

## **6B—Contested Knowledges**

*Decolonizing Shakespeare Collections in Academic Libraries, Michael Dudley (University of Winnipeg).*

Academic library collections concerning the biography of William Shakespeare are overwhelmingly dominated by the orthodox view that the poet-playwright was a “genius blessed by Nature,” with few available books questioning his actual identity, the real-world sources of his knowledge, and his relationship with Elizabethan political power. Applying a postcolonial lens to this conventional view of “The Bard” reveals its historic correspondence with (and reproduction of) the myth of the “genius of the West,” thereby legitimizing Western chauvinism and colonialism. However, the taboo in the academy against questioning Shakespeare’s identity leaves unexamined one of the last remaining bastions of Western exceptionalism.