



Institute of English Cultures and Literatures, University of Silesia

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Uniwersytetu
Śląskiego
w Katowicach

cordially invites everyone to a public lecture by

Dr Lieke Stelling

(University of Utrecht, the Netherlands)

entitled

**'Thy very essence is mutability':
Representations of Religious Conversion
on the Early Modern English Stage**

May 9th (Wed.), 9.45, room 0.3

Few subjects of the English stage have proved more alluring and enduring than religious conversion. The emergence of the Elizabethan theatre marked a profound shift in the way in which conversion was presented. If medieval drama had encouraged conversion without reservation, early Elizabethan plays started to question it. Considering a variety of canonical and uncanonical plays, I will argue that more so than any other medium, early modern drama engaged with the question of the possibility of undergoing a radical transformation in religious group identity and presented the period's understanding of it as fundamentally unsettled. The lecture will conclude with a discussion of Shakespeare's *Othello* as the only early modern English play that investigates the post-conversion life of a new Christian.

RIGHT: A cuckold, 16th c. woodcut



Dr Lieke Stelling studied English literature at the University of Utrecht and University College London and comparative literature at the University of Utrecht. She completed her PhD at the University of Leiden in 2013 before returning to Utrecht in 2015. She is a research affiliate with the Early Modern Conversions project at McGill University (Canada) and her monograph entitled *Religious Conversion in Early Modern English Drama* is to be published by Cambridge University Press early next year.

