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## Introduction

It is with great pleasure that we present the latest issue of *Multicultural Shakespeare*, which brings together a dynamic and thought-provoking collection of scholarship that delves into the richly textured world of Shakespeare's plays. At the heart of this issue lies an exploration of the diverse voices and perspectives that have shaped the translation and interpretation of Shakespeare's works across various cultural and linguistic landscapes. The articles featured in this issue offer a multifaceted examination of how Shakespeare's texts have been reimagined, reinterpreted, and rewritten by scholars, artists, and translators from around the globe. From the complex dynamics of gender and power embedded in the act of translation to the innovative appropriations of Shakespeare's works in postcolonial and contemporary contexts, this journal issue illuminates the transformative potential of Shakespeare's enduring global legacy.

The issue opens with a new section, "Shakespeare Translators' Voices: The 21<sup>st</sup> Century Perspective," created by Anna Cetera-Włodarczyk and Jesús Tronch in collaboration with the active translators of Shakespeare representing an array of approaches both to the original text and translation as a process and a product. The task of retranslation is coupled with a discussion on the nature of the resulting text. The translators describe in detail the tools of the trade and their thoughts on the target text as something meant for the stage and the audience or, just to the contrary, as something intended to be read.

The articles presented in this issue exemplify the breadth and depth of the ongoing scholarly engagement with Shakespeare's oeuvre. Rhema Mei Lan Hokama's exploration of the trial of a Portuguese sailor in a Chinese court, as depicted in Richard Hakluyt's *Principal Navigations*, offers a captivating examination of how Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice* intersects with the complex realities of early modern global exchange. "Radicalising Shakespeare: Staging the Sri Lankan Juliet in *Julietge Bhunikawa*" by K. C. P. Warnapala

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discusses how the character of Juliet in the Sri Lankan film *Julietge Bhumikawa* (1998) provides insight into the discourse of female purity and madness in the patriarchal culture of *Romeo and Juliet* on the one hand and its reconfiguration in the contemporary Sri Lankan society on the other. Adela Matei constructs a comparative analysis of the imaginary landscapes in *The Tempest* and Julian Barnes' novel, *A History of the World, in 10½ Chapters*. At the same time, Mythili Kaul presents a careful reading of *The Tempest* against the background of Aime Cesaire's *A Tempest* as a "reinscription" of Shakespeare play in terms of the issue of colonialism and discusses the influence of Lemming on Cesaire.

Thomas Clayton's "'Yet in His Idle Fire:' Once More unto the Bertram and *All's Well*" looks critically at one of Shakespeare's rarely staged plays to shift the focus onto Helena and identify *All's Well* as a "near-romantic comedy." Sam Kolodezh and Bryan Reynolds examine Ron Athey's *Solar Anus* as an auto-poetic "aberrant variation" of *Macbeth*, utilizing the thought of Bataille, Deleuze, and Guattari to discuss the controversial performance as an "excess of Shakespace." Agnieszka Rasmus looks at the docudrama *This England* (Winterbottom, 2022) and how Shakespearean allusion can function as a complex framing device, pointing to the lasting influence of Kenneth Branagh as a "Shakespearean celebrity," whose effects may be felt in the reception of the series.

With Yuequi Wu's "Reclaiming Cross-Dressing: Masculinity Construction in the All-Female Yue Opera's Shakespearean Adaptations," we move to the operatic genre, the global casting conventions, and their reclaiming by women in the Yue opera. Boram Choi continues the discussion on casting conventions in "The Cultural Paradox of All-Male Performance: (Dis)Figuring the Third Beauty in the Studio Life's *Twelfth Night*," while Zakia Resshid and Amra Raza examine the recent Shakespearean stagings in Pakistani Theatres with recourse to the notion of appropriation and post-dramatic theory.

The articles brought together in this issue look critically at how Shakespeare's works continue to be interpreted, translated, and adapted, pointing in the process also to the larger societal issues into which Shakespeare's texts may become implicated. We hope that the analyses and perspectives presented here will propel diverse ways of thinking and writing about Shakespeare in the local and global contexts: a task more pertinent than ever considering the onslaught of populism, military conflicts, and societal polarization in various areas of the world.