

Illuminated and Unsettled: Literary Forms and Cultural Power, Medieval to Early
Modern: A Morton W. Bloomfield Conference in Honor of James Simpson
Harvard University, Department of English
(Thompson Room, Barker Center, and via Zoom)
September 22-24, 2022

“What unites all his work is an attention to the way in which literary texts both illuminate and unsettle discursive patterns in disciplines that might seem more powerful (e.g. theology, economics, psychology, politics).” (James Simpson on James Simpson, 1998)

Thursday, September 22nd

2.00-3.30: Session 1. Simpson

Sarah Beckwith, “Exchanging Words with James Simpson”

Jason Crawford, “James Simpson’s Freedoms”

Ad Putter, “Simpson: The England Years” (Zoom)

Chair: Nicholas Watson

4.00-5.30: Session 2. The Morton W. Bloomfield Lecture 2022

Introduction by Sebastian Sobiecki

James Simpson: “Recognition, Reading and Riddles: An Exeter Book Poem”

Chair: Daniel Donoghue. Respondent: Erica Weaver

6.00: Reception Toast: Stephen Greenblatt, Rotunda

Friday, September 23rd

9.00-10.00. Session 3: Style

Christopher Cannon, “Lady Mondegreen and MS Gg.4.27: Dictation and the Transmission of Chaucer’s Works”

Taylor Cowdery, “Common Style in Lydgate”

Chair: Arthur Bahr

10.30-12.00. Session 4: Image

Jessica Brantley, “The Multi-media Hours and the Medieval Literary”

Jessica Berenbeim, “Iconoclasm and the Epigraphic Image”

Aparna Chaudhuri, “Idols in the Flesh: *St Erkenwald* and Iconoclasm” (Zoom)

Chair: Leah Whittington

1.15.-1.45 Pop-Up Exhibition, Edison-Newman Room, Houghton Library

Bailey Sincox will introduce the exhibit.

2.00-3.30. Session 5: Genre

Nicholas Perkins, “[T]hynke nat the contrary’: site reports in the ecology of romance thinking”
Laura Ashe, “Troilus can afford to fall in love ... with whomsoever he will”

Nicolette Zeeman, “Medieval Allegory and Obscurity”

Chair: Gordon Teskey

4.00-5.00. Session 6: Justice

Yun Ni, “Common Petitions, Mercantilism, and Justice in *Piers Plowman*” (Zoom)

Spenser Strub, “Constraint, Danger, and the Limits of Literature”

Chair: Elizabeth Robertson

7.00. Conference Banquet

Steven Rozenski, Alexis Becker, and others perform Chaucer’s “Manciple Tale”

Toast: Sarah Stanbury

Saturday, September 24

9.00-10.00. Session 7: Personhood

Ahmed Seif, “The Counsellor, the Confessor, and the Sinner as a Legal Person”

Julie Orlemanski, “Animation and Unmaking: Death, Chaucer, and the Art of Prosopopoeia”

Chair: Amy Appleford

10.30-12.00. Session 8: Hermeneutics

Chris Barrett, “Catching at Words: The Literal, the Metaphorical, and the Obvious”

H. M. Cushman, “Literal Senses in Fragment IV of *The Canterbury Tales*”

Ingrid Nelson, “Anagogy and (De)racializing Media in the *Parson’s Tale*”

Chair: Kathryn Lynch

2.00-3.30. Session 9: Historiography

Catherine Shrank, “Re-writing Robert the Devil: Thomas Lodge and Medieval Romance”

Ardis Butterfield, “The period unbound: what is ‘early’ modern?” (Zoom)

David Aers, “What happened to enemy-love (Luke 6/ Matthew 5)?” (Zoom)

Chair and Respondent: Kathryn Mogk Wagner

3.45-4.30. Session 10: Roundups and responses

Michelle De Groot and Misha Teramura

There will be a reception after James’s lecture on Thursday. To coincide with the conference, Bailey Sincox and Rob Brown are curating an exhibition of books related to James in the Edison-Newman room in the Houghton Library, with the assistance of Peter Accardo. Logistical assistance by Kailey Bennett, Sol Kim Bentley, Emily Sun, and Jason Thames. Financial assistance by the Morton W. Bloomfield and Medieval Funds, the Department of English, and the Committee on Medieval Studies. Special gratitude to Peter Sacks, for allowing us to reproduce *Summoning 3* and *Summoning 22* (2003-09) in the conference posters.