

Call for Submissions

A Special Issue of *Shakespeare*: 'Shakespeare in Action'

Edited by Eleanor Rycroft and Maria Shmygol

Both a noun and a verb, 'action' is the product as well as the process of doing. Action—as an idea and material fact—has particular relevance for theatre, and in early modern terms might be interchangeable with the play, or acting, or the manner of performance (*OED*, 'action', n. 10, 17, 19). All of the sinners in Jonson's *Poetaster* come to "applaud our Action, daily" while Hamlet advises the players to "suit the action to the word, the word to the action." This special issue on 'Shakespeare in Action' takes a similarly multivalent approach to this concept.

Shakespeare in performance is necessarily Shakespeare in action, and we are interested to receive abstracts which consider how Shakespeare's plays have been imagined and interpreted for film, TV, and theatre, both in-person and virtually. Likewise, we welcome submissions that consider how different types of action impact how we engage with, adapt, translate, and edit Shakespeare's plays.

We are also interested in how the idea of action interrelates with ableism and ableist assumptions about text and performance: how do certain types of performance practices exclude, marginalise, or silence disabled performers? How have theatre-makers attempted to mitigate such exclusions or erasure? In what ways have performers liberated Shakespeare's plays from assumptions of nondisability?

Action is also inevitably social, connecting to activities such as legal action, strike action, and social activism. In what ways has Shakespeare been 'actioned' in the service of social justice, critique or political change? When and where has Shakespeare been mobilised for either social justice or conservatism? How do such iterations of his works rewrite or transform their potential range of meaning?

We encourage authors to engage with a broad definition of the concept of 'action', whether in performance (theatre, film, radio, digital), or in text (translation, adaptation, textual editing). Papers might therefore examine:

- Shakespeare on film or TV, in performance or theatre
- Shakespeare and 'inaction' during the COVID-19 pandemic and opportunities/practices created by digital theatre
- Text as action: editing practices as an act of reimagining and reinterpreting text
- Intersections between performance, text, and action/activism
- Public humanities projects and performance

In bringing together papers relating to the above areas of interest this special issue of *Shakespeare* hopes to address the following broad questions pertaining to action:

- How does staged or filmed action complicate or challenge our understanding of the plays on the page?
- How is the notion of onstage action altered or interrogated by new practices developed for online performance during the COVID-19 pandemic?
- How do actions on the stage—gestures, movement, rituals, non-verbal sequences, sport, stillness—connect or disconnect with words and bodies?
- How can Shakespeare in performance interrogate long-held, inequitable and unfair assumptions about theatrical practice?
- How might actioning different versions of Shakespeare effect change or stasis?
- In what ways and to what ends might contemporary performances resist ‘suiting the action to the word’?
- How might performance practices and editorial practices be made more equitable and inclusive?

Submission of Abstracts

We invite abstracts of c.500 words in length, which should be accompanied by a title and a short bio of up to 250 words. Submissions should be emailed directly to both Eleanor Rycroft [e.rycroft@bristol.ac.uk] and Maria Shmygol [m.shmygol@leeds.ac.uk] by **28 February 2022**.

Submission of final papers of up to 7,500 words (including notes) is provisionally scheduled to take place on **30 September 2022**. Please note that all paper submissions will undergo anonymous double peer-review in keeping with the journal’s normal practices.

We especially welcome submissions from disabled scholars, LGBTQ+ scholars, scholars of colour, and early career researchers, and would be happy to provide further details, offer guidance, or discuss ideas with potential contributors.