

CFP SHAKESPEARE-SEMINAR 2024
“WHO’S IN, WHO’S OUT”: COMMUNITY AND DIVERSITY IN SHAKESPEARE

Time and again, Shakespeare demonstrates the frailty and contingency of the many historical and “imagined” communities (Anderson) that feature in his works. Many of his plays revolve around the conflict between individuals and society, depicting the bonds between friends, lovers, family members or even whole nations being put to the test by desire, jealousy, and ambition. If Shakespeare’s communities are unstable to begin with, then discussions of diversity bring to light that very instability even further. His works have been both hailed for showcasing the universality of human nature and critiqued for implicitly reinforcing a Western, Eurocentric world view. Shakespearean drama walks a fine line between incorporating diverse facets of early modern life – including gender and sexuality, race, and religion – and perpetuating insidious mechanisms of marginalisation and othering, as the fates of some of the figureheads of Shakespearean diversity, such as Shylock, Othello and Caliban, show. On Shakespeare’s stage, community and diversity are intimately but uneasily paired and expose the various ways in which “difference”, as Goran Stanivukovic writes in *Queer Shakespeare: Desire and Sexuality* (2017), is “based on suppression, occlusion and semantic difference of allied vocabulary” (24). Shakespeare thus makes us ponder the question “who’s in, who’s out” (*King Lear* 5.3.16) both in early modern times and in ours. While the dramatic representations of these conflicts are inevitably bound to the historical contexts that helped produce them, the theatre itself always had and still has the potential to renegotiate them and to newly create communities, just as it is capable of diversifying Shakespeare, and making his works more inclusive for 21st century audiences.

In light of this complex nexus, we invite short papers on how Shakespeare’s works, their performance, and reception engage with community, diversity, and the difficult dynamics between them. Topics may include, but are in no way limited to:

- Representations of inclusion and exclusion in Shakespeare’s works
- Community and diversity in the early modern period
- Shakespeare’s treatment of marriage, friendship, family, and kinship
- Intersectional Shakespeare
- Shakespeare and (trans)national communities
- Diversifying the Shakespearean canon through ‘non-canonical’ readings
- Adapting and appropriating Shakespeare’s works to build more inclusive communities
- Institutional (lack of) diversity and community in Shakespeare studies
- Teaching Shakespeare more ‘diversely’
- Accessible Shakespeare

Our seminar will address these issues with a panel of six papers during the annual conference of the German Shakespeare Association, *Shakespeare-Tage*, which will take place from 19–21 April 2024 in Bochum, Germany. As critical input for the discussion, we invite papers of no more than 15 minutes that present concrete case studies, concise examples and strong views on the topic. Please send your proposals (abstracts of 300 words) by **01 December 2023** to the seminar convenors:

Dr. Marlene Dirschauer, University of Hamburg: marlene.dirschauer@uni-hamburg.de

Dr. Jonas Kellermann, University of Konstanz: jonas.kellermann@uni-konstanz.de

The Seminar provides a forum for established as well as young scholars to discuss texts and contexts. Participants of the seminar will subsequently be invited to submit extended versions of their papers for publication in *Shakespeare Seminar Online (SSO)*. While we cannot offer travel bursaries, the association will arrange for the accommodation of all participants in a hotel close to the main venues. For more information, please contact Marlene Dirschauer and Jonas Kellermann. For more information about the events and publications also see: <https://shakespeare-gesellschaft.de/>.