collections to Shakespeare's comic heroines, and Robert Henke's recent summary of scholarship about Shakespeare's theatre and the *commedia dell'arte* suggest the importance of these connections for *Two Gentlemen*--including the Italian theatrical encounters of Englishmen Anthony Munday (Henke, "Back to the Future," 230) and Will Kemp, and the presence of Italian actresses in England (229). By placing the pastoral *Diana* in the context of a range of novella sources and traces of the *commedia dell'arte*, the essay will demonstrate the mutual interactions between these sources in imagining gender and female character in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*.

William N. West (Northwestern University)
Early Modern Performance and the Quantum Sublime
In the dramatic traditions of early modern Europe, the desire for elevation as described in Longinus or Boileau is persistently conflated with the grand style of the rhetorical tradition, which sometimes achieves what we might call sublime, but is often merely bombastic. Despite the enthusiastic assertions to the contrary of contemporaries of these performance traditions, modern audiences can find such supposedly elevating texts frigid or bathetic. But other traditions of theater practice relied more explicitly on performance than texts, and approached the sublime in other ways. Rather than dialing up their rhetorical intensity, some dramatic forms experimented with startling shifts in tone or perspective, dislocations that reorient their audiences in ways that seem closer to what a modern critic might call sublime. I am tentatively calling such leaps where a small change of perspective effects a global change a quantum sublime. Rather than understanding greatness to result from a steady increase, in the quantum sublime I posit that effects of greatness emerge from sudden reorientations of perspective. Prominent among these are examples of metatheater, which can produce a quasi-Kantian sense of vertigo, for example Calderon's *La vida es sueno* (1636), in which the protagonist decides to live his life as if it were no more than a dream. So are moments of wonder like those associated with stage machinery, or the intricate unfolding of plot. Other instances of

sublimity tend towards aporia rather than the hyperreflexivity of metatheater, like Lope's *Fuenteovejuna* (1619), in which a whole town takes collective responsibility for an act of political violence. Further examples of transfiguring shifts in perspective occur in German *Trauerspiele*, where an earthly perspective on suffering is suddenly recentered from the point of view of eternity. Renaissance performance also explores a comic sublime that, with the paired figures of Heraclitus and Democritus, cannot tell whether to laugh or cry. Corneille's *Illusion comique* (1636) is an example of this, but so are Machiavelli's bitter, biting comedies.

Susanne Wofford (New York University)
Plautus's *The Rope*, Terence's *Eunuchus,* Ariosto's *I Suppositi,* and Shakespeare: Race, Sex and Comedy
In this paper I explore questions of race, class, foreignness and sexuality in Plautus's *The Rope* and Terence's *Eunuchus* as intertexts for Ariosto's *Suppositi* and Shakespeare's *Pericles*, looking at the tensions and connection between the virginal "prostitute" (Shakespeare's Marina), the sexually active woman whose sexual practice is initially authorized by her position as a prostitute (Plautus's Palaestra and Ampelisca) (both plots emerging from the theatergram of the high born woman kidnapped and sold into slavery) and the sexually active high born daughter covertly engaging in sex and romance. Special attention to the character of the "brownish" or "tawny" ("subaquilus") Ampelisca and her more overt sexual exchanges with Sceparnio (action that directs sexual energy away from Palaestra), to the rape of Pamphila by Chaerea, and to the question of what happens when, as in the case of Ariosto's Polinesta, the character seduced by the young man in disguise as a slave or servant is a well-born daughter rather than a prostitute. All of these plays turn on different forms of foreignness and race that complicate both identities, class and ideas of sexual purity. Some questions I hope to explore include: How does this Italian treatment of the sexually active woman reshape our understanding of the intense celebration of virginity in *Pericles?* How do the different forms of foreignness and servitude in *I Suppositi* shift the treatment of the recognition and discoveries in the denouement? I hope to look at how the plots of the deceived classical fathers are multiplied by Ariosto and given a deeper form in the deceiving of Filogono, and of how Shakespeare creates a very different paradigm in Pericles by merging this classical topos with romance. The way each play turns and twists the relation of the desiring young man lover (desiring too to escape the control of the fathers) in relation to the deluded and grief stricken fathers, and to the slaves or servants who enable the fulfillment of these desires, will lead to aa inquiry about genre, into how comedy incorporates both social critique and irony about desire and family, and why the romance has to evade these recognitions.

Enrica Zanin (Université de Strasbourg)
***Tartuffe* from France to Italy: the first Italian adaptations of Molière's comedy**
The Biblioteca degli Intronati in Siena preserves some manuscripts of the first Italian translations of Molière's comedies. The author of these translations is Girolamo Gigli, academician and ntronato (called *l'economico*). He published in 1711 *Don Pilone*, in imitation of Molière's *Tartuffe*, and in 1755, *Le furberie di Scappino*, translated from Molière's *Furberies de Scapin*. He also adapted to the Italian stage a comedy by Racine (*Les plaideurs*), and plays by Corneille (*Nicomède*) and Pradon (*Attilio Regolo*). My paper explores this corpus of translations and analyzes their relationship to the original, in order to understand the diffusion of French theater in Italy and the adaptation of certain problematic subjects (especially concerning the Tartuffe quarrel) in the Italian context