

Doctoral Programme in English Language and Literature

**CUSO Doctoral Workshop in
Medieval and Early Modern English Studies**

Wednesdays, 4.15-6.45 p.m., University of Geneva, on Zoom (or Room Phil 204)

Spring 2021

3 March, work-in-progress papers: Ana Rita Parreiras Reis (UNIL), Beatrice Montedoro (University of Zurich)

17 March, CUSO half-day event, Prof. Katell Lavéant (University of Utrecht), ‘Joyful culture in texts and objects: new perspectives on carnival’. The workshop will be preceded by lecture at 2.15 p.m.

This half-day event will examine the impact of Bakhtin’s theory of the carnivalesque on scholarship, and will re-evaluate its impact on our understanding of joyful festivities in late medieval and early modern society. The examples, which will be taken from urban communities in France and in the Low Countries, will open up the wider European and comparative dimensions of the questions at hand. The event will offer new methods to combine the analysis of literary and archival texts with material objects, and will give a special attention to the latest developments in book history.

31 March, work-in-progress papers: Amy Brown (UNIBE), Emma Rayner (UNIFR)

21 April, work-in-progress papers: Honor Grace Jackson (UNINE), Danielle Thien (UNIGE)

5 May, Prof. Isabel Karreman (University of Zurich), ‘Danses macabres on the Early Modern Stage’

This workshop will explore the ways in which the medieval tradition of the Dance of Death was staged in early modern plays. The visual genre of the *danse macabre* was usually executed in murals, woodcuts, engravings and paintings, and often accompanied by explanatory and exhortatory verse. The imagery and its accompanying verses bear an inherent relationship with dramatic performances, however, which facilitated its transposition onto the stage, first in morality plays, then mainly in revenge tragedies. Drawing on a range of visual and textual material, we will discuss how these plays structure the experience of the viewers, and are in turn structured by them, as a set of topoi, representational structures and meanings made possible by cultural conventions across the divide of the Reformation. A key text will be *Hamlet*: as we will see, Hamlet’s meditative habits, his dramaturgic function as a *mors* figure, and his faith in providence link him more to the medieval tradition of the Dance of Death than the critical narrative of secularization and modernity allows for.

19 May, work-in-progress papers: Aurélie Blanc (UNIFR), Mark Darcy (UNIGE)

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Autumn 2021

22 September: work-in-progress papers by Emily Smith (UNIGE) and Kilian Schindler (UNIFR)

6 October: Prof. Christiania Whitehead (Universities of Warwick, Lausanne and Geneva), New Directions in Late Medieval English Lyric Studies

This workshop will offer an overview of the current state of medieval lyric scholarship, and suggest some possible directions of critical travel, focused on literary and biblical intertextuality, and attention to devotional, institutional and manuscript contexts.

20 October: Issues of Professionalization: the PhD student / supervisor relationship; online presence; funding applications; Swiss postdoc positions; professional service work. With contributions by Sarah Brazil (UNIGE), Emma Depledge (UNINE), Lukas Erne (UNIGE), and Devani Singh (UNIGE)

10 November: Prof. Jennifer Richards (Newcastle University), CUSO half-day event on 'Animating Books: Rethinking Book History', workshop at 4.15 p.m., preceded by a lecture at 2.15 p.m. (room to be announced)

The lecture and the workshop will be devoted to exploring a novel approach to the study of book history—one which considers how voice might animate the material book, even for silent readers.

24 November: work-in-progress papers by Vanessa Lim (Institute of English Studies, University of London / UNIFR) and Hannah Piercy (UNIBE)

8 December: Dr Oliver Morgan (University of Cambridge), Early Modern Drama and the Material Plot

This workshop will explore the relationship between two kinds of plot. The first is the early modern theatrical document now known as a 'plot-scenario'. A plot-scenario was the plan of an unwritten play—a scene-by-scene summary of the projected action and a list of the characters involved. The second is 'plot' in the more familiar sense of that word—plot as a literary critical abstraction that enables us to talk about narrative structure. Existing work on the plot-scenario is overwhelmingly archival and historicist (in the broader sense of that word). It does not engage with theoretical questions about the nature of 'plot'. Theoretical accounts of plot, on the other hand, tend to be abstract and trans-historical, ignoring its material embodiment in documents such as the plot-scenario. By bringing these two different conceptions of plot together, the workshop will attempt to shed new light on each of them.

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