Not outraged? Are you sure you're paying attention?

Lisha Xu, University of Glasgow
David Johnston, Queen's University Belfast

1. Introduction

We write, translate and perform amidst the turbulence of a paradigm shift in our relationships, both with each other as identity types and with the assumptions and dynamics of our past. Almost inevitably, this shift has re-shaped narratives and adjusted thresholds of tolerance, themselves the result of a cultural politics ineluctably absorbed with identitarian issues, that have become key determinants of the sensitivities of cultural reception. Identity, in its response to 'who am I in the world?' and 'how does that world recognise me?', can of course sensitise the self to the operations of difference, not least of opportunity and of participatory parity. Therein lies the possibility of corrective action. But as a bounded site, identity can also function as an unchallenged belvedere of perception, a heuristic springboard towards what Linda Hamilton Krieger, over twenty-five years ago, identified as "strategies for simplifying the perceptual environment and acting on less-than-perfect information" (1995, p. 1161). Within that simplified perceptual environment we hear calls for over-zealous trigger warnings, we read alarmingly reductionist views of the past and witness a purging of its visible markers; we see books being burned. The list of skirmish events is seemingly inexhaustible as symbolic issues and questions of identity come to occupy increasingly deeply embedded and more confrontational positions in our general culture.

Is this what we mean by culture wars?

The phrase itself was coined by sociologist James Davison Hunter in his 1991 book *Culture wars: The struggle to define America*, but the right-wing tabloid treatment routinely accorded to the idea of culture wars in the UK has detracted from the serious attention we need to pay to the growing divide between the deeply dug trenches of what Hunter views throughout the book as the 'orthodox' and the 'progressive'. While the book is wide sweeping in its analysis of key sites of conflict, such as, for example, abortion rights or the political spaces that might be properly occupied by religion, there is a clear sense of the underpinning moral positions confronting each other in an increasingly Manichean society. On one hand, this has led inevitably to the honing of critical theories of race and gender, and their extension into the worldview of rapidly growing numbers of people. But on the other, we are also drawn into a maximalist politics which, in its tracing of its own history through different sources of resistance across time and space, is increasingly impatient with any expression of what are perceived as oppositional positions, irrespective of the timeframe in which such positions have been taken. We can see immediately how this apparent war of the moralities panned out, for example, in the 2024 US presidential election, where sections of the media and, above all else, the Democrats themselves, presented the electorate with the starkest of choices between fundamentalist darkness and the assumptions of the moral high ground — yet another 'basket of deplorables' versus those with joy in their souls. Put in these terms, if, indeed, what we are living through can be thought of as a time of culture wars, then culture wars might be better considered as a constant of civilisation, with clashes over perceptions of place and

https://doi.org/10.26034/cm.jostrans.2025.6937
© The Authors

disputed representations of the symbolic, the sacred and the different a recurring characteristic of our great wars of empire, of religion and of radical social change. In that way, at least, we can re-grasp the idea of a cultural moment that is always becoming rather than being dictated, a moment in movement and ongoing transition that sits much more easily with our sense of how translation itself works across time and space.

There is much more to be said about these culture wars: for instance, about how symbols seem to stimulate a much more emotive act of attention than issues of *realpolitik*; about how so many of the battlegrounds for these wars are in places associated with hierarchy and the elite (including museums, universities and theatres); about how our reduction of complex interrelatedness to simplified narrative metonymies often serves to cleanse social and cultural phenomena of all intricacy; about how legitimate grievances and fake news alike are amplified by social media to feed into social and cultural disquiet. Finally, about how these culture wars are in many ways so easily orchestrated and commodified by experienced hands. In that final way at least, culture wars are sham battles; but they often spring too from resistance to a history whose movements and driving forces have, for so many and for so long, been out of reach. And once you grab something that has been denied to you for centuries, of course you fight to keep hold of it. Culture wars, manufactured or not, usher us all too often into binary positions; but that does not mean that the backlash they embody need not be taken seriously.

And that is precisely what this special issue seeks to do.

It asks one of the fundamental questions faced by writers today — and therefore by extension by translators. What does it mean to have your work represented in a public space where practitioners and audiences alike are increasingly sensitised to the representation of race, identity, gender, and sexuality, or where cultural norms are located within closed domains of what is deemed or prescribed to be socially or politically permissible? The question becomes more complicated when it comes to the representation of texts from the past which can often express views that are out of kilter with current sensibilities.

We experienced a small-scale but telling example of this. Just as the pandemic was drawing to its official close, at a time of relaxed lockdown measures in the United Kingdom, we were on a research trip to investigate portals of connection between Chinese classical opera and the theatre of the Spanish Golden Age, and in the process, attended the first rehearsal of David Johnston's translation *The Lady Boba: A Woman of Little Sense* (2013), of Lope de Vega's *La dama boba*, written originally in 1613. This was in one of the country's leading conservatoires, a place that almost as a matter of course channels talented young actors into the mainstream of the profession. The first three scenes, which turn on the comic realisation of a hopelessly mismatched arranged marriage, were read with skill and alacrity. The room was full of laughter, until we came to these lines delivered by a scheming father:

Octavio I have no quarrel with intelligence.
Discreet women wear it well; no, it's the frumps,
the little self-important graduate girls.

https://doi.org/10.26034/cm.jostrans.2025.6937
© The Authors

> What is a wife? The time-honoured formula.
> She is virtue and modesty: in equal parts (Johnston, 2013, p. 17).

The actor refused to speak the lines. He was more nervous than outraged, and it was clear that he was apprehensive of being associated personally with the overt sexism of the words once he had done his best to make them as believable as possible, once he had had his actorly way with them.

Johnston takes up the story here, for reasons that are immediately apparent —

As one of the old white men in the room, I felt automatically disqualified from defending the lines because of the albatross of centuries' privilege hanging heavy round my neck. But I was also the translator, and the onus was on me to do precisely that. I couldn't not communicate in the most direct sense, and I was painfully aware that, in the meaning given to the phrase by communication psychologists such as Paul Watzlawick, I was already communicating, albeit an attitude of disbelief that was certainly not shared by the young cast. I have no doubt that some of them were genuinely angered by this voice of patriarchal stupidity coming at them unadulterated from the past, especially when the old white man had just spent the previous fifteen minutes before the reading explaining how acts of translation are always provisional, that the product of the process of translation is complete only in a temporary way, and is in itself in a permanent state of transition, always open to amendment. So, why had these lines not been amended? Others among the cast, I am equally sure, were exercising their right to performative outrage. But, as everyone in the room was concerned with performance, I reasoned to myself that this should be taken with equal seriousness.

Actors can, of course, refuse to deliver bad lines. And in rehearsals for a number of plays I have re-written lines after discussions with performers and directors. But this was different. Firstly, the actors agreed that the lines were well written, that they tripped off the tongue in terms of that very often elusive goal of memorable speakabilty. But they contained a thought whose simple articulation was unacceptable; this was a crisis of utterance which forcibly ejected the play into the unforgiving and relentlessly bounded present moment.

So, it was precisely the temporal complexity of cultural representation that we made our first appeal to. We argued that translation is at the forefront of an epistemology of resistance, naturally in opposition to assumed authority. The refractoriness of translation, like that of theatre, lies in its ability to offer multiple and competing truths of any situation; to bring multiple temporalities into an adjacency that explodes any sense of linear time or invariant meaning, and instead embodies and connects difference in ways that are both historical and atemporal. In this way, we argued that what translation does is connect moments of the always contemporary. Octavio's casually anti-feminist speech was both relevant then and is alive now, but the play confronts these words with a clear depiction of how his two daughters have developed extraordinary coping strategies. One now has a relentlessly acid tongue where men are concerned:

> Facile fickle feigning fraudster,

https://doi.org/10.26034/cm.jostrans.2025.6937
© The Authors

> you immoral mendacious man.
> Men dare to call women fickle.
> We shift and change like weathervanes,
> you say, you call us mutable.
> So what are you? (Johnston, 2013, p. 49)

Meanwhile, the other tells her lover how she can draw on her experience of parental infantilisation to deceive her father into continuing to underestimate her intelligence so that she is free to exercise her own rights of choice (in this case, about marriage):

> Life's what's learnt.
> I can go back,
> like a blindwoman,
> to that familiar feel.
> To those dark rooms where I grew up.
> Me, the pretender.
> Me, the woman,
> From our mother's womb, women live in fear (Johnston, 2013, p. 90).

This is a play, we argued, about how women coped with patriarchy in 1613 and, through the temporal multi-layering that translation offers, it is also a play about how women cope with patriarchy in 2025. Translation uniquely connects different contemporaneities. It is more than a re-telling from a different perspective, from a shifted template, as is the case, for example, with Percival Everett's *James*, which re-tells Huck Finn's story from the perspective of Jim, the black man fleeing slavery. Translation creates a palimpseste, a layering of different moments and places so that effectively the translated text is set in the flow of time and the defining relationship of time with our lives and where those lives take place. Translation is the word in a space-time continuum.

The reading continued, now within an enriched awareness of how a translation can embody a translational response.

2. This special issue

A translational response engineers complexity, to create a multi-layered version of events. The Colston incident provides a good example. In the summer of 2020, an event took place in Bristol that caused a nation-wide rift in public opinion. Black Lives Matter protestors toppled the statue of a seventeenth-century local privateer and esteemed entrepreneur, Edward Colston, and ceremoniously pitched it into the murky waters of the harbour. The statue had been erected in 1895 by Victorians who clearly valued the achievements of this particular self-made man, and a wave of professed outrage swept the country, accusing protestors of effectively destroying English heritage. It was led by then Prime Minister Boris Johnson, who declared on television that the action was tantamount to lying about national history (which he deemed glorious and unstained). In response to this theatre of rage, it was recalled repeatedly that Colston had been a notorious slavetrader and, indeed, as it was subsequently discovered, had been in cahoots with the British monarch of the time, William III. His presence in a public square in one of England's most important port cities was an

https://doi.org/10.26034/cm.jostrans.2025.6937
© The Authors

affront to the spirit of our times, to cultural and identitarian egalitarianism. Put simply, it was untenable. But, of course, the problem immediately arose of what to do with the corpus delicti. The statue could either be publicly restored to its position of shameful pre-eminence, or quietly put into storage. Effectively cancelled. But the solution found was instead a translational one, in the most literal sense of material transfer, but also in the way in which translation is concerned with creating moments of illuminating connection. Translation tells a more complex story. So, instead, it was fished out of the water and, still battered and splashed with red paint, was laid recumbent in the Bristol People Gallery in the M Shed, a conjoined reminder of the shame of seventeenth-century slavery and the force of twenty-first century protest.

All eleven essays in this special issue discuss translational solutions and adjustments within contexts of difficult reception at different times and in different places. The mix of young and seasoned authors brings an extraordinary variety of perspectives to bear on what it means to translate and perform in challenging times. Translators, of course, have always written in difficult circumstances, and some have paid a heavy price for doing so. These essays are, therefore, timely testimony to the external constraints under which translators work, and to which they respond creatively through translations that still contrive to create conditions of encounter between real embodied subjects, translations that speak meaningfully to human beings living under specific circumstances. The acts of translation contextualised and analysed in this special issue are the result of clear-eyed translator and performer agency, all opening conduits between what we inherit from the past and what we might bequeath to the future, an interaction that takes place across the complex terrain of identity, place, language, history and culture. The specific terms in which these issues are articulated depends, of course, on the particular bond between identity, time and place in which they are set. In that way this special issue presents a fascinating compendium of translation's multifaceted engagement with complex contexts where the stakes for translators, performers and audiences alike are high.

Lisha Xu's essay opens the collection by exploring gender politics in China through the lens of translation and performance. Her discussion traces contemporary concerns with feminist politics and non-binary sexual identities back to their radical classical roots, to what she characterises as the compassion of the extraordinary Yuan dynasty playwright Guan Hanqing, and to the long-standing cross-dressing codes of Chinese classical opera, with its marked responsiveness to its own particular set of groundlings. Guan Hanqing is a remarkable playwright by any standards, known mainly outside China for his *Snow in midsummer,* staged in 2017 by the RSC in what one might view as a version overly-adapted for what was the first major outing of this relatively unknown classic. The original title, which translates as *The injustice to Dou E*, gives a clearer indication of the sense of moral engagement that lies at the heart of the play than does the more traditionally imagistic Chinese-sounding title chosen by the RSC. Amy Ng's translation of his *Rescuing one's sister in the wind and dust* supplies a much more committed take on Guan's work, a sharply funny writing forward into contemporary feminist concerns of his compassion for women's everyday struggle to survive. The same telescoping across time and space characterises new all-female productions of Yue opera, which channel their new stagings of traditional cross-dressing codes into the representation of an androgyny that places ossified heteronormative assumptions in its cross-hairs. It is this telescoping, which is one of

https://doi.org/10.26034/cm.jostrans.2025.6937
© The Authors

translation's most interesting devices and perhaps most far-reaching challenge to how moral certainties and political strictures mount their own exclusionary appropriation of the contemporary moment — whatever contemporary moment that is — in the swirl and intersecting of ongoing contemporaneities that characterises creative practice at its most vivid.

Xu's emphatic insistence on the value of highlighting those interstices in the enfolded fabric of time and space, those moments where key elements — repetitions and contrasts — conjoin past and present, is developed in Gonzalo Iturregui-Gallardo's fascinating analysis of the increasing visibility of the intersex body (in this case through another act of telescoping across variations adaptations, including an opera, of Herculine Barbin's memoirs, generally considered to be the earliest testimony of an intersex person). Xu's interstices are no less present in Iturregui-Gallardo's analysis, where they bring together Queer Studies and Translation Studies in ways that allow him to conclude that what was barely understood, hardly even glimpsed, at a certain time, can be carried over into new life, and indeed survive (in itself one of the key movements of translation) through what he considers to be the power of revision through adaptation and translation. But not revision in any historicist sense, not in the sense of inexorable laws of progress. But across paradigm shifts, through acts of re-envisioning, re-staging. Adrienne Rich springs inevitably to mind. Her seminal essay of 1972, 'When we dead awaken: Writing as re-vision', draws on Ibsen's portrayal of a woman struggling to full consciousness of exploitation, and pushes Ibsen's argument from his denunciation of an oppressive economic system to the sense that the oppressive nature of gendered relations has its deepest roots in the sexual class system itself. Rich's essay tracks both the exhilaration and the responsibility that come in the wake of a self-awareness rooted in the ever-present possibility of change.

Sarah Maitland's compelling essay further explores this core idea; to translate is to traffick in and across difference, where the translator's power to forge unexpected forms of relatedness through complex layers of simultaneous representation takes us into the heart of the translation paradox, namely that it implies both rupture and continuity (a paradox frequently associated with Benjamin's idea that translation itself works through a continuum of transformation: Benjamin, 1996, p. 220); but Maitland uses it here to discuss who 'should' or 'might' translate on the basis of Liebniz's Law on the relationship between equivalence and identities. Her discussion proceeds from an examination of the Amanda Gorman case (when arguably the issue of the pairing of racial identity between poet and translator eclipsed any discussion as to whether the poetry was actually worth translating or not), although Maitland does not allow herself to be drawn into questions of worthiness and inequity, or whether Gorman was lending herself to political appropriation by the incoming Biden administration. Where Maitland's discussion brings a new — and cooling — perspective to bear on an issue that has provoked a great deal of professed outrage, some of it undoubtedly performative, is through the application of theories of mathematical relations. This, in turn, allows her to pose and address the core questions behind this special issue — what meanings does performance actually give rise to in one context, and how might translation meaningfully supply equivalent meanings in another?

Vasiliki Misiou's contribution extends this questioning through her discussion of the staging of Paloma Pedrero's *La llamada de Lauren* [Lauren's call] in Greece in 2017. Pedrero is one of the leading playwrights of the post-Franco generation of Spanish

https://doi.org/10.26034/cm.jostrans.2025.6937
© The Authors

theatre-makers. Hers was a distinctive voice emerging from the codified political theatre of the Francoist era, marking a return to the sort of incisive probing of gender identity constrained within and rebelling against patriarchy that had been the hallmark of García Lorca's pre-Civil War theatre. Misiou's focus extends Maitland's concerns into the context of Greece, where the burgeoning transgender rights agenda and the discriminatory practices and gender-based oppressions of everyday life stood in marked disjunction. The focus here is on how the translator and director are key agents in extending the meanings of Pedrero's play into this context, so that by giving stage visibility to systematically underrepresented groups the production effectively reinforced the evolving discussion in Greece around gender, sexuality and identity.

One of the key ideas emerging from the essays in this special issue is that, if translation effectively happens at the crunch-point of difference, then it is the ethical responsibility of the contemporary translator to make a difference, to bring an interrogative newness to the receiving context. Kathinka Salzmann's essay sets out to examine how the translator's task can be to question the assumptions that solidify around the umbrella notion of the politically correct. Her analysis of the African-American playwright Suzan-Lori Parks's 1999 play *Topdog/Underdog* demonstrates how Parks, considered by many to be one of the most radical artists living in the US today, has been consistently concerned to present identity not as a set of fixed assumptions and static belonging, but rather as a fluid and ongoing work in progress. In that way, her work asks what it means to live ethically among different identities that are in themselves in transition. There is an echo here of Appiah's (2007) refreshing attempt to de-commodify cosmopolitanism as a lifestyle choice and return it to its core value as an ethical response to the challenges of living in a world of strangers — his account of what it means to be a citizen of the world. In that way, Parks's work, like Appiah's, provides a sharp rebuttal of the assumption of easy translatability (and, therefore, of the presumption of sameness) that characterises a wide spectrum of ethically-charged activities that are, in turn, an increasingly routine part of the global transactions of contemporary cosmopolitanism. As Salzmann emphasises, both translation and performance cast a new eye — Rich's re-visioning — on the objects they represent. And it is the viewer's ethical duty, in turn, to revise their own experience in the light of that new perspective. To pay attention.

Benang Xuan focuses on one particular aspect of the ethical responsibility of the theatre practitioner, which is to supply a viable counter-narrative to other time-bound interpretations, to prompt towards revision. His case study is of Puccini's *Turandot,* which notably mythologises ancient China through yellowface performance, an imagining of Chinese culture from the distinctly Western perspective that marks Franco Zefirelli's 1957 production of the opera that has been considered standard since its first performance. By looking at the re-interpretations of a number of Chinese directors, Xuan skilfully argues that their counter-perspectives effectively deliver a series of re-envisionings that restore Puccini's original concerns with the competing ideologies of hierarchical power. The essay, like Xu's, is rich in its suggestive analyses of the ways in which radical new translational interpretations can restore radical bite to our understanding of the classics. This emphasis on synchronicity, on the way in which the creative indeterminacy of translational discourse can restore diversity and relevance to a classical original, is in its own way a reminder of de Certeau's refusal, in *The writing of history* (1985), to accept the aporia of Western historiography, that is

https://doi.org/10.26034/cm.jostrans.2025.6937
© The Authors

the absolute differentiation between past and present. For de Certeau, the awareness of co-existence and the possibilities of re-absorption across apparent barriers of time are the defining principles of historical thinking. They are no less the creative qualities of translation as an anti-historicising practice, in the sense that Popper gives to historicism as the reading of history as predictable evolution.

It is precisely this quality that Jorge Braga Riera identifies in his analysis of the centrality of women on the Spanish Golden age stage. His essay provides an insightful and detailed account of well-known retranslations of Calderón's *La vida es sueño* [Life's a dream], showing how such classics can function as catalysts for gendered re-envisionings on, in this case, the Anglophone stage. The three retranslations — two British and one American, staged between 1983 and 2010 — on which Braga focuses are, in themselves, produced under materially very different times and moments, but together, they provide a powerful example of how extralinguistic agents, including notably social contexts, intervene in processes of both translation and reception, and serve to further emphasise the empowerment of female characterisation. In this sense, Rosaura, the female protagonist of Calderón's original, as Braga notes, is one of the most powerful women on the Golden Age stage, so much so that in her urge to correct injustice in a man's world she is obliged to cross-dress. Retranslation of the play offers its own interpretation of that urge in our contemporary circumstance.

Bei Hu's essay brings a different geographical and historical perspective to the mix, this time Singapore. Very little has been written to date on the role of translation in Singaporean theatre, a conspicuous deficit, given that Singapore itself is frequently referred to as a cultural melting pot. Hu examines the ways in which various cultural identities have been subsumed into attempts to construct a culturally homogeneous national identity, focusing on the conflated roles of arts activist, translator and playwright embodied in the work of Kuo Pao Kun, who died in 2002, and has been hailed as one of the great proponents of Singapore's multi-culturalism. Widely perceived as a rebellious Chinese-born non-conformist figure who stood in opposition to the Singaporean regime since the 1970s, Kuo's work contributed to a more tempered re-formulation of state identity. This is translator intervention at its conceivably most political, and is a powerful statement of the power of performance — in this case of Kuo's 1995 self-translated play *Descendants of the eunuch admiral* — which highlights and challenges the dismantling of different cultural identities, a policy that impoverished the postcolonial project that was the modernisation of the island city state.

This power of performance is the subject of Larisa Cercel's contribution. She argues that the translator frequently functions as a performer, turning their textual interpretation outwards in an act of representation that extends translator individuality and identity. But, more than this, she argues that the physicalised presence — or persona — of the translator, like that of the actior, contributes hugely to the projection of meaning. In this way, the essay deepens our understanding of translator embodiment by looking at a striking instance of the translator's own public performance of their own work. Central to this in Cercel's analysis are the impacts of voice and public persona on the effects of the performance. But, of equal interest in this case, is the identity of the performer himself and the circumstances in which these translational performances took place. The analysis is of a fascinating historical corpus

https://doi.org/10.26034/cm.jostrans.2025.6937
© The Authors

of Paul Celan's readings of his own poems and translations where, having lived through the 'collective madness that was Nazism', Celan seeks above all else to make heard a voice that stands unequivocally in opposition.

This developing emphasis on the performer as the embodiment of language continues in the next contribution, by Ye Tian and Guanpeng Wang. This time, however, the frame of analysis is ecological, focusing on how performance and the performer adapt and survive according to context, rather than Cercel's interest in the Jungian notion of the persona as key interface between the translator-performer and audience. That said, interesting parallels emerge between these two essays. While their essay discusses the development in China and North America of the popular Chinese comic form of cross-talk, a largely sketch-based double-act, it is no less concerned with the semiotics of performance in the very different spaces of the form's origins and those of its subsequent diaspora. Accordingly, their essay is no less concerned with the performative interrelationship between performer presence, audiences' cultural and social predisposition, and the play of historical and political forces that oscillates like an electrical current between both. Forces that are either left unaddressed or transformed into powerful connections, depending once again on interpreter choice and spectator attention.

The essay with which the collection closes broadens the range of forms and practices addressed by other contributors, this time to film and subtitling. But Lu Yan's central concern with censorship, as a phenomenon that has existed, both regulated and unregulated, in different ways and various processes across the wide stage of human history, makes it a fitting way to bring this special issue to a conclusion (itself necessarily provisional). Acknowledging at its outset the Chinese government's legal control over all aspects of media production and transmission, the essay inquires into the creative response that translators, in this case subtitlers, develop in order to circumvent the attentions of the censor's insistence on the externalised forms of what can be characterised as a form of state-sponsored political correctness. While the author is careful to recognise that the strictures of censorship can easily internalise themselves into the creative consciousness, she also argues that they can also foster powerfully innovative responses. Accordingly, the article rehearses many of the arguments about the complex choices to be made between artistic freedom tempered by responsiveness to and anxiety about audience, and circumstantial liberty as an anything-goes arena of performance and exhibition. In these terms, this engages with the polarising debate between necessary constraints around artistic freedom and the desideratum of total licence, returning to the contested ground between moral responsibility and libertarianism that was so clearly demarcated by John Stuart Mill (1859). Be that as it may, the same ground continues to be contested in recent years, particularly by practitioners (chief among them comedians) anxious about the official and unofficial policing of their performances. It is a debate reminiscent in turn of the possibilist-impossibilist controversy of Francoist Spain, where oppositional playwrights felt forced to declare whether they would choose to write under the conditions of militant censorhip, or to silence their own voices.

3. Conclusions

https://doi.org/10.26034/cm.jostrans.2025.6937
© The Authors

Perhaps silence should never be an option, even if those of us who write or perform our translations in public are often concerned that we are unwittingly providing evidence to the prosecution. This special issue is about the refusal to fall silent and go away. Instead, it considers various strategies and contexts through which translation and performance combine to offer acts of resistance. We argued earlier that theatre and translation are naturally at the forefront of an epistemology of resistance, because both inevitably query the stability of language as a form of representation, prompting a constant engagement with the complex entanglements of human relatedness. There is no limit or control that can be ascribed to that engagement. It develops and changes across time and space, that themselves function as complex folds of consciousness. And indeed, the perceptive reader will not only find in this special issue very distinct translational and performative responses to the immediacy of contexts of reception, but also a number of what we might think of as significant variations on the theme of resistance.

It is not the job of editors to suggest a resolution to such variations. Especially not in a special issue that is concerned with the individual and collective unfreedoms that we all inevitably experience in different parts of our lives. Nevertheless, at the heart of this collection is the conviction that the making of theatre and the writing of translations give us a powerful means of contesting those unfreedoms, and in doing so to explode the self-serving pieties and peddled commodifications of quietism.

References

Appiah, K. A. (2007). *Cosmopolitanism: Ethics in a world of strangers*. Norton & Company.

Benjamin, W. (1996). *Selected writings, volume 1: 1913–1926*. Harvard University Press.

de Certeau, M. (1985). *The writing of history*. Columbia University Press.

Everett, P. (2024). *James*. Doubleday.

Hunter, J. D. (1991). *Culture wars: The struggle to define America.* Basic Books.

Johnston, D. (2013). *The lady boba: A woman of little sense*. Oberon.

Krieger, L. H. (1995). The content of our categories: A cognitive bias approach to discrimination. *Stanford Law Review,* 47, pp. 1161–1248.

Mill, J. S. (1859). *On liberty*. Google Books. https://www.google.co.uk/books/edition/On_Liberty/GdxZAAAAcAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&printsec=frontcover.

Popper, K. (2002). *The poverty of historicism.* Routledge Classics.

Rich, A. (1972). When we dead awaken: Writing as re-vision. *College English*, *34*(1), 18–30. https://doi.org/10.2307/375215

https://doi.org/10.26034/cm.jostrans.2025.6937
© The Authors