

Royal Holloway Travel Award 2019 - Report
'NextGenPlen', Shakespeare Association of America (Washington DC)
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In April 2019, with the support of the RHUL Travel Award (Una Ellis-Fermor Award), I attended the annual meeting of the Shakespeare Association of America (SAA), held at the Renaissance Hotel in Washington DC.

The SAA annual meeting is an international conference which brings together scholars in the field of Shakespeare and early modern studies, with three days full of academic events ranging from seminars, workshops and panels, as well as performances, screenings, networking events and the chance to meet with a range academic publishers. This April, 1,157 members attended the conference, taking part in sessions including 67 seminars on topics ranging from 'Early Modern Disability Methodologies' to 'Teaching Shakespeare Online' to 'Early Modern Sexual Knowledge', roundtables on 'New Directions in Sound Studies', 'Ecofeminism', and 'The Economics of Shakespeare Publishing', as well as seven panels including 'Shakespeare and Transgender Theory', 'New Directions in Early Modern Race Studies', and the 'NextGenPlen'.

I was selected to speak on the 'NextGenPlen' - a plenary session of short papers by five early-career presenters, selected via a blind screening process which had taken place in the previous Autumn. This panel took place on the final day of the conference, and featured short papers from five scholars at doctoral level, or who had received their PhD in the past three years: Joseph Gamble (University of Toledo), Andrew Keener (Santa Clara University), Alex MacConochie (Boston University), Nicole Sheriko (Rutgers University), and myself. The aim of this panel is to offer a platform to early career scholars thinking through 'new topics, displaying fresh thinking about traditional issues, and demonstrating diverse approaches'.



Photo: @DerekVindice, Twitter

My TECHNE-funded doctoral thesis explored conceptions and representations of ecstasy and ecstatic experience in the work of Shakespeare and his contemporaries, and my paper - 'Mark how he trembles in his ecstasy: Space, Place and Self in *The Comedy of Errors* - drew on part of this research. More specifically, my paper considered a particular ecstatic experience in light of this play's treatment of displaced identities; etymologically, ecstasy comes from the Greek *ek* and *histani*, meaning to stand or place outside, and my paper focused on moments that render literal the sensation of 'standing outside', where a tranced experience comes from being denied an entrance. My paper will be published, alongside those of the other panelists, in *Shakespeare Studies*, vol. 28, 2020.

As well as being an exciting platform to share my own research, this conference was a unique opportunity for me to meet with leading international scholars in my field, to hear about upcoming research projects and fellowships, and to begin mapping my next steps as an early-career academic. I am incredibly grateful for the Travel Award for making this trip possible.