

# Introduction

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This issue of *Renaissance and Reformation* comprises selected papers from the Pacific Northwest Renaissance Conference held at the University of Victoria 16-18 March, 1989. The range of subjects addressed reflects the many-sidedness of contemporary Renaissance scholarship, and also the diversity of the conference, at which over thirty papers were delivered.

Several essays deal with the implications of gender. Sandra Fischer explores the discourse of "passive Ophelia," whose tragedy is reflected in a distinctively female utterance that exposes the inadequacy of Hamlet's masculine rhetoric. Jo Miller is concerned with Middleton and Dekker's *Roaring Girl*, and argues that the androgyny of Moll Cutpurse is a vehicle for protest against various contemporary views of woman as commodity. Karen Robertson explores the abdication crisis of Mary, Queen of Scots, and uses Pkeryng's play *Horestes* to provide a gloss on Mary's history. *Horestes* deals with the conflicting claims of motherhood and politics, and the hero's predicament parallels that of Mary's son James.

Other papers deal with further aspects of the drama. Alan Fisher links Shakespeare's Polonius to traditions of humanist education that stress the art of memory in the deployment of maxims. In this context Polonius is a more complex and significant figure than is acknowledged by standard interpretations. Frank Ardolino uses Reformation commentaries on the Book of Daniel to interpret Kyd's *Spanish Tragedy* as a historical allegory reflecting the triumph of Protestant England over Catholic Spain. Marie Kaskinen argues for the influence of cinquecento theatrical concepts on Rosso Fiorentino's *Deposition*.

Finally, William Rockett offers a reassessment of Camden's *Britannia*. He sees it in the context of late sixteenth-century English nationalism, and suggests that antiquarian study was one means of defining national identity.

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