Shakespeare: Immigrants and Aliens
Seminar Leaders: Ruben Espinosa and David Ruiter

Elizabeth V. Acosta

"Belmontian Refuge in *The Merchant of Venice*"

Much critical discussion has centered on Portia's ultimately successful attempts to control the containment represented by the caskets and the rings, and this discussion has shown her remarkable strategic talents. Ultimately, however, most of this criticism is focused on the personal, rather than the political ramifications of Portia's efforts. Still, she is the ruler of Belmont, and she, both early and late, provides the pathway for full access into the island community: she welcomes Lorenzo and Jessica, expertly guides Bassanio to choose the correct casket (and thus sends all other suitors away), and makes a space for Antonio, too. She does much to control the terms of Belmontian society, but these terms clearly apply to all, seemingly equally. And this last point is remarkable in its contrast to the play's other primary location, the city of Venice, where otherness is confined, restricted, and denied equality at every turn. In Belmont, asylum and access to full participation are possible, for Christian and Jew, rich and poor, gay and straight, male and female—demonstrating a new political mandate that, as it turns out, is as advantageous to Portia's leadership as it is to the hoped-for freedoms of its most recent immigrants.

Bernadette Andrea

"'A noble troop of strangers': Masques of Blackness in Shakespeare's *Henry VIII*"

Staging the volatile gender politics of the Henrician era in *The Famous History of the Life of Henry the Eighth* (1613), William Shakespeare and his collaborator, John Fletcher, abridge a century of "masques of blackness" for a Jacobean court weighing its investments in trans-Atlantic expansionism. During this transitional period — variously deemed "para-colonial" (Archer) and "proto-orientalist" (Barbour) — the English oscillated between anxiety about their status as "sluggish" imperialists, which term Richard Hakluyt coined during the last decade of the sixteenth century, and as supplicants to the more powerful empires of "the Greater Western World" (Goffman), which included the Ottomans. This tension imbues the play from its opening scene, which features the Field of the Cloth of Gold. This political spectacle, staged in 1520, celebrated the détente between Henry VIII of England and Francis I of France, who would go on to forge an alliance with the Ottomans in the mid-1530s (as Henry's daughter, Elizabeth, would do fifty years later). This spectacle becomes a "masque of blackness" whereby the English are represented as potential colonial others, with the French imperial display having "made Britain India" (1.1.21), a double-edged description. The play continues with a more formal masque featuring "a noble troop of strangers" (1.4.54), coded as Turks and Moors by analogy with similar masques in which the historical Henry VIII appeared. These "masques of blackness" are charged with ambivalent representations of three queens — Catherine of Aragon (former), Anne Boleyn (current), and Elizabeth (future) — all of whom are represented as blackened by their fall from

patriarchal mandates. This paper accordingly assesses multiple strangers, beginning with the estrangement of the "marginal English" (Floyd-Wilson) from the imperial projects of the sixteenth century to the instantiation of this strangeness in the inevitably fallen women surrounding Henry VIII in Shakespeare's late play.

Mary L. Dudy Bjork

"Stranger now again": Katherine of Aragon in *Henry VIII*

The historical figure Katherine of Aragon has in recent decades been put to good use as an example of the now orthodox understanding of the changing roles of women during the English Renaissance. Though in the sixteenth-century Foxe worked assiduously to un-saint and even un-queen this much-loved figure, by the seventeenth-century, when she appears as a character in Shakespeare and Fletcher's *All is True,* she has been, to borrow Betty S. Travitsky's term, "depoliticized" enough to serve as a stand-in for "pious, learned, and domesticated women" of the era. This, despite the play's provocative title and prologue's disingenuous insistence on the drama's mimetic faithfulness.

In her response to Cardinals Wolsey and Campeius's intrusion into her apartments, "Your graces find me here part of a housewife— / I would be all, against the worst may happen" (3.1.24-25) and subsequent heated exchange with them, Shakespeare and Fletcher's Katherine insists on identifying herself as "poor weak woman," "wife," "woman friendless," "wretched lady," "woman lost," and "constant woman," but never once as England's queen. This would seem to bolster the argument that the historical Katherine's transformation from divisive figure to unifying symbol was, by 1612-13, complete. Of parallel, unremarked intensity, however, is Katherine's ostentatious embrace of her alien character, insisted on only upon Henry's rejection.

The emphasis on Katherine's position as a *Spanish* stranger in Henry's court is worthy of examination, for there is no cogent reason why the historical Katherine should retain the reverence given her during her tragic life in a play written many decades later in the midst of some of the most intense anti-Spanish sentiment of the Renaissance. Rather than accepting Katherine as a depoliticized representative of ideal femininity, I propose to examine her manifest strangeness as a way of positioning *All is True* within Shakespeare's repertoire of anti-Spanish plays.

Urvashi Chakravarty

"Foreign Familiars: Parasites and Strangers in Shakespeare's *Othello*"

This paper examines popular representations of two foreign bodies, the parasite and the stranger, serving and working in the intimate space of the early modern English home. Focusing on these very different kinds of servants, I interrogate how together they rethink what it means to be

"alien" in the English nation, writ small in the English household. While the stranger is foreign, removed, and different, the parasite is naturalized, organic, and familiar. A flatterer, follower, and servant, the parasite evokes both the stock character of Roman comedy adopted and adapted by Renaissance playwrights, and the alien organism feeding and breeding on its host. And since early modern understandings of the household include servants, "strange" servants challenge the very character of the native "English" home. Yet both the stranger and the parasite compromise the integrity of the English household—the former by reimagining the nature of the English family, the latter by taking over its host and his home. This paper examines the "strange" maid Barbary as well as the parasitic Iago in Shakespeare's *Othello* to argue that the peculiar "alien-ness" of these two figures—at once foreign and familiar, national and transnational, intimate and threatening—resituates the "foreignness" of the "wheeling stranger" at the heart of the play. While the "stranger" is the more culturally dangerous figure, railed against in popular discourse for taking labor away from English subjects, the parasite, I argue, troublingly disrupts the integrity of the household, simultaneously evoking and subverting his classical provenance—peddling slander rather than the entertaining tales of his Terentian and Plautine predecessors—and embodying a relationship of "foreign familiarity" with his classical antecedents. The discourses—often distinct, sometimes conflated—of parasitism and strangeness as they relate to service reimagine the place of the "alien" in the early modern home and the English polity and both enable and oppose readings of Othello's "extravagant" strangeness.

Marisa R. Cull

"'London, Where All Is Purity': The Welsh Immigrant Presence in *A Chaste Maid in Cheapside*"

Recent studies of the Welsh presence in early English drama have focused primarily on the deeply textured representations of the Welsh that appear in the history plays of the late 16th century. Such representations have offered particularly telling insight into the often-uneasy Anglo-Welsh relationship. While characters like Shakespeare's Fluellen suggest a genial, complacent subject, willing to serve an English king, others, like Shakespeare's Glendower, suggest a mysterious, rebellious, and vaguely pagan foreign enemy. Although these characters tell us much about what Philip Schwyzer has called the "national memory" of the English and the Welsh, they actually tell us very little about the realities of the "on the ground" relationship between the English and the Welsh, who interacted on English soil ever more frequently after an influx of Welsh immigrants arrived in London following the 1485 accession of Henry Tudor to the throne. Yet in Thomas Middleton's 1613 play *A Chaste Maid in Cheapside*, we are offered a view of two Welsh characters: one male, one female, one denuded of typical "stage Welsh"

characteristics, one constructed almost entirely upon them, and as such, *A Chaste Maid* offers its readers a rare portrait of the Welsh in London. This paper not only aims to explain how the construction of "immigrant Welsh" relied heavily on common "stage Welsh" stereotypes, but also to explore how Middleton constructs the Anglo-Welsh dynamic in a contemporary metropolis. Removed from the contexts of war and invasion (contexts which mark the history plays so heavily), the Anglo-Welsh dynamic in *A Chaste Maid* reveals a middle-class London struggling to incorporate its rural, vaguely foreign, and upwardly mobile neighbors.

Peter Erickson

"Race Words in *Othello*: Migrating from London to the Mediterranean"

I am working with four elements:

(1) Symbolic Migration

I interpret theater's power to "transport" and to "move" to include a capacity for symbolic migration whereby performance relocates the audience in a temporary cross-cultural and cross-racial "contact zone." Thus the experience of migration does not apply exclusively to non-European characters within the drama but also extends to members of the London audience.

(2) Race Words

I consider the explicit racial vocabulary voiced by Iago, Roderigo, and Brabantio to be only one set of race words in *Othello* and I focus instead on a different set that potentially sketches out a more geographically and historically specific picture of migratory routes.

(3) Black Mediterranean

Before there was a Black Atlantic, there was a Black Mediterranean. Keywords in *Othello* suggest awareness of an early modern image of the traffic in black African slaves in the Mediterranean.

(4) Cross-historical Perspective

Shakespearean resonances in August Wilson's ocean plays allow us to imagine the historical transition from the Black Mediterranean to the Black Atlantic. Reliving, but also rethinking, this transition is a vital part of a comprehensive account of global migration.

Eric Griffin

"Living farre better then at native home": Drama, Propaganda, Libel, and the Stranger Crisis of 1593

This paper explores early modern England's "stranger-problem" by positioning two primary sources from the early 1590s, the government sponsored *A Fig for the Spaniard and Spanish Spirits* (1591, 1592) and the anonymous "Dutch Church Libel" (1593), against Anthony Munday's censored play *Sir Thomas More* and Christopher Marlowe's *The Jew of Malta*. It argues that between the plays and these two polemics—the former, a government sponsored advertisement of Elizabethan "openness," the latter, a xenophobic outburst that famously contributed to the crown's case against Marlowe and his associate Thomas Kyd—we may glimpse a number of the tensions and contradictions that characterized the period's attitudes toward immigrants and immigration policy.

Imtiaz Habib

Beyond the European Immigrant: Othello and the Early Modern English Black Alien

Historical scholarship on early modern English populations has traditionally ignored an important demographic group, namely black people in Tudor and Stuart England. Even if this is the result of the unavailability of documentary information about this group until very recently, and of the scholarly uncertainty regarding its legal status, continuing immigrant studies of the period cannot be said to be complete until this shadowy population is included. Doing so is a complex tax, given the complicated history of the terms used to identify individuals in sixteenth century England: natural born subject, denizened Alien, non-Denizened Friendly or Enemy Alien, and Stranger. The English black alien is analytically important precisely because she/he fits none of these categories and yet is an especially revealing element of the age's cultural, political, and economic history.

Using a new interpretative framework for Othello as an immigrant play that performs a prohibitive public "immigration interview" for the black aliens in the city, and drawing on documents across the Tudor and Stuart regimes, this paper will make an intervention, in the play's critical exegesis and in contemporary early modern English immigration studies, to argue for the inclusion of the historical English black subject as an alien in Tudor England. The paper will argue that early modern English black people should be counted as an immigrant group because, they are permanent residents, their residency is communally acknowledged, and they contribute economically and culturally to the life of the kingdom. They are not free agents like traditionally defined immigrants, but to include them as people who contribute to and become a

part of English life is to retrospectively free them from their historical incarceration and dispel the invisibility in which they have been marooned in the scholarly knowledge of their age.

Philippa M. Kelly

"The King and I"

Shakespeare's *King Lear* can reveal aspects of Australian culture in surprising and intriguing ways. For a very long time there prevailed a generalized view of Australia as a remote outpost ambiguously related to colonial narratives of pioneering hardship. However, starting in the 1970s, a flowering of Australian artefacts (particularly cinema), as well as the financial affordability of travel to Australia, has led to a growing curiosity about the country and a wish to understand its 'narrative'. In England this is of particular interest because Australia is still yoked in complex ways to England as its 'child'. For Americans, Australian culture has been particularly resonant because of the many historical analogues, such as the role of the wilderness and the pioneers who tame it, the sense of individual autonomy and possibility, the establishment of cultural identity to be reconciled with the encroachment on indigenous peoples, and the figure of the outlaw striking out against an authority's injustices. These are largely the narratives of people creating culture and society where no laws were believed to have existed. The idea of authority is fundamental to such narratives, and *King Lear*, for me as an Australian, emerges in an astonishing variety of contexts. My project, *The King and I*, considers the play as a filter for the complexity of Australian social practices. *The King and I* moves from 1976 through to 2009, taking moments in a personal history to examine, through the lens of *King Lear*, themes of authority, indigenous identity, feminism, and political injustice and unrest. The project also explores the ways in which Australians bring to *King Lear* the conceptually dexterous tools of humour and sarcasm.

Marjorie Rubright

"Representing Approximated Identities: The Double Trouble of the Dutch"

To speak of things Dutch in early modern English drama was almost always to traffic in double meaning. When the English represented their relations with the Dutch, the correspondences, resemblances, and similarities between Englishness and Dutchness often destabilized the oppositional frameworks that might have cut clean lines between the English and their near neighbors. Representations of Anglo-Dutch proximity pressured the self-evidence of borders that so often helped to define distinctions between the English and the alien. In the northern European context, Anglo-Dutch geographic propinquity engendered English concerns not only about the porosity of borders but the potential overlap of English and Dutch commercial, religious, even political cultures. Demographically, the Dutch constituted the largest alien population within early modern London. They were literally doubly situated—in England and just beyond its shores. This literal proximity was sometimes positively figured: the Dutch were England's "nearest neighbors" whose "common" Protestant affiliations and shared anti-Spanish politics

rendered them "friends." A shared linguistic history revealed the English and the Dutch to be "kin." But proximity incited anxieties too, and the English struggled to isolate specific terms and signifiers of their Englishness that would differentiate them from their near neighbors. This paper explores dramatic representations of Dutchness as meditations on the elasticity of the self / other divide. Through a brief exploration of Thomas Middleton's *No Wit, No Help Like a Woman's*, I explore how stage-Dutch speech exposes the *relatedness* of English and Dutch, Englishness and Dutchness. In its broadest strokes, this essay explores the representational processes by which identities that exist in proximity to one another become approximated identities when rendered in cultural performance.

Kathryn Vomero Santos

"Immigrant Texts"

Using the abstract example of the immigrant text as a figure for translation, this paper will explore the intersections between immigration and translation in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*. If "translation" indicates the act of bearing across as well as a process of transformation, this essay will consider various practices of early modern translation, both linguistic and cultural, as they necessarily borrow from the discourse of immigration and, in turn, become crucial features of the experience of immigration as it is represented on the stage.

In the main plot of *Merry Wives,* Sir John Falstaff describes his plan to woo the play's two wives for financial gain through the metaphor of translation:

> FALSTAFF …I can construe the action of her familiar style; and the hardest voice of her behavior, to be Englished rightly, is, 'I am Sir John Falstaff's.'
>
> PISTOL He hath studied her will, and translated her will, out of honesty into English.

Here, Falstaff introduces and thematizes two common phrases used to denote early modern textual translations. The project of the play's main plot, as Falstaff outlines it, is to "English" the female will by translating it "out of honesty and into English." While critics have interpreted these lines in various ways, I intend to focus on their indebtedness to the language of early modern textual practices of translation.

The textual models of translation, as represented by the similar but distinct processes of "Englishing" and translating "out of and into," can be applied productively to the play's two foreign, or immigrant, characters, Sir Hugh Evans (a Welshman) and Doctor Caius (a Frenchman). The translation of a text relies on a two-part process. Before a text can be translated from one language into another, it ostensibly emigrates from, or out of, its original site of creation to a foreign location. As a guest or stranger in this new setting, the text must then undergo a process of translation or transformation into the language of its host location to allow for its incorporation. The translated text, as such, appears to be double, bearing the marks of its original

even as it has been incorporated, or "Englished," by its host language and culture. Likewise, Caius and Evans bear the marks of their origin as they "abuse" the King's English and make "fritters of English" by speaking an accented and often incorrect English (I.iv.4-5, V.v.136). Indeed, the representation and incorporation of the play's immigrants through the language of their host location reveals a sense of linguistic superiority within the play's notably English setting. More crucially, however, it carves a space within the English language for the representation of the foreign by inadvertently fulfilling what Paul Ricoeur has described as "the ambition of de-provincialising the mother tongue, which is invited to think of itself as one language amongst others, ultimately to see itself as foreign."

Geraldo U. de Sousa

"'My Hopes Abroad': The Global/Local Nexus in *The Merchant of Venice*"

In Act V of *The Merchant of Venice*, Portia returns home to Belmont. Standing on the threshold of her domestic space, she comments on her surroundings and the significance of this homecoming, especially on such a romantic night, so brightly lit by the moonshine that it resembles a day "when the sun is hid" (5.1.126). Portia's homecoming brings to mind, as Bassanio suggests, a connection between the safety of home and the uncertainty of alien spaces elsewhere: "We should hold day with the Antipodes / If you would walk in absence of the sun" (127-28). The Antipodes refer, of course, to those who live on the other side of the world, so that their feet are against our feet; the term also means a region of perpetual darkness, or a region where everything is topsy-turvy. In fact, the antipodal or sub-Antarctic regions become the emblem of what is entirely alien and topsy-turvy. Throughout the play, Shakespeare connects home and alien spaces.

In this paper, I will argue that, in this play, Shakespeare focuses on sites of intercultural knowledge and cross-cultural encounters through which he localizes and explores a global/local nexus. The play suggests that alien worlds traverse domestic space and transforming home into an unstable borderland that abuts a dangerous, threatening alien world. International commercial and cultural ties bring into contact the local and the global, home space and foreign markets, creating emotional distress and disrupting the sense of security and stability associated with home. The play dramatizes the nexus where the local meets the global in three home spaces—Shylock's, Antonio's, and Portia's—and explores the extent to which a global economy affects everyday life, as the characters struggle to establish and maintain the boundaries of the domestic. The homecoming, dramatized in Act V, suggests that the home can only serve as a temporary, provisional shelter in a world where roots clash with an intricate web of global routes.