

Editorial

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In 2019, *Shakespeare in Southern Africa* decided to adopt the ‘online early’ or ‘online first’ publication model (also referred to as Advance Online Publication, or AOP). Volume 32 of the journal thus grew in installments over the course of the year, with each piece published electronically through our digital publishing partners as and when it was ready rather than being delayed until the full volume was ready for printing. This increasingly common model for scholarly journals has obvious advantages, both for authors and for reader-researchers; it facilitates the dissemination of knowledge, the core of the academic project. It also reflects the means by which that knowledge is typically accessed nowadays: whether via search-and-download or via an emailed PDF, articles, essays and reviews are most often read as individual or standalone works. With this in mind, the idea of a curated, coherent volume almost seems like a rather quaint relic of scholarly times gone by.

Yet, as I write this editorial in the final days of December, looking back on the process of putting together another volume of *Shakespeare in Southern Africa*, it seems all the more important not to abandon the notion of the self-contained (albeit ‘general’) academic journal issue or volume. For one thing, serendipitous connections would be lost. The articles and reviews in Volume 32 range across numerous plays – *Julius Caesar*, *Hamlet*, *King Lear*, *As You Like It*, *Othello*, *1 Henry IV*, *Richard III* and various others – but they intersect in unexpected ways. For instance, Frances Ringwood’s essay on alternative Machiavellian readings in a handful of Shakespeare’s plays including *Hamlet* and *Lear* is intriguingly offset by Anna Kurian’s very different treatment of *Hamlet* and Paul Walters’ comments, in the text of his 2018 Shakespeare Birthday Lecture, on Guy Butler and *Lear*. Brian Willan’s biography of Sol Plaatje, reviewed in this volume by Lauren Bates, offers a particularly South African inflection to plays such as *Julius Caesar*; is it too much to suggest that Plaatje might productively ‘haunt’ Nicholas Meihuizen’s theoretically nuanced take on spectrality in *Julius Caesar*, or that Willan’s book provides a counterpoint to the fictionalised biographical portraits of Emilia Lanier covered in Greg Homann’s combined review of a new novel and play? And what of the melancholy philosopher from *As You Like It*, Jacques, discussed by Tara Leverton in her article on “bad patients” who resist healing – what would he make of the scholarly sub-field of “Shakespeare and Philosophy”, the latest manifestation of which is reviewed in this volume by Tony Voss?

Journals are more, however, than incidental platforms for the material they publish. A journal must have a clear identity, a *raison d’être*, and the dual purpose of *Shakespeare in Southern Africa* is contained in its usefully ambiguous title: we publish both the Shakespeare-related work of South(ern) African academics and critics, broadly construed, and we publish work related specifically to Shakespearean phenomena in this part of the world. It is impossible for each annual volume to provide a survey or overview of ‘local’ productions, publications and significant events – ‘local’ itself is a dubious descriptor here; perhaps ‘regional’ is better – but as editor I am committed to offering readers at least a few snapshots of the contemporary South(ern) African Shakespeare scene. In volume 32, in addition to the reviews by Bates and Homann, there are two reviews that engage directly with South African Shakespeare-in-print and Shakespeare-in-performance in 2019: Ambereen Dadabhoy on Sandra Young’s book *Shakespeare in the Global South* and Colette Gordon on *Richard III*, this year’s Shakespeare production at the Maynardville Open-Air Theatre in Cape Town.

The journal’s title is not intended to be constraining or exclusionary, and the stated mandate of *Shakespeare in Southern Africa* indicates that it has “a particular emphasis on – but its content is not limited to – responses to Shakespeare in southern Africa”. Nevertheless, as I have noted in previous editorials, it is to be regretted that in practice this content tends to have a national (South African)

rather than a regional (southern African) focus. The Executive Committee of the Shakespeare Society of Southern Africa is mindful that in years to come it might be appropriate to broaden the title and scope of the journal towards a more global transnational orientation: Shakespeare in the global south, say, to follow Young's lead. As Dadabhoy points out, of course, the under/other world of the global south is also to be found within the global north; indeed, the global north can and should be situated more explicitly within the 'time' of the postcolony (to borrow from Achille Mbembe). Given such porous boundaries, perhaps a narrower primary locus makes *Shakespeare in Southern Africa* an apposite title for now.

The cover of volume 32 is a nod to the Shakespeare Society of Southern Africa's triennial congress, held in May of this year. This tremendously successful event incorporated workshops for teachers and theatre-makers from across South Africa (held at the Baxter and Fugard theatres in Cape Town), a brief lecturing visit to Johannesburg by congress keynote speaker Ayanna Thompson and an international academic conference on the theme of "Shakespeare and Social Justice: Scholarship and Performance in an Unequal World" (also at the Fugard Theatre). The images on the cover are of directors and actors who participated in the "Making Shakespeare" workshop. Volume 33, I am pleased to report, will be a special volume dedicated to a selection of papers from the conference.