

SHAKESPEARE'S THINGS

ACLA, March 17-20, 2016 (Cambridge, MA)

This seminar invites presentations on the liveliness, actual or apparent sentience, and uncanny autonomy of objects in Shakespeare's plays. The surge of new materialisms across disciplines, including thing theory, actor-network theory, speculative realism, and object-oriented ontology, opens up new possibilities for understanding the latent forcefulness of things—from stage props to statues to dead bodies to coastlines—and the social, economic, and ecological assemblages of human and non-human matter that collude in the creation of Shakespeare's theatrical worlds.

We welcome proposals for 20-minute presentations (which might be a talk, a performance, or a bit of both) that interpret the plays in terms of Renaissance theories of matter and materiality as well as subsequent theorizations of vibrant matter and non-human agency. Presentations are encouraged, for example, on props as tools and as actors; on object performances of Shakespeare (e.g. puppet and marionette Shakespeares; Forced Entertainment's Tabletop Shakespeare); as well as papers that track how Shakespeare's drama accommodates or qualifies new materialist stances. Do acts of anthropomorphism work to combat anthropocentrism, for instance, as philosopher Steven Shaviro suggests? When and how can political resistance be formulated as a refusal to be animated, as political theorist Sarah Ahmed claims? Is Shakespearean humanism compatible with a de-centered democracy of persons and things?

Please contact Brett Gamboa at brett.gamboa@dartmouth.edu and Lawrence Switzky at lawrence.switzky@utoronto.ca with inquiries and 250-word proposals at any time. All proposals must be submitted through the ACLA online portal by September 23, 2015 (<http://www.acla.org/node/add/paper>).