

Editorial

Over the past twelve months, *Early Theatre*'s editors have been reflecting on and learning from the RaceB4Race executive board's June 2020 [open letter](#) calling for structural changes in scholarly publishing within medieval and early modern studies. We unequivocally support RaceB4Race initiatives and have begun to change the journal's policies and practices in ways designed to foster greater equity for scholars of colour and researchers belonging to other equity-deserving groups, including early career researchers.

In thinking through how best to make this journal a more equitable publication venue for all scholars, we have relied heavily on the guiding questions and suggestions for concrete actions shared with us, and other journal editors, by the RaceB4Race executive board. We have also benefited greatly from ongoing discussions, policy statements, and webinars hosted by the Council of Editors of Literary Journals (CELJ) and the Canadian Association of Literary Journals (CALJ). Educating ourselves on such matters has been both humbling and transformative. In this spirit of humility, *Early Theatre* has organized a summer gathering for editors of peer journals in the fields of medieval and early modern drama. At this session editors will share insights developed thus far and brainstorm collectively around next steps for tackling particular challenges and bottlenecks our respective journals are facing as we seek to implement anti-racist policies and structures.

At *Early Theatre* itself, changes we have implemented thus far include:

- updating our website's [editorial team listing](#) to credit by name the early career researchers whose expertise as editorial assistants (Michael Angell and Jessica Swain) and production editor (Nicole Lamont) contributes so much to the journal's ongoing work;
- revising our [About the Journal](#) page to include detailed, transparent information regarding our support for authors, peer review and production/publication processes, and copyright, open access, and archiving practices and policies;
- simplifying our submission checklist to remove unnecessary barriers for potential contributors;
- revising, to avoid ableist language, the journal's statements regarding doubly-anonymous peer review;

- instituting an [optional author survey](#) designed to support contributors during the submission, review, and production stages. This survey includes an opportunity for contributors to suggest appropriate arms-length reviewers;
- updating our peer review practices and [guidelines](#) with an eye to fostering greater accountability by stating our expectations for specific feedback and constructive criticism;
- making explicit our policy not to forward reader reports that are dismissive, aggressive, prejudicial, or otherwise inappropriate towards the author(s) or their research;
- adding new language and workflow stages that encourage peer reviewers to consider identifying themselves to contributors, via the editors' decision letter, after the peer review process has been completed, if and when they believe it is appropriate and safe to do so;
- revising, to make more explicit and transparent, the criteria according to which our advisory board members adjudicate submissions for the journal's bi-annual essay prizes.

Over the coming months, and with help from our advisory board members, we will work on the following additional equity-related tasks:

- revising our instructions for book reviewers, in line with our new policies and statements regarding peer review;
- crafting a journal statement regarding inclusive citational practices;
- including language in our style guide that explicitly recognizes an expansive range of citations, including, for example, social media posts;
- devising a clear and transparent journal policy requiring anti-oppressive language use, together with an up-to-date list of preferred terms and usages and an explicit copyediting workflow step designed to check for oppressive language;
- further researching and implementing best practices for announcing publicly, via an annual equity audit, demographic breakdowns for contributors, peer reviewers, and editorial team and advisory board members;
- investigating possibilities for a funded assistant editor fellowship designed to support opportunities for emerging scholars from racialized and other historically excluded groups;
- revising and making public our practices and policies regarding appointment to and service on the *Early Theatre* editorial team and the advisory board.

Through these efforts, *Early Theatre's* editors will seek to build greater transparency, and hence accountability, with respect to the work of our editorial and

advisory teams. Specifically, we will work with members of our advisory board to revise our processes for appointing editors, graduate editorial assistants, and advisory board members, making explicit the responsibilities inherent in each role. We will also put out an open call for new advisory board members, paired with active recruitment of scholars from historically excluded equity-deserving groups.

One particularly important task that our advisory board members undertake every two years involves adjudicating the journal's essay prizes. These prizes aim to honour the exceptional research of all our authors, with an eye to particularly outstanding work. Please join us in congratulating the prize winners from our 2019 and 2020 volumes. (For full details, including adjudication criteria, please see our [Essay Prize announcements](#) page on the journal website.) In the category of best essay on a theatre history topic relying on REED-style records, we are delighted to mark the outstanding achievement of Callan Davies, for his essay 'Bowling Alleys and Playhouses in London, 1560–90', *Early Theatre* 22.2 (2019), 39–62, <https://doi.org/10.12745/et.22.2.3918>. In the category of interpretative article on a topic in early drama, medieval or early modern, we congratulate Mark James Richard Scott, for his essay "'That's hard": Christopher Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus* and the Trauma of Reprobation', *Early Theatre* 23.2 (2020), 9–30, <https://doi.org/10.12745/et.23.2.3894>. We are also delighted to recognize, as honourable mention in this category, Liz Fox's piece 'Cosmopolitan Desire and Profitable Performance in *The Dutch Courtesan*', *Early Theatre* 23.1 (2020), 145–62, <https://doi.org/10.12745/et.23.1.4167>. Finally, in the category of best note/Issues in Review essay, we are happy to honour Justin Shaw's essay "'Rub Him About the Temples": *Othello*, Disability, and the Failures of Care', *Early Theatre* 22.2 (2019), 171–84, <https://doi.org/10.12745/et.22.2.3997> and to congratulate Matthew Woodcock, as runner up, for his piece 'Perambulation and Performance in Early Modern Festive Culture', *Early Theatre* 23.2 (2020), 139–53, <https://doi.org/10.12745/et.23.2.4384>. We are exceptionally grateful to the board members who so thoughtfully adjudicated our three subcommittees this year: Theresa Coletti and Alexandra F. Johnston (articles on theatre history topics relying on REED-style records), Pamela Allen Brown and Paul Budra (interpretive articles on topics in early drama, medieval and early modern), and Sheila Christie and David Dean (notes and Issues in Review essays).

The Editors

