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Front Matter

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Introduction: Knowing Shakespeare

In October of 2018, the Ohio Valley Shakespeare Conference gathered for the organization's 42nd annual meeting, hosted by Youngstown State University. With a capacious theme – Knowing Shakespeare – the annual meeting brought together a wide range of panels, covering topics from pedagogy to poetics, from the body politic to the pregnant body, and from translation to perceptions of time. Scott Newstock, Director of the Pearce Shakespeare Endowment at Rhodes College, provide the plenary session, “Islands of Knowledge”; the conference also featured a special session with Nicholas R. Helms, “ ‘The Mind’s Construction’: Cognition, Mindreading, and Shakespeare’s Characters” a screening of *The Triumph of Time*, and a workshop on Shakespeare-based gaming.

Among our selected papers this year, we also see these wide-ranging possibilities. Altogether, though, these papers, along with the papers, forums, workshops, and plenary sessions of the conference, ask us to confront the question “What does it mean to know Shakespeare?”

This issue begins with Jordan Kohn-Foley’s “Misogyny in the Sonnets: Connections between Hell and Female Sexuality.” In this piece, Kohn-Foley seeks to complicate readings that argue for the misogyny of the sonnets through an analysis that connects Shakespearean imagery of the female body and hell with Boccaccio’s *Decameron*. Rather than link this misogyny with Shakespeare or the sonnets himself, Kohn-Foley argues that the misogyny is part of an inherited linguistic tradition, one that especially links female genitalia with hell. These links, the article concludes, “function, ultimately, as a kind of subterfuge, one in which the goal is to exert control over women through the denigration of their bodies in order to have them remain, as the early modern society put them, in a place subjugated to the men of society, both on the page and off of it.”

From knowing Shakespeare’s linguistic subterfuge about the female body, the issue moves to knowing early modern encounters of China in Carol Meija LaPerle’s “John Ogilby’s *Atlas Chinensis*: Anglo-Dutch Exchange and the (Re)Printing of China.” This article explores John Ogilby’s book, “an English translation of Dutch accounts about China

compiled by the printer Olfert Dapper in 1670 as *Gedenkwaerdig bedryf der Nederlandsch Oost-Indische Maatschappye, op de kust en in het keizzerrijk van Taising of Sina*” and considers how investigates the ways that the west knew, encountered, and translated China for seventeenth century European readers. Not only does *Atlas Chinesis* present European relations with China, but it also mediates Anglo-Dutch conflict in diplomacy and trade. For Meija LaPerle, “The interpellation of China to pique and to satisfy English interests, and therefore its representational value at points when geopolitics and textual, visual depictions intersect, hinges not on the participants of the global encounter but on those who produce the encounter for consumption, dissemination and, in the case of China, assessment of approaches to possible commercial strategies. For the interest of economic success in China, Anglo-Dutch hostilities seem less important than English knowledge generated by Dutch firsthand, detailed accounts.”

Finally, “Knowing the World: Shakespeare and Travel in *As You Like It* and *Othello*” by David Summers brings together ways of knowing Shakespeare and ways of knowing travel. In this piece, Summers discusses Shakespeare’s ways of knowing the world through the textual experience of hearing play or reading the words in the comfort of one’s own study. Summers investigates the paradox of travel within Shakespeare’s work through the lens of the humanist intellectual tradition, a tradition which demonstrates a “preference for bookish learning over actual travel [that] pervades the conversation about the educational and character building potentials in travel all through the 16th century,” exemplified in Roger Ascham’s work. In *Jacques and Othello*, Summers finds contrast between the persona of the well-traveled individual and the truly well-traveled, but exotic individual. In examining these figures, Summers concludes with a notion that what the traveler truly wishes for is a return from home, a return from exile.

I would like to finish by taking the opportunity to thank Hillary Nunn, co-editor of the journal, the readers and responders, and the journal’s board.

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