



The Shakespearean International Yearbook

THE SHAKESPEAREAN INTERNATIONAL YEARBOOK

19: SPECIAL SECTION, SHAKESPEARE AND REFUGEES

Edited by
Tom Bishop and Alexa Alice Joubin

Special Guest Editors
Ton Hoenselaars and Stephen O'Neill



Preface

As a familiar and canonical playwright, Shakespeare has often offered orientation and even emotional refuge both to people in crisis and to those contemplating it. *King Lear* became a political allegory of division in the post-Brexit era, and Anglophone pop culture gravitated towards Shakespeare through memes and quotes during the global pandemic of COVID-19. Shakespeare's plays have also been used to depict large-scale social dislocation. Kozintsev's 1971 film of *King Lear* opens with an anxious multitude gathering to learn the fate of the kingdom, and in Richard Eyre's 2018 film, Anthony Hopkins' exiled Lear finds himself an unaccommodated man in a refugee camp under pouring rain, wandering among makeshift tents.

Shakespeare has also been performed by and for refugees, as the Special Section of this issue of the *Yearbook* shows. In 2015, the London Globe toured its *Hamlet* to Zaatari Camp in Jordan, and German director Thomas Ostermeier led workshops in the Jenin refugee camp in Ramallah, Palestine. Europe's recent refugee crisis, peaking in 2015, saw over one million asylum seekers, driven by wars and environmental disasters, arrive in Europe from Syria, Afghanistan, Iraq, and elsewhere. The humanitarian crisis was the central concern of a nine-university Erasmus project, *Facing Europe in Crisis: Shakespeare's World and Present Challenges* (2016–2019). It seems fair to predict that this will not be the last such movement.

These cases show that the Western canon has been given various forms of moral authority, including the authority to address crisis. Shakespeare in particular has been deployed for socially and politically reparative purposes. The efficacy of the purported reparation differs among these performances. As empowering and positive as these productions and academic initiatives can be, this curated selection of essays considers the moment dialectically, including the less comfortable question of whether some of these projects might unconsciously exploit the refugee crisis as a trendy topic to serve mere palliation or even academic advancement rather than communities in need. Special section co-editors Ton Hoenselaars and Stephen O'Neill ask: how do we "draw a line between

using Shakespeare to show that refugees matter and using refugees to show that Shakespeare matters?” Contributors to this special section urge us to serve marginalized communities through sensitive reflections on the uses of Shakespeare during crisis. They caution us against fetishizing the refugees, on the one hand, and against resurrecting the “phantasmagoric” image of Shakespeare as the “great humanist,” on the other.

Parallel, political uses of Shakespeare for socially progressive causes have also emerged in Latin America, which is why the present volume features a second thematic section, edited by Tom Bishop and Alexa Alice Joubin. It has been 16 years since the publication of the only book, in English, on the subject, *Latin American Shakespeares*, co-edited by Bernice Kliman and Rick Santos. The six articles devoted to this topic in our Part Two take the pulse of the vibrant artistic and scholarly creativity in the field since that time by examining the presence of Shakespeare variously on page and stage in Brazil, Chile, Cuba, Colombia, and the Caribbean. As with the essays in the section on refuge, this section takes stock of both positive and negative associations of Shakespeare with the theme of social justice. Kevin A. Quarmby, for example, argues that in Colombia, Shakespeare’s anti-heroes are seen by some as “an unwelcome advocate of continuing revenge” in a Colombia seeking to emerge from its violent recent history.

The two sections on refuge and on Latin America speak to each other in their nuanced reframing of concepts such as the local and the global as well as antipathy and political uses of Shakespeare. An ethical concern around “outsourcing” social work to Shakespeare also informs both sections, raising questions about the use of canonical texts as much to reassure the privileged as to advance the interest of the oppressed. Together, these two sections expand our understanding of social justice and of Shakespeare in global contexts.

In addition to its annual curated sections, the *Yearbook* also publishes, in each volume, individual essays on topics that fall outside the strict purview of special sections, in keeping with the general commitment to current scholarship in international Shakespeare studies. In this volume we feature Christian Smith’s study of the international migration of Shakespeare’s own work through the fascinating case of German co-translation of Shakespeare by Ludwig Tieck and Caroline, Friedrich, and August Schlegel, which has come to be known as the “Schlegel-Tieck Shakespeare.” Along with its intrinsic interest, Smith’s article also speaks to work in the special sections of this volume, such as Belén Bistué’s analysis of Nicanor Parra’s Spanish translation of *King Lear* in Chile.

Each article stands on its own, but the articles can be read within and across the special sections. We invite readers to take advantage of this structure by finding their own paths through the many nodes of connection.

Tom Bishop
Alexa Alice Joubin
General Editors

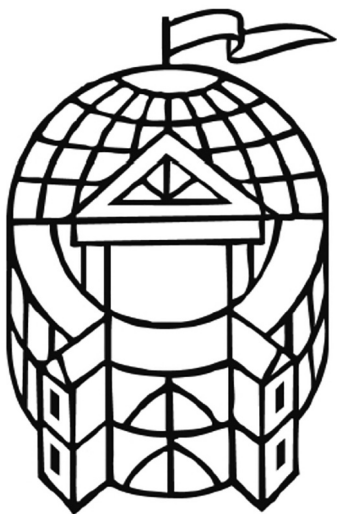
The Shakespearean International Yearbook

Publishing its nineteenth volume, *The Shakespearean International Yearbook* surveys the present state of Shakespeare studies, addressing issues that are fundamental to our interpretive encounter with Shakespeare's work and his time, across the whole spectrum of his literary output. Contributions are solicited from scholars across the field, from both hemispheres of the globe. New trends are evaluated from the point of view of established scholarship, and emerging work in the field is encouraged. Each issue includes a special section under the guidance of a specialist Guest Editor, along with coverage of the current state of the field in other aspects. An essential reference tool for scholars of early modern literature and culture, this annual publication captures, from year to year, current and developing thought in Shakespeare scholarship and theater practice worldwide. There is a particular emphasis on Shakespeare studies in global contexts.

General Editors

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19: Special Section, Shakespeare and
Refugees

Edited by

TOM BISHOP AND ALEXA ALICE JOUBIN

Special Guest Editors

TON HOENSELAARS AND STEPHEN O'NEILL

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