

Transcultural Tempests: Dev Virahsawmy's *Toufann*, A Mauritian Fantasy

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Abstract:

Even though Shakespearean adaptations and rewritings initially emerged in a post-colonial context under conditions of asymmetrical power relations that were operative under colonialism (the “writing back rewrite”), today, a different kind of cultural synergy characterises the “individual rewrites” of Shakespeare emerging from postcolonial spaces. In the latter, specific national, local, regional or indigenous contexts help to redefine and create new dimensions in which to understand the Shakespearean play in another light. This is gradually being acknowledged in debates on “postcolonial Shakespeares”, wherein we have witnessed a paradigm shift from the literary practice of “writing back” and “rewriting,” which aims at correcting colonial misrepresentations, towards a more differentiated, multifaceted and necessarily complex approach of transcultural adaptation. This essay makes the argument above by way of a close reading of Dev Virahsawmy's *Toufann, A Mauritian Fantasy* (1999), an English translation of a play originally written in Mauritian Creole that is an adaptation of Shakespeare's *The Tempest, King Lear, Hamlet* and *Othello*.

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