

IASEMS
Italian Association of Shakespearean and Early Modern Studies



Annual IASEMS Conference

Università degli Studi di Bergamo, 28-29 May 2015

“In the Public Sphere”:

Crime, Transgression and Subversion in Shakespeare and Early Modern England

Plenary Speakers:

Janette Dillon, University of Nottingham

John Drakakis, University of Stirling

The conference aims to explore the shifting range of meanings covered by the notion of crime and their far-reaching social repercussions in the representations of early modern England. In that context, drama and other literary forms came to be exploited as tools of propaganda for the containment of dissent. At the same time, and often unpredictably, they functioned as agents of change and/or means of subversion.

A useful starting point for reassessing the role drama and other literary forms played in the early modern period may be found in Jürgen Habermas’s concept of the public sphere as a site of debate ensuring the circulation of discourses that were central to the development of society. And yet, the varying modes of Early Modern transgression allow for a variety of other critical approaches which profitably engage with the social, political and religious dimensions of cultural representations.

It is within this broad and critically contentious field that we intend to explore the notions of crime and transgression in their manifold implications. An analysis of the debate on crime, transgression and subversion as discussed, performed and represented will hopefully provide fresh insights into the ‘circulation of social energy’ (Greenblatt) in early modern English culture.

This conference invites papers on the following issues:

- Definitions and perceptions of crime and transgression
- Transgressive performances of subjectivity
- The materiality of the text and its potential for transgression

- Theatre and drama as sites of subversion
- Unorthodox discourses: remediations and disseminations in science, religion and philosophy
- Subversion and sedition in pamphlets, controversies, condemnations and defences (the rhetoric of public debate and public speaking)

Please send a 200-word abstract and a short CV **by December 31, 2014**, to the following emails:

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