<div align="center">**Uncharacteristic Shakespeare – Paper Abstracts**</div>

Jonathan Baldo
Recovering Medieval Memory in Shakespeare's Pericles

Critics often speak of Shakespeare's late romances as retrospective in outlook: in Norman Rabkin's words, "consciously allusive to the author's earlier work, a virtual cadenza on the materials and themes of a lifetime's art" (Shakespeare and the Problem of Meaning, 135). One of those themes is memory or retrospection itself. In the romances, Shakespeare looks back upon the various ways he has staged memory – both collective and personal – over the course of his career.   During Shakespeare's lifetime, the values ascribed to memory were in flux, owing to at least three major developments: the rise of print, the rise of nationalism, and the Protestant Reformation. Pericles imagines a world where memory's value and sway were more stable than they were in post-Reformation England. In addition to staging a restoration of England to its medieval self, Pericles simultaneously reminds audiences of the wide gap between its past and its present, of the remoteness of the medieval Gower from post-Reformation England.

Leticia C. Garcia
Black Shakespeare(s): The African Company's *Richard III*

My aim in this essay is to explore the theoretical challenges that emerge from bringing Afropessimism and contemporary Shakespeare studies into a sustained dialogue. I argue that black Shakespeare is a phobogenic object and designation. Black Shakespeare is not yet here, as Fanon in *Black Skin, White Masks* clearly states, reason takes flight whenever the black enters the scene. Black Shakespeare, in all its occurrences, occasions anxiety of thought. Black Shakespeare is imbricated in the need to cohere and the impossibility of that destination. The approach I use in this essay is not a linear narrative but rather a series of observations and reflections touching upon several problems raised by this initial one about the social world; specifically, most uncharacteristic, that Shakespeare is a device that employs violence. The pairing of Shakespeare and blackness is not only an uncharacteristic one, but a maintenance of instability, where Shakespeare's equivocal character, then, provides an uncanny medium for our nation's divided self/other racial constructions. In doing so, black Shakespeare is an idea in which 'nothing is / But what is not.'[1] In looking to the nineteenth-century production of the African Company's *Richard III*, I suggest that Afropessimism and Shakespeare need to be read as ideological discourses that address to the following three problematics: (1) the black is a site of questioned humanity, (2) that black culturally unmakes or worse—goes against the coherence of civil society, (3) the meaning of Shakespeare in an antiblack world. Black Shakespeare, then, involves the inability to transcend a world that is the condition of black being. To do black Shakespeare is not *to do* Shakespeare, and the incoherence of black Shakespeare generates the coherence of white Shakespeare.

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[1] Shakespeare, William. *Macbeth.* (Oxford: Oxford Univesity Press, 1990). 1.3.140-141.

Jonathan Holmes
Thinking with Type: Rethinking the Stage Machiavel and Shakespeare's Villains

Character types like the braggart soldier, tool villain, and citizen's wife have long been effectively employed in critical discussions of early modern dramatic characters, yet recent scholarship has tended to disregard typology as a useful approach to Shakespeare's characters. Because certain characters are perceived to exceed the explanatory power of any one particular type, modern character critics argue for the insufficiency of typology. Paradoxically, Katharine Maus has revived a traditional character type, the stage machiavel, by redefining it in terms of inwardness. So now, identifying a villain as a stage machiavel fits with character studies that focus on interiority, subjectivity, and individuation even though such a move used to be perceived as an oversimplification or flattening of Shakespeare's villains.

By building upon Elizabeth Fowler's theory of *social persons*, my paper reconsiders two of Shakespeare's best-known villains, Richard of Gloucester and Iago, as instantiations of character types. Psychological readings of these two villains tend to focus on notions of conscience and motivation, so my section on Richard deals with his apparent attack of conscience before the battle at Bosworth, and my section on Iago focuses on questions of his motivation. The layering of character types does not cancel out previous types, nor does it invalidate the concept of type. Instead, a more thoroughly theorized understanding of character type helps us better appreciate how early modern theatergoers might have understood characters embodied on stage. Layered types also provide us with a way of conceptualizing seemingly complex stage figures without resorting to anachronistic notions of psychological depth. Shakespeare's villains captivate and move us, but not because we are ever at risk of mistaking them for actual persons.

Caroline Latta
An Examination of the Disappearance & Reappearance of the Desdemona/Emilia
     Scene (4.3) in *Othello*

My paper focuses on the distortion effects in the editorial and production history of the Desdemona/Emilia scene (4.3) in Shakespeare's *Othello*. I will investigate and interrogate its beleaguered journey by visually tracing the disappearance of the scene until it vanishes completely by the end of the 19th century, discussing the reasons for each major curtailment and what was lost and/or gained in the successive iterations in this death of a 'thousand' cuts. When the scene reappears in the 20th century, the pros and cons of its reappearance will be analyzed not only in light of the 'restored' scene's material, and its relation to the play itself but also in terms of how its reduction and reinstatement affect our understanding and perception of the rest of the canon.

Andrew Mattison
Upon Points

It is utter foolishness to suggest that Shakespeare has a characteristic style of punctuation. Shakespeare is even more subject than most to the vagaries of Renaissance

punctuation: lacking recourse to manuscripts from Shakespeare's lifetime or editions that he saw into print himself, all modern editions base their punctuation on a source well removed from the author. Punctuation varies between the early quarto and posthumous folio editions of his plays even more than other aspects of the text, and the 1609 first edition of the sonnets does not even have another to compare it to until 1640, a different era (particularly for poetry in print) with different punctuation standards.

Nevertheless, my paper for this seminar will discuss the significance of punctuation—most notably the period or point, that smallest, roundest, least conspicuous, and, in the Renaissance, most versatile of marks—to grammar, prosody, and ambiguity in Shakespeare's plays and poems. The point, particularly when its placement varies between early editions, can reveal the range of meaning and of prosodic sound a Renaissance reader (of whom a compositor is really a specialized example) could see (or hear) in a Shakespearean line. Attention to its nuances is an opportunity to see a Shakespeare far more concerned with prosody and somewhat less concerned with rhetoric than he is usually understood to be by critics. It also allows us to reflect on the particular experience of reading Shakespeare—as opposed to seeing the plays on stage—as a vitally important 17th-century practice. When we "stand upon points" (to quote Theseus) the distinctiveness of Shakespeare's dramatic verse as read—not a mightly line like Marlowe's but a changeable and elusive one—emerges.

Gavin Paul
"What is this?": The Interpretive Challenges of Timon's Missing Body

Timon of Athens is one of the shortest plays in the canon, but Timon is a massive role: Timon's part is longer than that of Anthony, Richard II, Lear, Brutus, Macbeth, Titus, Prospero, and Romeo. In terms of the proportion of a play's lines spoken by a single character, Timon is second only to Hamlet. Nevertheless, Timon is rarely thought of as one of the "great" Shakespearean creations, despite the fact that actors and audiences can be pleasantly surprised by the role's physicality and its demands for a vast range of emotions. Our seminar is interested in "distortion effects," and Timon's character is obscured by a number of these, the most significant of which is his mysterious, bodiless death. Unlike other Shakespearean tragedies that relentlessly channel our attention to bodies that are grievously wounded (*Othello*, *Coriolanus*, *Antony and Cleopatra*), butchered (*Macbeth*), or gradually expiring (*Hamlet*, *King Lear*), subsequently loading heroic corpses with the potential to bear great thematic weight as they remain onstage, the First Folio version of *Timon* provides only vanishment and absence. Timon writes his own epitaph and dies offstage. Who was Timon? How do we interpret his bounty, prodigality, and rage? How do we make sense of his death and how are we invited to respond to it? The world of the play poses refracted versions of the same unavoidable questions that face directors, actors, and audiences of the play in the world. My paper will survey the play's performance history, highlighting notable attempts to resolve Timon's confusing death and missing body. What might Timon's uncharacteristic demise tell us about Shakespearean tragedy, characterization, and heroism?

James Purkis
Uncharacteristic and Uncanonical Shakespeare

For a little over one hundred years, *Sir Thomas More* has posed a series of challenges for scholars seeking to define or demarcate the 'Shakespearian'. My paper will look at some of these challenges, beginning with *More*'s first brush with the Shakespeare canon: its inclusion in C. F. Tucker Brooke's *The Shakespeare Apocrypha: Being a Collection of Fourteen Plays which have been Ascribed to Shakespeare* (1908). Brooke's attempts to explain the play's place in the Apocrypha are impossibly and inevitably contradictory. He justifies the play's inclusion in the volume by arguing that Shakespeare is the author of several of the additions (more, indeed, than modern scholarship allows). Yet to confine the play to the Apocrypha, he must also insist that the additions, while sufficiently contiguous with the acknowledged works to reveal Shakespeare's authorship or involvement, are not exactly 'Shakespearian' – or at least they are not 'Shakespearian' enough to warrant a place in the canon (he can't seem to make up his mind which of these is the case). Brooke's act of exclusion is performed in part through a discussion of Shakespeare's usual settings for his plays and his favoured genres, but for the most part Brooke employs a series of aesthetic measures by which the Shakespearian may be identified and against which the Apocryphal plays in general, and *More* in particular, fall short. While Brooke's measures appear glaringly outdated, his difficulties in establishing what constitutes the 'Shakespearian" and/or a 'genuine' canonical 'performance' may have much to say to us today.

Vanessa Rapatz
"Uncharacteristic Shakespeare" Abstract

William D'Avenant's *The Law Against Lovers* (1662) was one of the earliest Shakespearean adaptations to hit the Restoration stage. His revision is a hybrid text that folds Beatrice and Benedick from *Much Ado About Nothing* into a reimagining of *Measure for Measure*. Presented to and accepted by Restoration audiences as D'Avenant's own play, even Pepys does not acknowledge Shakespeare in his diary entries about *The Law Against Lovers*. With this play, we get an exchange of characters that at once seem characteristic and uncharacteristic of Shakespeare's originals. Beatrice and Benedick seem to take the place of Shakespeare's suburban characters and the newly enforced laws "restraining the liberty of lovers" seem not at all concerned with brothels or bawdy characters represented in Shakespeare's Mistriss Overdone. Instead, we see a mutiny amongst midwives, nurses, and milk-women as they worry over the disintegration of "the trade in making children." Furthermore, while there are still traces of the conjunction between marriage and punishment, amplified at moments by Beatrice and Benedick, the marital conclusions seems much less of a problem than in either *Measure for Measure* of *Much Ado*. I will focus on these marital endings in light of D'Avenant's reconstitution of sibling rivalries and social alliances. I am particularly interested in the way Julieta takes over Claudio's role of briefly trying to persuade Isabella to sleep with

Angelo to save Claudio's life. The bed-trick, in this instance, becomes a speculative speech act rather than a staged exchange, a move that might hearken back to Shakespeare's source texts, but that also seems strange on the Restoration stage where bed-tricks continued to be comedic convention.

Cody Reis
Universal Peace: Shakespeare's Nativity

In this essay, I consider the how the familiar, all too familiar characterization of Shakespeare as "universal" is belied by the familiar, all too familiar characterization of him as "native," as Milton most memorably puts it: "sweetest *Shakespear* fancies child, / Warble his native wood-notes wild." Between these rival rationales for Shakespeare as either universal or native (or both) lies a history not only characteristic of aesthetics, but also a history characteristic of historicism itself, for which it is both in and out of character to be both in and out of different times and places. If the universal is true for all times and places, and if the native is only true or *truest* for the time and place of one's birth, then how might Shakespeareans come to terms with those ambiguous and anachronistic moments when the universal and the native would seem to coincide in spite of or even because of their historicity? Such coincidence engrosses the thematic and semantic interests of a historical tragedy like *Antony and Cleopatra*, where Octavius Caesar's prediction that the "time of universal peace is near" has become an ominous reminiscence not only of the death of the Roman republic and the birth of the Roman empire, but of the birth, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ as well. To what extent can the coincidence of the universal and the native in these world-historical and other-worldly events be said to define not only the historical and ahistorical pretensions of Roman imperialism and Christian incarnation, but also the historical and ahistorical pretensions of both theological and a-theological readings of Shakespeare's Roman plays?

Emily Shortslef
Remember me not: Shakespeare, obliteration, and consuming tragedy

Following on the heels of Hamlet's plea that he will "tell my story," Horatio's resolve to "speak to th' yet unknowing world / How these things came about" exemplifies the most characteristic closing move of Shakespearean tragedy: an articulation of the necessity of memorializing. Orders are given for bodies to be taken up, monuments to be constructed, and stories to be told, all in accordance with the assumed or expressed wishes of the dead for the truth of their life and death to be made known. In stark contrast, Shakespeare's late tragedy *Timon of Athens* ends with Alcibiades reading the bitter parting words that Timon has inscribed on his own gravestone—words that curse passers-by and command them to "Seek not my name." Taking *Timon* as its starting point, this paper will explore the desire for obliteration and oblivion in Shakespeare's work, with particular attention to how expressions of such desire frame the plays of which they are a part. If familiar closing gestures to commemoration implicitly direct theatrical audiences to reflect upon

the events of the play as if they too are witnesses who must remember what they have seen, what kind of audience reflection do these "uncharacteristic" impulses toward obliteration encourage? How do they work as a form of narrative closure? What kind of tragic spectatorship—and model of tragic art—do they imagine?

Eric Spencer
Garrulous Gonzalo, Widow Dido, and Stupid Sebastian:
Is *The Tempest* 2.1 Uncharacteristic Shakespeare?

   An uncharacteristic Shakespeare presupposes a characteristic one, which our seminar description associates with "rich characterization, naturalism, depth psychology, and 'timeless,' 'universal' sentiments." But unless I've missed the boat more than usual, the characteristic Shakespeare of the last few decades, at least among academic Shakespeareans, has been more like a Barthian text in a Foucauldian discursive field—a decentered, unstable intersection of discourses, each such discourse pursuing its own multivariable cultural itinerary. Such texts at best elude the artistic or ideological control of any "author" (whatever that word does or does not designate), and at worst impose ideological limits even on what seem like the most aesthetically accomplished and self-aware authorial performances--although in the more politically optimistic formulations of this situation, some combination of authorial agency, critical reception, and performance can partly intervene in or reconfigure those itineraries.
   My question, then, is whether *The Tempest* 2.1, a troublesome scene both on stage and in the study (meandering, dull, clunky, puzzling, tonally incongruous, apparently irrelevant at several points, and often [?] cut substantially in production, but also rich in provocatively oblique suggestion), is "uncharacteristic" by either the old or the new definition of "characteristic." Asking this will (I think) lead me to suggest that the nature of the scene and the history of comment upon it renders the question troublingly unanswerable, such that struggling with the scene opens some cans of intriguing critical worms, whose nature I hope to specify—if I ever figure out what they are.