

Vanessa Ackerman

Doctoral researcher

[Shakespeare Institute \(/schools/edacs/departments/shakespeare/index.aspx\)](/schools/edacs/departments/shakespeare/index.aspx)

About

PhD title: Performing Madness: towards a feminist practice of Shakespeare

Supervisor: [Erin Sullivan \(/staff/profiles/shakespeare/sullivan-erin.aspx\)](/staff/profiles/shakespeare/sullivan-erin.aspx) and [Abigail Rokison \(/staff/profiles/shakespeare/rokison-abigail.aspx\)](/staff/profiles/shakespeare/rokison-abigail.aspx)

PhD Shakespeare Studies (</postgraduate/courses/research/english/shakespeare-studies.aspx>)

Research

This study will investigate how iconic figures of female psychopathology in Shakespeare have been shaped by and reflected the shifting conceptualizations of connections between psychological/psychiatric disorders, gender and female sexuality during the last three decades. Because pathology has historically been linked to gender and sexuality, analyzing the ways in which practitioners interpret and engage with pathology in order to construct performance will enable me to chart how psychological/psychiatric thinking (including its current intersections with complementary disciplines such as neuroscience and cognitive science) theorizes the female character.

I'm particularly interested in asking how feminist thinking on female psychopathology has impacted the ways in which Shakespeare practitioners have integrated biomedical/psychological advances in their theatrical practice. By reviewing these advances from a feminist perspective, I hope to determine if and how a feminist praxis may be integrated into performance of Shakespearean female psychopathology.

