

# UNDISCIPLINE, DECOLONISE, REPAIR

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## GENEALOGIES OF RACE SEMINAR

### PERFORMING SHAKESPEARE AND RACE

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**Monday, 28<sup>th</sup> September 2026, 6.00-7.30 pm**

**Room n° 153, Olympe de Gouges Building, Université Paris Cité**

**8 Place Paul Ricoeur, 75013 Paris**

**Speakers: Lucy Munro and Hanh Bui**

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#### **Decolonising the Shakespearean Playhouse**

This talk will take a fresh approach to question around decolonising Shakespeare by considering the buildings in which plays such as *The Tempest* were performed, and the affective and financial networks in which they were embedded. It will examine the ownership and financing of early modern playhouses in the light of old and new documentary evidence linking them with global trade and colonial exploitation in the late-sixteenth and early-to-mid seventeenth centuries.

I will argue that playhouses were imbricated in the same cultural and ideological networks as the plays that were staged in them, and that playhouses and plays were in dialogue in the production of theatrical narrative. In doing so, I will look in detail at the Globe and Blackfriars playhouses, examining the colonial connections and investments of the actor, Folio editor and playhouse shareholder John Heminges, and reassessing the colonial associations of *The Tempest* itself.



**Lucy Munro** is Professor of Shakespeare and Early Modern Literature at King's College London. She currently serves as President of the Shakespeare Association of America.

#### **'Fair' Futures: Shakespeare, Race and White Optimism'**

This talk reads Shakespeare's drama through the lens what I call white optimism. Building upon theoretical work by Arthur L. Little, Jr., I examine how whiteness in the history plays sustains an affective investment in an idealised and racialised genealogical future—one imagined as inexhaustibly available and historically inevitable, even when whiteness fails to reproduce itself or when the child produced is not the anticipated heir. White optimism offers an account of how time organises and naturalises certain bloodlines as inherently desirable, not because they are biologically guaranteed but because they are presumed to be the rightful owners of the future itself. The talk also considers the present and future of Shakespeare and race in the academy.



**Hanh Bui** is Head of Research at Shakespeare's Globe, where she oversees the Research and Collections team, organises research and scholarly programmes, and leads on pedagogical development for Higher Education and Lifelong Learning.