

<https://doi.org/10.18778/2353-6098.7.05>

Agnieszka Rasmus

University of Lodz

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5446-5573>

e-mail: agnieszka.rasmus@uni.lodz.pl

Introduction

On behalf of the editors of the journal, I am pleased to acknowledge that it seems to attract a greater variety of proposals than initially anticipated. We have therefore decided to extend the scope of the journal to answer the need for other forms of engagement with scholarship and cultural artefacts. Starting with the present volume, we are happy to announce a new section devoted to the publication of reviews, interviews, creative pieces and papers on the methodology of teaching literary and cultural texts, “A/R/T in Practice”.

The present section boasts an assortment of exciting entrances that vary both in length and focus. Starting with a critical essay by Rowland Cotterill on “Shakespearean Doubling: Issues of Action, Theme and Stage Presence”, the readers get an opportunity to acquaint themselves with Cotterill’s response to Brett Gamboa’s *Shakespeare’s Double Plays: Dramatic Economy on the Early Modern Stage* (2018) and his suggestion that “the great majority of Shakespeare’s plays not only can be performed, but were intended for performance, by just twelve actors”. Cotterill analyses such possibilities from the perspective of someone who has not only studied Shakespeare’s works at length, seen many of them staged but also directed numerous student productions, which makes for an engaging account of Shakespearean doublings with their possibilities, limitations and meanings.

Next, we have two different and yet related pieces not only because they are both written by John Crust but also because each brings us closer to the work of the German documentary filmmaker Tanja Cummings. Crust reviews her film from 2015 first in “Tanja Cummings’ *Line 41: A Reflection*”, whose title derives from, as he reminds us, “the tram that travelled through the ghetto, connecting one part of the city to another” during the Nazi occupation of Poland. His second piece is based on interviews he conducted with the filmmaker about her other project “*Café Zelig: A Seniors’ Hangout and a Whole Lot of History*”, released in 2020. In many ways, Crust shows that her second work is a continuation of her earlier interest in the untold stories of Holocaust survivors, though this time we move from Lodz to Munich, which has become home to many Jews who still regularly meet in Café Zelig.

What follows is an intriguing short story by Borys Fynkelshteyn, “O Venice!”, which, as the forward by Dmytro Drozdovskyi explains, proposes that the titular protagonist of *The Merchant of Venice* had his prototype in a real-life character who may have met William Shakespeare. The most surprising aspect of this piece is Fynkelshteyn’s suggestion, based on the research he conducted in



Received: 1.08.2022. Revised: 10.08.2022. Accepted: 10.08.2022.

© by the author, licensee University of Lodz – Lodz University Press, Lodz, Poland. This article is an open access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution license CC-BY-NC-ND 4.0 (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>)

Venice, that “the eponymous merchant of Shakespeare’s play was based on a very old relative of Fynkelshteyn’s”, which gives the perusal of the story an unexpected twist.

Piotr Spyra’s entry “Teaching Psychomachia in *The Castle of Perseverance*” closes the present section of the “A/R/T in Practice” with a very detailed analysis of the text, offering a theoretical background before then moving on to the discussion of possible topics and questions that may be raised in the classroom. Spyra suggests focusing on the play’s staging, its allegorical figures, the stage movement of Mankind as well as “an awareness of the difference in the linguistic and rhetorical strategies employed the by Good Angel and the Bad Angel” to allow students to gain a fuller understanding of the complexities of the play which had a great impact on later drama.

We are happy to see that the new part of the journal makes for exciting, informative and useful reading and is a welcome addition to the journal. In closing, we wish to thank all the contributors for their exciting work and would like to extend our invitation for future proposals to continue building this stimulating new platform which combines an academic perspective with that of theatre, film and teaching practitioners.

On behalf of the editors in chief,
Agnieszka Rasmus