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Introduction

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Introduction

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The Annual Meeting of the Ohio Valley Shakespeare Conference reconvened in October of 2021, after a year's hiatus during the pandemic. In our return together, we were able to take advantage of new technologies, which allowed members to attend both in person and virtually. This was especially apt, since the theme of the conference was "Transformative Shakespeare." As an organization, and as individuals, we experienced the transformation of contemporary life in a time of crisis.

The meeting itself included two plenary sessions: the first with Julia Lupton, Professor of English at the University of California at Irvine, who spoke about Ovidian transformations in her talk "Infinite Virtue: Shakespeare and Capacity." The emerging scholar plenary session, "An Oral History of Public Shakespeare," was presented by Jeffrey R. Wilson a faculty member in the Writing Program at Harvard. Panel sessions included a wide variety of interpretations of the years' theme, from Shakespearean adaptations in television and film to Shakespeare and education, from transformations within the plays to two sessions on Prison Shakespeare, which included a founding member, as well as the founder of *Shakespeare Behind Bars*.

Emerging from this program, the Selected Papers presents a range of papers evocative of the entire theme. The collection begins with Kathryn Croft's "'She Never Yet was Foolish that was Fair': Whiteness as Erasure in William Shakespeare's *Othello*," which discusses at length the presentation of Desdemona's whiteness -- onstage and in the text itself -- surrounds Othello's racial identity and ultimately erases it. Next, David George discusses the problems of Juliet's aging and maturity in his piece "A Double Time in *Romeo and Juliet*: Juliet's Rapid Maturity." From here, the collection turns to the transformation of Shakespeare in television adaptations, as discussed by Jared Johnson in "'Hell is empty and all the devils are here': *Westworld*'s New Prospero and His Isle of Calibans," which examines the use of *The Tempest* and *Romeo and Juliet* in the sci-fi Western. Next the collection turns attention to *King John*, in the piece "'My

All the World': Constance, Motherhood, and Petrarchanism in Shakespeare's *King John* by Anne McIlhaney, examining Constance's love toward her son Arthur. Finally, the collection ends with Robert Pierce's "Does Shakespeare Believe in Sudden Conversion for his Villains?" in which the author discusses two possibilities for fifth act conversions of villains: is this a convenient tool for a piece of art? Or is it representative of a belief in human nature?

All of these pieces bring together the questions of transformation in their own ways and represent the wealth of ideas shared at the 2021 meeting. The meeting was another rich experience, and one particularly welcome after the transformative isolation of working virtually during the pandemic.