The form and deformation of an early modern stock character

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This essay will describe the form of a stock character and its contributions to genre. As one of the smaller units of form or dramatic genre, a stock character's permutations and shifts between genres display a frequent site of formal collision and expansion. Looking in particular at the type of the stage malcontent, I will discuss how the malcontent indexes the forms of reformation, toleration, and rebellion. Importing a model of Protestant resistance from the Continent–where geographic proximity to the Catholic church's political arm necessitated toleration by and for Catholics–English authors used the transgressive malcontent to stage the negotiation between ideological extremes. To survive the difficulty of ongoing compliance with theological mandates, an English subject's confessional loyalty was a moving target for much of the 16th century, adapting to a shifting political and theological landscape. Rather than performing confessional loyalty, the malcontent envisioned the loyal English subject's inverse: one prepared to denounce and oppose the sovereign's and the state's imperatives without exception. Just as the malcontent rejected containment by national or religious ties, so too did it resist the containment of dramatic genres, irrupting from tragedy into tragicomedy, where the certainties of a pre-ordained dramatic outcome were overturned and heterodoxy could be celebrated. This short essay will look at malcontents in tragicomedy after briefly sketching out how I understand and define stage malcontents in late 16th century drama.

"I Know You All": Remediating Medieval and Early Modern Literature in *1 Henry IV*

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Historicist criticism has successfully demonstrated the engagements of early modern history plays with late Elizabethan systems of political power, and certainly *1 Henry IV* is no exception. However, while historicist approaches provide effective methods for synchronic readings of literary texts within contemporary historical contexts, these approaches are often less effective in explaining diachronic changes and innovations in literary form over time – in this case, how early modern writers' sense of history differed from their medieval predecessors', and how they themselves would have understood this difference.

This paper examines *1 Henry IV*'s remediation of medieval literary forms – including chivalric romance, biblical cycle plays, and medieval historical chronicle – arguing that Shakespeare's play stages the conflict between medieval (and medieval-coded) cultural values and early modern ones as a conflict between late medieval and early modern modes of literary and historical representation. The play's characters, consciously or unconsciously, model their behaviors, rationalize their transgressions, and craft their public personae using numerous preexisting literary templates, each with various results. Hotspur, for example, speaks and acts

as though he were a character in a chivalric romance, with politically disastrous consequences; Falstaff reenacts conventions of medieval drama, only to undermine them; and Prince Hal, though his wayward exploits evoke those of the merry outlaws of popular (and populist) medieval ballads, he privately evinces a political savvy which is thoroughly elitist, Machiavellian, and modern. Ultimately, the play shows how these past literary and historical forms – current at the time of the plays historical setting, but now archaic to the play's audience – are no longer equal to the cultural, political, or literary demands of the current age.

Extravagant and Wheeling Characters

Professor Allison Kay Deutermann
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John Stephens's 1615 book of characters describes "A Ubiquitarie" as "a journeyman of all Trades," "an Epitome of Artes, and all things, but…indeed nothing lesse than himselfe" (189). Flighty, easily distracted, and fickle in his interests, he is a thing of patches that risks coming apart at the seams. Above all, he is ever-present, "A person or thing that is, can be, or seems to be, everywhere at once" (OED). The short-lived but popular genre of the character book reveals a fascination, I suggest, with the idea of a publicized self—that is, a self who is known to others who may or may not, in turn, be known to you—as well as an understanding of the individual through type, in both senses of the word (printed characters, taxonomic categories). The formal and etymological history of "character" is therefore bound up in the study of what it meant to be a public person. Stephens's "Ubiquitary" gives expression to what is a central concern of character books more generally: how to make sense of what it meant to be simultaneously known and unknown, recognizable and unfamiliar, in a growing urban center like early modern London.

We are perhaps most familiar with how these concerns play out in early modern city comedy. I turn my attention in this essay instead to Shakespeare's tragedies, particularly *Othello*, arguing that it is often through the tragedies' attention to complexly racialized characters that the lived, embodied experience of being made a public person is explored. Othello is not a moor, but "*the* Moor*," a figure whose publicly assembled self shifts in meaning as its makers—Iago, the Senators, Brabantio, Desdemona--use and repurpose it as they see fit. His suicide, in which he casts himself as Venice's enemy and its savior, becomes not just the inevitable outcome of his paradoxical identity within Venetian culture, but also the result of his having been made *too* public—a disintegration of the self into a too-diffuse multiplicity of meanings that the play suggests no body can sustain. In Stephens's words, Othello becomes "perpetually...unmade" because he is omnipresent, disassembled through collective attention into one who "hath no *Beeing*" (193).

Shakespeare, On Commission

Dr. Derek Dunne
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In keeping with the seminar theme of 'Shakespeare's Forms', I want to draw attention to pivotal moments when forms are staged in Shakespeare's drama. These range from commissions and licences to warrants and pardons, and many more besides. Shakespeare's letters have attracted much scholarly attention, most notably in Alan Stewart's book on the topic. What about the other paperwork that circulates onstage? It may not be read out, or even opened, but therein lies its power and its potential; these staged documents contain within them instructions, permissions and affordances that have a material effect on many key scenes.

"Have you any commission from your lord to negotiate with my face?" Olivia asks Cesario at their first encounter in *Twelfth Night.* This paper investigates the power of the form to mediate relations (both political and personal), change the direction of the plot, and in extreme cases to underwrite murder. Such documents enfold anxieties regarding authority, epistemology and jurisdiction that make their presence felt in plays as diverse as *Richard III, Hamlet, Measure for Measure,* and *The Winter's Tale.* It is therefore time we pay close attention to their contents.

Queer Couplets in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*

Professor Jennifer Higginbotham
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Although couplets in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* generally express heteroerotic desire, this paper suggests that the form nonetheless does queer work in the play. Shakespeare has Hermia initiate a shift from blank verse to rhyme in Act 1, and couplets subsequently dominate the verse form until the end of Act 4 when the couples awake to the sounds of hunting horns. It is suggestive that Demetrius initially woos Hermia in couplets and speaks in blank verse while rejecting Helen. Later, when Puck applies a love potion to Demetrius's eyes, he awakes and starts addressing his formerly despised pursuer in couplets, only switching back to blank verse once he awakes and finds himself still in love with her. Do Demetrius's formal shifts indicate an awakening from a false dream of loving Hermia, or expose his desire as merely the effect of the spell cast over him by the fairies, who themselves are speaking in couplets? By exploring the way characters use rhyme, I argue that the conscious artificiality of the form highlights the supernatural environment of the play and the fickleness of love, and as such, heterosexual desire in the play becomes a fictional form and a form of fiction.

Stage Talk

Dr. Matthew Hunter
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A form is a relay of social relations. In the now classic semiology of Charles Sanders Peirce, a form is better understood as an *index* reflecting and creating meaningful encounters, rather than as an *icon* which allegorically diagrams those encounters. Although there is much to be gained from studying the internal arrangement of forms, therefore, it is only in use—in situated and emergent interactions—that the designs, the constraints, and the affordances of any form become properly meaningful. Drama offers a particularly rich laboratory for studying forms in use, because it is itself a form that stages the deployment of forms in the service of shifting social relations. This paper turns to early modern drama in order to consider three richly overlapping concepts: form, formality, and style. Drawing upon Webb Keane's magisterial study of Anakalang ritual, it argues that early modern drama cultivates acutely "formal" and insistently theatrical styles of talk as a means of establishing relations of seemingly insurmountable distance between actor and audience, between play-world and real-world—a discursive analog to the physical barrier that separates any stage from the spectators gathered around it. My term for such styles is "stage talk," because they can only be plausibly delivered on stage, so removed are they from the cadences of ordinary conversation. Quoting moments of stage talk, as Ben Jonson's Juniper does with Marlowe's *Tamburlaine*, provides playgoers with a means of establishing virtual contact with the otherwise distant world of the play. The affiliative quotation of insistently, recognizably theatrical lines spurs the emergence of a theatrical public in early modern London.

As it treats the intersection between form and social imaginaries, this paper seeks to offer additional insight into the relationship between style and form. Although style might seem to obviate form, since any style may scaled across any number of forms, the concept paradoxically depends upon form for its own legibility; only against a background of formal integrity does any style become visible, as when we say a style of dance, a style of dress, or a style of talk. We may even go so far as to say that style, as a repetition of co-occurring figures at a given scale, exposes the emergent and interactive qualities that are latent within form, but that get occluded when a form is treated in isolation. A guiding assumption of this paper, then, will be that style is neither subordinate nor ornamental to form, but an essential component of it. To put it in Peircean terms once more, style is the *interpretant* of form; it mediates the relationship between any form and its surround, defining the meaning of a form's situated use.

In Search of English Poetic Form: Venus and Adonis

Professor Christine E. Hutchins
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Elizabethan poets invented edgy new forms as well reinventing and mingling old forms. However, they quickly realized that some experiments had a publicity problem. Even creations

with laudably elite and learned premises might flounder when released to wider audiences. Elizabethan poets wrote under new conditions as a result of rapid development of public stages and less expensive print editions. They became increasingly and acutely aware that they needed audiences if their works were to be more than nine days' wonders, soon delivered and soon forgotten. Audiences make choices, even given that their choices are substantially influenced by socio-economic forces and cultural predispositions. These elusive arbiters of taste can prove insurmountable even for very strenuous impositions of power and privilege. In perhaps no other arena did the cold, hard facts of writing for wider audiences come more forcefully home than in Elizabethan poets' quests for new verse forms that would rival Greco-Roman and Continental models. The quantitative movement in poetry—which attempted to apply Greco-Roman poetic principles to English verse—had such wretched success among audiences that even now specialists in early modern studies rarely read it despite the fact that its practitioners are among the most read, including the Earl of Surrey, Philip Sidney, Countess of Pembroke, Edmund Spenser, and Christopher Marlowe.

I argue that Shakespeare's *Venus and Adonis* is a rare contemporary print success experimenting with verse forms, and that it achieves its success by marrying edgy with traditional forms. In Shakespeare's poem, each speaker uses distinctive metrical and stylistic markers. The sophisticated English poetic narrator ~~varies meter and style depending on what and whom he speaks of and for.~~ adopts Horatian Aeolic meter:

> ÉVEN ás the súnne wíth | púrple-cólourd fáce,
> Hád táne his lást léaue | óf the wéeping mórne,
> Róse-chéekt Adónís | híed hím tó the cháce, |
> Húnting he lóu'd,[4] | but lóue he láught to scórne: |
>   Síck-thóughted Vénús | mákes amáine vntó hîm, [+1]
>   Ând líke a bóld fác'd | śuter gínnes to wóo hîm. | [+1 Horatian alcaic meter]

Horace's Odes 2.9 Ad Valgium [Horatian alcaic meter]

> Nōn sēmpĕr īmbrēs | nūbībūs hĭspīdōs
> Mānānt ĭn āgrōs, | aūt mārē Căspîûm
> Vēxānt ĭnæquālēs prŏcĕllæ
> Ūsquĕ: nĕc Ārmĕnĭîs ĭn ōrîs
> Āmīcĕ Vālgī | stāt glāciês īnērs
> Mēnsēs pĕr ōmnēs: | aūt āquīlŏnībûs
> Quērcētă Gārgānī lăbōrânt,
> Ēt fŏlĭîs vĭdŭântŭrr ōrnī.

Venus, Roman goddess of love, too, uses sophisticated Greco-Roman Aeolic and Elegiac meters. Adonis, a simple boy interested only in the hunt, uses plain iambic with little flourish:

> VENUS: **Ó** learne to **lóue**,[4] the **lés**son is but **pláine**,
> And ónce made pérfect,[5] néuer lóst agáine.

ADONIS: I knów not lóue (quoth hé)[6] nor wíll not knów ît,
Vnlésse it bé a Bóare,[6] and thén I cháse ît. (407-410)

Thus, while Shakespeare borrowed the matter of *Venus and Adonis* from Ovid's heroic *Metamorphoses*, he crafted its style to Greco-Roman models, especially amatory works by Horace and Ovid. Shakespeare likely intended readers to recognize his poem as experimental verse. It appeared in print in 1593 within a milieu familiar with similar experiments, including Marlowe's *Ovid's Elegies*, Lodge's *Scillae's Metamorphosis*, and Golding's *Metamorphoses*. *Venus and Adonis* featured on its title page a passage from Ovid's *Amores* 1.15, a cue both to its metrics (combinations of dactyls, spondees, trochees, and iambs) and to its aspirations in experimental poetic form:

Vīlĭă □ mīrē □ tūr □□ vūl □ gūs; mĭhĭ □ flāvŭs Ă □ **pō**llo
Pōcŭlă □ Cāstălĭ □ ā □□ □ plēnă mĭ □ nīstrĕt ă □ **qua**.

Let common people admire cheap things; for myself golden Apollo
Serves full cups of Castalian water.

Commonplaces in plays, or Plays against commonplaces

Dr. Laura E. Kolb
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This paper considers two forms that often appear intertwined: plays and commonplaces. Recent scholarship has unearthed the ways readers mined plays for adages, adding commonplace markings and excerpting *sententiae*, which they recorded in manuscript miscellanies and circulated in print. This paper shifts focus from readers to playwrights, arguing that Shakespeare and Heywood take commonplaces as ground-plots for their dramatic inventions. In so doing, they test the limits of the adage form as 'equipment for living'. Short and definitive, commonplaces address complexity by eliding it, while implicitly positing an "eternal present" in which they are always applicable, always true. Longer, multi-vocal, and unfolding over time, plays accommodate contradiction and complexity. I argue that Shakespeare's and Heywood's plays respond to commonplaces on the most fundamental levels of plot and character, but ultimately dramatize their inability to manage (or even fully describe) the complex webs of social, emotional, and financial bonds in which their characters are enmeshed. Tracking how two widely circulating sayings about money and friendship inform *The Merchant of Venice* and *A Woman Killed with Kindness*, the paper argues that both dramatists locate tragedy in the dangerously tight fit between general precept and dramatic situation.

Forms of Interrelation:
Twinship in *The Comedy of Errors*

Dr. Kent Lehnhof
Chapman University

As is true of virtually every stageplay, the characters in Shakespeare's *The Comedy of Errors* interact with one another in and through a variety of social forms, ranging from the conjugal to the commercial to the political to the paternal. In *The Comedy of Errors*, however, some of the characters enmeshed in these forms of interrelation share the same physical form--right down to the smallest mole and mark. The somatic self-sameness of the play's identical twins significantly stresses the forms that structure Ephesian society, resulting in crises of both a personal and public nature. In this essay, then, I propose to read Shakespeare's farcical comedy as a thoughtful meditation on form--a meditation that ultimately encourages a clear-sighted appreciation for the forms of interrelation that give rise to our individual selves and connect these selves to others.

Shakespeare and the "Case" as Simple Form:
Suspended Judgement in *Measure for Measure* and Its Sources

Mr. David Nee
Harvard University

I'm now writing about the "simple form" of the case (or *controversia*) in *Measure for Measure*. The paper takes up Levine's ideas about the overlapping of multiple forms and the affordances of forms to think about how the form of the case, which functions to create a suspension of judgement by highlighting an impasse in the law, gets used across different forms and genres (novella, rhetorical and theological texts, plays). I'm looking briefly at the sources and analogues of Measure for Measure (Augustine, Whetstone, Cinthio) and then offering a reading of 2.4 in Shakespeare's play.

Why shouldn't Orlando talk in blank verse?

Dr. Richard O'Brien
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Scholars of form have long known that a hierarchical understanding of the roles of verse and prose in Shakespeare – the kind assumed by George Steiner in *The Death of Tragedy* when he describes how '[c]ommon men are prosaic and … Kings answer in verse' – is not adequate to the range of semantic and dramatic meanings these kinds of speech and the transitions between them express. But in a world where verse drama has become far distant from the theatrical mainstream, there is a power to the demotic urgency of Jaques's dismissal of what he views as Orlando's affected and overblown speaking style: 'God b' wi' you, an you talk in blank verse' (4.1.24). *As You Like It* is a play in which characters of relatively high social status – Orlando, Jaques, Rosalind – show themselves equally capable of employing verse and prose in a variety of

modes of interpersonal engagement. As Jaques's acerbic comment indicates, it is also a piece where the forms of language, their efficacy and appropriateness, are repeatedly interrogated, as new forms of social life and romantic encounter are simultaneously put to the test.

This exploratory paper will attend to the complexity and mobility of aesthetic form across the play: why should Duke Senior's woodland court use verse if not for 'old custom'? Why should the imminence of marriage, and the assumption of feminine costume, lead Rosalind back from prose into verse? And why does Jaques so comfortably assume a register he seems elsewhere to reject and despise? Levine's work on affordances asks us to attend to 'the range of uses each [form] could be put to, even if no one has yet taken advantage of those possibilities — and also to their limits, the restrictions intrinsic to particular materials and organizing principles' (10-11). In this paper I will read *As You Like It* as a text to which this kind of attention might usefully be paid, even if the outcomes trouble many easy assumptions about the rhetorical hierarchies of early modern drama.

Forms of a Character-Prop

Ms. Megan Snell
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Excerpted from the introduction to my dissertation, my paper aims to outline and theorize some of the ways that different forms overlap in the topic of my study. In *Staging Issues: Infancy in Renaissance Drama*, I research a category of theatrical character largely defined by its forms, rather than its individual identities. Usually played by a prop, onstage newborns are thus character-prop hybrids that can act as limit cases for formal designations, challenging definitions of "character" and "property." The larger project compares patterns and variations in how and when Shakespeare and his contemporaries stage infancy, extending backward to classical and medieval sources and looking forward to later iterations on the modern stage. Levine calls for scholars to "get better at describing the interactions among multiple forms at multiple scales." This young age "affords" large-scale thinking that looks to the future and past, but these scales also shape and are shaped by formal categories of theatre (character, property) and the child's intersecting identities (legitimacy, race, gender, and class). Levine's definitions of wholes, rhythms, hierarchies, and networks that "pattern our experience" offer a potential vocabulary for such overlaps, but I also draw on other understandings of historical or "new formalism" in our field.

The Interruptive Form of Actions:
Stage Directions as Theatrical Interruptions

Dr. Michael M. Wagoner
Florida State University

According to Derrida, "To enter into a relation with the other, it is necessary that interruption be possible; it is necessary that the relation be a relation of interruption... And the interruption, here,

does not interrupt the relationship to the other, it opens the relationship to the other" (Derrida and Labarrière 82).[1] Even though Derrida is not specifically thinking about drama, the possibility that he indicates is the important possibility of all dramatic structures. Derrida refigures a form—often aligned with breaking or disconnection—as the means through which two persons connect; therefore, interruption is not interrupting but opening. Drama begins at the opening of this interruption and the possibility of the relationship that moves out of the opening. From written moments within a text to the connection between a reader or audience member and the text or performance, interruptions are a form that is both crafted within dramatic literature as well as a product of our engagement with it. They question the nature of established relationships and resituate the dynamics of a relationship through negotiation of the encountering parties. They constitute a struggle, an active dynamic encounter, and an investigation of them uncovers the methodologies by which authors examine the struggles between their characters, themselves, and their texts. This paper will explore interruptions as a formal engagement of drama by first defining their qualities and implications and then by exploring their repercussions. To do so, I will consider the theatrical moment of the stage direction, questioning how these words and their liminal space between text and performance interrupt both live action on the stage and readerly engagement on the page. Pulling examples from Shakespeare and Fletcher, I will explore how each writer approaches his audience in tension with the performance. Where does the stage direction move power as it interrupts, either breaking or opening, the dialogue of the drama? How do readers or audience members interpret moments when actions overtake, perhaps speak, a bit louder than words?