

Madness in Jacobean England: The Asylum and the Playhouse A Lecture by Pascale Drouet



"Union & Disunion" by Daniel Friedman

"Whether we fall by ambition, blood, or lust,
Like diamonds, we are cut with our own dust."
- John Webster, *Duchess of Malfi* (1623)

In the Middle Ages, lunatics were sent away onto "ships of fools". A major change took place in the early modern period: lunatics were to be confined in asylums. This initiated the process that Foucault termed "the Great Confinement." Madness, however, was not hidden from "normal" people. On the one hand, the London asylum of Bedlam daily opened its doors to visitors. On the other hand, some playwrights included scenes that took place in a fictional asylum, thus displaying madmen's behaviors and speeches, and thus holding a mirror up to society.

Focusing on a couple of plays like *The Changeling* and *The Duchess of Malfi*, this talk by Pascale Drouet, Professor of English Literature at the Université de Poitiers, will explore how and why the asylum and its inmates were represented on the Jacobean stage.

This event is co-sponsored by the Department of English at Boston University and moderated by William Carroll, Professor of English.

Tuesday, February 26, 2019 | 4 to 5:30 PM
Pardee School of Global Studies, 121 Bay State Road (1st floor)

