Introduction

Ty Buckman and Charles S. Ross

This issue of Forum for World Literature Studies focuses on the English Renaissance from a global perspective. It consists of two collections of essays, one for each of the two greatest English poets, Willliam Shakespeare and John Milton. The first collection, titled "World Shakespeares," continues work begun Shakespeare in Hollywood, Asia, and Cyberspace, edited by Alexander C. Y. Huang and Charles S. Ross (Purdue University Press, 2009) and has been further inspired by the recent publication of Chinese Shakespeares by Alexander C. Y. Huang (Columbia University Press, 2009). These articles look at Shakespeare's influence and legacy not only in different countries but in different regions and literary genres; that is, not only in France, China, and Brazil, but also Iowa and the mythical town of Macondo.

The seven essays in the second grouping, titled "Milton, Time, and Mind," constitute a small but rich sampling of the scholarship that was presented at two meetings of the Purdue University Renaissance Prose Conference. The first of these conferences was held at Wittenberg University, November 1 and 2, 2007; the second conference, convened by former students in honor of Professor Michael Murrin of the University of Chicago and Professor James Nohrnberg of the University of Virginia, was held at Purdue University, November 5 and 6, 2009. Essays inspired by the work of Professor Michael Murrin at the University of Chicago will appear in the January 2011 issue of the journal Arthuriana.

Our travels through the Renaissance begin with an essay that looks at the French obsession with the theme of jealousy. In "Othello and the French Tradition in Les enfants du paradis," Charles S. Ross shows how the French have admired Shakespeare but also sought to provide a context for his work that would suit a French audience. Jealousy plays well in France, it seems, from Voltaire's imitation of the play in Zaire to Marcel Carné's film Children of Paradise. Germany provides the backdrop for the next essay, in which Brady Spangenberg takes a daring leap by showing how our current global interest in Shakespeare also works in terms of what in American letters is called regionalism. He shows how Shakespeare's play is as much about property as daughters, and the Iowan setting of Jane Smiley's imitation of King Lear, the novel and movie A Thousand Acres, gives us a unique view of the German inflections of midwestern America.

We next turn to the first of three essays on Hamlet. In her essay "The Anti-Gaze in a Hybrid Shakespeare: A Discussion of Women Characters in Prince of the Himalaya's," Runlei Zhai takes the issue of the female gaze familiar in literary students and combines it a theoretical approach to Asian Shakespeare found in Alexander Huang's work. The result is penetrating analysis what happens when the film-

maker Sherwood Hu sets Shakespeare's Hamlet in Tibet. Reading this essay, we were reminded of the scenes in the Merchant-Ivory film Shakespeare Wallah set in the Himalyan foothills. In that movie the end of colonialism seems to spell the end of Shakespeare in India. Zhai's essay suggests more positive aesthetic outcome for Shakespeare's fortunes, as in Feng Xiaogang's version of Hamlet, where slow-motion horses and beautiful landscapes make a similar experiement in beauty. But the film also raises cultural, as Jinhua Li shows in her essay "Love and Empire: The Transnational Logic of Feng Xiaogeng's The Banquet." Her argument is that The Banquet situates Hamlet in literary traditions associated with tenth-century China, the turbulent years of the the Five Dynasties and Ten Kingdoms. One of these traditions, Li argues, is that of the beautiful woman who creates havoc.

Brazilian cinema and TV offer their own conception of women, which affects its representation of Shakespeare. Christiane F. de Alcantari, in her essay "Representations of Shakespearean Women in Contemporary Brazilian Cinema," provides a useful overview of a subject new to many of us, the Brazilian adaptations of The Taming of the Shrew, The Merry Wives of Windsor, The Merchant of Venice, and Romeo and Juliet. It is a rich tradition and worth considering for our courses on Shakespeare, particularly the way women find strategies for dealing with the men in their culture. It is not just American but global audience who need to pay closer attention to Shakespeare south of the border, a goal of comparative literature that can be facilitated by Jason Lotz's essay "Creating the Ghosts of Modernity: Magic and Memory in Hamlet and Cien A? os de Soledad." Despite differing conceptions of magic in the Renaissance and in Gabriel García Márquez's famous novel, the problem of memory provides a connection between Hamlet and magical realism, the term used to describe so much of modern literary fantasy.

If Shakespeare relation to the modern world is pervasive, it takes someone of Professor James Nohrnberg's scope and learning to argue for an equally pervasive presence of Milton in modern culture, and we are pleased to offer her his keynote address in addition to the other essays related to the theme of "Milton, Time, and Mind." In keeping with the nature of the journal in which they now appear, these essays involve journeys – across texts, cultures, times, genres, religious traditions, and media. (Indeed, Professor Nohrnberg's formidable essay at the heart of these selected papers crosses all of these boundaries itself.) It is useful to think of this grouping as a hinged diptych, with the three essays in the first panel taking up the experience of travelers and objects and fame that cross borders to arrive in Renaissance England. David Read, in his essay "Expensive Egypt," examines the place of Egyptian antiquities in the quotidian experience and popular imagination of Shakespeare's audience as a means of better understanding Shakespeare's vision of Alexandrian Egypt in Antony and Cleopatra. In "Language and Difference in Hakluyt's Principal Navigations," Marianne Montgomery argues that the penchant for early modern English travelers to ignore language difference in their travel narratives, and those few cases where the strangeness of a non-English language or the need for an interpreter is noted, both reveal deep-seated English cultural attitudes about distancing and embracing other cultures. And Jena Al-Fuhaid traces the depiction of the towering figure of

Alexander the Great and his lesser known mother Olympias across two cultures and two literary traditions languages and three centuries—to reveal the fundamental congruity that these literary figures evoke.

The hinge is provided by James Nohrnberg's expansive "The Mythical Method in Song and Saga, Verse and Prose: Part II," that takes as its starting point T. S. Eliot's formulation of a "mythical method" to explain the relationship between cultures and myths, past and present. In pursuit of his thesis, Nohrnberg's tour de force runs forward and backward in time, making its way between such texts as the Davidic cycle in II Samuel and Milton's Paradise Lost and Thomas Pynchon's Gravity's Rainbow, and up and down the scale of putative literary merit, from Virgil's Aeneid to Ian Fleming's Dr. No.

The second panel follows James Nohrnberg's treatment of Milton in the midst of his larger argument with three essays that concern how religious poetry in England in the seventeenth century can be read against its continental and classical analogues. Peter Hufnagel's essay, "The Epic Decision: From Homer to Milton," takes up the paradox that John Milton faces in rendering the fall of humankind in Paradise Lost as an essentially (Protestant) heroic act, one in keeping with the values of the epic tradition that he inherited from Homer's Iliad. Ty Buckman begins his essay, "The Fight Over the Body in Paradise Lost Book IV," with a single scene in from Milton's epic and traces it back to two points of origin, one in an obscure epistle in the New Testament, the other in Homer's Iliad, to illustrate the nature of the poet's "encyclopedic" impulse. And Mardy Philippian, Jr. concludes the collection with his essay, "Devotional Method and Efficacious Reading in John Donne's Devotions Upon Emergent Occasions," a study of Donne's greatest devotional text against the backdrop of its Spanish and English analogues, to argue that in place of a devotional method, Donne offers his readers a theology of language.

We hope that readers who follow these scholars on their various journeys here described will gain a sense of what was possible in literary criticism at the beginning of the twenty-first century, a time when the lack of a single dominant critical practice has made possible the crossing of many literal and figurative frontiers.

【Notes】

1. The editors gratefully acknowledge the skilled and tireless assistance of Gabriel Valley, an editorial research assistant and student at the University of Chicago, in the preparation of these essays.