The Futures of Historicism: A Symposium in Honor of David Scott Kastan
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**THURSDAY, OCTOBER 1**  
Calhoun Cabaret, Calhoun College, 189 Elm Street

6:45–7:45 pm  Pre-performance reception

8 pm  PERFORMANCE  
A staged reading from the first quarto edition of *Hamlet*  
Directed by Zachary Elkind (*Yale, ’17*), produced by Catherine Shaw (*Yale, ’16*), and organized by Alyssa Miller (*Yale, ’16*)

**FRIDAY, OCTOBER 2**  
Linsly-Chittenden (LC), room 317, 63 High Street

9–9:15 am  Welcome  
Langdon Hammer (*Chair, English Department, Yale University*)

9:15–10:15 am  Keynote  
Stephen Orgel (*Stanford University*)  
Making History

10:15–10:30 am  Coffee, LC 319

10:30 am–12 pm  READING BOOKS  
Chair: Peter Stallybrass (*University of Pennsylvania*)

Zachary Lesser (*University of Pennsylvania*)  
Xeroxing the STC: Early Modern Bibliography between UMI Microfilm and EEBO

Alan Farmer (*Ohio State University*)  
Idle, Scurrilous, Prophane: The Cultural Ephemerality of Playbooks in Early Modern England

Adam Hooks (*University of Iowa*)  
Shakespeare after the Book

12–2 pm  Lunch, LC 319

2–3:30 pm  READING TEXTS  
Chair: Aaron T. Pratt (*Trinity University*)

Douglas Pfeiffer (*Stony Brook University*)  
Erasmus the Editor: Fiction as Historical Method

Matthew Hunter (*Yale University*)  
The Immateriality of the Shakespearean Text

Thomas Festa (*SUNY New Paltz*)  
Milton and the Stations of the Crux

3:30–3:45 pm  Coffee, LC 319

3:45–5:15 pm  READING LITERATURE  
Chair: John Rogers (*Yale University*)

Sam Fallon (*SUNY New Paltz*)  
Rethinking Topicality: Sidney’s *Arcadia, à clef* Reading, and Early Modern Fiction

James Ross Macdonald (*University of the South*)  
Ben Jonson’s Religious Engagements

Tessie Prakas (*Kenyon College*)  
“I shall never begin if I hold my peace”: The Ends of Song in Early Modern Literature

5:15–5:30 pm  Break

5:30–7 pm  READING IN THE LIBRARY  
Chair: Kathryn James (*Beinecke Library*)

Chloe Wheatley (*Trinity College*)  
“I have always imagined that Paradise will be a kind of library”: Teaching Milton in the Rare Book Room

Bianca Calabresi (*Columbia University*)  
Whoredom and the New Boredom: Scarlet Letters in the Age of Digital Reproduction

Eric Bulson (*Claremont Graduate University*)  
Marinetti’s Head

7:15 pm  Drinks & dinner at BAR, 254 Crown Street
**SATURDAY, OCTOBER 3**
Linsly-Chittenden, room 317

**8:15–8:45 am** Coffee, LC 319

**8:45–10:45 am** **HISTORY AND HISTORICISM**
Chair: Keith Wrightson (Yale University)

Sarah Kelen (Nebraska Wesleyan University)
When Is History and What Did They Speak Then?

Daniel Vitkus (UC, San Diego): Early Modern Past, Postmodern Crisis: A Radical Historicism for Our Time?

András Kiséry (City College of New York, CUNY)
Jonson’s Tacitean History, or, Politics as a Spectator Sport

Claire McEachern (UCLA)
Does Dramatic Irony Have a History?

**10:45–11 am** Break

**11 am–12:30 pm** **THE BODY IN HISTORY**
Chair: Catherine Nicholson (Yale University)

Heidi Brayman Hackel (UC, Riverside)
Disabling History, Historicizing Disability

Mario DiGangi (Lehman College and The Graduate Center, CUNY)
The Shaping Fantasies of Historicism

Benedict Robinson (Stony Brook University)
Panic

**12:30–2 pm** Lunch

**2–3:30 pm** **DRAMATIC HISTORIES**
Chair: Lawrence Manley (Yale University)

Jesse Lander (University of Notre Dame)
Glamour in the Library: The History of Magic and The Tempest

Ronda Arab (Simon Fraser University)
Flipping Text and Context: Non-literary Narratives, Dramatic Tragedy, and the Seventeenth-Century Younger Son

William Weber (Centre College)
Building the Future: The On-Stage Education of Child Actors in Adult Companies

**3:30–3:45 pm** Coffee, LC 319

**3:45–5:15 pm** **PRESENT HISTORIES**
Chair: Michael Warner (Yale University)

Diana Henderson (MIT)
Historicizing Ourselves: Adventures in Shakespearean SpaceTime

Zoltan Markus (Vassar College)
Historicizing Appropriability: Temporality and Shakespeare’s Hybridity

William Sherman (University of York and Victoria and Albert Museum)
Back to the Future: Derek Jarman and John Dee

**5:15–5:30 pm** Break

**5:30–6:30 pm** **ROUNDTABLE**
Chair: Ivan Lupić (Stanford University)

David Kastan (George M. Bodman Professor of English, Yale University)

Peter Stallybrass (University of Pennsylvania)

Reception, English Department terrace
**Abstracts**

**Arab, Ronda (Simon Fraser University)**

**Flipping Text and Context: Non-literary Narratives, Dramatic Tragedy, and the Seventeenth-Century Younger Son**

The name of younger brother was notorious in seventeenth-century England, where primogeniture meant first-born boys inherited full landed estates and younger sons made do with considerably smaller plots of land, or, more often, an education or apprenticeship. As younger sons increased in number in the seventeenth century and primogeniture became more entrenched, discussions of their plight became increasingly common in polemical pamphlet literature, whilst the character of the younger son was seen with increasing frequency on the stage. One prevailing non-literary seventeenth-century narrative of the younger son writes his story as an incipient tragedy, constructing his subjectivity and affective motivations in ways that are similar to early modern dramatic constructions of tragic subjectivity on the late sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century stage. My interest, then, is not just in the New Historicist understanding of literature as an autonomous or semi-autonomous contributor to social discourse, but also in its role as context for the writing of contemporary narratives. I intend to examine how contemporary dramatic literature contributes to discourses of the younger son by offering affective and subjective models for understanding the identity of younger sons of the gentry.

**Brayman Hackel, Heidi (UC, Riverside)**

**Disabling History, Historicizing Disability**

This paper will center on the intersection of literary studies, historicism, and disability studies. How might disability studies inform our reading of early modern literature and culture? How do early modern accounts and representations shape modern understandings of disability? What does it mean to import categories of difference to the early modern period? How might we perform “ethical staring” at the past? What counts as evidence, and how might we best use it? How can the methods and insights of book history and other materialist approaches open up the field of disability studies?

In *Recovering Disability in Early Modern England* (2013), Allison Hobgood and David Wood call for disability studies that are historically specific and historically oriented. In proposing the study of disability histories and disability representations, Hobgood and Wood insist that representations of early modern disability “offer insights into the material, lived experiences of disabled individuals in the distant past” (7). In *Shakespeare After Theory*, David Kastan justifies reading Shakespeare historically: “history functions as some apotropaic fetish to ward off our narcissism, or at least to prevent the premature imposition of present day interests and values” (17). He calls for scholarship to locate discourse “in the world of lived history” (18). Taking early modern deafness and muteness as my subjects, I will press upon the relationship between discourse and “lived history,” with particular attention to how we recover disability, presenting disability studies as one model for working out the place of historicism in scholarship motivated by present political commitments.

**Bulson, Eric (Claremont Graduate University)**

**Marinetti’s Head**

Working with a vast collection of photographs, film negatives, and x-rays housed in the archives of F.T. Marinetti (some from the Beinecke), I will argue that the head of Futurism’s founder was crucial to the collective image of the movement itself. Whether shouting on stage in Buenos Aires, reading mail in a private tent in Ethiopia, or sidling up alongside the Sphinx in Egypt, Marinetti and his band of publicists were careful about how his head was angled, in what direction, and against what landscape or object. This talk, I should add, will not be a veiled attempt to get at the subject of Marinetti’s biography. Rather, it will use a collection of images of this magnificent dome (inside and out) to reflect more broadly on the state of the Futurist archive itself in the age of digital reproduction and think about ways in which Futurism itself always already depended upon a belief in technologies that had not yet arrived. And no matter how confident Marinetti was in his
own immortality—why else would he have left so many documents behind—even he knew that the body of his archive had to be big enough for the head to fit.

Calabresi, Bianca (Columbia University)

Whoredom and the New Boredom: Scarlet Letters in the Age of Digital Reproduction

What does the digital archive offer and what does it withhold, two decades into the ‘New Boredom’? This paper charts archival profligacy and parsimony, both virtual and material, through the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century editions of two early modern plays—Fernando la Rojas’ *La Celestina* and Thomas Dekker’s *The Whore of Babylon*—which feature prostitution and rubrication in tandem. Focusing in particular on what can and can’t be seen in Anglo-American digital traces, by comparison to their Continental equivalents, the paper shows what’s at stake in the dominance of certain historically significant electronic collections for the study of early modern English literature and suggests how scholars and libraries might reconfigure research and reproductive practices accordingly.

DiGangi, Mario (Lehman College and The Graduate Center, CUNY)

The Shaping Fantasies of Historicism

In a recent analysis of *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, Madhavi Menon writes that Shakespeare uniquely imagines sexual desire in a “non-corporeal, non-material” form. Focusing on the fairies’ dispute over the changeling boy, Menon argues that the boy’s absence “underlines the importance of divorcing desire from a body that can be named as its cause” and concludes that “desire must be disembodied. Only then does it qualify as desire.” This conclusion might come as a surprise to historicist critics such as Louis Montrose and Bruce Boehrer, who in influential essays of the 1980s and 1990s described how actual bodies shaped the sexual fantasies of the play. Acknowledging that Queen Elizabeth might not have been “physically present” at the first performance of *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, Montrose argues that “her pervasive cultural presence was a condition of the play’s imaginative possibility,” particularly in its rendering of the contemporary sex/gender system. Arguing that fantasies of bestiality in *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* undermine any secure sense of what it means to be human, Boehrer discusses actual bestiality cases from the period, including data about numbers of convictions and the kinds of animals involved. Menon’s insistence on the disembodiment of desire seems a far cry from the historicist belief that actual bodies—whether those of animals or of the Queen herself—deeply inform how a cultural artifact such as a stage play negotiates cultural fantasies of desire. While resisting staging a debate between “historicism” and “theory,” I will explore this critical impasse around bodies and fantasies, and address its implications for future historicist work on early modern sexualities.

Fallon, Sam (SUNY New Paltz)

Rethinking Topicality: Sidney’s *Arcadia*, à clef Reading, and Early Modern Fiction

This paper reconsiders the history of topical fiction in England. Although the first indisputably à clef romances in English, Lady Mary Wroth’s *Urania* and the translation of John Barclay’s *Argenis*, were published in 1621, the roots of topical fiction are often traced to Philip Sidney’s *Arcadia*, written several decades earlier. Indeed, early- to mid-seventeenth century manuscript “keys” to the *Arcadia* are often taken as signs that Sidney’s romance was read topically, in Julie Crawford’s words, “from the very beginning of its circulation.” I want to begin by suggesting that, on the contrary, the *Arcadia* became an à clef text only in the 1620s, and that the early keys, several of which are owned by the Beinecke, thus reflect the assimilation of Sidney’s text into an exogenous fashion for topical fiction. I also want to pursue a broader argument: that critics have largely been mistaken in conflating political investment with the à clef form. Indeed, the seventeenth-century à clef keys to the *Arcadia* often read less as willfully political interpretations than as puzzles, games of trivia or even fan fiction. As a reading practice, I will suggest, these keys reveal not an increasing intertwining of fiction and political reality but rather a growing interest in distinguishing fictional characters from real persons. These keys, I hope to show, thus open a
window onto the process by which literature emerged as a discursive category. But they also allow a reflection on critical method—what kinds of formal cues and reading practices, they help us ask, license and structure politically historicizing interpretations?

Farmer, Alan (Ohio State University)

Idle, Scurrilous, Prophane: The Cultural Ephemerality of Playbooks in Early Modern England

A truism in studies of early modern literature and the early modern book trade is that printed playbooks were ephemeral, with scholars repeatedly stressing that these publications were “cheap,” “disposable,” and “perishable.” A key assumption underlying these claims is that plays were texts of low cultural value, which led to their being printed in volumes of low quality and to readers then treating them as “throwaway quartos.” In this talk, I want to rethink this view of the cultural ephemerality of playbooks. Probably the most frequently cited early modern proponent of this view is Thomas Bodley, who famously objected to the inclusion of playbooks in his Oxford University library. Although several recent scholars have convincingly shown that other early modern readers did not share Bodley’s antipathy to printed plays, Bodley was hardly alone in his low opinion of playbooks. In fact, most early modern references to playbooks characterize them as “idle,” “scurrilous,” and “prophane,” and link them to other apparently frivolous genres such as jests, fables, romances, ballads, and amorous poems. I will argue, however, that the writers advocating this point of view should not be seen as articulating a consensus opinion of playbooks. Rather, these authors were explicitly seeking to discredit and devalue the reading of plays precisely because playbooks were more popular with readers than these authors believed printed drama should be. When scholars refer to early modern playbooks as ephemeral, therefore, they are in effect replicating the polemical arguments of early modern religious controversialists. More generally, these ideological debates about the ephemerality of playbooks—both early modern and modern—raise important questions not only about the cultural status of playbooks in early modern England but also about the types of claims we make (and remake) in the historical study of literature.

Festa, Thomas (SUNY New Paltz)

Milton and the Stations of the Crux

“The consideration of a textual crux in itself sharpens the wits,” wrote Edward Dowden in 1888. According to the OED, this, the first usage of the phrase, almost certainly derives from the Scholastic Latin *crux interpretum*, “the interpreter’s crossroad,” an irresolvable hermeneutic conundrum. One crux has a way of leading to others, as Swift says in his poem “To Sherridan”: “As for your new rebus, or riddle, or crux, / I will either explain, or repay it in trucks.” This paper explores the implications of the language of analogy, above all that of crucifixion, as the point of logical breakdown in Milton’s Arian attack on Orthodox Trinitarian theology in *De Doctrina Christiana* and *Paradise Lost*. By emphasizing failures of the published Word to mediate between God and man in cruxes, Milton clears the ground for his argument that only an anti-Trinitarian conception of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit can wholly account for the Son’s unique role as the mediator of divine truth. It is as if the deity, through the Scriptures, has providentially left cruxes as keys to understanding the relations between the persons of the Trinity. The corruption of the text indicates the corruption of the idea of essential identity between Father and Son. Likewise, the apparent caprice of the deity in relation to the text of Scripture promotes heretical choice by implying the necessity to reject corrupted text in order to free the spirit from unfounded claims to authority, paradigmatically those of the Roman Church.

Henderson, Diana (MIT)

Historicizing Ourselves: Adventures in Shakespearean SpaceTime

Past/present, historicism/presentism, boredom/pleasure, and yes, even still, text/performance: these inadequate dichotomies still animate and plague our scholarly conversations. Celebrating David Scott Kastan—while remembering his unlikely tonal kinship with his recent debating partner, the late Terence Hawkes—seems the perfect occasion for reflection on the value of such terms in locating ourselves as well as understanding our objects of study. Drawing on the metaphorical potential of recent (scientifically informed)
philosophical debates regarding the foundational reality of space and time, I propose to dance through the minefields of disciplinar-
yty and tone, in hope of synthesizing an antithesis between these
two valued mentors. Some of my text/performance examples will
be drawn from experience working on the Global Shakespeares
online curriculum project, developing modules for twenty-first
century study of Hamlet and The Tempest in the US and Singapore.
English history may lurk in the margins, as well as surrogation and
personation; the importance of great teachers persisting amidst
generational change will indubitably arise.

Hooks, Adam (University of Iowa)

Shakespeare after the Book

The historicist scholarship of the “New Boredom” dispersed and
then reconstituted Shakespeare, scattering his authority into
the collaborative activities of play and book production, only to
reconstruct him in the commercial world of print. Authorship was
defined as a function of the marketplace; Shakespeare’s reputation
was produced by and embodied in the book (particularly in the
relic on tour in 2016, the First Folio). Recently, scholars have begun
to break Shakespeare apart again, by demonstrating the fragment-
ary nature of plays and playbooks, composed of disparate forms
of text (songs, letters, etc.) that circulated far beyond the page and
the stage (not to mention the author’s control). This paper focuses
on one of these forms of text—ballads—in order to show what can
be gained by considering Shakespeare after the book. When John
Danter registered Titus Andronicus in 1594, he also registered “the
ballad thereof.” It was a common practice (and a crucial part of
Danter’s business model) to print ballads based on current popular
events, turning these events (or texts) into multi-media experi-
ences. Ballads were thus the locus of a form of media transference
that could perpetuate a performance as a kind of embodied mem-
ory. And in turn, Shakespeare incorporated ballads into his plays,
perpetuating the practice of textual fragmentation and circulation.
Looking beyond the book, then, allows for a more expansive view
of Shakespeare and the early modern book trade – and our own
historicist practices, as we look towards a multimodal or phenome-
nological bibliography.

Hunter, Matthew (Yale University)

The Immateriality of the Shakespearean Text

This paper seeks to reappraise and expand the concept of textuality
in early modern studies. The foundation to materialist histories of
drama, poetry, prose, “text” is a concept that has become synon-
ymous with – and inextricable from – its material instantiations.
Books, quartos, folios, paper, pamphlets, and octavos are integral
to any history of literature because they are the vessels that allow
literary artifacts to take concrete, readable shape; to be read by
readers; to survive across eras; to enter our canons; and to accrue
meaning thereby. “Text,” by this thinking, is indeed that durable,
material form which allows the circulation of language to happen.
Yet this equation of text with print has foreclosed from view
the active role that language itself has to play in this process of
circulation. Drawing upon the anthropology of Michael Silverstein
and Greg Urban, this paper argues that literary artifacts actively
manipulate their language to make themselves bounded, seem-
ingly unified documents that may be detached from one context
and inserted into others. Printed forms like quartos, pamphlets,
and commonplace books thus concretize, respond to, and extend
a process of circulation that the language of these artifacts itself
works self-reflexively to set in motion. Recognizing this mutual
interplay between language and material forms should prompt us
to revise our prevailing assumptions about what we mean by “text”
in literary studies. More than a material phenomenon, “text,” this
paper proposes, is a culturally situated ideology of language and
circulation, determining what makes a stretch of language worth
committing, in the first place, to durable, printed form.

Kelen, Sarah (Nebraska Wesleyan University)

When Is History and What Did They Speak Then?

My paper will look at the way early modern writers described
late medieval English, in particular the disparity between writers
who identified the English language of two centuries previous
as alien and those who described it as familiar. These two posi-
tions, distancing and embracing an earlier stage of the language,
manifest different notions of identity and thus differently articulated nationalisms. Those who make a point of distancing Middle English implicitly define a boundary separating the present self from the past other; those who absorb the language we now call Middle English into an undifferentiated English implicitly define the nation transhistorically. In this approach, I seek to question our received notions of periodicity as well as a received History of the English Language. In answer to the symposium's questions about historicism, I would add another question: is it the past yet?

**Kiséry, András (City College of New York, CUNY)**

**Jonson's Tacitean History, or, Politics as a Spectator Sport**

Ben Jonson's 1603 *Sejanus* presents itself as a piece of authoritative Tacitean historiography – one that uses poetic invention to bridge a major gap in the historical record. As a representation of, and commentary on, the *arcana imperii*, it aligns itself with the classical and modern “politic histories” that were popular in the period for their promise of making useful political knowledge available to their readers – intelligence worth studying. But Jonson's *Sejanus* also provides a commentary on the utility of such knowledge. In spite of its ostentatious display of unflinching observations, Jonson's tragedy suggests that the unmasking of power performed by these histories is ultimately inconsequential as a political gesture – that instead, the insight into the hidden operations of political rule finds its utility in the social realm, as it is refashioned into a form of cultural capital – paradoxically, a precondition of modern political culture.

**Lander, Jesse (University of Notre Dame)**

**Glamour in the Library: The History of Magic and The Tempest**

This paper will explore the various ways in which the history of magic has been used to read *The Tempest*. These approaches, focused on the figure of the Renaissance magus, have invariably amounted to histories of the subject, an approach that succeeds in making magic explicable in so far as it presents an allegory of human mastery. As an alternative, I will propose that we pay attention, not to the high magic of Neoplatonism, but instead to what Frances Yates referred to as “dirty magic,” the eclectic and only quasi-learned magic found in manuscript grimoires. As an example, I will look at a particular spell to enable the practitioner to go invisible and see spirits in order to suggest that the play's presentation of spectacular spirits addresses a deep curiosity in the audience, a curiosity that is less about the will to operate than it is about the desire to observe.

**Lesser, Zachary (University of Pennsylvania)**

**Xeroxing the STC: Early Modern Bibliography between UMI Microfilm and EEBO**

In the late 1960s, the University of Pennsylvania contracted with University Microfilms Inc., then a subsidiary of the Xerox Corporation, to produce xerographic copies of the entire STC microfilm collection as bound codices, at a cost of about $1,000,000 in today's money. These books were housed in the “STC Seminar Room” in the library at Penn for about 35 years, before being moved to New Jersey to a long-term storage facility. In the paper, I undertake a bibliographic analysis of these Xerox books, comparing them to the microfilm that underlies them and to the EEBO project that seems to have made them seem redundant. What kinds of books are these? What kinds of scholarly work did they enable? Why were they perceived to be necessary, and then why were they perceived to be expendable? Through this investigation, I hope to theorize our scholarly relation to the archive of early modern printed material on which we rely for our work.

**Macdonald, James Ross (University of the South)**

**Ben Jonson’s Religious Engagements**

More perhaps than any other context, critics tend to see the poets of the seventeenth century in a religious light, as they pervasively mix religious imagery and erotic experience (Donne), erect a temple in words (Herbert), or even undertake the vocation of theodicy itself (Milton). These poets did not presume their only readers would be doctors of divinity, but their patterns of diction...
and imagery are often illuminated by recourse to the theologies which the authors practiced, preached, or created. This mode of intellectual history runs into difficulty with Ben Jonson, however, since while there is abundant evidence in his two conversions for lifelong engagement with religious belief, the place of theology within his works is ambiguous. Instead, the insistent ethical pressure of Jonson's verse is more often associated with his classical stoicism, or his criticism of the Puritans with royalist politics; and even straightforwardly religious lyrics like “To Heaven” seem uninterested in probing the paradoxe of divine nature. In this paper, I hope to meditate on the way that Jonson's biography and the social history of English religion at the turn of the century can help us to understand the religious temper of his works, even if he seems to evade theology itself. His shifting religious identities, I hope to argue, furnish him with footing for a critique of the status quo by grounding his epideictic rhetoric in a reliable foundation for judgment, a shoring motion that becomes habitual in his secular verse.

Markus, Zoltan (Vassar College)

Historicizing Appropriability: Temporality and Shakespeare's Hybridity

The starting point of this paper is that Shakespeare is not an inherent attribute of any text or production but a marker of “appropriability” resulting from a cultural consensus in every age. Author Shakespeare and his works continuously reemerge as they are re-iterated, reproduced, and reassessed; they are the results of academic and artistic deliberations; they are not clear-cut, immutable, finalized units. With the aid of a specific (or idiosyncratic) understanding of the concept of appropriation that suggests that appropriations are reciprocal maneuvers of hybridization that negotiate and construct both their subjects and their objects at the same time, the paper investigates Shakespeare as a cultural hybrid produced in various historical and cultural contexts. It accepts the view that Shakespeare's works have no immediate, unmediated presence; they are always already displaced. Moreover, it also maintains that historical approaches as vehicles of authentication in search of an ‘original Shakespeare’ are problematic and unhelpful. On the other hand, it proposes that temporal dimensions of Shakespearean appropriation remain crucial. Drawing on current philosophical debates about perdurantism versus endurantism as well as “polychronicity” versus “multitemporality,” my paper aims at finding ways in which we can productively historicize the cultural hybrid we call Shakespeare.

McEachern, Claire (UCLA)

Does Dramatic Irony Have a History?

Dramatic irony is one of those literary terms and technologies—like “verse”, “prose”, or indeed “drama”—that even the best literary historicists tend to use without cultural qualification. Citations of Sophocles’ Oedipus as its paradigmatic instance—sited, like the predetermining fiat it dramatizes, in the prehistory of western drama—tends to give the impression that dramatic irony is as old as, well—drama. In exploring the precedents of Sophocles, Seneca and Ovid as they are mediated through late sixteenth-century soteriological practice, this paper will argue for a historical turn in the career of this term in the late sixteenth-century manifest in the kinds of affective involvements Shakespeare’s plays solicit of us.

Pfeiffer, Douglas (Stony Brook University)

Erasmus the Editor: Fiction as Historical Method

Standard accounts of critical historiography have tended to locate its origin in Renaissance philology: the humanist scholarship that first self-consciously brought historical context to bear on the reading of ancient texts. But the same importance attributed to this pioneering positivism in the work of textual scholarship has also continued to encourage the segregation of such scholarship today from the more inventive and playful dimensions of reading and writing about literature. As a way to challenge this origins story and its remarkably persistent notion of a divide between the work of textual editing and the practice of literary criticism, this paper examines the editorial work of Erasmus in his monumental 1516 edition of Saint Jerome. In order to make his case for the dis-inclusion of a handful of letters from the textus receptus of Jerome’s Epistolae,
Erasmus attributes these letters to a single “pseudo-Jerome” for whom he invents a humorously risible persona. By tracing Erasmus’ use of this ludic character portrait as an instrument of textual criticism, we can begin to discern how non-rational, even fictionalizing practices figured more generally in the field of Renaissance philology – and thus in the field long understood as the progenitor of modern fact-based, critical historiography. Perhaps historiography, especially when employed as a tool of textual interpretation, has always been at least as rhetorical as it has been factual.

Prakas, Tessie (Kenyon College)

“I shall never begin if I hold my peace”: The Ends of Song in Early Modern Literature

My paper considers “the futures of historicism” by focusing on how a particular literary genre was understood in early modernity, and on how it is understood now by scholars of that period and by literary scholars more broadly. That genre is song, widely used as a titular designation for early modern lyric poetry — though the formal characteristics linked with this designation vary very widely. In drama, though, songs function more consistently as interludes separate from dialogue that nonetheless have a complex range of relations to it. This paper will take as a starting point the songs in Twelfth Night, considering their varying significance as the entertainment demanded by languid aristocrats, as moments of reflection akin to the soliloquy, or as signifiers of the carnivalesque or of alcoholic abandon. I will focus on the different properties typically ascribed to this intradiegetic music by literary critics today, assessing whether, and how, their readings are influenced by the conventions of musical performance on and off the stage in early modern England. What relation does such historicist scholarship bear to the increasingly widespread critical tendency to use the term “musical” loosely to describe pleasant aural effects of text? And how might these shifting discursive norms shed light on the disciplinary relations between music and literature?

Robinson, Benedict (Stony Brook University)

Panic

The seventeenth century created modern panic. In early usage the word, deriving from the Latin panicum, meant millet or various other grains or grasses; in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries it began to be associated with the god Pan and thus with states of intense feeling including fear as well as enthusiasm and wild delight. Bacon uses it for the superstitious fictions of pagans; in the 1593 text of Sidney’s Arcadia the people search for Dametas “with Panike cries and laughters.” Over the course of the seventeenth century and above all after the civil wars this association with the behavior of unruly crowds shifted the word’s meaning toward forms of collective and unreasoning fear, usually spread as though by contagion and without knowledge of the inspiring object. It became possible to speak of “panic terror,” “panic fear,” “panic horror.” I will trace the rise of panic, above all in the work of Shaftesbury and Dryden, as a keyword for affective contagion, a kind of immediate transfer of feeling that anticipates Hume’s materialist analysis of sympathy. In the late seventeenth century this was not yet a general analysis of human passionate response but part of a crowd psychology in some ways anticipating the analyses of Freud and Gustave Le Bon. I will situate the history of panic as part of a wider history of fear, and as part of a transformation in the thinking of the passions at the cusp of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. And I will use that analysis to ask some key questions about the possibilities and limits of a history of emotions, and about the contribution humanities-based and specifically literary scholarship can make to a broader discussion of emotion.

Sherman, William (University of York and Victoria and Albert Museum)

Back to the Future: Derek Jarman and John Dee

Derek Jarman would explore the Renaissance and its modern shadows time and again in the course of his cinematic career: alongside Peter Greenaway (with whom he shared an obsession
with Shakespeare’s *Tempest*), he may well be the most backward looking of England’s avant-garde filmmakers. But *Jubilee* is his boldest experiment with multiple temporalities, in which he uses the Elizabethan polymath John Dee as a magical hinge between past, present and future. And Jarman is by no means alone in choosing Dee and his angelic visions as vehicles for time travel. In his guise as cloak-wearing, crystal ball-gazing magus, Dee has long served as one of the English past’s most familiar guides to the mysteries of the future. While his scholarly stock has gone up and down, he has retained a peculiar power to speak to writers and artists who turn to the past for new perspectives on where we find ourselves and where we think we are going. In this talk I will use the case of Jarman’s work with the Renaissance — in *Jubilee* above all but also, time permitting, in *The Tempest*, *Caravaggio*, *The Angelic Conversation* and *Edward II* — to examine the ways in which modernity keeps finding itself through contact with early modernity.

**Vitkus, Daniel (UC, San Diego)**

**Early Modern Past, Postmodern Crisis: A Radical Historicism for Our Time?**

When the pendulum of critical fashion swings away from politics, is that just the inevitable rhythm of our scholarly culture club? Or is it a sign of the times, a symptom of a particular historical conjuncture? The paper will argue for the urgency of new interventions that would revive a radical historicism — in particular, a historicism that can demonstrate a connection between the current crisis of global capital and the origins of capitalism, globalization and modernity during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. How can this be accomplished in a way that deploys an appropriate dialectic of past and present, one that does not foist our current concerns onto the past in ways that distort the historical record? How might a newly energized and theorized historicism make connections between the present and the early modern past without committing the sin of teleology? How would this new radical approach resemble or differ from earlier forms of radical materialist and historicist work? This paper will seek to offer some provisional answers to these questions with reference to the early modern theater in London and to specific plays that might be understood as “radical” texts in the sense that we can trace in them some of the roots of today’s postmodern crisis.

**Weber, William (Centre College)**

**Building the Future: The On-Stage Education of Child Actors in Adult Companies**

In a recent study of the authorship of *Titus Andronicus* 4.1, I discovered that earlier attempts to attribute the scene to George Peele based on its uncharacteristically high frequency of vocatives were misguided, as they failed to account for a crucial aspect of the scene: its inclusion of Young Lucius, one of Shakespeare’s memorable child characters. As my analysis of Shakespeare’s dramatic depictions of children elsewhere in his career showed, dialogue by and addressed to child characters uses vocative constructions far more often than does speech between adults. While this realization alone was sufficient to discount that particular rhetorical feature as evidence against Shakespeare’s authorship of the scene, it also raised fascinating questions beyond the scope of such a narrow argument: Are there other rhetorical features whose usage differs based on the age of the speaker? Might each age of man speak in a distinct, rhetorically quantifiable fashion? Why does Shakespeare surround his child characters with so many vocatives? Does vocative-rich diction simply reflect an attempt at verisimilitude, or might there be another explanation? This paper will explore these questions, suggesting that the specific rhetoric written for child actors provides insight into the largely undocumented processes by which adult theatre companies in Elizabethan England trained their novice actors, combining the rhetorical focus of the period’s formal pedagogy with the dramatic needs of a professional repertory troupe. By applying recent studies in early modern pedagogical and theatrical practices (by Lynn Enterline and Tiffany Stern, respectively) with the scholarship on Shakespeare’s use of children in his dramatic art, I hope to show how the plays do not merely depict education, but mindfully practice it.
“I have always imagined that Paradise will be a kind of library”:
Teaching Milton in the Rare Book Room

My interest in the histories of books began before I ever set foot in Connecticut, but it really took a serious turn back in my pre-graduate school days when I took classes from a New Haven bookbinder who introduced me to the Beinecke’s translucent marble walls and extraordinary collection. While the Beinecke still stands as my version of Paradise, the Watkinson, Trinity College’s rare book library, has proven to serve as a delightful bower in its own right. For my paper, I will be talking about my pedagogic experiments using Trinity’s rare book collection to engage students in the pleasures of historically grounded literary scholarship. I will talk specifically about my Milton seminar, and more generally about my current perceptions of the role libraries can play as institutional contexts within which we may shape a future generation’s historical interests and modes of humanist inquiry.