

Advice:

As far as running my seminar was concerned, I found the online section on organising seminars extremely useful, and would have gladly pillaged it further were it not for the fact that one of the most impressive innovators was in my seminar! It's an excellent resource, thank you for providing it.

Potentially useful things that I tried for the first time included:

- 1.) sharing everyone's SAA experience in advance. We had a great range of experience in the group, from a former SAA president to first-time seminar members, and I think that sharing this in advance of the meeting highlighted awareness of the range of our backgrounds and experiences and made for a more inclusive discussion.
- 2.) asking for feedback on connections between papers from the full group rather than only within small groups made structuring an inclusive discussion more straightforward, for the organiser at least.

We did not end up using or extending the bibliography mentioned in the welcome letter very much. In all honesty, I think this was a step too far for colleagues with heavy workloads and, though I think it would genuinely be a productive exercise, there clearly was no time for it.

All best,
Clare

Welcome Letter:

Dear all,

Welcome to the seminar 'Women, Performance, and the Dramatic Canon'. I'm greatly looking forward to our exchanges, both in advance and at the seminar. This document sets out the plan for the next few months, gives deadlines and explains how we'll stay in touch. I hope you find it helpful.

Our seminar topic.

Here is the seminar abstract, as found in the Bulletin:

What are the consequences of early modern women's theatricality for the dramatic canon, early modern dramaturgy or performance practices, present-day Shakespearean performance, or theater history? Papers might explore the evidence base for female performance; theoretical or methodological approaches to performance, transnationality, feminism, and gender; connections to Continental practice. Fresh interpretations of Shakespeare plays in light of women's theatricality (broadly defined) are also welcome.

The motivation behind this seminar is to see what happens if we bring studies of early modern women's performance and theatrical participation, broadly defined, into contact with those of canonical drama, to unpack what relevance each might have for the other, and to analyse a relatively underexplored context for early modern theatre. Hence, one question for us might be, how might an understanding of early modern traditions of women's theatricality inflect interpretations of the plays of Shakespeare and his contemporaries? We have many ways to proceed from this question: to the evidence base and the documents and construction of theatre history; to close readings of early modern playtexts for the effects of women's performance on structure or characterisation; into the early modern playhouse and its practices and personnel (e.g. the boy actor, or the children's companies); to reconsiderations of recent and modern productions; to a tight focus on

the English canon or a transnational, comparativist approach that ranges between national traditions; to the methodologies of feminism, gender, transnationality, theatre history, performance studies and the archive.

The categories for our seminar are deliberately broad. 'Canonical drama' can be flexibly defined, and you can range widely in terms of period, genre and the profile of the materials on which you'd like to write. So, too, 'early modern women's theatricality' has a range of meanings. The skills you examine might include dance, vocal or instrumental musical skill, bodily 'feats of activity', tableaux and spectacle, oration, or – of course – acting. Likewise, you're free to range through various sites of performance (e.g. playhouse, court, street, piazza, or great house) and through distinct kinds of performing women, such as the celebrated Italian or Spanish actress, women who tour for their living, women involved in popular or civic performance, women who were court servants, or those who formed the court elite. We need not restrict ourselves to English women who performed or, indeed, to English plays: transnational papers are very much encouraged. Similarly, we need not restrict ourselves to the study of historical performance, and a contribution dealing with modern or recent performances would be very welcome. For instance, there is currently a flurry of interest in all-female Shakespeare productions in the UK: what difference might it make to those productions to know about all-female plays in the seventeenth century, or the existence of performing women before 1660? How might an understanding of traditions of performing women in the early modern period change how twenty-first-century actors approach Shakespearean performance? All in all, we have a broad field on which to play, and I'm fascinated to see how you interpret our central concepts. If you have any questions about our focus or your possible approach, do let me know.

Your contribution

There are several ways that you can be part of this seminar. The obvious route – and a good one – is to write a paper on women's performance and the dramatic canon, interpreting that remit to best suit your research interests. Other contributions are also possible, however. You might write a concept paper on a key term or theoretical approach, or a prospect paper on the field's future development. If this is something you plan to do, let me know of your intention as soon as you can to help with planning.

Plan for the seminar and deadlines

The seminar will work as follows. Once I receive the abstracts I'll divide you into groups of three or four under some broad thematic headings. **Your paper MUST be sent to me by 14 February 2017.** Once all the completed papers are in, you will read all the contributions, but I'll ask you to read the papers in your group with particular care and assign you to write a short response to two of them and to comment on what you think are the commonalities between our papers. I'll then post some discussion points before the seminar. This will enable you all to receive feedback on your work and help us to have a wide-ranging discussion during the seminar itself.

Based on the successful use of Dropbox in other seminars, I plan to use it for us, as a place to post our abstracts, papers and responses.

For more information on downloading and accessing Dropbox, and to sign up for an account, see <https://www.dropbox.com>

When I create the Dropbox seminar folder, you will receive an email with a link that will allow you to access all the seminar files and post your completed papers, abstracts and so on (be sure to check your junk folder in case your invitation from Dropbox is moved there). I trust that if you run into difficulties with the platform, or have any concerns about using it, that you'll let me know asap.

Here's a timeline for the seminar:

- **ASAP** - Upon receipt of this email, please send me a quick reply to acknowledge receipt and to confirm your participation. Please confirm that the email address listed at the end of this document is your preferred one. In the same email, please also send me the following
 - 2 sentences on why you chose this seminar.
 - 2 sentences on your SAA experience, if any. If this is your first time at the SAA, it would be great to know that in advance. If you're a regular, let me know a little bit about your experience of SAA seminars. I'm interested in what has generated lively and collegial discussion in the past.

- 2 entries to contribute to a shared bibliography on our topic. My hope is that this will generate ongoing research after our seminar.
- **By 16 December 2016.** Please post your title and a brief abstract (c. 250 words) to our Dropbox folder as a Word document.
- **1 January 2017.** SAA registration opens.
- **By 14 February 2017.** Please post your final paper to Dropbox as a Word document. Out of courtesy to everyone's workload, your paper should be no longer than 3,000 words. Please also post your updated abstract (these are pre-circulated to seminar auditors to help include them in our discussion). **This deadline is very important**, as I will need to inform the SAA that I have received your paper in order to confirm your involvement in the seminar. If you miss the deadline, I'm afraid you won't be able to join us in the seminar!
- **By 3 March 2017.** In order to facilitate discussion and to ensure that everyone receives a response to their work, I will allocate each of you to a smaller group of three or four people. I'll ask you to read these papers with particular care, and assign you to write a short response (around one side of paper) to two of them. These responses are intended to stimulate discussion across papers and should engage with the issues raised rather than critiquing substance, style or structure.
- **By 22 March 2017.** Please post your responses to each other's papers to Dropbox and include a list of what you see as important commonalities between papers: this will help to form the basis of our discussion.
- **A week before the seminar (29 March 2017).** I'll post some discussion points based on your responses and my own ideas in order to create a framework for the seminar. If you're travelling, do keep an eye on our Dropbox folder.
- **April 5-8 2017.** Our seminar in Atlanta (date and time to be confirmed). It would be great to meet before we convene for the seminar and I'll be in touch about arranging a pre-seminar drink nearer the time.

As a final note, you can find more information on the SAA's seminar policies at <http://www.shakespeareassociation.org/seminars-and-workshops/guidelines/>

I'm greatly looking forward to working with you all in the run-up to Atlanta and to seeing you all there.

All best wishes,
Clare

Shared bibliography: some initial entries

Here are some suggestions for reading on the topic of women's performance, so we have a shared knowledge base from which to work. This list isn't exhaustive and I, for one, am aware that some of my work needs updating in the light of recent developments, so I'm looking forward to your contributions to our shared bibliography and the new research angles this will reveal.

Roberta Barker, 'Acting Against the Rules: Remembering the Eroticism of the Shakespearean Boy Actress', in *Shakespeare Re-Dressed: Cross-Gender Casting in Contemporary Performance*, ed. by James C. Bulman (Fairleigh Dickinson UP, 2008), pp. 57-78

Pamela Allen Brown, *Better a Shrew than a Sheep: Women, Drama, and the Culture of Jest in Early Modern England* (Cornell UP, 2003)

-- "'Cattle of This Colour": Boying the Diva in *As You Like It*', *Early Theatre* 15:1 (2012), 145-66

--- 'Dido, Boy Diva of Carthage: Marlowe's Dido Tragedy and the Renaissance Actress', in *Transnational Mobilities in Early Modern Theater*, ed. Robert Henke and Eric Nicholson (Ashgate, 2014), pp. 113-30.

Pamela Allen Brown and Peter Parolin (eds), *Women Players in England, 1500-1650: Beyond the All-Male Stage* (Ashgate, 2005)

Karen Britland, *Drama at the Courts of Queen Henrietta Maria* (Cambridge UP, 2006)

Morwenna Carr, 'Material / Blackness: Race and Its Material Reconstructions on the Seventeenth-Century Stage', *Early Theatre*, forthcoming

Leslie C. Dunn and Katherine R. Larson (eds), *Gender and Song in Early Modern England* (Routledge, 2014)

- Melinda Gough, 'Marie de Medici's 1605 *Ballet de la reine* and the Virtuoso Female Voice', *Early Modern Women* 7 (2012), 127-56
- 'Marie de Medici's 1605 *Ballet de la reine*: New Evidence and Analysis', *Early Theatre* 15:1 (2012), 109-44
- "'Not As Myself': The Queen's Voice in *Tempe Restored*", *Modern Philology* 101:1 (2003), 48-67
- Melinda Gough and Clare McManus (eds), *Women's Performance in Early Modern Europe: Transnational Mobilities*. Forum, forthcoming in *Renaissance Drama* 44.2 (autumn 2016).
- Jennifer Higginbotham, *The Girlhood of Shakespeare's Sisters: Gender, Transgression, Adolescence* (Edinburgh UP, 2013)
- M.A. Katritzky, *Women, Medicine and Theatre, 1500-1750: Literary Mountebanks and Performing Quacks* (Ashgate, 2007)
- Natasha Korda, *Labors Lost: Women's Work and the Early Modern English Stage* (U. of Pennsylvania Press, 2011)
- Clare McManus, *Women on the Renaissance Stage: Anna of Denmark and Female Masquing in the Stuart Court (1590-1619)* (Manchester UP, 2002)
- Clare McManus and Lucy Munro (eds), special issue of *Shakespeare Bulletin* on *Renaissance Women's Performance and the Dramatic Canon*, *Shakespeare Bulletin* 33:1 (2015)
- Sara Mueller, 'Touring, Women, and the English Professional Stage', *Early Theatre* 11.1 (2008), 53-76.
- Eric Nicholson, 'Ophelia Sings Like a Prima Donna Innamorata: Ophelia's Mad Scene and the Italian Female Performer', in *Transnational Exchange in Early Modern Theater*, ed. by Robert Henke and Eric Nicholson (Ashgate, 2008), pp. 81-98
- Peter Parolin (ed.), *Access and Contestation: Women's Performance in Early Modern England, Italy, France, and Spain*, special issue of *Early Theatre* 15:1 (2012)
- Sophie Tomlinson, *Women on Stage in Stuart Drama* (Cambridge University Press, 2006)
- 'A Jacobean Dramatic Usage of 'Actress'', *Notes & Queries* 55:3, pp. 282-3
- Evelyn Tribble, 'Marlowe's Boy Actors', *Shakespeare Bulletin* 27:1 (2009), 5-17
- Deanne Williams, *Shakespeare and the Performance of Girlhood* (Palgrave MacMillan, 2014)
- Susanne Wofford, 'Foreign Emotions on the Stage of *Twelfth Night*', in *Transnational Exchange in Early Modern Theater*, ed. by Robert Henke and Eric Nicholson (Ashgate, 2008), pp.141-57