The English Department Advent Calendar 2015

If you like poetry – or if you like to read out loud – or if you like winter and Christmas, then…

… be part of the English Department Advent Calendar.

From Dec 1, we will have a winter or Christmas poem every day to listen to online – read by students as well as members of staff of the English department.*

For more information, please contact:
angelika.zirker@uni-tuebingen.de

* Lists of poems will be provided – or pick your own poem!
Introduction to Literary Studies
WiSe 2015/2016
Lecture 03:
Session plan

1. Introduction: A Few Facts and Figures

2. Character
   2.1 Characters in the Play
   2.2 Character in Drama

3. Dramatic Communication and Language
   3.1 Forms and Levels of Communication in Drama
   3.2 Blank Verse vs. Prose

4. Dramatic Genres
   4.1 Comedy and Tragedy
   4.2 History Plays
   4.3 The Notion of a ‘future history play’
1. Introduction: A Few Facts and Figures

*Charles III*

written by Mike Bartlett (*1980)

first performed at Almeida Theatre, London, on April 10, 2014

directed by Rupert Goold

Critics' Circle Award for Best Play of 2014

“future history play”

Synopsis
2. Character

OED, “character, n.”

I. Literal senses.
1. A distinctive mark impressed, engraved, or otherwise made on a surface; a brand, stamp.
3. a. A member of a set of symbols used in writing or printing to represent linguistic elements, as individual speech sounds, syllables, or words; any of the simple elements of a written language, as a letter of an alphabet, or an ideogram.
II. Figurative senses.
8. a. The aggregate of the distinctive features of something; essential peculiarity; distinctive nature, style, or quality; sort, kind, description.
9. a. The sum of the moral and mental qualities which distinguish an individual or a people, viewed as a homogeneous whole; a person's or group's individuality deriving from environment, culture, experience, etc.; mental or moral constitution, personality.
14. A person portrayed in a work of fiction, a drama, a film, a comic strip, etc.; (also) a part played by an actor on the stage, in a film, etc., a role.
2.1 Characters in the Play

King Charles III
Camilla
William, Duke of Cambridge
Catherine (Kate), Duchess of Cambridge
Harry
James Reiss [Press Adviser for the Palace]
Mr Evans, Prime Minister
Spencer [one of Harry’s friends]
Cootsy [one of Harry’s friends]
Jess [Harry’s girl-friend]
Mr Stevens, Leader of the Opposition
Ghost

various servants, butlers, friends of Harry’s, newspaper journalist, et al.
2.2 Character in Drama

Character and characterization:

- explicit and implicit characterization
- auto-characterization and altero-characterization (see Jahn)

CAMILLA.
My wond’rous Charles you looked composed throughout
You did her proud, for as she would have liked
You never showed your pain, but stood instead
A virtuous man of dignity and grace.
Immovable, inscrutable as stone.
[...]
CHARLES. My whole existence has like most of us
Been built upon the ones who gave me birth.
And now they’re gone. That’s it. First Dad. Now Mum.
The only truth: I am alone. (Act One, Scene 1)
CAMILLA.
My wond’rous Charles you looked composed throughout
You did her proud, for as she would have liked
You never showed your pain, but stood instead
A virtuous man of dignity and grace.
Immovable, inscrutable as stone.

→ explicit altero-characterization

[...]
CHARLES. My whole existence has like most of us
Been built upon the ones who gave me birth.
And now they’re gone. That’s it. First Dad. Now Mum.
The only truth: I am alone. (Act One, Scene 1)

→ explicit auto-characterization
CAMILLA.
My wond’rous Charles **you looked composed** throughout
You did her proud, for as she would have liked
**You never showed your pain**, but stood instead
**A virtuous man of dignity and grace.**
Immovable, inscrutable as stone.

→ **explicit altero-characterization (referring to Charles)**
→ **implicit characterization of Camilla: her concern for her husband**

[...]
CHARLES. **My whole existence** has like most of us
Been built upon the ones who gave me birth.
And now they’re gone. That’s it. First Dad. Now Mum.
The only truth: **I am alone.** (Act One, Scene 1)

→ **explicit auto-characterization**
→ **implicit characterization of Charles (he feels sad, melancholy)**
Kinds of Character:

possible dichotomies:
- static/dynamic; complex/simple; individual/stereotype
- transparent/opaque;
- protagonist/bit-part; functional/non-functional (plot, information, constellations, themes, purposes etc.)

historically motivated distinctions:

1. A general concept represented by a human being:
   allegorical character, personification (cf. Everyman)

2. An individual dominated by a particular trait or feature:
   psychologically: a “humour” (cf. Ben Jonson’s plays)
   socially: a type (e.g. the faithful, clever slave; the braggart soldier)

3. An ‘individual’ (may nevertheless become ‘transparent’ for a mythological, allegorical, ideal etc. pattern or ‘archetype’; cf. Shakespeare’s characters)
4. a mixed character
e.g. the Aristotelian tragic hero (*Poetics*, ch. 13):

There remains, then, the character between these two extremes - that of a man who is not eminently good and just, yet whose misfortune is brought about not by vice or depravity, but by some error or frailty. He must be one who is highly renowned and prosperous - a personage like Oedipus, Thyestes, or other illustrious men of such families.
3. Dramatic Communication and Language

3.1 Forms and Levels of Communication in Drama

Forms of communication

dialogue: two characters or more speaking with each other
monologue: a single person speaking, but not alone on stage
soliloquy: a single person speaking, alone on stage
4.3 Kensington.

*Enter KATE, reading the* Evening Standard.*

KATE.
And so despite emancipation we must look
Towards the harder sex to find the power.
But I know nothing, just a plastic doll
Designed I’m told to stand embodying
A male-created bland and standard wife,
Whose only job is prettying the Prince, and then
If possible, get pregnant with the royal
And noble bump, to there produce some heirs.
And in all this I’m told I don’t have thought
Or brains to comprehend my strange position.
But being underestimated so
Does give me what these men could never have
Since no one asked me what I think, I can
Observe and plan and learn to rule.
For I will be a Queen unlike the ones before
I have ambition for my husband yes
And hope my son will grow the finest King
But if I must put up with taunts, and make
So public everything I am, then I
Demand things for myself, I ask no less
Than power to achieve my will in fair
Exchange for total service to the State.
Yes this is what, enthroned, that I will do.
Not simply help my husband in his crown
But wear one of my own. (4.3, 97-98)
3. Dramatic Communication and Language

3.1 Forms and Levels of Communication in Drama

Forms of communication

dialogue: two characters or more speaking with each other
monologue: a single person speaking, but not alone on stage
soliloquy: a single person speaking, alone on stage

epic forms of communication:
prologue
epilogue
report
aside (monological/dialogical/ad spectatores)
Levels of communication

**internal**: communication within the play, between the characters on the stage (monologue, soliloquy, dialogue)

**external**: between author and audience (one possible effect: dramatic irony)
Dramatic Irony

GHOST.
My darling Charles your face it is so pale
You often looked in thought, but not like this
CHARLES.
It said my name.
GHOST.
You think I didn’t love you that’s not true
I always cared I always wanted best
But you rejected me, and so away
I went.
CHARLES.
    Diana…?
GHOST.
    But in all that time
I never hoped, I never thought that you –
GHOST. But in all that time
I never hoped, I never thought that you –
CHARLES. What do you mean, you never thought –
GHOST. Never reckoned on the fact that you as Crown
Who worries 'bout the way you look, and stroke
Your hair down into place, and nervously
Do touch above your lip when getting sad.
Will be the greatest King we ever had. (3.4, 68)
GHOST.
Oh William!
WILLIAM.
    She cries my name, I know
That voice.
GHOST.
    Oh William, you look so old
I never thought I’d see my boy like this
A man become so bald and middle-aged.
WILLIAM.
Mum?
*The GHOST touches his face.*
He cries.
GHOST.
But still the face remains the same, and there
The eyes hold kindness, and intelligence.
You’ll be the greatest king we ever have. 
   (3.5, 76-77)
GHOST.
Never reckoned on the fact that you as Crown
Who worries ’bout the way you look, and stroke
Your hair down into place, and nervously
Do touch above your lip when getting sad.
Will be the greatest King we ever had. (3.4)

GHOST.
But still the face remains the same, and there
The eyes hold kindness, and intelligence.
You’ll be the greatest king we ever have. (3.5)
3.2. Blank Verse vs. Prose

KATE.
But wait, we haven’t met, always the same
With Harry, must be in his training some
Efficiency of drill or army thought
Means he forgets his manners. Hi. I’m Kate.
And this my husband William –
HARRY.

No wait –
She doesn’t understand, she’s deaf and dumb.
Not dumb, that much, a bit, she speaks sometimes
But chooses when, unfortunately now
Is such a moment she can’t talk. And since
She’s deaf as well, she didn’t hear a word
You said, that’s why she isn’t smiling much,
And looking at me in that funny way.
We really should be though, bye, bye –
3.2. Blank Verse vs. Prose

KATE.
But wait, we haven’t met, always the same
With Harry, must be in his training some
Efficiency of drill or army thought
JESS.
Yeah okay hi. Of course I know who you are. Fuck. ‘William and Kate.’
Jesus.
WILLIAM.
This is unusual.
HARRY.
I’m just showing her the Palace –
KATE.
Are you from Reading?
JESS.
Er ... yeah. Why?
KATE.
Heard the accent. Me too! Well not – like it was a village nearby.
JESS.
I’m from Purley.
KATE.
Purley! We used to go there sometimes and hang out on the weir.
JESS.
We did that too. Smoked a bit of weed. Didn’t know you were from there.
KATE.
Fuck yeah! (2.2, 47-48)
KING. Once more unto the breach, dear friends, once more,
Or close the wall up with our English dead.
In peace there’s nothing so becomes a man
As modest stillness and humility;
But when the blast of war blows in our ears,
Then imitate the action of the tiger:
[....] (3.1.1-6)

WILLIAMS. [...] Now if these men do not die well it will be a black matter for
the King, that led them to it, who to disobey were against all proportion of
subjection.
KING. So if a son that is by his father sent about merchandise do sinfully
miscarry upon the sea, the imputation of his wickedness, by your rule,
should be imposed upon his father that sent him; [...] (4.1 143-50)
KING. Once more unto the breach, dear friends, once more, 
Or close the wall up with our English dead. 
In peace there’s nothing so becomes a man 
As modest stillness and humility; 
But when the blast of war blows in our ears, 
Then imitate the action of the tiger: 
[...]
(3.1.1-6)

WILLIAMS. [...] Now if these men do not die well it will be a black matter for 
the King, that led them to it, who to disobey were against all proportion of 
subjection. 
KING. So if a son that is by his father sent about merchandise do sinfully 
miscarry upon the sea, the imputation of his wickedness, by your rule, 
should be imposed upon his father that sent him; [...] (4.1 143-50)
Scene endings

CHARLES.
Such equal billing was a joy when Prince.
To share the stage did spread attention out.
But now I'll rise to how things have to be
The Queen is dead, long live the King. That’s me. (1.1, 19)

CHARLES.
[…]
I’m certain all she was, was nerves and ills.
I’ll call the doctor now for sleeping pills. (1.3, 35)

MR STEVENS.
[…]
But thank you for consulting me in thought
In this, be sure, you have my full support. (2.1, 43)
4. Dramatic Genres

Mike Bartlett has written a speculative play about the future of the monarchy. While based on a dodgy premise, it gains traction as it goes along and by the end has acquired a borrowed grandeur through its Shakespearean form and a tragic dimension through the performance of Tim Pigott-Smith. (Billington 2014)
4.1 Comedy and Tragedy

Aristotle's *Poetics*

**Comedy:**
- realm of the ordinary, not elevated life
- more 'realistic' than tragedy, a mirror of manners
- main subjects: not existential questions or the fate of man, but everyday problems and human frailty and vices
- didactic intent
- good/happy ending
Tragedy:

“Tragedy is an imitation of an action that is admirable, complete, and possesses magnitude; in language made pleasurable, each of its species separated in different parts; performed by actors, not through narration; effecting through pity and fear the purification of such emotions. (By ‘language made pleasurable’ I mean that which possesses rhythm and melody, i.e. song. By the separation of species I mean that some parts are composed in verse alone; others by contrast make use of song.)”

(Aristotle, Poetics 10)

- emphasis on effect on the audience: catharsis (= purgation)
- eleos & phobos (= pity & fear)
- caused by the fate of the tragic hero (and his hamartia= tragic flaw)
Tragedies and Comedies, saith Donatus, had their beginning à rebus diuinis, from diuine sacrifices, they differ thus: In Comedies, *turbulenta prima, tranquilla ultima*, In Tragedyes, *tranquilla prima, turbulenta ultima*, Comedies begin in trouble, and end in peace; tragedies begin in calmes, and end in tempest. [...] Cicero saith, a Comedy is the imitation of life, the glasse of custome, and the image of truth [...]. (Fv)
4.2 History Plays

Chernaik’s definition:
1. A historical play is a dramatization of (pretended) historical facts.
2. History plays are often very closely based on chronicles, which means their sources are all in prose.
3. In Elizabethan times, audiences were familiar with the material and historical background of the plays.
4. Authors of history plays were not primarily interested in historical accuracy.
5. Patriotism was an important ingredient in history plays.
6. A history plays always had contemporary relevance. Even though the play is historical, its audience or its reader is meant to transport the play’s matter into its own time.
4.3 The Notion of a ‘future history play’

There is also a what-if fascination to seeing how a future king might exercise long-dormant powers, invoke army support and leave the country bitterly divided. (Billington 2014)

Chernaik’s definition:
1. A historical play is a dramatization of (pretended) historical facts.
2. History plays are often very closely based on chronicles, which means their sources are all in prose.
3. In Elizabethan times, audiences were familiar with the material and historical background of the plays.
4. Authors of history plays were not primarily interested in historical accuracy.
5. Patriotism was an important ingredient in history plays.
6. A history plays always had contemporary relevance. Even though the play is historical, its audience or its reader is meant to transport the play’s matter into its own time.
Literary models/intertextual links

history plays: Shakespeare (also to his other plays, e.g. appearance of ghost; *Macbeth*)

‘future history play’:
George Bernard Shaw, *The Apple Cart* (1930)
ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY.
I here present to you King William your undoubted King. Wherefore all you who are come this day to do your homage and service. Are you willing to do the same?
ALL.
God Save the King!
*The regalia – crown, sceptre, orb, ring, glove, etc., is placed on the altar.*

[...]
ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY.
Is Your Majesty willing to take the Oath?
WILLIAM.
I am willing.
[...]
All this I promise to do.

*A choir sings.*

The ARCHBISHOP goes and gets the crown.
He brings it forward to WILLIAM.
CHARLES suddenly stands – a consternation. This isn’t supposed to happen.
He goes and looks at the crown. The choir stops singing.
CHARLES reaches for the crown. The ARCHBISHOP is unsure.
Glances at WILLIAM. Then gives the crown to CHARLES.
A moment.
CHARLES.
It is much heavier than I thought.
He looks at WILLIAM.
A moment.
And from the side, bejewelled, it looks so rich
But turn it thus, and this is what you see
Nothing.
Beat.
My son.
CHARLES puts the crown on WILLIAM’s head.
God save King William, unking’d Charley says,
And send him many years of sunshine days!
CHARLES slowly collapses and sits on the step. WILLIAM stands.
A long pause.
WILLIAM looks to the ARCHBISHOP.
ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY.
God save the King!
ALL.
God save the King!
End. (5.2, 126-28)

KING RICHARD. […]
God save King Henry, unkinged Richard says,
And send him many years of sunshine days! (4.1.220-21)