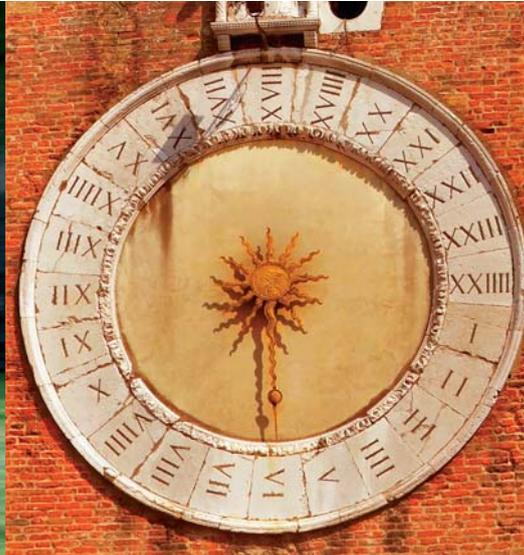




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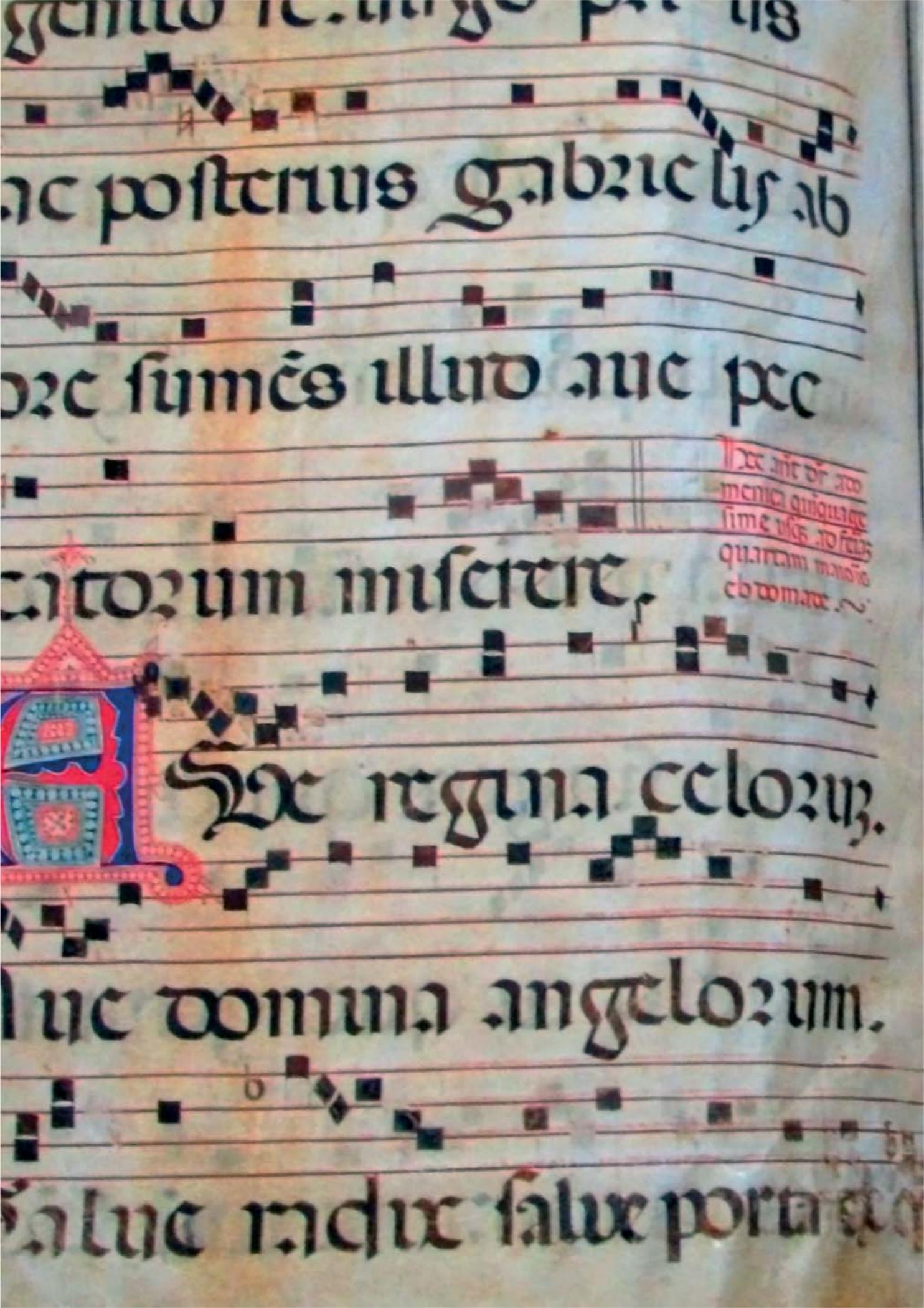
nel mezzo camin di nostra vita - mi rit
ai per una selva oscura, che la diritta v
era smarita. Ah! quanto a dir qual era è
cosa dura - esta selva selvaggia e aspra e fo
che nel pensier rinova la paura! Tant
amara che poco è più morte; ma per tratt
del ben chi' vi trovai, dirò de l'altre cose
chi vho scorte. Io non so ben ridir com
vintrai, tant'era pien di sonno a quel punt
e la verace via abbandonai. Ma poi chi' fu
al piè d'un colle quinto, la dove terminata
ella valle che m'avea di paure il core comp
guardai in alto e vido le sui spalle - veste
de' raggi del pianeta - che mena dritta altr
ogni valle. Alor fu la paura un poco queta, ch
nel lago del cor m'era dureta la noche chi pa
con tanta pietà. E come quei che con lea
fannata, uscito fuor del pelago a la riva, si
ge a l'aqua perigliosa e gitta così l'animo



Symposium Three – Programme

Filming and Performing Renaissance History Temporalities and Materialities

24-26 April 2009



Symposium Three Programme

Filming and Performing Renaissance History: Temporalities and Materialities

Friday, 24 April

Dinner: 8.00 (Private Dining-Room, Deane's at Queen's, 1 College Gardens)

Saturday, 25 April

Paper Session One: 9.00-10.30

(Seminar Room, The Seamus Heaney Centre for Poetry,
46-48 University Road, School of English, Queen's University)

Chair: Mark Thornton Burnett, Queen's University, Belfast

Past Contemporary Perceptions and Present Reconstructions: The Value of Archival Evidence Elizabeth Salter, University of Aberystwyth

Having examined archival evidence for popular perceptions of material objects in the early English Renaissance in the context of a study of cultural creativity, I would like to use this symposium as an opportunity to revisit that subject. My work on material objects was devoted to the reconstruction of 'contemporary' attitudes and experiences through the exploration of how Renaissance individuals described their objects.

One of the main sources I used was the last will and testament, which is a document produced for very particular purposes in the summation of an individual's life and how he or she wishes to be remembered and commemorated. The material objects named and described in these documents are, therefore, what might be termed 'biographical objects' which form part of a highly charged set of symbolic representations. This approach was necessarily theorised in relation to modern concepts (often drawn from cultural anthropology) of identity, appropriation, inscription, creativity, the symbolic, ritual action, literacy and so on, and it required careful consideration of the role and uses of textuality in relation to this type of evidence.

Continued overleaf

In this paper, I will give some examples of the kinds of objects that are mentioned and the ways they are described in detail. Like, for example, John Scragges' gifts in 1543 to the guild of leather sellers in London of 'a standing cup with a cover chased and well gilt having upon the cover a vane and either side of the vane is an eagle and John Scragg graven under the eagle' or Joanna Flower's gift to Alice Herd in 1502 of 'a ring of gold which I wore upon my finger at my time of sickness'. And, also in the light of my more recent work on the reconstruction of Renaissance lives and their connections with the historical novel, I would like to propose some ways in which the detailed, difficult to uncover, archival evidences which I have used might have a valuable place in the production of modern reconstructions of the Renaissance past.

**Sensing the Past:
The Historical Optics of 'Documentary'**
John Corner, University of Liverpool

It is clear that documentary television now has a very wide array of audio-visual possibilities for relating viewers to the historical and that, at points, these converge with fiction and, at other points, remain quite distinct from it. Documentary frequently involves an engagement with the *materiality* of the past (the things of the past, the places of the past, the bodies and faces of the past) depicted in ways that can generate a sense of a much broader, imaginative apprehension of 'old times'. Documentary also involves attempted evocations of the moods and subjectivities of the past, perhaps as indicated by the voicing of contemporary writing or by enactment, but often, also, by the phrasings of a commentary or presenter address. Music often has a rhetorical role here too, as it does in fiction. The combination of phenomenological 'closeness' and temporal 'distance' with forms of subjectivity at once both alien and familiar is one which television has been able to articulate more powerfully than any other medium. Its positioning as essentially a domestic device, one of casual sociability and intimacy, has been an important factor here. Across its many formal options for providing a *sense* of the past, documentary television has also shown significant achievements in providing viewers with historical knowledge, of offering historical *propositions*, if sometimes in ways found questionable by historians. This paper will look at some key features of 'documentary' approaches to history and the arguments that have surrounded them, relating its account to various examples depicting Renaissance events, people and themes.

**Writing the Material:
Objects, Contexts and Narratives of History**
Catherine Richardson, University of Kent

This paper explores the way objects operate within the construction of various types of historical narrative. It examines how experiences of early modern space are reconstructed through materiality, arguing that unpicking these experiences is important because it helps us to think about how individuals relate to events, and the role which material culture plays in representing those events. The paper examines the differences between written and visual narrative's potential for presenting the relationship between events and their material contexts. It takes the example of the

domestic interior, a crucial space for conveying notions of privacy, intimacy and family. The paper traces the representation of domestic space in both academic and popular accounts of Tudor life, paying particular attention to its construction as a material space. It explores the use of material objects, and how they might affect the way audiences interact with historical narratives.

Coffee/Tea Break
**(Committee Room, Ground Floor, School of English,
House No. 2, University Square)**

Paper Session Two: 11.00-12.30
**(Seminar Room, The Seamus Heaney Centre for Poetry,
46-48 University Road, School of English, Queen's University)**

Chair: Adrian Streete, Queen's University, Belfast

**The Cinematic Treatment
of Early Modern Witch Trials**
James Sharpe, University of York

The starting point for this paper is the impression that the cinematic treatment of Renaissance and early modern Europe has, a few honourable exceptions apart, concentrated on retelling the lives or episodes of the lives of the great and famous rather than getting to grips with the everyday experience of the bulk of the population. There are, of course, obvious reasons for this: cinema directors and the production companies they work for would see, say, a film on Henry VIII's marital problems, or even on his relationship with Sir Thomas More, as inherently more likely to attract a popular audience than a movie about the lives of early sixteenth-century peasants. And (if we may restrict our focus to English themes) popular books on history, which so often form the basis for movies or define the tastes of the potential audience for historical films, tend to concentrate on the great and famous, or those in close proximity to them. The problem of how far a modern film can recreate the lives of 'ordinary' people in the past remains an open one.

The theme of witchcraft is, both modern and historical, one which has proved attractive to movie-makers, and, in its historical interpretations, allows us to move away from the world of monarchs and court intrigue. Cinematic treatments of the subject vary from using modern witchcraft as the basis for horror movies to witchcraft, both early modern and twentieth-century, as a subject for comedy. From within this wide range, I wish to concentrate on three films, two at least of which relate to 'real' historical events, and all three of which are of considerable interest to the modern historian of witchcraft.

The first is Benjamin Christensen's *Häxan* of 1922, essentially a documentary work (said to have been inspired by the director's having come across a copy of the *Malleus Maleficarum* in a Berlin bookshop) but one which has lengthy dramatised

sequences, and has in particular a striking evocation of the Sabbath clearly based on early modern demonological texts. The second, again by a Danish director, is Carl Theodore Dreyer's *Vredens Dag (Day of Wrath)*, released in 1943 (the fact that Denmark was then under Nazi occupation may not be irrelevant) and based, via a stage play, on the story of Anne Pedersdotter Absolan, the wife of a Lutheran pastor burnt for witchcraft in 1590. And, thirdly, Michael Reeves' 1968 movie *Witch-Finder General*, which retold the story of Matthew Hopkins (played by Vincent Price) and the mass East Anglian trials of 1645-7, an episode which has recently been subjected to close scholarly re-evaluation.

There are, of course, numerous themes present in these three rather varied films: but perhaps the most persistent one is that early modern witch-hunting is portrayed as a metaphor for the bigotry and intolerance of the late medieval and early modern world. What I will question is how a cinematic treatment of witchcraft might break through this model, and in particular how it might connect with the types of approach to the history of witchcraft pioneered since the 1970s by social and cultural historians. And, further to this, I will consider the potential for cinema to reconstruct the lives of non-elite Europeans in the Renaissance and early modern periods.

Imagining the Medieval and Renaissance on Film

Anke Bernau, University of Manchester

The study of post-medieval representations of the medieval period known as 'medievalism' has, in the past decade, reached new prominence and academic respectability. A considerable part of this body of scholarship is concerned with film; initially in its relationship to historical 'truth', but increasingly as part of a wider examination of our desire for the past and its multiple manifestations. Of course, medievalism is not a unique phenomenon; similar developments have also taken place in, for instance, Classics, Tudor / Renaissance / early modern as well as Victorian studies, indicating a widespread academic awareness of (but also anxiety about) contemporary interest, or lack of it, in the past. Yet scholars working in these areas do not often share their work or their insights, due to disciplinary and period boundaries.

This paper will begin by asking what kinds of differences, if any, there might be between filmic representations of the medieval and of the early modern periods, and what such differences (or their absence) might reveal about how and why the cinema imagines specific pasts. Are the themes and cinematographic techniques (as well as choice of genre, music, costume, language) informed by academic as well as wider understandings of the differences between the 'medieval' and the 'early modern'? Are stereotypical assumptions reaffirmed, challenged or sidestepped? I will conclude by considering whether the insights gained from asking these questions can feed back into academic concerns, specifically concerning temporality and periodisation.

Consuming the Renaissance: Cannibalism in the Contemporary Jacobean Film

Pascale Aebischer, University of Exeter

Mike Figgis' *Hotel*, a film about the making of a dogme-style *Duchess of Malfi* in a hotel in Venice, provides the starting-point for a reflection on the conjunction of cannibalism and 'the Renaissance' in a cluster of turn-of-the-millennium films which, using Susan Bennett's terminology in *Performing Nostalgia*, can be described as 'contemporary Jacobean'. Some key sequences in *Hotel* spin a complex web of associations between the re-membering of Renaissance drama and culture and the notions of processing and consumption. *The Duchess of Malfi* functions in this film both as a temporally remote text and as a material body, represented by the 'international agricultural harvest' of hotel guests who have come for a taste of Renaissance culture before ending up on a meat hook themselves (literalising the cannibalism the Duchess speaks of when she says that 'A many hungry guests have fed upon [her]'). Cannibalism, I will argue, is one of the ways in which this film signposts its position within an emergent canon of 'contemporary Jacobean' films – such as Peter Greenaway's deliberately 'Jacobean' *The Cook, The Thief, His Wife and Her Lover* (1989), Derek Jarman's *Edward II* (1991) and, more recently, Julie Taymor's *Titus* (1999) – that directly or indirectly take issue with the consumption of 'the Renaissance' in contemporary mainstream Shakespeare and heritage film. It becomes a trope for not only for the desire to break cultural taboos characteristic of the 'contemporary Jacobean' film, but also for a sense of visceral disgust with the business of exhuming and processing long-dead corpses for popular consumption.

Lunch: 12.30-1.30

**(Committee Room, Ground Floor, School of English,
House No. 2, University Square)**

Paper Session Three: 1.30-3.00

**(Seminar Room, The Seamus Heaney Centre for Poetry,
46-48 University Road, School of English, Queen's University)**

Chair: Mary-Ellen Lynn, Queen's University, Belfast

The Pageant of History: Processions, Festival Culture and the Representation of the Tudors

Michael Dobson, Birkbeck College, University of London

This paper considers the persistence of the Renaissance pageant in modern and postmodern culture, both as a recurrent metaphor for history in general and as a feature of stage, cinematic and communal representations of Tudor history in particular. Arguing that the early modern period has been identified with 'Merrie Englande' in plays, films and community pageants on the subject to precisely the

extent that those works have themselves been self-consciously festive and recreational, the paper examines a number of examples of the apparently arbitrary and unstoppable inclusion of processions, feasts, maypole dances and masques in different modern representations of Tudor England, drawing in part on eyewitness accounts of local pageants. It identifies the immediate post-war years in particular as a time when the words 'European', 'Renaissance' and 'festival' became purposively intertwined.

Living History: The Experience of Authenticity

Eleanor Lowe, Oxford Brookes University

Both academically and practically, 'living history' and 'authenticity' are deemed problematic terms in the re-enactment of Renaissance history and within the growing field of heritage studies. This paper seeks to address some of these issues, based on several years experience of re-enacting mainly Tudor history, and will pay particular attention to these key terms: what is does it mean to be 'authentic' and does it matter? Is the umbrella term 're-enactment' satisfactory, and what are the alternatives? These questions will also involve considerations of performativity, the visitor experience at heritage sites, and interaction with 'performers' of history. Of particular interest are notions of legitimacy and value in terms of the visitor experience and the unpaid volunteer. This latter point will be explored with direct reference to The Tudor Group, a historical interpretation group which seeks to undertake site-specific research in addition to traditional forms, and argues that authenticity is an integral and stimulating part of the visitor and re-enactor experience. The value of 'living history' and 'authentic' approaches will be discussed in relation to personal, group and spectator experience, as part of a wider framework considering aesthetics, education and entertainment.

Consuming the Renaissance

Nicola J. Watson, Open University

This paper looks at one very particular way in which the Renaissance has been represented, performed, and consumed within modernity by considering the long history of banquets in honour of Shakespeare's birthday. Describing the divergent practices that have evolved in Britain, Europe, and North America from the mid eighteenth century through to the present day, it theorises these both as 'food-theatre' and as a form of heritage tourism. Making detailed reference to materials ranging from the minutes and menus of Shakespeare club dinners to heritage 'Shakespeare' cookbooks, it explores the ways in which food and Shakespearean text have been related by multiple practices of quotation, arguing that, like both theatre and tourism, and despite superficial differences, they are all designed to enable the diner to occupy the same physical space as 'Shakespeare', to taste the Renaissance by ingesting the text.

Coffee/Tea Break
**(Committee Room, Ground Floor, School of English,
House No. 2, University Square)**

Parallel Session: Paper Session Four: 3.30-5.00

**(Committee Room, Ground Floor, School of English,
House No. 2, University Square)**

Chair: Victoria Brownlee, Queen's University, Belfast

Henry's Desperate Housewives: *The Tudors*, the Politics of Historiography and the Beautiful Body of Jonathan Rhys Meyers

Ramona Wray, Queen's University, Belfast

In contradistinction to largely defunct arguments over the importance of 'fidelity' and 'authenticity' in the adaptation of literary texts, discussion of how best 'history' might be screened, revised and rewritten is still largely unresolved. This paper examines the successful Showtime series, *The Tudors*, a television project which has attracted exceptional viewing figures, lucrative sales to over seventy global 'territories' and prestigious EMMY awards.

One of my arguments is that *The Tudors* is facilitated by what we might loosely call the 'Shakespearean cinema' of the past twenty years. Playing on its most successful precursors (not least *Henry V* [dir. Kenneth Branagh, 1989], *Elizabeth* [dir. Shekhar Kapur, 1998] and *Shakespeare in Love* [dir. John Madden, 1999]), and on the popular historical understandings gleaned from them, *The Tudors* takes these films' successful features and transferable elements and places them in arresting juxtaposition.

Yet if the *The Tudors'* approach to the sixteenth century is anchored in such heritage-based reinventions of the past, the series' range and scope takes it beyond the remit and import of earlier productions and into previously uncharted representational territory. *The Tudors'* depiction of the Renaissance is revisionist – it breaks clear from an expected 'golden age' heritage-based template to present the period as dark, chaotic and horror-laden and to envision the usually Holbein-inflected Henry VIII (Jonathan Rhys Meyers) as a slimline, twenty-something object of desire.

The unpalatable nature of such a move is reflected in the critical controversy which has surrounded the series. Arguing against simplistic understandings of 'dumbing down', and recognizing the ways in which *The Tudors* works inside more inclusive notions of accessibility, this paper posits the importance of understanding cultural development through layered modalities of telling and via the central contribution of emotion, personality and celebrity. Crucial here is the role of Jonathan Rhys Meyers who exceeds the frame of the story and whose omnipresence in global media forms allows him to take on a role akin to that of public historian. In 2009, the 500th

anniversary of Henry's ascension to the throne, this essay argues for *The Tudors* as the most definitive expression of a sea-change, a radical revision of the ways in which the origins of the Tudor dynasty, the Reformation and the long-standing ramifications of religious change are explained and understood in the popular imaginary.

Heritage and Public History: Henry VIII in 2009

Thomas Betteridge, Oxford Brookes University, and Suzannah Lipscomb, Hampton Court Palace and Kingston University

This paper explores the process of planning for a new interpretation of the Tudor palace at Hampton Court to mark the 500th anniversary of Henry VIII's accession in 2009. It examines the ways in which a consensus was built between academic and public history. In particular, it will discuss the establishment of a nexus of academic involvement with Hampton Court, initially through the establishment of a Research Advisory Panel, and plans for an academic conference, and the diffuse and unexpected outcomes of this interaction. The paper will also consider the tensions that arise between academic agendas for history and the presentation of history to the public. It will examine the various different mediums that Historic Royal Palaces will be deploying throughout 2009 to communicate the history of Henry VIII's reign to the public, including the organisation's first foray into site-specific drama. The paper will conclude by suggesting that history and interpretation are based on notions of telling the truth about the past, and that, whilst these notions may differ, there is much to be learnt on both sides.

'Heroes do not look like Henry VIII: that is just the world we live in': Reimagining the Aging Body of Henry VIII

Edel Lamb, University College, Dublin

In anticipation of the 500th anniversary of his accession to the throne, Henry VIII has, unsurprisingly, been the focus of a number of exhibitions, books and screen representations of the Renaissance during the past few years. Yet events and publications such as the *Young Henry VIII Exhibition* at Hampton Court Palace (2007-2009), the British Library exhibition opening in April 2009 and David Starkey's *Henry: Virtuous Prince* (2008) do not simply signal a renewed interest in the Tudor monarch; they offer an original image of a youthful King aimed at twenty-first-century audiences. This paper will explore the ways in which contemporary representations of Henry VIII reimagine the temporalities and materialities of the King and his reign. Focusing on the controversial portrayal of Henry as a young and handsome ruler in the casting of Jonathan Rhys Meyers in Michael Hirst's TV series, *The Tudors* (2007-08), it will examine the ways in which this representation of Henry's aged and physical identity revisits and appropriates earlier depictions of the King to reimagine Henry in the context of cultural preoccupations with youth and beauty.



Parallel Session: Paper Session Five: 3.30-5.00

(Seminar Room, The Seamus Heaney Centre for Poetry, 46-48 University Road, School of English, Queen's University)

Chair: Brendan Savage, Queen's University, Belfast

The Golem, or the Communist 'What You Will'

Martin Procházka, Charles University, Prague

Two days before the Epiphany in 1952, the nationalized Czechoslovak film industry released a historical comedy in two parts *The Emperor's Baker and the Golem* (*Císařův pekař a pekařův císař*; in the U.S. distributed under the title *The Emperor and the Golem*). In the grim times of Cold War, compulsory manifestations of revolutionary élan, political show-trials and deepening economic crisis followed by the collapse of currency in 1953, people enthusiastically welcomed a movie, starring one of the most popular Czech comedians and a leading avant-garde artist, Jan Werich (1905-1980). Many spectators still remembered the play on which the Communist blockbuster was based, the extravaganza *Golem* produced in 1936 by Werich with his friend, fellow-actor and co-author, Jiří Voskovec (1905-1981) and the leading Czech jazz composer Jaroslav Ježek (1906-1942) at the Osvobozené divadlo (Liberated Theatre). The impressive cast, starring well-known actors and actresses of the pre-war period, and the film director Martin Frič (the leading figure of the pre-war Czechoslovak cinematography) not only demonstrated the control the regime had assumed over the cultural scene but made an impression of the absolute dedication of Czech artists to the causes of the Communist revolution. The film, which became one of the most successful works of popular entertainment, was among the first Czechoslovak movies shot in colour to be exported to the West as a propaganda piece. In spite of its overt ideological message – the imperial power is replaced by the power of the people, which can use science and technology for beneficial purposes and avert a global disaster (in the movie, the monstrous figure of the Golem thwarts the Emperor, courtiers and military conspirators and finally is turned by the Emperor's *doppelgänger*, a clever baker Matthew, into a miraculous bread-oven) – it had a great success in France in the wake of *Fanfan la Tulipe* or the remake of *Scaramouche* (both 1952). It also won awards at the 1952 international film festival in Edinburgh and in the U.S. in 1955. The paper will discuss the avant-garde and communist rewritings of the Golem myth and the representation of Rudolph's Renaissance court full of alchemists and astrologers as the eve of a Communist utopia. It will also explore the reasons for the movie's continuing domestic and international popularity (a trailer on YouTube, a review on blackholereviews.blogspot.com).

Capturing the Medium: Issues and Opportunities for Constructing a Database of Audiovisual Shakespeare Productions

Luke McKernan, British Library

The International Database of Shakespeare on Film, Television and Radio (<http://www.bufvc.ac.uk/shakespeare>) is an online database which attempts to capture, describe, classify and make available to researchers the entirety of Shakespeare across the three media. The project encompassed not only 'conventional' productions, but parodies, plot borrowings, news programmes, documentaries and advertisements, and both commercial and non-commercial products (particularly video records of stage productions). This paper will describe the background to this project, from its academic rationale to the challenges of defining and describing a subject whose parameters are continually expanding. The question that arises is whether the subject (audiovisual Shakespeare) defines the form that seeks to encompass it, or vice versa. The paper will also consider the opportunities for Shakespeare studies that the database promises in delivering such information in a structured and interoperable form, based on the needs of the research community.

Performing Theatre History in a Digital Age

Martin White, University of Bristol

It has long been recognised that the physical reconstruction of specific historic performance spaces, and practice-led research undertaken in those spaces, can illuminate aspects of earlier performance practices in ways unavailable to other forms of investigation. However, the significance of these practical discoveries has not been matched by a capacity to document and, therefore, to disseminate them effectively. In the area of English early modern indoor performance, the nature, flexibility and impact of the artificial lighting of the stage by candles, lanterns, torches and so on has been generally under-explored, particularly given the evident importance of light and darkness in many plays written specifically for indoor performance. In this paper I shall outline some experiments with artificial light, illustrate how its effects have been documented using digital technologies and show how these are now to be disseminated via DVD and web-streaming.

Dinner: 7.00 (Beatrice Kennedy's Restaurant, 44 University Road)

Sunday, 26 April

Paper Session Six: 8.45-10.15

**(Seminar Room, The Seamus Heaney Centre for Poetry,
46-48 University Road, School of English, Queen's University)**

Chair: Conor Smyth, Queen's University, Belfast

**'The Touch of Man on Woman':
Temporalities and Materialities in the
Martin Guerre Case**

John O'Brien, Royal Holloway, University of London

This paper will look at scenes from the film *The Return of Martin Guerre* and show how they give a sense of completion to the enigmatic, speculating on what the historical record cannot contain or about which it keeps obdurately silent. Consideration is given to the comparative value of historical films in the light of Hayden White's article on historiography and historiophoty and Natalie Zemon Davis' lecture, 'Any Resemblance to Persons Living or Dead'.

**Televising History 1995-2010:
Where is the Renaissance?**

Ann Gray, University of Lincoln

This four year AHRC funded project, based at the University of Lincoln, focuses on the many genres of 'factual' television history programming and the context of their commissioning and production. My paper will present an overview of our work to date and, drawing on some programme examples, raise questions about the ways in which production imperatives shape representations of the Renaissance.

**A Shakespeare Sized Hole: Shakespeare,
the Renaissance and the Twenty-First Century**

Roberta Pearson, University of Nottingham

A reviewer of James Shapiro's Shakespeare biography, *1599*, characterized it as a book with a 'Shakespeare sized hole' in the middle. The historical record establishes, contra the anti-Stratfordian loonies, that Will Shakespeare existed and that he wrote Shakespeare's plays. But the extant facts can only cast an insubstantial shadow into that Shakespeare sized hole. Biographers, filmmakers, television producers and others must exercise their imaginations to endow this shadow with flesh and blood and thoughts and emotions. Having to appeal to twenty-first century audiences, Shakespeare biographers do not necessarily acknowledge the unknowable otherness of Renaissance England but draw instead upon twenty-first century assumptions about individuality, identity, sexuality, human relationships and the like.

This paper will explore several recent representations of Shakespeare in print, film, and television (including *Will in the World, 1599*, Peter Ackroyd's *Shakespeare, Shakespeare in Love, A Waste of Shame, In Search of Shakespeare* and *Great Britons: Shakespeare and the Dr Who* episode, 'The Shakespeare Code'). The focus will be upon the ways in which twenty-first century debates about multi-culturalism, race, gender, the power of the state and the like are reflected back on the Renaissance. Present-day concerns inevitably inflect all historical representations, but different media and genres can constrain or inhibit speculation to greater or lesser degrees. For example, the cultural codes governing the writing of print biographies require greater adherence to established 'historical facts' than do the codes governing the production of fantastic television. But the Renaissance serves as raw material for the historical imagination across all fields of cultural production.

**Coffee/Tea Break (Committee Room, Ground Floor, School of English,
House No. 2, University Square)**

**Workshop Session One (Why Theatre? Renaissance
History in Modern French Drama): 10.45-12.00**

**(Seminar Room, The Seamus Heaney Centre for Poetry,
46-48 University Road, School of English, Queen's University)**

Chair: Laura Gallagher, Queen's University, Belfast

**Why Theatre? Early Modern History
on the Modern French Stage**

Neil Kenny, Department of French, University of Cambridge

This paper will set the scene for the three more detailed ones to follow in this session.

In nineteenth- and twentieth-century France, why did the representation of history and, in particular, of early modern history, often take the form of drama? Was drama considered to have any special relationship to history?

I will briefly survey the concern of Romantics and others in nineteenth-century France to put into dramatic form episodes taken from the French and Italian history of the period which they thought of as the 'Renaissance'. Musset's *Lorenzaccio* will be highlighted. I will then mention a selection of twentieth-century examples, including Artaud's *Les Cenci*, while also gesturing towards the competing representations of 'Renaissance' history now offered by film.

The point of the survey will be to ask whether drama was considered by writers and practitioners to have qualities which enable it not only to represent history in the sense of 'showing what happened in the past', but also to represent history in the sense of 'making it present'. Was drama considered to be more capable than other

representations of making history come alive in one sense or another? I will raise the possibility that theatre was indeed sometimes considered to have this special role, thanks to varying factors such its unique relation to ‘temporalities and materialities’ (in the terms of the symposium’s focus), its presentation of bodies in real time and in three-dimensional space, its capacity to represent and address collectivities, its ability to dispense with a narrator, its proximity to ritual, and its preoccupation with masks and repetitions.

Rabelais and/on the Stage

Wes Williams, St Edmund Hall, Oxford

This paper will be structured as a tragi-comedy in five unequal acts. The first will give some sense of the theatricality of Rabelais’ writing, by way of a brief contextual conspectus of such topics as textuality, orality, performance, carnival, and the place of the University in the theatre of ‘the Renaissance.’ The second, third and fourth acts will each resurrect a distinct twentieth-century dramatisation of *Gargantua and Pantagruel* – that of Jean-Louis Barrault’s company in 1968 (a politically charged total-theatre love-in that toured from its original location in a Parisian wrestling arena, to London’s Roundhouse, to the University in Berkeley); the stilts, puppets, mead and early music *Gargantua* produced in 1983 by the Medieval Players (‘a touring company’, so their website archive, hosted by the University of Lancaster suggests, ‘killed by the policies of a Thatcherite Arts Council’); the deconstructive multi-media ‘devised’ musical *Gargantua and Pantagruel* produced a year later as a summer garden show in St John’s College, Oxford. The last act will draw things together, by way of a dual reflection: first on the representation of ‘the Renaissance’ in each of these shows, and second on the consequent interplay of historical narrative and dramatic form. A final recognition scene should allow us both to understand better the differences between these various accounts of Rabelais’ work, and to acknowledge the forms of kinship – at once political, formal, historiographical and theatrical – which bind them together.

Staging Historicities of France: Planchon, Chéreau, Lavaudant

David Bradby, Royal Holloway, University of London

Over a period of forty or so years, the Théâtre de la Cité / TNP in Villeurbanne (Lyon) conducted a sustained reflection on the topic of the construction of history through dramatic re-enactment. This was partly achieved by means of productions set in the Renaissance period, but also through plays set in more recent (including contemporary) periods that were concerned with similar problems of ‘temporalities and materialities’. A great deal of their work can be seen to have developed in response to just the question set for this workshop by Neil Kenny – i.e., ‘what difference does it make to a performance that it represents historical (rather than fictional) events?’ I shall begin by evoking briefly Vinaver’s three plays of the 1950s – *Aujourd’hui ou les Coréens*, *Iphigénie Hôtel* and *La Fête du cordonnier* (the latter adapted from Dekker’s play of 1599) – and I shall conclude with Michel Deutsch and

Georges Lavaudant’s *Histoires de France* (1997). In between I shall examine how Planchon, subsequently joined by Chéreau and then (after Chéreau left to direct his own theatre) by Lavaudant, explored the ways in which theatre production is able to reflect our changing sense of how we understand history. Two celebrated productions set in the Renaissance will be of obvious relevance: Planchon’s production of his own play, *Gilles de Rais*, and Chéreau’s production of Marlowe’s *The Massacre at Paris* (later adapted as a film). But equally interesting will be the later works of Vinaver, in which he develops a highly original dramatic method for representing the history of our own times, a dramatic method that is, by the author’s own admission, inspired by Renaissance models.

Making Sense of *Les Cenci*: Antonin Artaud and the Cruel Re-presentation of (Early Modern) History

Benjamin Andréo, Aberystwyth University

This paper will focus on Antonin Artaud’s *Les Cenci*. As well as being the Théâtre de la Cruauté’s sole concrete performance (sets by Balthus; music and sound effects by Désormière), this ‘tragedy in four acts and ten movements’ – ‘inspired’ by Shelley and Stendhal and based on a late sixteenth-century real event – was also the acme and final act of Artaud’s theatrical career. *Les Cenci* opened in May 1935 at the Folies-Wagram and closed after only seventeen performances. The play was given much media coverage, though not critical acclaim. I intend to address some of the questions at the heart of this panel’s reflection on theatre and the modern stage: indeed, why did Artaud choose theatre? And why did he choose *Les Cenci*? In the light of these questions, I propose to explore and assess this tragedy as a potential ‘re-presentation’ of history, read mainly as a way of ‘making history present’.

In a manifesto designed to accompany the production of the play, the poet-director described it as an act of ‘real theatre where life was being re-made’ (*le vrai théâtre refait de la vie*). In other words, it was an act of mythical and magical ‘re-naissance’, for both actors and spectators alike. As such – and flawed as it was bound to be – *Les Cenci* provided the space needed for the embodiment and the expression of Artaud’s conceptions of theatre, space and time. I will therefore question the relationship of the play to h/History and its grounding in ‘cruelty’, as well as to the status of theatre. The latter, according to Artaud, was predominantly sacred in its ability to ‘give body to’, and ‘enact’, modern myths and rituals, and therefore to re-create a world in which History is found in mankind, rather than the other way round.

However, such a privileged position for theatre will necessarily have to be nuanced. On the one hand, the modern critic can legitimately see *Les Cenci* as the illustration of Antonin Artaud’s dramatic theories; on the other, the fact remains that the play also marked his lasting disaffection and disillusionment with theatre as a magical space capable of representing History. As a consequence, Artaud would pursue off the stage the mythical creation he started in the theatre, first in Mexico and in Ireland and then in Ville-Evrard and Rodez.

Workshop Session Two (‘Making the Old’): 12.00-1.15

(Seminar Room, The Seamus Heaney Centre for Poetry,
46-48 University Road, School of English, Queen’s University)

Chair: Emma Rhatigan, Queen’s University, Belfast

This concluding workshop will be led by Jerome de Groot, University of Manchester. Jerome de Groot is the author, most recently, of *Consuming History: Historians and Heritage in Contemporary Popular Culture* (London and New York: Routledge, 2009). In this workshop, he will draw on this exciting new work and initiate a series of participant-led activities that address the following aims, all of which are highly pertinent to the symposium and project as a whole: *To question our assumptions about the ways in which ‘history’ works in the popular imagination and in particular the ways it is resourced by popular media; To think about the material elements and constrictions attendant upon the creation of historical product; To understand further the ways that popular media think about historical periods; To think about the ways in which academic and popular discourses might interface; To consider, in the light of the above, how non-academic issues such as marketing, commissioning, budget requirements and formal issues might skew and change the ways in which particular historical ideas are made popular.* In this way, the workshop will serve as an apt conclusion for our discussion thus far.

Lunch: 1.15 (Café Renoir, 95 Botanic Avenue)

Organizer: Professor Mark Thornton Burnett

Design: Rodney Miller Associates, Belfast

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