

## **Heavenly eloquence: *Romeo and Juliet* and linguistic conflict**

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**Abstract:** There have been several multilingual productions of *Romeo and Juliet* since the late 1980s, with the Capulets and the Montagues speaking two different languages, the Prince possibly a third. In this paper such productions in Belgium, Finland, Germany, Russia, Switzerland and Ukraine (and one in Canada for comparison) are discussed in view of the problems and opportunities multilingualism can create. Conflicts tend to be better motivated and harder to resolve, the philosophy of the productions tends to vary between political commitment and theatrical experiment, and language as the basis of theatrical communication is devalued.

**Keywords:** performance, multilingualism, Shakespeare, postmodernism, Belgium, Canada, Finland, Germany, Russia, Switzerland