

Performing Power in the Premodern World

University of Warwick

9 November 2019

Keynote Speaker: Dr Naomi Pullin (University of Warwick)

In Shakespeare's *Henry V*, a disguised king mingles with his soldiers at Agincourt. Hearing criticism of his actions, he claims 'the king is but a man, as I am'. Then, when he is alone, he soliloquises, asking 'what have kings, that privates have not too, / Save ceremony, save general ceremony?' These lines acknowledge that power and performance have always been interlinked. Monarchy has always had a performative aspect, and the ruled have responded in kind with their own performances. Whole genres of entertainment and performance, as well as specific discourses and conventions, were devised to allow the performance of power to be beneficial to, and understood by, both the ruler and the ruled. Recent scholarship has begun to expand the dramatic canon to include these genres of performance, and scholars have increasingly focused on the duality of power, emphasising the role of the ruled in perpetuating the ruler's power. *Performing Power in the Premodern World* aims to expand this conversation.

Proposals are therefore invited for 20-minute papers that deal with the intersection of power and performance in the premodern world. Topics could include, but are not limited to:

- Court entertainments, including plays and masques;
- Royal progresses, pageants, entertainments, and tours;
- Coronations, royal weddings, royal funerals, and other religio-political events;
- Methods of counsel;
- Public speeches by monarchs, politicians, and courtiers (especially those that were later published);
- Plays that depict power and authority;
- Publicity, fame, celebrity, and power;
- Broadside ballads and other forms of popular critique;
- Print culture, cheap print, newsbooks, and other forms of commentary;
- Patronage and sponsorship;
- Royal art, architecture, and costuming/fashion;
- Medallions, and commemorative souvenirs;
- Performativity and power.

While our temporal parameters stretch from antiquity to the end of the eighteenth century, we have no geographical limits. We are also interested in modern performances that adapt, or interact with, these premodern examples.

Please send abstracts of no more than 250 words and biographies of no more than 100 words to aidannorrie@gmail.com and sophie.l.shorland@gmail.com by **30 August 2019**.

The convenors intend to submit a proposal for a special issue of the *Royal Studies Journal* on 'Performing Royal Power', consisting of papers from the conference that focus on performances of royal and monarchical power (and responses to these).

Performing Power in the Premodern World is generously supported by the University of Warwick's Centre for the Study of the Renaissance and the Department of English and Comparative Literary Studies.