Shakespeare Association of America
April 10, 2014
St. Louis MO

SEMINAR: "Slavery, Captivity and Piracy in Early Modern Writing"
ABSTRACTS

Abdulhamit Arvas

Michigan State University

Ganimets and Ganymedes, or Prospero's Boys

My paper explores the link between sexual and territorial domination through an investigation of the circulating boys as objects in the early modern period together with the rise of the Ganymede images and other visual images of the abducted of the boys -- "lovely boy(s), stolen from an Indian king(s)" as referred in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (2.1. 389)—in England and the Mediterranean. Just like Ganymede, abducted by Zeus as "booty" after the Trojan War, the Christian youth are taken by the Ottomans as *ganimet* (booty) after their victories in wars. The Ottomans have a policy of abducting young boys from their Christian territories, and bringing them to Istanbul, the capital city of the Empire, in order to turn them Turk, and train and educate them for the future offices of the State. This practice ostensibly is not free from its association with rape of and sexual domination over Christian youth. John Ravlis, for example, narrates tales about "a hundred handsome youths compelled to turn Turks, or made subject to more vile prostitution, and all English." Similarly, J.M. Gramaye reports that the Christian children captured by pirates were sent as presents to "Turke or his Bassas [to satisfy their] Sodomitical lusts for Boyes." Thomas Coryat also states "The Turkes are exceedingly given to Sodomie, and therefore divers keep prettie boyes to abuse them by preposterous venerie." While English travelers and writers criticize the Ottomans' sexual practices and their abduction of boys as *ganimet*, we see similar practices and representations of the abduction of boys in English works, too. By focusing on such representations in Ottoman works as well as English plays such as *The Midsummer Night's Dream, The Tempest* and *Othello,* together with the visual images of abducted boys, I argue how these boys, abducted and enslaved, become representative of their lands, and how sexual domination over their bodies is a symbolic act of domination over other territories in an age of maritime marketplace.

Amanda Bailey
University of Maryland

Early Modern Planet Thought

Recent productions of *Romeo and Juliet* set in Iraq, Rwanda, and South Africa have staged the enmity driving the play as an ethnic conflict with geopolitical dimensions. *Romeo and Juliet*, however, does not leap to mind as a likely candidate for an exploration of present-day international issues. In particular its preoccupation with planetary influence seems out of sync with our postmodern sensibilities. Yet it is the play's investment in the "star crossed," and the early modern habit of thought the phrase references, which make this play an apt vehicle for explorations of an early modern geopolitical imagination. In the early modern period, astrology provided a way of conceptualizing universal sympathy and collective sensation. A belief system based on the invisible interconnectedness of everything, astrological thinking encouraged an empathic awareness of interdependency that, paradoxically, also highlighted diversity. Postcolonial scholars have called for imagining ourselves as planetary subjects rather than global agents so as to embrace an inexhaustible taxonomy of interrelation. Yet, as I will show, planetarity predated -- and anticipated -- globalization, and for this reason *Romeo and Juliet* offers a rich repository of the political and affective complexities of planet thought.

Pompa Banerjee
University of Colorado – Denver

Ending Revels

The Tempest engages with a powerful fiction of self-determination and mobility. After Prospero lands on the island, he suppresses the indigenous population and sets up a social and labor hierarchy. Before he leaves the island, he disposes of his belongings, destroying some possessions (books, staff), and abandoning others (Caliban). Prospero controls his own leave-taking and final obligations. No local authorities or laws temper his rule of the isle or direct his disposal of property. No consequences issue from his actions. However, Prospero's autonomy is rarely available to Europeans in foreign lands. To be sure, accounts of European sailors, merchants and pirates enjoying lives unfettered by social or legal constraints appear in print. But the reality of seaborne lives lived along the port cities and islands negate such accounts of self-sufficiency. In most cases, Europeans had to find a place within existing social and familial networks and legal systems. In the Indian Ocean region, Asian maritime communities already functioned within sophisticated mercantile, social, and political networks in operation well before the arrival of Europeans who had to accept conditions imposed by local rulers. Frequently they entered new social compacts, often codified in local languages that spelled out the terms of the temporary and contractual relationships including marriages. Such laws also governed the disposal of property and children, forcibly embedding the foreigners in the local social structure even as they attempted to leave. Ironically, even rovers and pirates, supposedly rootless wanderers of the high seas, were often part of the established coastal communities, combining piracy with farming, trading, and shipbuilding. In most cases, early modern European

experiences in the Indian Ocean region contradict Prospero's autonomy and freedom of movement.

Stephanie Chamberlain
Southeast Missouri State University

Domestic Seizure: Piracy and
Clandestine Marriage in *Othello*

Clandestine or unsanctioned marriages occur in a number of Shakespeare's plays, including *The Taming of the Shrew, The Merry Wives of Windsor,* and *The Merchant of Venice,* where the annoyances of such marriages are, according to the dictates of comedy, amicably resolved. Fathers are largely appeased, the ensuing marriages, however irregularly undertaken, recognized as ultimately beneficial to all. Clandestine marriage in *Othello,* however, is represented in a decidedly different vein. The secret marriage of Desdemona to the Moor, Othello, I will argue, reflects the tensions between European and Eastern interests in global trade.

My paper examines clandestine violations in the age of early modern trade. I explore how such violations are reflected in the fears attendant to trade, most notably in regard to piracy. Brabanzio may well love the Moor, may well invite him home to share stories of "the battles, sieges, fortunes" that have befallen him (1.3.129). Yet, when Othello seizes Brabanzio's most prized asset, boards, as Iago notes, the Venetian's "land-carrack" (1.2.50), carrying away the chaste Desdemona from her father's home, the Moor commits an act of domestic piracy.

Jason E. Cohen
Berea College

Irregular Seas and Breached Sovereignties

Several recent discussions of sovereignty have, following Giorgio Agamben's work, characterized the early modern body politic in terms of static land-based jurisdictions represented largely by stable administrative or institutional organs even during times of conflict and in locations of changing influence or power. We might note a counter-narrative in the claims of sovereignty at sea. As scholars including Lauren Benton and Phil Stern have shown, the discourses of corporate power, maritime law, and increasingly, mercantilism, complicated the administration of a stable or homogenous sovereignty, which might regulate the vast imperial spaces being shaped under European state influences. This paper makes a rather small intervention in that rather large and unwieldy set of legally and transactionally defined jurisdictions by thinking through the problems associated with ships hovering off shore, in liminal zones just beyond the edge of any one state's or colony's authority. Using the open seas

debate between Grotius and Selden as the points of reference for the principal competing theories of sovereignty over the physically and temporally dislocated spaces governed by maritime law and the emerging discourse of the laws of nations, I show how the adjudication of two cases in Jamaica, and early US admiralty presented a productive complication to notions of citizenship, jurisdiction, and ultimately, the powers attributed to sovereign authority. Ultimately, I want to argue, competing claims over property and national affiliation were tied to the challenges associated with fixing the materiality not only of goods or bodies, but also of the juridical markers, whether signaled by stamps, writs, charters, licenses, or insurance documents (among other forms of national alignment). These competing regimes of nationality -- economic, ecological, social, and legal – reframe sovereign authority at sea as a location of profound ambiguity as well as the (often frustrated) desire to establish analogously stable terms for sovereignty at sea as were operating on land.

Stephen Deng
Michigan State University

Hamlet among the Pirates: Problems of Interstate and Maritime Accountability

As part of a longer project on *Hamlet* and accountability, I will examine in this paper how the "pirate" episode in *Hamlet* complicates the nature of accountability within spaces of uncertain and conflicting authority. While Hamlet credits providence with his stumbling upon the plot to kill him, the possession of his father's signet, and his boarding of the pirate ship, it remains difficult to morally justify his decision to send Rosencrantz and Guildenstern to their deaths. While he acknowledges the judgment he must face due to Polonius' accidental murder, Hamlet defends his actions in this later event by appealing to a form of poetic justice appropriate for the duo's willing "employment" under Claudius, regardless of their knowledge about this specific commission. This narrative justification, the lies about Hamlet that Claudius includes in his commission in order to justify Hamlet's execution in England, and the method of representing the events (through a letter and a recounting of what transpired off stage) become ways for Hamlet's character to remain accountable to the audience's moral approval. But what also maintains this accountability, I argue, is the particular space of these actions, the pirate-filled sea between Denmark and England, and the peculiar situation of one country requesting the execution of another country's subject.

Valerie Forman
New York University

Harmonizing Populations: The Politics, Economics, and Aesthetics of Plantation Development

Reading literary, economic, and political texts from early modern Jamaica, Barbados, and Surinam, this paper explores the complexities of plantation development and the establishment

of a functioning social order in the face of conflicting objectives and unfamiliar terrain both literal and metaphoric. In particular, I trace the aestheticization of the commodities necessary to plantation development (e.g., the sweetness of sugar, the beauty of the contrast of green plantains against the black bodies of the slaves that carry these plants and then consume them). I explore how this aestheticization choreographs harmony not only between the ecological environment and those whose labor radically transforms it, but also among the social categories of its inhabitants: European indentured servants, African slaves, and European colonizers—Spanish, English, and Dutch. These renderings, I argue, condense the political, economic, and aesthetic properties of commodities in order to preserve a sense of wholeness in the face of a developing global, but also competitive and thus fractured, economy. Linking the stories of these various colonizing groups and those they colonize in the image of a united world mystifies the dispossession at its center while also undermining the categorical distinctions on which such developments depend. I thus offer this analysis partially as a prehistory to contemporary understandings of how and which Caribbean bodies matter, particularly as agents in both local and global political economies.

Peter Kuling
Wilfrid Laurier University

Thin Line(s) Between Piracy and Nationalism in the 1630s Plays of Thomas Heywood

> Piracy is the product of geopolitics, since it appears precisely at the point where territorial space and the normative network emanating from a sovereign authority meet.
>
> Rodolphe Durand and Jean-Philippe Vergne,
> *The Pirate Organization: Lessons from the Fringes of Capitalism* (2013)

The following quotation describes piracy as any deliberate act that conflicts with the sovereignty of the state. My research argues that pirates should not be thought of as simply products of seafaring conflict and colonial exploration. Characterizations of pirates and piracy in line with Durand and Vergne's description appear throughout city comedies as well as adventure plays in the 1630s. Building upon Jean Howard's work on foreign identities and geography in the Shakespearean history plays, my paper explores renewed interest in all kinds of piracy during the reign of Charles I. Robert Turner explains in his 1967 edition of *The Fair Maid of the West Parts 1 and 2* that successful adventure drama depends upon its "swiftness of movement that prevents any significant meaning from arising" (xv, "Introduction"). Repetitious characterizations of foreigners, criminal and transgressive, figures across the various genres of Heywood's plays speak to the invisible sovereign networks of the era. Turner describes how Heywood's adventure plays provide a form of social theatrical therapy, yet it appears that despite their entertaining narratives t they also actively criticize sovereign power. I will be exploring connections between Heywood's *The Fair Maid of the West Part 2* (1631) and *The English Traveller* (1633). I am also interested in the specific use of foreign locations like Florence and Mantua in Heywood's plays. My research explores the thin line(s) between acts of piracy and

privateering (nationally sanctioned crime) in Heywood's later plays. Heywood encourages early modern audiences to question the invisible pirate networks that subvert instead of destroy the English nation during the 1630s.

Gaywyn Moore
Gustavus Adolphus College

Piracy and Global Citizenship in Heywood's *The Fair Maid of the West*, *Part I*

Thomas Heywood's *The Fair Maid of the West,* part 1 offers a romanticized map for achieving a form of global citizenship through piracy. Using the Azores as a space for exchanging English money and identity for a global (but still English) citizenship, the protagonists ultimately employ the instability of seafaring and the dubious loyalties of the Azores to redefine their places and spaces in society. The Azores themselves function as a contested site for determining the nature of worth and wealth. Occupied by first the English (in the play), and then the Spanish, the Azores become a distribution center for New World wealth. After many a pitched battle, the Azores must serve one more purpose: contested burial site for the bodies of the English and Spanish combatants. The disinterred body of an English Protestant becomes one more act of piracy, as Spanish mariners lay claim to his funereal monument. The Azores act as a kind of philosopher's stone, transmuting landed wealth into the liquid assets gained at sea, a barmaid into "a girl worth gold," and a murderer into an innocent.

Sara Morrison
William Jewell College

"I know no country I can call home": Piracy, Conversion, and Desire in *A Christian Turned Turk*

In the early modern world, conversion from Christianity to Islam was enacted under various pressures of the convert's social milieu, among them economic gain, self-preservation, and erotic temptations. Those who are dislocated often risk transformations of various kinds, which can be defenses against social influences and threats of bodily harm or captivity, for the promise of belonging or safety. In Robert Daborne's *A Christian Turned Turk*, the infamous pirate Ward converts to Islam for the promise of marrying the Turkish Voada, undergoing conversion, including circumcision, in one of the play's dumb shows that is well-appointed with costume and ornament. Ward's conversion and marriage are undermined, however, by Voada's desire for Alizia, who is cross-dressed as a page, Fidelio, to protect her from masculine desire. The play includes performances of both heterosexual and same-sex desire, and both involve material transformation. For Ward, turning Turk is irreversible; for Alizia, however, turning masculine does not alter her integral self. My paper explores the intersection of conversion, desire, and

social spaces in the context of piracy, suggesting that competing claims to bodies (religious, economic, marital) reframe possibilities for transformation.

Holly Moyer
UCLA

"Pleased Perforce": Choice and Enslavement in Marlowe's Playworlds

In his sociological study *Slavery and Social Death,* Orlando Patterson argues that enslavement has two essential characteristics: first, the enslaving culture characterizes slaves as those who have chosen enslavement over death (and are thereby fundamentally deserving of dishonor), and second, the enslaved person becomes "natally alienated," separated from his or her family and culture through a variety of tactics (such as being renamed, commodified, or prevented from bequeathing property to descendants). Patterson's argument provides the background to my consideration of enslaved characters in Christopher Marlowe's two *Tamburlaine* plays and *The Jew of Malta.*

Patterson's first point—that enslaved people are characterized as having made the "dishonorable" choice to endure slavery rather than die—is crucial to Marlowe's depiction of captive characters. In Marlowe's playworlds, characters who surrender with the explicit goal of avoiding death become slaves, whereas characters who surrender for different reasons become honorable vassals of their conquerors. The moment and manner of surrender become the determining factors not only for the captive's future experiences, but also for the captive's future characterization: those who yield out of fear become not only slaves, but slav*ish* (cowardly, dishonorable), while those who yield out of admiration are, themselves, admirable. Tamburlaine, in particular, treats the surrender of his prisoners as a choice rather than a forced reaction—as if his prisoners have consented to their fates rather than suffered them. This treatment further naturalizes the idea that enslaved people have chosen dishonorable servitude because they are, themselves, dishonorable.

Buried within this pattern is the brutal assumption that fearful surrender at swordpoint marks a person permanently as "slavishly" dishonorable. Observing how early modern captivity narratives—especially those claiming autobiographical authenticity—handle surrender becomes doubly fascinating with this in mind. Often, for example, former captives narrate their surrenders with a suggestively corrective emphasis on their *lack* of choice. While my paper will focus on Marlowe's characters and their specific trajectories, I will be eager to invite a discussion of this pattern and its repercussions across various early modern texts.

Joel Elliot Slotkin
Towson University

The Travels of the Three English Brothers and *The Tempest*: Mapping Fantasies of New World Subjection onto the Islamic World

Early modern English writers trying to make sense of encounters with unfamiliar cultures frequently resorted to, in the words of Barbara Fuchs, "reading a newly discovered culture as another manifestation of one already othered." In this model, we would expect the relatively long history of contact between western Europe and the Muslim cultures of north Africa and the Near East to provide paradigms by which English writers could understand the more recently encountered cultures of the Americas. At times, however, this appropriation appears to work in the opposite direction as well. How and why might American exploration provide imaginative resources for dealing with the Muslim world, which despite its foreignness and the physical and ideological threats it posed to Christian Europe should still have been significantly more familiar than the New World? My paper will examine instances of this counter-intuitive process: texts that use models of native American encounters to understand interactions with Muslim cultures closer to home, specifically *The Travels of the Three English Brothers* (1607) by John Day, William Rowley, and George Wilkins, and Shakespeare's *The Tempest* (1611). Early modern England was increasingly engaged in a complex web of interactions with both regions that included various forms of captivity, slavery, and subjection. Rather than reflexively seeing the unfamiliar in terms of the familiar, it appears that at least some English writers were searching for a novel and more optimistic paradigm for understanding their troubled relationship with the Muslim world. The ideas developed in Thomas Hariot's account of the New World, such as the credulity of the native Americans and the ease with which they could be pressed into servitude, may have seemed like particularly attractive fantasies in the face of powerful Muslim empires that enslaved English citizens.

Tim Turner
University of South Florida – Sarasota-Manatee

Captivity, Slavery, Autobiography: Three English Travelogues from New Spain

The English word *travel* is thought to derive from the name of a Roman torture device called the *trepālium*. Though today *travel* does not necessarily connote forms of suffering (the vagaries of modern air travel may be an exception), in early modern English the word was virtually indistinguishable from *travail*.[1] Drawing on previous scholarship that foregrounds various forms

---

[1] "The etymological sense was thus 'to put to torture, torment', passing at an early stage into those of 'afflict, vex, trouble, harass, weary'" (*OED*, "travail, v.," see also "travel, n.").

of suffering in English travel narratives about the Mediterranean world, including slavery, piracy, and captivity, this paper turns its attention to similar subjects in New World contexts. It focuses in particular on a set of documents generated by John Hawkins's disastrous third and final slaving voyage to the West Indies from 1567-68. (Hawkins's three voyages are thought to be the first English attempts to profit from the trade in African peoples transported to the Americas.) After a devastating naval encounter with the Spanish, Hawkins was left to limp home with few supplies, many men, and only one ship, and was forced to leave behind around one hundred of his men near Tampico, Mexico. Three of the men in this party who made their way back to England—David Ingram, Miles Philips, and Job Hortop—wrote and saw published accounts of their travels and travails, among the earliest firsthand accounts of the region composed and published by Englishmen. The latter two are notable in part because both men were interrogated and punished by the Spanish Inquisition, Philips with indentured servitude in Mexico and Hortop with slavery in the Spanish galleys. At present, this paper offers a preliminary study of the historical circumstances of the production of these documents, their narrative complexities, and their textual aftereffects, including their publication and reception history as evinced through their inclusion in the major travel compendia assembled by Richard Hakluyt and Samuel Purchas.