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Preface:

Recurrence of the Past, Reception of the Present, Reflections on the Future

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This issue incorporates scholarship across centuries and ideological frameworks, emerging at the nexus of literary memory and modern critical discourse. This present collection is divided into two distinct but conceptually related sections.

The first section, “The Global Folios”, is edited by Murat Ögütçü and Amrita Sen, who steered the contributions from diverse contexts. This special collection honours William Shakespeare’s astute insights while also examining and exposing literary and cultural issues, intertwined with violence, marginalisation, and resistance across various contexts. Shakespeare and his works frequently emerge as moral and philosophical allegories, as well as artistic renderings or performances, through multilingual reinterpretations and innovative reproductions. He, as an influential figure whose themes have maintained relevance across centuries and character archetypes recur through dramatic and narrative genres, has shaped numerous political and cultural narratives on a global scale. The "Global Folios" section presents articles that examine Shakespeare’s growing relevance across various cultural and historical contexts, emphasising his transition from a literary mind to a more expansive mindful philosopher. It studies how translations and adaptations of his work have facilitated social reform, modernity, and political opposition, especially in eastern cultures such as India and Georgia, where his texts have fostered artistic innovation and formation of identities. This collection of essays examines Shakespeare’s reception in the Ottoman Empire and contemporary Türkiye, emphasising his influence on drama, literature, and intellectual discourse.

Shakespeare’s lasting relevance in contemporary literature demonstrates how narratives across diverse genres address existential and ethical dilemmas through Shakespearean frameworks. Hence, the issue enriches the Global Folios section with two additional substantial contributions:

Baysal’s “Pre-birth Hamlet” emphasises counterfactual narrative in both *Hamlet* and McEwan’s *Nutshell*, exploring the intersection of speculative thinking, alternative history, and ethical responsibility. Both texts depict characters ensnared by fate and agency, illustrating that

counterfactual thinking exacerbates existential paralysis rather than providing liberation. A metahistorical analysis of Shakespeare's themes emphasises the influence of experiential and imaginary narratives on identity formation. The study ultimately portrays conjecture as a tragic and detrimental influence on human consciousness.

Arargüç and Hınıslioğlu reflect on Shakespeare to reconfigure structural violence and ideological frameworks. An alternative reading of *Titus Andronicus* through the theoretical lenses of Slavoj Žižek and René Girard offers an additional dimension of Shakespeare's legacy. The article reconceptualises Shakespeare as a political thinker and analyst of systemic cruelty and ideological complicity, thus moving beyond the notion of him merely a dramatist of revenge, by examining the play as a locus of ritualised and concealed violence. This article also provides an insightful exploration of the final theoretical article that questions the modern "liberal narrative" and the dynamics of power relations.

The second section opens up with Karmakar's engaging article "Arguing for Decolonial Repair: Petrostate, Environmental Injustice, and Decompositional Politics," which provides a decolonial reading of Helon Habila's *Oil on Water*, emphasising the themes of environmental and epistemic violence. The article examines how "petrocapitalism" not only degrades the environment but also enforces epistemic hierarchies that marginalise indigenous knowledge systems, placing the novel within the geopolitical context of the Niger Delta. The article advocates for a new form of solidarity rooted in the recognition of shared vulnerability and the importance of epistemic humility by introducing the idea of "decompositional politics."

By applying the architectural theory of brutalism to the political economy of the Global South, Om Prakash Dwivedi's "Brutalism: The Next 'Liberal' Narrative of the 21st Century" presents a theoretical discourse and foregrounds a conceptual shift. The article examines how "liberal narratives" or "narrative of liberalism" are subverted by the governance frameworks that normalise incremental violence. Dwivedi draws on Achille Mbembe's definition of "brutalism" and applies it to neofascist ideologies that turn human lives into commodities of exploitation. Dwivedi strives to understand how the "liberal narrative" is self-restraining and continuously undermines peace, freedom, and security.

In a nutshell, the issue brings together the spirit of the past, contemporary reception, and the insights into the future through original research, critical reviews, and theoretical discussions.