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SHAKESPEARE AND CULTURAL APPROPRIATION

Vanessa I. Corredera, L. Monique Pittman, and
Geoffrey Way



Remedial Uses of Shakespeare

An Afterword

Alexa Alice Joubin and Elizabeth Rivlin

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In Miguel Sapochnik’s post-apocalyptic film *Finch* (2021), which was released for streaming on Apple TV+ during the pandemic of Covid-19, the name and plays of Shakespeare are deployed as a reminder of human civilization. Finch Weinberg (played by Tom Hanks), the sole survivor, builds a humanoid robot to keep him company. In one philosophical scene that probes the question of what it means to be human, Finch, in a heat and ultraviolet-resistant protective suit, takes the as yet unnamed android into a derelict theater to salvage food. The marquee above the theater entrance indicates it is the venue for “Springfield Shakespeare Festival” (Figure 9.1). Inside the lobby, the android passes in front of a poster of a production of *Much Ado About Nothing* and spontaneously offers an analysis of that play in his monotonic, synthetic voice. His analysis, casual as it may seem, echoes the theme of post-apocalyptic mistrust: “This is a play by William Shakespeare, a dramatic comedy about love, deception, and other human misunderstands—.” Interestingly, while the android may appear to be analyzing the play, he is simply paraphrasing the taglines of the production, reading the analysis directly off of the poster.



Figure 9.1 Finch (Tom Hanks), on the left, and his robot (voice by Caleb Landry Jones), on the right, in front of a Shakespeare theater in *Finch*, directed by Miguel Sapochnik (Amblin, 2021).

As it turns out, this is a pivotal scene where the android becomes sentient, discovering himself for the first time in a mirror in the lobby. In a later scene, the android, in more fluid speech, tells Finch that he wishes to be named “William Shakespeare.” To have a name, for the android, is to be human, and to choose Shakespeare implies that at some level the idea of Shakespeare encapsulates human identity. Here, “Shakespeare” fixes the deficiencies of the android and gives him a “soul.” This instance represents a popular approach to what we call remedial uses of Shakespeare, which we propose as a specific vocabulary for describing the wide range of cultural appropriations of Shakespeare that Vanessa I. Corredera, L. Monique Pittman, and Geoffrey Way conceptualize so beautifully in their introduction to this volume.

As the editors suggest, cultural appropriation can be an exploitative act but need not be; it all depends on what users do with Shakespeare. Some of the chapters in this volume stress the unequal status of the parties engaged in appropriative exchange or discuss appropriations that deploy Shakespeare to protect conventional power structures. Appropriations are rarely negotiated on a level playing field, especially when it comes to Shakespeare, because of the canon’s long history of association with cultural elites and prestige. Other chapters argue for the subversive and counter-hegemonic effects of cultural appropriation. Marginalized agents have the power to expose and correct power imbalances. In other words, this volume not only addresses a wide range of intercultural and global appropriations of Shakespeare, it also complicates any simple definition of how cultural appropriation works and what ethical effects it might produce.

In *Finch*, Shakespeare is reparative for an essence that we might call human, but remedial uses of Shakespeare are not always ethically benign. Indeed, remedial uses of Shakespeare, like cultural appropriations more generally, can offer disparate or contradictory implications. The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines “remedial” in two ways, first as “providing or offering a remedy, tending to relieve or redress something,” and second in an educational context, as “basic educational skills to help schoolchildren who have not achieved the proficiency necessary for them to be able to learn other subjects with their contemporaries” (*OED*). These two definitions represent the two ends of a spectrum of remedial uses of Shakespeare that mirror the range of possibilities this volume ascribes to cultural appropriation.

If we apply the first definition, with its connotations of curing, healing, and the provision of relief or even reparations, “remedial” uses would seem to carry a strong ethical charge, suggesting either that the adaptation uses Shakespeare to counter harm, or in a more astringent sense, that the work seeks to remedy injustices or power asymmetries that inform Shakespeare’s works. For instance, the Oregon Shakespeare Festival’s *The Winter’s Tale* (2016), directed by Desdemona Chiang, provided remedies in the form of social justice and inclusiveness. This rare Asian American production featured an Asian American cast and alternated the settings of premodern China and America’s Old West to create a remedial, culturally hybrid space. Chiang selected the play because it features strong themes of awakening, restoration, and social healing to which many audiences gravitate.

In this production of *The Winter's Tale*, cultural appropriation brings together elements of Anglo-European and East Asian cultures in an exchange along the lines outlined by Richard A. Rogers and cited by Corredera, Pittman, and Way in the introduction to this volume, defying the assumption that cultural appropriation always entails theft or seizure. The production deploys this hybrid culture to build a socially inclusive playing space. In the Director Interview, Chiang said in unambiguous terms that, with this production, she finally had “a sense of ownership over the [Shakespeare] material,” which is “a very validating thing” when American theater is dominated by “Eurocentric and Western perspectives.” The risk of tokenizing Asian Americans aside, said Chiang, the production “is a sign of solidarity and support” (Oregon Shakespeare Festival). Indeed, the hybrid cultural and social space mirrored the minority actors, who were at once insiders and outsiders in the United States. One example of cultural hybridity was this production’s stylized presentation of “exit, pursued by a bear.” Upon arriving in Bohemia, Antigonus encounters what appears to be a large, brown rock center stage. A series of lightning flashes shows, first, the face of a bear, followed by its claws, and eventually its body. The rock comes to life, turns around, and reveals itself to be a bear in the form of a Japanese Bunraku-style puppet. One puppeteer can be seen driving the bear’s head while two others are in charge of each of the bear’s front limbs. The bear devours Antigonus, who “exits” through its mouth. This is a remarkable transition from the tragic mood in the first half of the play to the comic pastoral mode in the second half. The creative decision is hybrid both generically and culturally, ameliorating not only the tragic suffering of the play’s first half but also Shakespeare’s western, Anglo canonical exclusivity. Chiang’s production is a remedial use that seems curative to us, since—as a dialogic process and product—it simultaneously takes elements from Asian and American cultures and “donates” hybrid new elements to these cultures.

The second definition of “remedial” invokes the educational context which many people might think of when they hear the word. Here, the “remedy” involves providing skills and knowledge that students “ought” to possess but do not, such as the inmates in the prison literacy program in Canadian writer Margaret Atwood’s *Hag-Seed* (2016), a novel that adapts *The Tempest*. As Elizabeth A. Charlebois shows in her chapter in this volume on *Hag-Seed*, in this scenario of remedial schooling, the power lies with the person who is “offering” Shakespeare to those in need of rescue. The recipients of remedial Shakespeare are imagined as having gaps or deficiencies in their previous education or perhaps in their circumstances outside of school that require compensatory measures. As applied to Shakespeare, the model of remedial education might seem to suggest that Shakespeare’s cultural power is offered remedially to receptive subjects through appropriations that mediate between classes, genders, races, cultures, nations, or other hierarchical constructs, with Shakespeare taken to stand on a superior rung in each category. Uses of Shakespeare for remedial education reflect the troubling power dynamics that can adhere to cultural appropriation. Far from redistributing or equalizing power, the effect may be, as in *Hag-Seed*, to reinforce the power differential, shoring up, as Charlebois writes, “colonialist narratives and persistent ideologies of race” (p. 125).

Not only does “remedial” have diverging definitions, but it is also proximate to “remediation,” in the sense given it by Jay David Bolter and Richard Grusin, namely, “the representation of one medium in another” (45). If we conjoin this definition to acts of remedying or correcting, the implication is that such acts occur in—and as a result of—the process of media transformation. As Shakespeare’s plays are appropriated to the form of a postcolonial Sudanese novel or Spanish television drama, the respective subjects of Ambereen Dadabhoy’s and Elena Bandín’s chapters, they are fitted by their appropriators to provide various cures, compensations, or corrective measures. Tayeb Salih’s *Season of Migration to the North* (1966), which Dadabhoy discusses in relation to *Othello*, represents novelistically the experiences of African women and thus provides a remedy for their erasure from the play and from its surrounding critical discourses. By contrast, the official Spanish state television productions of Shakespeare’s plays about which Bandín writes offer a disciplined ideological corrective to productions based on the work of Spanish writers that potentially would have been less easily controlled by Franco’s regime. In this example, remediation from play text to television production, bringing Shakespeare into living rooms across Spain, carries with it an erasure of alternatives, among them interpretations of the plays that express political critique or dissidence. Remediation as defined by Bolter and Grusin carries a recursive charge, turning us back to “the older medium” (47) even when it appears to be effaced by the newer one. As this volume reminds us, the remedy is never simply a replacement for or erasure of what went before, but more often a creation of hybrid cultural elements.

Both senses of the remedial—that of repairing social injustice and that of remedial education—thus have an application to power, offering a consolidation or redistribution of resources. Cultural appropriation, in this sense, can give agency to artists who do things with the canon, even though the act of appropriation can also imply a hierarchical relation in which Shakespeare and his authoritative or culturally sanctioned spokespeople remain entrenched above those who are seen as lacking “proficiency” or other resources. “Power” itself, as the chapters in this volume show, is multifaceted: it can convey the most commonly understood sense of “power over,” as in coercion, “power with,” as in a collaborative relationship, the more generative “power to” a community, and individuated “power within,” as in individual expressions of self-worth. Shakespeare’s remedial uses participate in processes of communal and identity formation within and across cultures that these varying vectors of power expose.

To illustrate some of the many possible remedial uses of Shakespeare, we draw examples from our respective areas of research: for Elizabeth, contemporary American novels; for Alexa, global films. In what follows, Elizabeth discusses Lois Leveen’s novel *Juliet’s Nurse*, published in 2014 by Simon & Schuster, which offers a remedial use of Shakespeare directed toward the historical archives. The novel also suggests that popular understandings of *Romeo and Juliet* are in need of remedy. Finally, the text thematizes its historical and cultural work in the form of the Nurse’s deep ethics of care. Alexa examines Tom Gustafson’s *Were the World Mine* (2008), a queer film set in a private boys’ school, which culminates in a performance

of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* that miraculously sets things right in an anti-gay town. The play-within-a-film creates inclusive playing spaces that host social reparation, even if only on a limited-time basis. The act of (day) dreaming creates plot parallels to Shakespeare's *Dream*. As such, the film offers a corrective to social injustice in Shakespeare's Athenian court and "repairs" anti-gay attitudes in our times. Both *Juliet's Nurse* and *Were the World Mine* are cultural appropriations that aim for curative and caring effects, and both expose imbalance in social power structures.

Lois Leveen's *Juliet's Nurse* uses the novelistic genre of historical fiction to offer an educational antidote to versions of pre-modern history that have neglected the lives of non-elite women. From this perspective, Shakespeare functions as a recognizable hook to engage readers in a historical re-examination. Leveen has a doctorate in literature and ample experience with historical research, and she has gone so far as to say that "I think of my novels as a way to teach history to a broad audience" ("The Blotted Line"). This pedagogical imperative underlies Leveen's most important creative decision: to convert the Nurse—a memorable secondary character in Shakespeare's play—into her first-person narrator and heroine, whom she names Angelica (the name used by Lord Capulet in 4.4 to address a character who may be the Nurse). Her representation of the Nurse's story covers far more than the events of a few days dramatized by Shakespeare; Leveen begins instead with the birth of the Nurse's daughter, some fourteen years previous, and traces the Nurse's life past the end of the play. She also takes advantage of the introspective narrative voice afforded by novelistic form to render, through the Nurse's memories, earlier moments from her life. The specifics of Angelica's relationship with her husband, Pietro, along with their parenting of six sons, all now victims of the plague, along with meticulously researched details about food, clothing, medicine, childbirth, and wet-nursing, help emphasize the materiality of fourteenth-century Verona, and, in particular, its stark class divides. Angelica is treated with disdain by her employers, Lord and Lady Cappelletto, and even by Friar Lorenzo, who cautions her about her relationship to the infant Juliet: "Remember your place... . You are only her wet-nurse" (Leveen, *Juliet's Nurse* 68). One of Leveen's primary goals in giving the Nurse's character a full and sympathetic life story is "to draw readers to a fictionalized feminist recuperation of a mostly forgotten female labor history" (Leveen, "The Play's the Thing" 13). Thus, Angelica is intended to represent medieval non-elite working women more generally, and *Juliet's Nurse* provides a means to remedy gaps and absences in the historical archives regarding their lives.

With these methods and objectives, Leveen is doing something not altogether unrelated to Saidiya Hartman's method of blending fiction and history to redress—and also expose—archival silence. Gaps in our collective cultural memory create archival "silence" because certain stories are overlooked or removed from sight altogether, as Alexa discusses in a recent essay (Joubin 99–100). Hartman has asserted that "care is the antidote to violence," a proposition that is especially apropos for the relationship of the novel to historical archives, if violence is taken to refer not only to physical aggression but also to the harms caused by omission ("In the Wake"). Kathryn Vomero Santos makes a similar point in her chapter in this volume, arguing that Aditi Brennan Kapil's *Imogen Says Nothing* imagines "archival

absences and accidents as opportunities for revision and repair” (p. TK). Whether the focus is on a “ghost character” like Imogen in the 1600 quarto of *Much Ado About Nothing* or a character like the Nurse, usually consigned to a marginal role, appropriators make strategic and ethical use of that which is erased or minimized in Shakespeare. If, as Leveen has stated, “*Juliet’s Nurse* plays on Shakespeare’s place in popular memory” to accomplish its pedagogical aims, then Shakespeare is remedial in the sense that leveraging one of his most famous plays can help make visible that which has too often remained invisible (Leveen, “The Play’s the Thing” 13).

While in some senses Shakespeare seems merely to be a convenient vehicle for Leveen, in others, *Juliet’s Nurse* aims to remedy conventional readings and popular understandings of Shakespeare’s play. Leveen has written that “there’s a striking difference between what people associate with *Romeo and Juliet* and what actually happens in the play” (Leveen, “The Play’s The Thing” 2). Adaptations like *West Side Story* and Franco Zeffirelli’s 1968 film have cued audiences to see the story as a tragic romance of young love. In telling a story that centers instead around the inner life of a middle-aged woman and the pressures that younger women face, Leveen corrects what she sees as a popular misconception about Shakespeare’s play, particularly about the romantic ideal of Romeo, whom she jokingly called a “dirtbag” in a piece for *HuffPost* (“Romeo”). Having observed the number of visitors who flock to tourist sites in Verona that are marketed in relation to the play, Leveen concluded that “there was an audience hungry for the story revealed in *Juliet’s Nurse*” (Leveen, “Author’s Note,” *Juliet’s Nurse* 367). She might say that it is readers themselves who are eager (even if they do not quite know it) for an alternative version of *Romeo and Juliet*, one that challenges their assumptions about the nature of the story being told.

Finally, *Juliet’s Nurse* thematizes the ethics of care, modeling within its narrative how an appropriation might demonstrate or provide care. The novel begins with a midwife helping Angelica give birth to her daughter. Believing that her own baby has died, Angelica is eager to become the wet nurse for the baby Juliet: “I need no remedies, no potions. I need only a child to draw out what is already thick in me” (Leveen, *Juliet’s Nurse* 16). Juliet is the remedy to the Nurse’s grief and loss, and in return, the Nurse provides the physical and emotional nurturance that Juliet’s supposed mother, Lady Cappelletto, does not. The question of whether Friar Lorenzo has switched Angelica’s baby with the Cappellettos’, as Angelica comes to believe is the case, remains unresolved in the novel. What seems to matter more is that Angelica protects and tends to Juliet deeply and wholeheartedly, and that, as Juliet reaches adolescence, she reciprocates that care, as when the Nurse is injured in a brawl between the feuding families: “All the love with which I’ve fed her, she gladly feeds back to me. She may not have the learned friar’s knowledge of medicinals, but her tenderest mercies do me more good than any holyman could” (243). In fact, such loving remedies are presented in counterpoint to the Friar’s deceitful “remedy,” the potion that has put Juliet “into a sleep so deep that she seems a corpse” (326). Juliet’s seeming death soon becomes a real one when she commits suicide, hewing closely to Shakespeare’s play. But while Juliet perishes, the Nurse survives. She

mourns Juliet's death alongside her earlier losses, but Leveen emphasizes in the novel's ending that Angelica continues to live by an ethics of care, now demonstrated through her tender maintenance of the bees that Pietro had kept. When she accidentally kills a bee, she sheds tears, thinking that if her husband Pietro were there, "he'd remind me of what I already know: loving what's in this life is our only remedy for death" (362). This phrase "love what's in this life ..." appears on at least one previous occasion in the text, and it functions as a life-affirming mantra for Angelica. It also conjures something of Leveen's remedial use of Shakespeare. The author has noted that she was concerned with rising rates of teen suicide and suggested that her novel might "spark conversations about how we can keep real people we love feeling secure enough to make different choices" ("Five Questions"). *Juliet's Nurse* offers its appropriation of *Romeo and Juliet* as a manifestation of this sort of care.

Leveen's remedial use of Shakespeare has limits, which are worth pointing out, not to criticize her novel, but to observe that cultural appropriations are often multivalent, applying a transformative remedial vision in some areas while leaving other aspects of Shakespeare's canonicity unquestioned and intact. In the example of *Juliet's Nurse*, *Romeo and Juliet* is often assumed to be a play about white people, and Leveen's novel, though it has strong remedial aims in relation to gender and class, does nothing to challenge that racial orthodoxy. An appropriation can, like Desdemona Chiang's production of *The Winter's Tale*, invite audiences or readers to reflect on discrimination against minorities or, more metatextually, on Shakespeare's historical enlistment in structures of white supremacy. But that kind of work is outside the remit of *Juliet's Nurse*, perhaps in part because of the conventional understanding within the publishing industry of the novel's genre—European historical fiction—and who buys and reads it. Institutional pressures are important to see clearly for their role in shaping the effects of cultural appropriations. The works we analyze in this volume are not produced in a vacuum and are not immune to the restrictions placed by various gatekeepers in the theater, film, and publishing industries.

A remedial vision is, we might say, built into Tom Gustafson's film *Were the World Mine* (2008), with its target for remediation not necessarily Shakespeare's plays but rather our own world. The film takes advantage of the metatheatrical qualities of dreaming in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. High schooler Timothy (Tanner Cohen) has a crush on rugby team captain Jonathan (Nathaniel David Becker), but, being openly gay, he is rejected by his mother and bullied by his peers and the scripture-quoting townspeople in Kingston, Illinois. As a result, Timothy daydreams frequently about a world where he can be himself, a world without rugby-enhanced heterosexual masculinity. That world is eventually sanctioned, and even sanctified, by Shakespeare's text in a school musical. The film's title hints at reparative changes by referencing its outcast protagonist Timothy's wishes and Helena's plea to Hermia in *Dream*: "Were the world mine, ... / The rest I'd give to be to you translated./O, teach me how you look, and with what art/You sway the motion of Demetrius' heart" (1.1.194–197). Like Helena, Timothy wishes to be transformed into a different person, someone who fits in and owns the social space.

The act of dreaming serves as more than a narrative device that creates plot parallels to Shakespeare's *Dream*. The film interpolates scenes of a distracted Timothy in class, during gym practice, or out and about, with dream sequences composed of point-of-view shots from his perspective that portray alternate realities as musical theater, foreshadowing his eventual, decisive role in the musical *Dream*. He does not just dream idly. He actively shapes his alternative reality. Upon reading *A Midsummer Night's Dream* in his English class, Timothy concocts a Puck-inspired potion, which he carries around in a floral spray (Figure 9.2), and uses it to make many characters fall in love with same-sex partners, including rugby coach Driskill and the headmaster, both of whom in an earlier scene oppose casting boys in female roles in Shakespeare. However, this new social space is not always inclusive. Before Timothy manages to anoint everyone, the straight characters show disgust when being approached by same-sex characters who are now homosexual, echoing the initial disgust of Lysander and Demetrius for Helena, whom they deem undesirable. There is a connection between Helena in Shakespeare and queer characters in the film, since both are social outcasts. The limits of a queer cultural appropriation of Shakespeare are thus made evident, even as the film imagines its potential.



Figure 9.2 Timothy (Tanner Cohen), on the right, holding the floral spray as Puck during rehearsal of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* in Tom Gustafson's *Were the World Mine* (SPEAKproductions, 2008).

In the final scene, which depicts the closing moment of the students' performance of *Dream*, the teacher tells Timothy, "it's time to fly." An underdog figure, Timothy takes wing as he delivers the epilogue with confidence as both Puck and himself. He locks eyes with his mother in the audience, who is now more supportive, as he carries on with Puck's thinly veiled faux apology. As he speaks, fairies, played by his classmates—formerly hardened by rugby and now "civilized" by Shakespeare—dance joyously around him. The "civilizing" process here involves an ethics of care that embraces queer identities. Puck's epilogue carves out a sanctified space for making amends. At this juncture, the three concentric circles of social and fantastical spaces

—Timothy’s dreams, the play’s world, and Morgan Hill High and the town of Kingston—finally converge to become a queer positive space.

We close by considering how the framework of remedial uses of Shakespeare might, as Santos puts it in this volume, provide “a set of tools with which to build our field anew” (p. tk). One of the goals of such remediation, as Santos’ formulation suggests, would be to reform critical and pedagogical practices surrounding Shakespeare, as well as the various literary, theatrical, cinematic, and other fields that Shakespeare has helped orient. A remedial lens is consistent with recent efforts within early modern and Shakespeare studies to reorient practices around social justice and inclusiveness (Dadabhoy and Mehdizadeh; Eklund and Hyman; Espinosa; Hall; Loftis; Thompson and Turchi). In fact, remedial interpretations as a mode have informed the work of researchers and practitioners since the 1980s. There are reservations worth noting: Rita Felski astutely observes that professional critics can fall prey to the urge to excavate ideologically appealing messages from narratives and to expose hidden truths and counterintuitive cultural meanings that amateur readers do not see. And Courtney Lehmann has critiqued a “salvational” approach like those taken by some instructors in Shakespeare programs in prisons, in which “Shakespeare is clearly invested with an under-problematized and almost mystical capacity to transform lives” (91, 92). Theirs are well-articulated suspicions, which express the tendency of some scholars to superimpose their own priorities and values on both a work and its reception.

Yet it is also the case that remedial uses can make the canon and the field more inclusive and therefore more appealing to new generations of artists, readers, and students. As Alexa and Lisa S. Starks argue, education is reparative “when it is designed from the ground up to be truly inclusive” (28–29). There are many ways in which remedial uses of Shakespeare can work in the classroom to repair and to manifest care, rather than to enforce the notion that students lack cultural capital that they can only gain through passively absorbing Shakespeare. One approach might be to juxtapose examples of cultural appropriation with which students might be familiar—for example, Kim Kardashian wearing Fulani braids in her hair—with cultural appropriations like the works we discuss earlier that unpack Shakespeare’s monolithic authority and allow creators and users to critique and even reassemble it from new vantage points. In studying how authors, theater directors, and filmmakers appropriate Shakespeare to meet varied cultural priorities, students come to recognize themselves as potential agents of appropriation, with attendant power and responsibility. This volume, with its innovative treatment of cultural appropriation in relation to Shakespeare, opens up exciting pedagogical possibilities and invites us to think collaboratively toward new creative and critical horizons.

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Contributors

Elena Bandín is Associate Professor at the University of León (Spain) where she teaches undergraduate and postgraduate courses focused on English literature and gender studies. She has done extensive research on the reception of Shakespeare's works in Spain with a particular interest in translation, performance, censorship, and screen adaptation. Since 2008, she has been a member of the international research project "The Reception of Shakespeare's Works in Spanish and European Culture," coordinated by the University of Murcia. She has published articles in national and international journals such as *SEDERI Yearbook*, *Cognitive Linguistics*, and *Critical Survey*, and has contributed chapters to several international volumes including *Shakespeare and Tyranny: Regimes of Reading in Europe and Beyond* (CSP, 2014) and *Romeo and Juliet in European Culture* (John Benjamins, 2017). More recently, she has co-edited *Othello in European Culture* (John Benjamins, 2022).

Elizabeth A. Charlebois is Professor of English at St. Mary's College of Maryland where she teaches courses in Shakespeare and early modern drama as well as contemporary American theatre and adaptation. Most relevant to her chapter in this collection on cultural appropriation in Margaret Atwood's *Hag-Seed* are her articles on adapting Shakespeare in both men and women's prisons as the Scholar in Residence with St. Louis-based Prison Performing Arts. See her "With Rhyme and Reason: Hip Hop Hamlet in Prison" in *Text and Presentation*. Ed. Graley Herren. 2016, pp. 87–107 and "'Their Minds Transfigured So Together': Imaginative Transformation and Transcendence in A Midsummer Night's Dream" in *Performing New Lives: Prison Theater*. Ed. Jonathan Shailor. Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 2011, pp. 257–269. She earned her PhD in English from Northwestern University.

Vanessa I. Corredera is Chair of and an Associate Professor in the Department of English at Andrews University. Her research focuses on the intersections of Shakespeare, race, gender, and representation in performance, adaptations and appropriations, and popular culture and has appeared in *Borrowers and Lenders*, *Shakespeare Quarterly*, *EMLS*, *Literature/Film Quarterly*, *The Journal of American Studies*, and *Literature Compass*, as well as several edited collections. Her monograph, *Reanimating Shakespeare's Othello in Post-Racial America* (2022), examines the racial framings and representational choices that create either anti-black or anti-racist Othellos during an era that supposedly did not "see" race. She is currently

working on a project exploring strategies of anti-domination in modern Shakespearean performance.

Ambereen Dadabhoy is an Associate Professor of literature at Harvey Mudd College. Her research focuses on cross-cultural encounters in the early modern Mediterranean and race and religion in early modern English drama. She investigates the various discourses that construct and reinforce human difference and how they are mobilized in the global imperial projects that characterize much of the early modern period. Ambereen's work also seeks to bridge the past to the present to illustrate how early modern racial and religious discourses and their prejudices manifest in our own contemporary moment. Currently, she is working on a project that explores the representation of Islam in Shakespeare.

Ruben Espinosa is an Associate Professor of English at Arizona State University and Associate Director of the Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies. He is the author of *Shakespeare on the Shades of Racism* (2021), *Masculinity and Marian Efficacy in Shakespeare's England* (2011), and co-editor of *Shakespeare and Immigration* (2014). He is currently at work on his next monograph, *Shakespeare on the Border: Language, Legitimacy and La Frontera*.

Valerie M. Fazel is an Instructor at Arizona State University. Her work has been published in *Shakespeare*, *The Sundial*, and *Borrowers and Lenders*, as well as several edited volumes on Shakespeare and appropriation. With Louise Geddes, she has co-authored *The Shakespeare Multiverse: Fandom as Literary Praxis* (Routledge, 2021) and co-edited *The Shakespeare User: Creative and Critical Appropriation in a Networked Culture* (Palgrave, 2017) and *Variable Objects: Speculative Shakespeare Appropriation* (Edinburgh University Press, 2021).

Louise Geddes is a Professor of English at Adelphi University. Her work has been published in *Shakespeare Bulletin*, *Shakespeare Survey*, and *Medieval and Renaissance Drama in England* and she is the author of *Appropriating Shakespeare: A Cultural History of Pyramus and Thisbe*. With Valerie M. Fazel, she has co-authored *The Shakespeare Multiverse: Fandom as Literary Praxis* (Routledge, 2021) and co-edited *The Shakespeare User: Creative and Critical Appropriation in a Networked Culture* (Palgrave, 2017) and *Variable Objects: Speculative Shakespeare Appropriation* (Edinburgh University Press, 2021). She is the General Co-Editor of *Borrowers and Lenders: A Journal of Shakespeare Appropriation*.

Katherine Gillen is an Associate Professor of English at Texas A&M University–San Antonio. She is the author of *Chaste Value: Economic Crisis, Female Chastity, and the Production of Social Difference on Shakespeare's Stage* (Edinburgh University Press, 2017), and several essays on race, gender, and economics in early modern drama and Shakespeare appropriation. With Kathryn Vomero Santos and Adrianna M. Santos, she co-founded the Borderlands Shakespeare Colectiva and is co-editing an anthology of Borderlands Shakespeare plays, forthcoming from ACRMS Press (forthcoming 2023).

Helen A. Hopkins completed her collaborative PhD at Birmingham City University/the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust (SBT) in 2021. The AHRC Midlands4Cities funded project, entitled “‘Gifts of the World’?: Creating and Contextualising the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust’s International Collection,” represents the first scholarly account of the SBT’s international collection. Helen’s research broadly encompasses contemporary and historical uses of Shakespeare, especially in terms of diplomatic responses to his cultural capital and uses for soft power, and exploring the potential in Shakespeare’s cultural capital and texts for a generative, inclusive, anti-colonial form of diplomacy that might redress Shakespeare’s ongoing use as a tool of Anglo/European cultural supremacy.

Sujata Iyengar, a professor of English at the University of Georgia, is author of *Shades of Difference: Mythologies of Skin Color and Race in Early Modern England* (Penn Press, 2005), *Shakespeare’s Medical Language* (Arden Bloomsbury, 2011), *Shakespeare and Adaptation Theory* (Arden Bloomsbury, forthcoming), and editor of *Disability, Health, and Happiness in the Shakespearean Body* (Routledge, 2015). With Nathalie Vienne-Guerrin, she co-edited the peer-reviewed Open Educational Resource Focus on “Henry V” (<https://scalar.usc.edu/works/henry-v/index>). With Miriam Jacobson and the late Christy Desmet, she co-edited the *Handbook to Shakespeare and Global Appropriation* (Routledge, 2020). With Matt Kozusko and Louise Geddes, she co-edits the award-winning, born-digital, multimedia periodical *Borrowers and Lenders: The Journal of Shakespeare and Appropriation*. Iyengar’s many essays on Shakespeare, adaptation, early modern race, book history, and feminist art have appeared in journals such as *Shakespeare Quarterly*, *MaRDiE*, and *Criticism*, and in collections from the University of Toronto Press, Cambridge University Press, and Routledge, among others. She is currently completing “Shakespeare and the Art of the Book,” a monograph that investigates Shakespearean artists’ books as aesthetic, critical, and editorial interventions and that synthesizes book history, literacy studies, and the work of adaptation.

Alexa Alice Joubin (<https://ajoubin.org/>) writes about race, gender, and cultural globalization. She teaches in the Departments of English, Women’s, Gender and Sexuality Studies, Theatre, International Affairs, and East Asian Languages and Literatures at George Washington University in Washington, D.C., where she co-founded and co-directs the Digital Humanities Institute. Her latest book, *Shakespeare & East Asia*, was published by Oxford University Press in 2021. She co-authored *Race* with Martin Orkin, which was published in Routledge’s New Critical Idiom series in 2019. Her (co)edited books include *Sinophone Adaptations of Shakespeare: An Anthology, 1987–2007* (Palgrave, 2022), *Onscreen Allusions to Shakespeare* (Palgrave, 2022), *Local and Global Myths in Shakespearean Performance* (Palgrave, 2018), and *Shakespeare and the Ethics of Appropriation* (Palgrave, 2014).

Natalia Khomenko teaches English literature at York University (Toronto). Her ongoing research project, which has received funding from the Social Sciences and Humanities Council of Canada and York University, focuses on the reception

and interpretation of Shakespearean drama in early Soviet Russia. Natalia is currently co-editing a special issue of *Shakespeare Bulletin* on *A Midsummer Night's Dream* in global performance and working on an anthology of early Soviet adaptations of Shakespeare's plays for Palgrave. She will be stepping in as one of the general editors for *The Shakespearean International Yearbook* in 2023.

Joyce Green MacDonald is a Professor of English at the University of Kentucky. She is the author of two books—*Women and Race in Early Modern Texts* (Cambridge, 2002), and *Shakespearean Adaptation, Race, and Memory in the New World* (Palgrave, 2020)—and the editor of *Race, Ethnicity and Power in the Renaissance* (Fairleigh Dickinson, 1996). She has published several articles on race in sixteenth and seventeenth century literature and on women's writing in the period, as well as on Shakespearean adaptation and performance. A former trustee of the Shakespeare Association of America, she is currently editing Aphra Behn's *Abdelazer* for the University of Toronto Press and *Antony and Cleopatra* for Cambridge Shakespeare Editions.

Taarini Mookherjee is a Lecturer at Columbia University, New York, where she teaches Literature Humanities, a required course in the Core Curriculum. She previously taught British and Transnational Literature at SUNY, New Paltz. She received her PhD in English and Comparative Literature from Columbia University and holds a master's in Shakespeare Studies from King's College London. Her current book project, *Desifying Shakespeare: Performing Contemporary India in Adaptations*, focuses on contemporary Indian adaptations of Shakespeare in film and theatre. Her broader research and teaching fields include early modern drama, global Shakespeare, translation theory, postcolonial theory, and theatre and performance studies.

L. Monique Pittman is a Professor of English and Director of the J. N. Andrews Honors Program at Andrews University. Her recent articles (published in *Shakespeare Survey*, *Shakespeare Bulletin*, *Adaptation*, *Borrowers and Lenders*, *The Routledge Handbook of Shakespeare and Global Appropriation*) and previous monograph (*Authorizing Shakespeare on Film and Television: Gender, Class, and Ethnicity in Adaptation*, 2011) examine how constructions of Shakespearean authority shape the portrayal of gender, class, and racial identities in stage, film, and televisual performances and adaptations. Her most recent book, *Shakespeare's Contested Nations* (2022), explores representations of multicultural Britain in third-millennium performances on stage and television of Shakespeare's history plays.

Ingrid Radulescu graduated from Andrews University with a BA in English literature as a J.N. Andrews Honors Scholar. She is currently completing her Doctor of Jurisprudence at Indiana University Maurer School of Law. During her time in law school, she held a number of roles focused on pro bono work and student affairs and served as a Civil Justice Design and Equity Fellow for the Center for Law, Society & Culture.

Elizabeth Rivlin is an Associate Professor of English at Clemson University. She is the author of *The Aesthetics of Service in Early Modern England* (Northwestern University Press, 2012) and the co-editor, with Alexa Alice Joubin, of *Shakespeare and the Ethics of Appropriation* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2014). Her work has appeared or is forthcoming in journals that include *Arizona Quarterly*, *English Literary History*, *English Literary Renaissance*, and *Journal of American Studies*. She is currently completing a manuscript titled *Middlebrow Shakespeare: American Reading Publics*, supported by a summer stipend from the National Endowment for the Humanities.

Kathryn Vomero Santos is an Assistant Professor of English and co-director of the Humanities Collective at Trinity University in San Antonio, Texas. Her cross-historical research explores the intersections of performance with the politics of language, empire, and racial formation in the early modern period and in our contemporary moment. She is currently completing a book about race, multilingualism, and assimilation entitled *Shakespeare in Tongues* (Routledge, 2024). Her most recent articles—“¿Shakespeare para todos?” (*Shakespeare Quarterly*, 2022) and “Seeing Shakespeare: Narco Narratives and Neocolonial Appropriations of Macbeth in the U.S.–Mexico Borderlands” (*Literature Compass*, 2021)—examine the role that Shakespeare’s works have played in conversations about the ongoing coloniality of the U.S.–Mexico Borderlands region. With Katherine Gillen and Adrianna M. Santos, she co-founded the Borderlands Shakespeare Colectiva, and together, they are editing *The Bard in the Borderlands: An Anthology of Shakespeare Appropriations en La Frontera* for ACMRS Press (forthcoming 2023). Santos is also co-editing a collection of essays entitled *Ethical Appropriation in Shakespearean Performance* (Edinburgh University Press, forthcoming) with Louise Geddes and Geoffrey Way.

Ayanna Thompson is a Regents Professor of English at Arizona State University and the Director of the Arizona Center for Medieval & Renaissance Studies. In 2021, she was inducted into the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. Thompson is the author of many books including *Blackface* (Bloomsbury, 2021), *Shakespeare in the Theatre: Peter Sellars* (Arden Bloomsbury, 2018), *Teaching Shakespeare with Purpose: A Student-Centred Approach*, co-authored with Laura Turchi (Arden Bloomsbury, 2016), *Passing Strange: Shakespeare, Race, and Contemporary America* (Oxford University Press, 2011), and *Performing Race and Torture on the Early Modern Stage* (Routledge, 2008). Thompson serves as a Shakespeare Scholar in Residence at The Public Theater in New York, and currently serves on the boards of the Royal Shakespeare Company, the Folger Shakespeare Library, the National Parks Arts Foundation, and Play On Shakespeare. She is a past-President of the Shakespeare Association of America.

Geoffrey Way is the Manager of Publishing Futures for the Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, where he serves as the Managing Editor for *The Sundial* and *Borrowers and Lenders* and works with authors for ACMRS Press. He is also the cofounder and cohost of the podcast *Remixing the Humanities* with Devori Kimbro and Michael Noschka. He has published on Shakespeare, adaptation and appropriation, digital media, and performance in *Shakespeare Bulletin*, *Borrowers and*

Lenders, *Journal of Narrative Theory*, and *Humanities*, as well as the collections *Early Modern Studies After the Digital Turn*, *The Shakespeare User*, and *Games and Theatre in Early Modern England*. Currently, he is coediting a second collection entitled *Ethical Appropriation in Shakespearean Performance* (Edinburgh University Press, forthcoming) with Louise Geddes and Kathryn Vomero Santos, as well as a special issue of *Shakespeare* on “Public Shakespeares and New Media” with Deori Kimbro and Michael Noschka.

Introduction

Shakespeare and Cultural Appropriation in the Third Millennium

Vanessa I. Corredera, L. Monique Pittman, and Geoffrey Way

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“acts of appropriation are part of the process by which we make ourselves. Appropriating—taking something for one’s own use—need not be synonymous with exploitation. This is especially true of cultural appropriation. The ‘use’ one makes of what is appropriated is the crucial factor.” (11)

—bell hooks, *Art on My Mind: Visual Politics*

As bell hooks launches her meditation on art, representation, race, and cultural appropriation, she quickly and adeptly directs her reader to the nuances of *appropriation* as a concept. Yes, appropriation *may* be exploitative, but, she cautions, it “need not be.” Indeed, by asserting that appropriative acts are “part of the process by which we make ourselves,” hooks implies that appropriation is an inevitable, even necessary component of the constitutive process shaping identity. And yet, anyone familiar with hooks’s larger *oeuvre* understands that this positive valuation of appropriation is not a naïve, ideologically reparative move. hooks, after all, calls out the all-too-common practice of “eating the other,” of consuming precisely for the purpose of exploitation so often associated with cultural appropriation, arguing, “Currently, the commodification of difference promotes paradigms of consumption wherein whatever difference the Other inhabits is eradicated, exchanged, by a consumer cannibalism that not only displaces the Other but denies the significance of that Other’s history through a process of decontextualization” (*Black Looks* 31). hooks’s assertion of appropriation’s less exploitative possibility, to which we will return, thus directs one to the complexities of appropriation—its ubiquity, its potential to harm, yet its equal potential to positively shape the self—and above all, to the importance of “use” in distinguishing the ethical parameters of the appropriative act.

Such concerns similarly inform discussions of appropriation not as an undertaking between individuals or cultures (hooks’s context), but rather as an aesthetic

product, such as the works that make up Shakespeare adaptation and appropriation studies. Films, songs, novels, comic books, visual art, digital media, and stage performances all appropriate Shakespeare, a move at times understood as defined beside and against adaptation (Sanders), and at other times considered an inevitable part of the adaptive process (Hutcheon).¹ Following Christy Desmet and Sujata Iyengar, for us, the two terms are interrelated, both existing on a spectrum that explores the afterlives of Shakespeare's works, and for which the difference between the two is one of "degree rather than kind" (16). Frequently, that "difference in degree" depends on the appropriation having a "greater distance" from or distinct "political disposition" than the source material (Desmet and Iyengar 16). Our interest here is in taking up the very element hooks emphasizes—that of use—to conceptualize how use informs that distance and political disposition, and vice versa. As Valerie M. Fazel and Louise Geddes argue, the study of appropriation has to grapple with the fact that "what is collectively represented or defined as Shakespeare is continuously being reimagined and reconstructed in accordance with the *affordances of the medium in which he appears and the purposes to which he is put to task*" (2, emphasis ours). Building on the work of hooks, Desmet and Iyengar, Fazel and Geddes, and others, we employ frameworks that direct attention to the various *users* and *uses* of appropriations and interrogate their power dynamics to provide tools for better distinguishing between appropriation as exploitation or appropriation as a form of true appreciation. In other words, we want to offer a robust foundation for interrogating not just the line between exploitation and appreciation, but also how distinct values, biases, and even inequities determine where that line lies. We believe that one of the most undertheorized yet evocative frameworks for considering the relationship between power and users and use of Shakespeare in adaptation and appropriation studies is the very one hooks singles out: cultural appropriation.

Western culture frequently grapples with the topic of cultural appropriation across domains, such as television, music, fashion, cooking, and beyond. Ubiquitous and very public contentions over what can and should be demarcated as cultural appropriation—like criticism regarding the faux dreadlocks used in the 2017 Marc Jacobs fashion show, musician Taylor Swift setting her "Widest Dreams" music video in neocolonial Africa, or celebrity Kim Kardashian wearing cornrows—mean that whatever multifaceted reverberations the term *appropriation* might have, for many, when *appropriation* appears, issues of stealing, ownership, and authority are never far from their minds. Compounded with the term *cultural*, appropriation necessarily threatens an erasure or derogation of the practices, traditions, and markers integral to individual and group identities; in so doing, cultural appropriation encroaches on the personhood of those whose cultural signifiers are freely looted by more powerful majorities. Thus, even if at its most fundamental level *appropriation* means "To *make something appropriate* for another context," cultural critic Lauren Michele Jackson cautions that *appropriation* frequently takes on very different, less anodyne implications due to "in a word: power" (1, 3). *Shakespeare and Cultural Appropriation* thereby places the questions, concerns, and central ideas that cultural critics employ when discussing cultural appropriation in dialogue with Shakespeare

studies in order to assess how they invite us to reconsider not just who uses Shakespeare, but how Shakespeare is appropriated.

Ultimately, then, this collection broadly employs cultural appropriation to rethink extant Shakespeare adaptation and appropriation studies by redirecting attention back to power structures, cultural ownership and identity, and Shakespeare's imbrication within those networks of power and influence. In many ways, this collection is particularly indebted to existing work on global Shakespeares, which frequently challenges readers to consider how transnational engagements with Shakespeare instantiate interpretive and adaptational modes that are more complicated than mere cultural appreciation. Mark Thornton Burnett, for instance, has long advocated for and deployed an analytical method sensitive to "global flows, media technologies and questions of difference as they play out in the screen constructions" of the Shakespearean in the "global marketplace" (3). And within this global marketplace, Sujata Iyengar and Miriam Jacobson observe how the "functions of [global] Shakespearean appropriation" include "the deployment of Shakespeare in the service of ... cultural authority (for both conservative and progressive ends)" (2). They elaborate, noting that Shakespeare can be used to consider "the relationship between minoritized communities in the nation-state (ethnic, racial, religious, and sexual minorities, for example) and ... the power relationships between smaller and larger nations" (4). Remarks such as these may lead one to believe that extensive scholarship on Shakespeare and cultural appropriation exists. In their discussion of appropriation and its global reach, however, Iyengar and Jacobson only address the framework of cultural appropriation in passing, exemplifying the generally brief considerations of cultural appropriation extant in the field of Shakespeare adaptation and appropriation studies. For instance, in their influential overview of both adaptation and appropriation, Desmet and Iyengar address cultural appropriation in relation to both "legal/political" and philosophical explorations of the topic, suggesting that through these analyses the field "might reconsider ... property and individuals, as they pertain to discussion of Shakespeare adaptation and appropriation" (15, 16). In the years following this 2015 suggestion, considerations of the topic have indeed appeared in individual essays, but perhaps surprisingly, no book-length project has yet to tackle the relationship between Shakespeare and cultural appropriation that Desmet and Iyengar identify as so promising. Thus, building and expanding upon vital scholarship that tackles unflinchingly the intimate relationships between Shakespearean authority, power, and culture, we aim to uncover how a deeper exploration of cultural appropriation reorients the inquiries of Shakespeare adaptation and appropriation studies.

Appropriation's Dualism

To better conceptualize what cultural appropriation has to offer the field of Shakespeare adaptation and appropriation studies, it is helpful to briefly trace its history. As Shakespeare adaptation and appropriation studies moved away from discussions about fidelity to the "original" Shakespearean text, critical approaches

to appropriation had to hold in tension competing definitions of the concept. As Desmet delineates, at its core, *appropriation* as both process and product can derive from very different uses, either the act of stealing or the conference of a gift: “The term itself signifies, at least historically, both theft and donation, giving and taking” (42). However, when it comes to considering appropriation *and* Shakespeare, interrogating the complex interrelationship between culture, power, and use has often been overshadowed by the allure of centering *Shakespeare* and all that the word signifies—the poet himself, his works, and his cultural legacy. Indeed, as Douglas M. Lanier rightly asserts, “the appropriative model often depends upon positing, reifying, and at times even amplifying Shakespeare’s cultural authority in order to observe it being exchanged,” and in that process, “final authority often remains vested in the Shakespearean text” (25). Though possibly unintentional, by centering Shakespeare in discussions of appropriation, the field has continued to ask the same types of questions: what are the most efficacious terms for conceptualizing how audiences approach Shakespeare adaptation and appropriation? How do adaptors and appropriators “collaborate with Shakespeare”?² At what point does a work no longer “count” as a Shakespeare adaptation or appropriation?

Certainly, these questions have opened up important avenues for critical inquiry, resulting in foundational contributions to Shakespeare adaptation and appropriation studies. Yet to varying degrees, the specter of Shakespearean fidelity continues to haunt many of our discussions of appropriation, locking the discourse into an interrogative loop centered on Shakespeare. Even when framed as a departure from the debates regarding Shakespearean fidelity, many conversations still return to the relationship between an adaptation or appropriation and the “original” text. This is perhaps why Desmet claims by 2014 that “to define literary appropriation as a theft of property reduces appropriation—wrongly, in my view—to a one way rather than dialogic process” (41). To see appropriation as dialogic entails an attention to audiences and to reception, Desmet contends, as well as a conceptualization of it as “not simply a conversation or collaboration between appropriating and source texts, but an exchange that involves both sharing and contested ownership” (42). Other critical voices have joined Desmet in considering the dialogic nature of appropriation. Alexa Alice Joubin and Elizabeth Rivlin likewise recognize the dualities of appropriation, describing it as carrying both the connotations of seizure but also “strong overtones of agency” (2). Their focus on the potential communal elements of appropriation thereby builds on Diana E. Henderson’s emphasis on collaboration, which moves away from the “zero-sum economics implied by ‘appropriation’” to focus instead on the connections made between both individuals and artists (8). And Thomas Cartelli delineates the parameters of what he terms “dialogic appropriation,” which “involves the careful integration into a work of allusions, identifications, and quotations” so that each work intertwines with “the other’s frame of reference” (18). These voices lay the groundwork to conceive of alternate theoretical models rather than operating with a narrow definition of appropriation as theft, finding within the process of appropriation the mutually constitutive potential hooks identifies.

While we agree with the need to keep the multifaceted and dialogic nature of appropriation in mind, the socio-historical conflicts that have emerged since Desmet's 2014 essay remind us that even as the field may need to reconsider an over-emphasis on appropriation as theft, it cannot make that shift at the expense of anatomizing the power endemic to the appropriative process. Doing so risks minimizing the gains achieved by cultural materialist, feminist, queer, race studies, and postcolonial reconsiderations of Shakespeare and power especially prominent in the 1980s and '90s. The concerns such scholarship raised in the context of late-twentieth-century Western capitalism have only intensified in the third millennium's flattened global reach, interpenetrating markets and financial vulnerabilities, ideological cross-pollination and, sadly, ideological cross-contamination. In fact, a renewed urgency driven by geopolitical developments in the 2010s informs the power flow emanating from Shakespeare and through the works that borrow from, rewrite, adapt, appropriate, and resituate his canonical texts. Writing for *The Guardian* in January of 2020, political scientist Cas Mudde traces the shifts in political power that have occurred globally during the 2010s, stating bluntly, "The past decade was the decade of the far right." He elaborates:

In January 2010, leftist and centrist politicians led three of the largest democracies in the world: Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva (Brazil), Manmohan Singh (India) and Barack Obama (US). In December 2019, all three countries have far-right leaders: Jair Bolsonaro, Narendra Modi and Donald Trump. In Europe, center-left parties have been decimated, while mainstream right parties mainly survive by adopting frames and policies from the radical right.

This right-wing rise across the world has coincided with other traumas, whether those of racial injustice—particularly George Floyd's murder—that sparked international protests calling for change; gender inequity, as signaled by the Women's March on Washington in October 2021; or the COVID-19 pandemic, which has again laid bare the intersection of economic and racial disparities when it comes to affordable and effective healthcare. And these are only the situations and contexts most familiar to us as American editors. Questions, topics, and terms directly related to appropriation have circulated around these conflicts. Theft came to the fore when Donald Trump lost the 2020 election as he declared the contest "stolen," urging his supporters to help "stop the steal." The question of who has the power to control and reshape a narrative arose as discrepancies between the police report of George Floyd's murder and the video taken of it came to light. The Women's March engaged with authority and ownership as indicated by the popular declaration, "My body, my choice," which provided the answer for who determines a woman's right to make medical choices about her body, including abortion. And the appropriation of language, political agency, and ideas once more appeared as "My body, my choice" became a clarion call for those opposing mask and vaccination mandates in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. It is no wonder, then, that questions of power, ownership, use, and authority have been on our minds and hearts.

Our ideological and ethical commitments as Shakespeare scholars likewise mean that these questions consistently inform the work we do across our research, pedagogy, editorial practices, and public-facing work. Whether it be exploring how digital media open up or restrict audiences' access to or interactions with various Shakespeare institutions, creating new models for public engagement with scholarly conversations and writing, or examining the racial formation undertaken by contemporary Shakespearean adaptations and appropriations, we are guided by the commitments of Premodern Critical Race Studies (PCRS), gender and queer studies, postcolonial studies, and cultural studies—theoretical approaches that never let questions of power recede from view. As a result, whenever we engage with Shakespeare, we continuously interrogate the implications of his vast cultural authority and its varied deployment. The persistent ways that Shakespeare intersects with other, less academic, contestations for power, such as the socio-political issues raised earlier, only strengthen these commitments towards issues of social justice.

Because of his cultural authority, Shakespeare is always bound up with competing forms of power, and weaponizing that power is a signature move of the political right today, which is why it is so important to keep the various uses of Shakespeare's cultural authority, and therefore power, centralized as scholars consider the nuances of appropriation. In May 2021, Vanessa joined Farah Karim and Aldo Billingslea for a discussion entitled "Anti-Racist Shakespeare: A *Midsummer Night's Dream*." As the title suggests, the three participants talked about the various ways race appears throughout the play's language, as well as how race can and should play a role in performance considerations of this popular comedy. Even before the talk launched, all three scholars received strident online protestations against the discussion that made it clear how Shakespeare is appropriated as a tool in the culture wars between the political right and left. Interactions such as these playing out online underscore that current Shakespeare scholarship must tackle the long cultural investment in the institution of Shakespeare. While such work requires understanding and nuance, social media platforms like Twitter and Facebook are built to privilege and disseminate the "hot take" and its propensity for misinformation. Even as these platforms open up access for audiences to engage with more of the work within Shakespeare studies, they simultaneously create new power structures we must navigate and account for.³ Put differently, this experience reminds us that even as Shakespeare's cultural capital is widely recognized, it can just as easily be ignored for disingenuous, even harmful purposes. Thus, as Shakespeare adaptation and appropriation studies continues to theorize the concept of *appropriation*, it must be heedful of the socio-political stakes of reducing Shakespeare's cultural authority to less than it really is—one critiqued, yes, but nevertheless longstanding, deeply entrenched in Western culture, and often, doing more harm than suffering harm.

What we thereby want to stress is that precisely because of Shakespeare's deep-rooted cultural authority, power always infuses both adaptation and appropriation, and this reality should shape and refine discussions of appropriation's dialogic nature. If recognition of Shakespeare's power does not occur, discussions of

Shakespearean appropriation quickly run the risk of creating the inverse imbalance to the one Desmet identifies by overemphasizing the giving and gift-like nature of Shakespeare and appropriation with little to no consideration for the potential of theft. For instance, while there is no doubt that the field would benefit from increased attention to reception, such attention needs to consider how Shakespeare's eminent cultural capital affects reception, as well as which audiences typically have the ability to receive Shakespeare in the first place. How does American theater's catering to wealthy, white audiences affect reception, for instance? How might they respond to a play destabilizing the power of whiteness, such as Caridad Svich's *Twelve Ophelias* (Chapter 9)? Are the plays most frequently adapted, such as *The Tempest* (Chapter 5) or *Othello* (Chapters 3 and 4), those that challenge or reiterate gender norms? And, as both Elizabeth A. Charlebois and Ambereen Dadabhoy ask us to consider, how do the adaptations themselves engage with issues of gender, race, or both (Chapters 4 and 5)? Why are certain plays, like the history plays, largely absent from popular culture? What does that absence say about our cultural investments in the ways history has or has not been told? And how do engagements with the archives, like those of the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust, shape that telling (Chapters 7 and 8)? How does Shakespeare's worldwide elevated status inform the dynamics of collaboration, especially in relation to people from overly exploited nations or from minoritized and/or racialized backgrounds, such as Preti Taneja and her novel *We That Are Young* (Chapter 6)? Given the power differentials, is collaboration even possible? Power thereby suffuses every adaptive or appropriative interaction with Shakespeare, whether recognized or not by those re-imagining Shakespeare, as well as those whose scholarship examines their works. When it comes to Shakespeare's presence across reception, ethics, collaboration, and beyond, power should not be ignored. What is needed, then, is a better way of conceptualizing the various power manifestations inherent in appropriative acts that exist between gift and theft, in other words, a shift from the gift/theft binary to a more complex continuum. *Shakespeare and Cultural Appropriation* provides a foundation for doing so by delving into the multifaceted framework of cultural appropriation, which offers this very continuum.

Cultural Appropriation

Frequently, however, cultural appropriation is seen as binary as well, a contest between a powerful culture and a less powerful one. As such, on the surface it may seem to keep investigations of Shakespearean appropriation mired in the same dialogic, either/or dynamic already prevalent in the field. Such a belief in cultural appropriation's duality is understandable given how the idea of cultural appropriation frequently appears in conversations about Western culture. Assertions of cultural appropriation come to the fore when pop stars like Katy Perry thoughtlessly dress up like a geisha for a television performance, when *Bon Appetit* is accused of "decontextualizing recipes from non-white cultures, and for knighting 'experts' without considering if that person should, in fact, claim mastery of a cuisine that isn't theirs" (Hernandez), when fashion labels send models down the

runway wearing turbans or Native American-style headdresses, or when Asian American actress Awkwafina asserts that she refuses to employ an Asian accent when performing because it makes a “minstrel” out of her people, yet has readily used a “blaccent” throughout her career. These examples suggest that cultural appropriation depends on binaries between cultures in which one culture holds power and influence and the other, less powerful culture is more often than not passively plundered. It is precisely this type of common understanding that James O. Young pushes back against in his analysis of the cultural appropriation of art. He argues that using a philosophical rather than legal lens moves cultural appropriation away from conceptualizations of appropriation as theft. Yes, cultural appropriation may cause harm, but he remains “skeptical about the suggestion that significant harm is done to cultures as a whole. Much cultural appropriation is completely benign” (25). On the whole, we tend to find Young’s conceptualization not only similarly binary, but also overly dismissive of both interpersonal and intercultural power dynamics. Nevertheless, while affirming that cultural appropriation frequently involves a form of intercultural depredation, we contend that a more deeply theorized understanding of cultural appropriation is in fact *not* binary but rather adds further specificity and complexity to the tightrope of power walked by Shakespearean appropriations.

To consider the ethics of cultural appropriation requires a step back to establish grounding assumptions about culture itself. In contrast to formulations of culture as monolithic wholes, Seyla Benhabib insists on the polyvocality of any given culture: “cultures themselves, as well as societies, are not holistic but polyvocal, multilayered, decentered, and fractured systems of action and signification” (25–26). In addition to such intracultural multiplicity, Edward Said elaborates on the interpenetrations that occur interculturally, noting “how oddly hybrid historical and cultural experiences are ... how they partake of many often contradictory experiences and domains, cross national boundaries, defy the police action of simply dogma and loud patriotism” (15). He crucially observes: “Culture is never just a matter of ownership, of borrowing and lending with absolute debtors and creditors, but rather of appropriations, common experiences, and interdependencies of all kinds among different cultures” (217). These bedrock assumptions that cultures exist as non-binary, multifarious, and hybrid and as interpenetrating and mutually influencing entities inform our efforts to complicate the flow of power in Shakespearean appropriation.

With cultures conceived of as both internally riven and externally influencing and interpenetrating, the power imbalances that characterize and govern encounters of the appropriative kind demand a careful parsing. So, what is cultural appropriation exactly? Perhaps most closely related to Cartelli’s examination of Shakespearean appropriations in postcolonial places and spaces, cultural appropriation, as Desmet and Iyengar observe, “return[s] us to the politicized context of appropriation’s cultural materialist origins while broadening the scope of analysis” (15). Richard A. Rogers defines cultural appropriation broadly as “the use of a culture’s symbols, artifacts, genres, rituals, or technologies by members of another culture” (474), a definition similar to Young’s, who defines it as

“appropriation that occurs across the boundaries of cultures. Members of one culture (I will call them *outsiders*) take for their own, or for their use, items produced by a member or members of another culture (call them *insiders*)” (3). Such definitions make it clear that cultural appropriation is inevitable, a way of engaging in and with the world that shapes lives daily; however, such acts are not necessarily benign or neutral. Coinciding with Jackson’s emphasis on cultural appropriation’s relationship to power, Rogers clarifies: “It is involved in the assimilation and exploitation of marginalized and colonized cultures and in the survival of subordinated cultures and their resistance to dominant cultures” (474). In this way, cultural appropriation dovetails especially well with a particular area of the “tripartite [heuristic] division” in adaptation studies, that of intercultural adaptation, which not only addresses “comparative arts” but also analyses concerned “with the image one nation or culture has of another” (Nicklas and Lindner 3). According to Pascal Nicklas and Oliver Lindner, the relationship between appropriation and cultural appropriation clarifies when one understands cultural appropriation as “[implying] a move towards the new version rather than a move away from the ‘original,’” a process creating “new cultural capital” (6). Before moving on to discuss different kinds of cultural appropriation—a contentious act that for some, like scholars Baruti N. Kopano and Tamara L. Brown, amounts to the stealing of the soul, while for others, like Young, can be potentially benign—we want to emphasize the concepts most important to this collection because they are at the heart of Shakespeare adaptation and appropriation studies. Significantly, cultural appropriation involves power and authority, often, as hooks notes, articulated through the concepts of “ownership” and “authenticity” (*Art on My Mind* 12), and contestations over authentic and therefore appropriate ownership can manifest within a culture (cultural capital) and between cultures (the image one nation or culture has of another). The essays in this collection focus specifically on Shakespeare’s cultural capital within and across distinct nations and cultures, a capital which in turn both influences and is influenced by the ways nations and cultures perceive of themselves and each other.

Because of varying forms and degrees of cultural capital (both capital *within* a culture and the capital *of* a culture) and therefore authority, it is important to delineate the multiple manifestations of cultural appropriation that afford the act very different appearances and distance it from a binary concept and towards a multifaceted one. Indeed, as Rogers acknowledges:

The active ‘making one’s own’ of another culture’s elements occurs ... in various ways, under a variety of conditions, and with varying functions and outcomes. The degree and scope of voluntariness (individually or culturally), the symmetry or asymmetry of power relations, the appropriation’s role in domination and/or resistance, the nature of the cultural boundaries involved, and other factors shape, and are shaped by, acts of cultural appropriation.

(476)

To account for these complexities, Rogers outlines four different categories or types of appropriation: cultural exchange, cultural dominance, cultural exploitation, and transculturation (477):

1. **Cultural Exchange:** For many, this type of appropriation may not even seem like cultural appropriation. Cultural exchange is based on reciprocity and typically occurs “between cultures with roughly equal levels of power” (Rogers 477). An example would thus be the ubiquitous use of the Spanish shoe style, the espadrille, by many American fashionistas each summer.
2. **Cultural Dominance:** Conversely, cultural dominance describes actions occurring within a context where a dominant culture “has been imposed” on a subordinated culture (Rogers 477). Importantly, according to Rogers, cultural dominance describes all uses of elements from the dominant culture by the subordinated culture, even enactments of resistance. Thus, cultural dominance may equally describe immigrants who proudly don red, white, and blue on Independence Day in order to signal their American patriotism to Kent Monkman’s painting *Resurgence of the People* (2019), an indigenous critique of American imperialism that notably reworks Emanuel Gottlieb Leutze’s famous patriotic artwork *Washington Crossing the Delaware* (1851).
3. **Cultural Exploitation:** This term encapsulates what most people think of when they hear the term *cultural appropriation*. Cultural exploitation is, essentially, the reverse of cultural dominance—the dominant culture’s taking of and from the subordinated culture without reciprocity, such as the Katy Perry, *Bon Appetit*, and fashion examples noted earlier.
4. **Transculturation:** Finally, Rogers imagines transculturation as the (perhaps unreachable) ideal, describing it as a hybrid form, essentially “cultural elements created from and/or by multiple cultures ... [in which] identification of a single originating culture is problematic” (Rogers 477). It is so hard to provide an example of this type of appropriative act that even Rogers eschews one. Thus, this meshing may be the ultimate goal but appears to be very difficult to achieve.

Rogers conceives of cultural appropriation as a spectrum, allowing for a number of appropriative acts with distinct uses, forms of representation, and power dynamics at play. Rogers thereby offers an instructive taxonomy that helps extend beyond appropriation as merely an either/or choice between acts of gift and theft. At the same time, this foundation raises questions about the most efficacious ways to continue theorizing distinct forms of appropriation. For instance, what is lost when resistance by the subjugated culture is categorized as “cultural dominance”? Does this classification discursively delegitimize such resistances? And as a result, is transculturation ever possible if a material power imbalance exists between cultures? Does what Rogers formulates as the inability to determine an originating culture really entail a conflation of cultural elements that cannot be disentangled and therefore not distinctly identified in any way? How, then, can transculturation be discerned? Thus, both deploying and vexing Rogers’s categories fruitfully expands and refines conceptualizations of appropriation.

When applying these formulations of cultural appropriation to Shakespeare, the Bard's revered status must also be taken into account. Thus, cultural exchange would consider the power between cultures, as Helen A. Hopkins does in her discussion of gifts given to the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust in Chapter 8, but also Shakespeare as a cultural power that engages with either the culture of the appropriator and/or the culture(s) depicted in the appropriation, like the Sudanese women given enhanced focus in *Season of Migration to the North* (Chapter 4) or the Indian women at the heart of *We That Are Young* (Chapter 6). Cultural dominance prompts one to consider the types of domination for which Shakespeare has been employed, such as in the colonizing educative process, or as addressed in this collection, for the purposes of national propaganda in Franco's Spain (Chapter 2) or to shore up soft power for Romania (Chapter 1).⁴ Thus, one must ask, "which cultures are considered subordinate to (if not subordinated by) the elevated status held by Shakespeare?" And the question that follows must be, "does the appropriation employ dominant cultural elements to advance assimilation or resistance?" The question of exploitation is complicated by the debatable status of Shakespeare as agent; in modern appropriations, he is an absent presence. But is that presence necessarily passive? Fazel and Geddes argue through the lens of object-oriented ontology that the "thing-power" of Shakespeare exudes an "uncanny energy" (*Variable 9*). They conclude: "As a variable object, Shakespeare exists as unsettled and unfettered, ever moving in and out of human control as it intersects with other networks of meaning, and this relies on particular patterns of ideologically driven consumption" (*Variable 13*). Therefore, one must consider Shakespeare's role in the contest between the dominant and subordinate culture, and whether Shakespeare is or ever can be part of the subordinate rather than the dominant power. Finally, given the stranglehold of Shakespearean fidelity and authenticity on performance, one must consider if and how Shakespeare thwarts the hybridity inherent in transculturation and what mechanisms might combat that tendency to undermine genuine intercultural transformations. One can therefore see how, when applied to Shakespearean adaptation and appropriation, cultural appropriation takes into account intent and directs attention to reception, but especially pushes consideration of exactly the act hooks asserts makes all the difference—that of use, namely, the way Shakespeare is appropriated or deployed to reify or contest existing power structures between people, institutions, cultures, and even nations.

Domains of Power

Employing cultural appropriation as a framework for expanding approaches to Shakespeare adaptation and appropriation studies involves accounting for individual creators, artistic institutions, distinct regional, ethnic, and racial cultures and subcultures, competing nations, and of course the powerful yet varied signifier that is *Shakespeare*. Such an approach necessitates delineating between the different forms of power at play in these interchanges. Patricia Hill Collins and Sirma Bilge provide a helpful heuristic for doing so through what they term, "[f]our distinctive yet interconnected domains of power" that build upon and interact with

each other in mutual reinforcement: “*structural, cultural, disciplinary, and interpersonal*” (6). The structural domain of power “refers to the fundamental structures of social institutions,” encompassing the ways foundational institutions (the market, education, healthcare, jurisprudence, etc.) are organized and constructed, particularly in relation to economics, nation, class, race, and gender (7, 9). Grounded on the structural, “*The cultural domain of power emphasizes the increasing significance of ideas and culture in the organization of power relations*” (9). By means of deliberately crafted and ever-multiplying story lines, the cultural domain proliferates a “narrative of fair play that claims that we all have equal access to opportunities across social institutions,” transmitting “scripts of gender, race, sexuality, and nation that work together and influence one another” (11). Essentially, worldviews circulated by means of such narratives often position certain people as winners and others as losers on an ostensibly equitable playing field, even though “social divisions of class, gender, and race” in fact make that field unlevel, unfair, and winning inequitably attained (10). The disciplinary domain of power then relies upon the differential application of rules and regulations “based on race, sexuality, class, gender, age, ability, and nation” to reinforce the disequilibriums baked into the institutional structures of a culture and circulated through its myths of fair play (12). Profound socio-economic ramifications accrue from these distinctions and practices, for the unequal rules and discipline “create pipelines to success or marginalization, and then encourage, train, or coerce people to stay on their prescribed paths” (12–13). Lastly, the interpersonal domain of power considers “how individuals experience the convergence of structural, cultural, and disciplinary power” (15). Collins and Bilge locate their core examination of intersectional identities within this last domain of power, recognizing that “perceived group membership can make people vulnerable to various forms of bias, yet because we are simultaneously members of many groups, our complex identities can shape the specific ways that we experience that bias” (15). The delineations of power characterized by Collins and Bilge readily shape this collection’s effort to inform appropriation studies with a cultural appropriation framework.

Thus, when applied to Shakespeare, the structural domain clearly includes theaters, places of higher education, governments, and all other institutional entities that use Shakespeare to assert authority in ways that intersect with class, gender, sexuality, race, and nation. Cultural power’s myths of equity manifest in the toxic appeal of universal Shakespeare, where access to that signifier’s cultural capital may be made to seem equitable even as it is decidedly not.⁵ The differing rules of discipline can be seen, for instance, in who is allowed to perform Shakespeare and in what manner or modality. Similarly, the regulatory strategies of discipline operate to gatekeep (often along lines of gender, class, and racial identities) whose Shakespeare adaptations and appropriations are lauded and whose are dismissed or overlooked.⁶ In the field of scholarship, disciplinary strategies monitor publication rates as well as the work that merits the protections of academic tenure.⁷ Lastly, the interpersonal domain of power might be applied to assess power differentials between the fictionalized characters within a given adaptation or appropriation. But, in addition, the individual domain of power

operates as a means to examine the team responsible for creating the Shakespearean work such as the designers, costumers, production crew, the actors, and the auteur-director.⁸ Just as intersecting identities determine access to creative power, so do those competing categories determine the power status and interpretive feedback of any given audience member.

By bringing together culture, use, and various forms of power through a broadly conceptualized understanding of cultural appropriation, *Shakespeare and Cultural Appropriation* returns to the topic of Shakespeare and appropriation, reconsidering it in relation to some of the most pressing questions reverberating across Western culture: when and how does appropriation become a form of theft? What role does power play in this delineation? What are the ethical parameters for distinguishing a benign appropriative act from a harmful one? How does Shakespeare's globally revered status complicate the answers to these questions? As Shakespearean appropriators reimagine his canonical works for their own ends, how can an expanded concept of cultural appropriation help one identify important distinctions and reverberations across significant epochs and locales of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries?

We ask these questions in hopes that they will reorient the perspectives from which Shakespeare scholarship approaches adaptations and appropriations while also broadening how readers might think about cultural appropriation. In *Playing in the Dark*, Toni Morrison compellingly lays bare how the positionality readers take—the assumptions they bring to the text—guides what they do or do not see in that text: “the readers of virtually all of American fiction have been positioned as white” (xii). To correct such constraint, Morrison urges a readerly and critical reckoning to account for “what that assumption has meant to the literary imagination” (xii). hooks similarly argues for the importance of point of view in order to identify the radical potential of cultural appropriation. For instance, she points to the “discursive practices of anticolonialism,” which “decenter, interrogate, and displace whiteness” (*Art on My Mind* 66). Rather than flattening out subjectivity, anticolonial discourse instead offers “an inclusive understanding of radical subjectivity that allows recognition and appreciation of the myriad ways individuals from oppressed or marginalized groups create oppositional cultural strategies.” Thus, she categorizes anticolonialism as a “constructive cultural appropriation.” Importantly, however, hooks makes it clear that constructive cultural appropriation “happens only as shifts in standpoint take place, when there is ongoing transformation of ways of seeing that sustain oppositional spheres of representation” (emphasis added). Our hope is that more thorough engagement with cultural appropriation proves mutually beneficial by facilitating this shift in standpoint within Shakespeare studies, a shift that pushes the field to think beyond appropriation as a theft/gift binary, while at the same time expanding how it might engage with and deploy the concept of cultural appropriation. Expressly spotlighting the power imbalances determined by race, gender, class, sexuality, and colonial/post-colonial status, the deployment of cultural appropriation as a framework for reassessing Shakespeare appropriations insists that our analytical work confronts twenty-first-century threats to human

thriving, threats that too often are mediated through and rendered authoritative by the Bard of Avon's iconicity.

Contribution and Overview

While not all of the nine essays and four scholarly interviews comprising this collection expressly use the term *cultural appropriation*, they nevertheless navigate and address the tension between appropriation as inequitable borrowing or theft, appropriation as the more neutral changing of hands, or the spectrum of appropriative possibilities between these dualistic actions. In other words, each piece in *Shakespeare and Cultural Appropriation* interrogates thematic elements raised by cultural appropriation: the social capital of particular cultures, creators, works, and/or nations; the relationship between authenticity and authority; how gendered, raced, and classed hierarchies of power affect use. Ultimately, then, these essays tackle how appropriations diffusely employ Shakespeare's cultural authority—that is, his cultural *power*—across media in order to reify, shape, transform, and push back against diverse sites of ideological contestation, including Shakespeare's legacy, nationalism and national identity, and the identity politics associated with gender, class, and race. The collection thus meditates on the interconnected yet shifting relationships found between culture, authority, and appropriation in twentieth- and twenty-first-century global Shakespearean reinterpretations. By practicing a set of diverse analytical methodologies and relying upon a range of theoretical frameworks, these essays instantiate the polyvocality necessary to disrupt white patriarchal power and control over the considerable cultural force housed in Shakespeare's dramatic canon. This collection thereby presses upon the concept of cultural appropriation to re-theorize *appropriation*, laying the foundation for new studies of Shakespeare and appropriation, reconsiderations especially important as the field's scholarly and pedagogical commitments increasingly strive to grapple with Shakespeare as a tool for both justice and injustice.

In order to facilitate further interrogation of Shakespeare adaptation and appropriation studies, we have included four Appropriation Conversations with scholars whose research and pedagogy engage with Shakespeare, appropriation, and power expressly. Some of these scholars have long been part of the adaptation and appropriation subfield while others are newer participants. We believe that this diversity opens up important, nuanced, and distinct perspectives on the subfield's value, its current limitations, and its past, present, and, perhaps most importantly, future. The four critical conversations traverse pathways of interrelated concerns addressing the discipline's conceptualization and theorization of Shakespeare and appropriation. While we provided each interviewee with potential questions to consider ahead of our scheduled discussions, these conversations did not follow a particular script. They are true dialogues capturing a wide range of issues, from the effects of faltering academic pipelines to the distinctions between performances and appropriations to the audiences Shakespeare studies values or disregards.

Offering a state-of-the-field assessment so vital to instigating meaningful theoretical and methodological change, these conversations are rooted in the

identities of the participants and the intersection between those identities and the world of Shakespeare performance, appropriation, and scholarship. Insisting on the informing personal and cultural narratives of identity, the interviews illuminate gaps in the scholarship, failings of pedagogy and community, and the inhospitable structures within the field of Shakespeare studies that too often reinforce oppressive systems of power. The pervasive nature of institutional inequities driven by race, class, gender, ability, and sexuality demands intense self-awareness and critical responsiveness that begin with a thoroughgoing assessment of our discipline. Thus, the critical conversations lay the foundation for addressing the structures that stymie or facilitate methodological and theoretical shifts within our subfield. One recurring theme emerges from the conversations—a disciplinary preference for historicist methods that means graduate students receive limited formal training in the specific theoretical and analytical tools necessary to assess and critique the power dynamics running through performance, adaptation, and appropriation.

Together, these conversations demonstrate that scholarship must direct sustained, responsible, and critical focus on the ethnographic—both on the culture-specific stories of the researcher and those of the people who participate in rewriting, reworking, and transforming Shakespeare’s texts into appropriative artworks. With their focus on how cultural identity has shaped each scholar’s experience of Shakespeare, the conversations illustrate the necessity for scholarship and pedagogy that parse with care the cultural markers replicated in and through Shakespeare appropriations. Too often Shakespeare performances, adaptations, and appropriations borrow cultural rituals, costumes, and signifiers as mere fetishized window-dressing; but at other times, those elements of cultural representation can serve to appropriate Shakespeare to renovate the canonical text from below, from the margins, and from outside the white male hegemonic center. Framed by and intertwined with the content of the four conversations, the essays in this collection examine the semiotic significance of precisely observed cultural markers, rituals, and practices when appropriated into Shakespearean performance or when empowered as appropriative agents of critique; such an ethnographically-informed scholarship spotlights endemic threats to human flourishing present in the canonical texts as well as their interpretation, performance history, and previous adaptations—threats that demand redress (misogyny, racism, ableism, homophobia, transphobia, etc.).

The essays in dialogue with the critical conversations stress the fluidity and flux of appropriation as shaped by power, use, and culture. Indeed, one of the collection’s goals is to demonstrate the interrelatedness of culture, authority/power, and use, not only with each other, but also with facets that fundamentally shape one’s identity: nation, class, gender, and race. As a result, instead of breaking up chapters by these identity categories, and thereby emphasizing distinctions instead of overlaps, we have created an organizational structure that integrates the purpose of the Appropriation Conversations with the chapters. Each interview is thus followed by three essays that share a thematic or ideological emphasis animated by the preceding interview.

We begin with Sujata Iyengar, who meditates on the way her national identity and racial background influenced her earliest engagements with Shakespeare—engagements which have fundamentally shaped her scholarly life. The three subsequent chapters share a similar interest in how national identity and Shakespeare work together or at odds with one another. In “Romanian *Hamlet*: Translated Shakespeare as Soft Power for the Post-Communist Nation,” Ingrid Radulescu and L. Monique Pittman take up Shakespeare’s function as a form of “soft power” in the Opere translation of *Hamlet*. Radulescu and Pittman deftly argue that the striving for this soft power manifests both through the edition’s notes, which favor Western cultural references at the expense of highlighting Romanian literary and performance histories of Shakespeare, and through translations that advance vexed patriarchal gender dynamics by infantilizing Ophelia. As a result, Shakespeare as soft power erases Romania’s indigenous literary history and normalizes its past and present gender inequalities.

Elena Bandín’s chapter, “Taking Centre Stage: Shakespearean Appropriations on Spanish Television in Franco’s Spain,” traces the under-considered history of the Francoist regime’s appropriation of Shakespeare through its strict control of and influence upon Shakespearean performances on Spanish television. Bandín explains how politics and nation worked together to appropriate Shakespeare from the hands of left-wing Spanish playwrights and artists, making Shakespeare a tool of Francoist propaganda, a dynamic which Bandín contends harmed Spanish culture and deprived it of part of its theatrical legacy.

Natalia Khomenko’s “Rescuing Othello: Early Soviet Stage and Cultural Authority” closes out this section as she meditates on the ways the Soviet Union used *Othello* to communicate its more progressive stance toward racial equality in comparison to the West. The Soviet Union repeatedly staged *Othello* to negotiate and shore up its cultural authority, both at home and abroad, by re-politicizing the play through its attention to race in direct contradiction to the West’s de-politicization of the tragedy. These Soviet *Othellos* thus served dual purposes, Khomenko argues: consolidating state power through the cultural superiority garnered by appropriating Shakespeare, and generating engagements with race in *Othello* that drew attention to the question of race and performance circulating internationally through figures like Paul Robeson in the 1930s.

Moving away from concepts of nation and instead focusing on the state of the field, Ruben Espinosa’s interview pays particular attention to the various ways Shakespeare studies sidelines adaptation and appropriation work, which thereby limits important avenues of scholarly inquiry, particularly regarding Shakespeare and race. The next three chapters demonstrate the type of vibrant scholarship on Shakespeare, gender, and race created when appropriations are robustly theorized and centered. “‘Othello Was a Lie’: Wrestling With Shakespeare’s *Othello*,” by Ambereen Dadabhoy, turns to Tayeb Salih’s novel *Season of Migration to the North*. Through her compelling postcolonial and comparative reading, Dadabhoy challenges the common critical focus on white women in the novel. Instead, she rectifies the erasure of Black women in Salih’s text through her incisive analysis of and grappling with the ramifications of the Western imperial project upon the

various Black women's lives in the text. Dadabhoj thereby de-centers whiteness in order to expose the cross-cultural and cross-temporal forms of patriarchal violence that challenge the narrative of the "savage" Other. This is the "lie" at the heart of both *Othello* and the imperial violence that *Season of Migration to the North* exposes.

The intersections between race, hip hop, prison Shakespeare, and appropriation are at the heart of Elizabeth A. Charlebois's "Prospero in Prison: Adaptation and Appropriation in Margaret Atwood's *Hag-Seed*." In spite of its Caliban-referencing title, the fourth novel in the Hogarth Shakespeare Series focuses on a Prospero figure, Felix Phillips, who takes a job as the director of the "Literacy through Literature" program at a men's prison. He engages with numerous "Calibans" represented by the incarcerated men, many who are identified as men of color who write and insert hip hop songs into the script of *The Tempest*. Ultimately, Charlebois argues, a careful analysis of these Caliban figures exposes how their one-dimensional characterizations coupled with the stereotypical lyrics of the hip hop Shakespearean retellings result in unethical racial representations within Atwood's novel. *Hag-Seed* thus appropriates both hip hop and the concept of prison Shakespeare to create a narrative exemplifying cultural colonialism, racism, and white supremacy. For Charlebois, these dynamics reflect the broader exploitative operations of the Hogarth Shakespeare Series.

In "Motherhoods and Motherlands: Gender, Nation, and Adaptation in *We That Are Young*," Taarini Mookherjee demonstrates the value of having Shakespearean appropriations dialogue not only with the "original" Shakespearean text, but also with previous adaptations and appropriations. She does so by tracing the role of maternity and maternal figures in Jane Smiley's *A Thousand Acres* and in Preti Taneja's *We That Are Young*, two retellings of *King Lear*. Mookherjee places *We That Are Young* in a thoughtful conversation with both texts, demonstrating what she terms the "desification"—a decidedly Indian adaptation—of both *Lear* and *A Thousand Acres* undertaken by *We That Are Young*. Rather than simply recuperating the villainized female characters in *King Lear*, *We That Are Young*, Mookherjee contends, launches a blistering critique of contemporary India by uncovering the discrimination, oppression, and subjugation that shape and are perpetuated by the novel's Indian maternal figures.

What is the dividing line between performance and appropriation? This is the provocative question that opens our conversation with Ayanna Thompson, who, across her wide-ranging conversation with us, especially directs attention to the overlaps and distinctions between performance studies and Shakespeare adaptation and appropriation studies. She notes the desperate need to foster future scholars willing to do academic work in both areas, as well as the challenges with creating this pipeline. Her conversation thereby productively frames the final three chapters, which all address the ways gender, race, ethnicity, class, and national identity shape both traditional and ceremonial Shakespearean performances. Kathryn Vomero Santos's "Hijacking Shakespeare: Archival Absences, Textual Accidents, and Revisionist Repair in Aditi Brennan Kapil's *Imogen Says Nothing*" turns to Kapil's 2017 play *Imogen Says Nothing* to articulate how recovering the textual error that is Imogen invites a consideration of violence and the silencing

undertaken by both the historical record and those who analyze it. In restoring the silenced Imogen, Kapil's play rewrites history while asserting a powerful critique of the archival record and the hierarchies it underprops. As Imogen finally gets to speak, Santos argues, her voice draws attention to the cost of centering Shakespeare, which too often entails marginalizing other voices difficult yet vital to recover.

Helen A. Hopkins directs attention to a less traditional yet no less influential type of performance undertaken by and related to the archives of the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust (SBT). In "Fortune Reigns in Gifts of the World": Appropriation and Power in the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust's International Collections," Hopkins compares and contrasts gifts from pre-unification Germany and post-independence India to illuminate the cultural and national identities that each nation strived for through gifts to the SBT intended to access Shakespeare's cultural capital. Hopkins's thoughtful and engaging close reading of both the gifts and the ceremonies surrounding them not only directs attention to the way Shakespeare has long played a role in nation building, but also to how the SBT has used (and uses) its collections to craft a Shakespearean legacy that even nations desire to access. Thus, by unpacking the tangled threads of appropriation in such gifts, Hopkins's chapter foregrounds the legacy of Shakespeare as a tool of British power that is occasionally diplomatic and occasionally imperial, while also emphasizing the moments in which art and culture refuse to be limited as such.

In "Remediating White, Patriarchal Violence in Caridad Svich's *Twelve Ophelias*," Katherine Gillen interrogates the presumed centrality of universal whiteness in Shakespeare's *Hamlet*. In Svich's play, whiteness's universality is challenged when Svich depicts Gertrude, Hamlet, and Ophelia as particular rather than universal, namely as poor "white trash." This particularity not only resonates with the marginal Northern European whiteness present in *Hamlet*, Gillen asserts, but it also creates a space to interrogate *Hamlet*'s misogyny. Through her careful and captivating analysis of Svich's performance choices, most especially the decision to have twelve actors perform the role of Ophelia, Gillen reveals how Svich's play sheds light upon the ways *Hamlet*'s reception history has obscured the play's troubled gender dynamics, and how appropriations can recognize those very dynamics to remediate *Hamlet*'s 400-year legacy of sexual violence.

The collection closes with two reflective pieces. The first is an Appropriation Conversation with Joyce Green MacDonald, whose observations bring together the collection's thematic interests in questions of national identity, race, gender, and the status of appropriations in Shakespeare studies. The second is an Afterword by Alexa Alice Joubin and Elizabeth Rivlin, which reflects on the relationship between cultural appropriation and the concept of remediation to stress that Shakespearean appropriations are not unmitigated sites of social and ideological recuperation but which, despite that qualification, can nevertheless be pressed into an ethics of care.

The variety of texts and sources employed across these conversations and essays renders hooks's point abundantly clear—the uses to which something is put, here, to which Shakespeare is put, make all the difference to the appropriative process. What are the artworks being made through appropriated Shakespeare in the

twentieth and twenty-first centuries across the globe? And how do we best discern the appropriative uses that shape more or less ethical works in this process? By considering the spectrum of appropriative acts offered up by cultural appropriation, *Shakespeare and Cultural Appropriation* lays the groundwork for answering these questions. In doing so, we hope the collection launches a broader conversation in the field that extends beyond a dualistic understanding of appropriation and instead recognizes its multiplicity, one potentially troubling, potentially liberatory, and almost everything in between.

The works that comprise appropriated Shakespeare are only one facet shaped by the appropriative act, however. The other, as hooks poignantly reminds readers, is the human subject. Indeed, the intimate relationship between the literary work and the self clarifies when one considers how appropriative iterations of Shakespeare too often operate within Collins and Bilge's cultural domain of power, recycling narratives that advance inequity and paper over structural advantages for some and disadvantages for others. As Kwame Anthony Appiah contends, "an important form of struggle over identity occurs when people challenge the assumptions that lead to unequal distributions of power" (11). Reorienting both who gets to make these works and the works' focus—in other words, who gets to use Shakespeare and to what ends—therefore becomes a vital means by which to disrupt such inequality both at the structural and at the individual, subjective levels.⁹ Indeed, recent scholarship on Shakespearean adaptation, social justice, and pedagogy emphasizes the classroom as a crucial space for this reorientation, as seen in the work of Ayanna Thompson and Laura Turchi, Ruben Espinosa ("Chicano Shakespeare"), Ambereen Dadabhoy and Nedda Mehdizadeh, Alexa Alice Joubin and Lisa Starks, and the contributions to Jonathan Burton's "Quality of Mercy" project by Anston Bosman, Jonathan Burton, Brooke Carlson, Vanessa I. Corredera, Ambereen Dadabhoy, Tim Duggan, Ruben Espinosa, Katherine Gillen, Eric Griffin, Lynn Maxwell, Mary Janell Metzger, Kathryn Vomero Santos, Ian Smith, and Geoffrey Way (Way). These contributions all provide concrete examples of Joubin and Starks's assertion that "One of the core values of the humanities lies in understanding the human condition in different contexts, and Shakespeare's oeuvre as a cluster of complex, transhistorical cultural texts provides fertile ground to build empathy and critical thinking" (15) by revealing how appropriation and social justice pedagogy intertwine to make students more mindful of the power imbalances Collins and Bilge identify. This increased awareness thereby better enables them to enact interventions in their daily lives. As Kimberlé Crenshaw reminds us, to be able to identify and name a "problem" or injustice is the first step toward seeing and solving it.

But the reach of Shakespearean appropriations crafted by new hands with new, more ethical visions extends beyond the classroom by shaping the self and its imaginative potential, including its social vision. When discussing Afrofuturism—an aesthetic based on appropriation that brings together technology, Black culture, and a vision of Black futurity—Ytasha L. Womack describes the connection between appropriative art and self-transformation. She explains,

[Afrofuturism] is an artistic aesthetic, but also a kind of method of self-liberation or self-healing... . It intersects the imagination, technology, Black culture, liberation, and mysticism... . As a mode of self-healing and self-liberation, it's the use of imagination that is most significant because it helps people to transform their circumstances. *Imagining oneself in the future creates agency.*

Shakespearean adaptations and appropriations carry the same potential. Put to the right uses such as ones that consider the issues of power and authority we have highlighted here, adaptations and appropriations, too, can imagine new futures that afford agency to long disadvantaged identities and the people who embody them by enlisting the substantial cultural power domain of Shakespearean narrative in that cause.

Does this mean that Shakespearean appropriations have the potential for political intervention? We editors are cautiously hopeful that they may for, if undertaken ethically, they have the possibility of enacting the recognition so fundamental to personal and interpersonal well-being. Charles Taylor explains how

our identity is partly shaped by recognition or its absence, often by the *misrecognition* of others, and so a person or group of people can suffer real damage, real distortion, if the people or society around them mirror back to them a conflicting or demeaning or contemptible picture of themselves.

(25)

This misrecognition has political import, Taylor elaborates, for “The need [for recognition], it can be argued, is one of the driving forces behind nationalist movements in politics. And the demand comes to the fore in a number of ways in today’s politics, on behalf of minority or ‘subaltern groups’” (25). The framework of cultural appropriation illuminates the various and competing power dynamics that shape and distort recognition. By better understanding cultural appropriation, then, scholars, teachers, and appropriators of Shakespeare can better grasp how *Shakespeare* both contributes to but also powerfully counters misrecognition. If, as already established, the communal draw of nationalist identities is particularly potent in this specific historical moment, those invested in countering such movements must commit to identifying and advancing alternate forms of “due recognition,” a “vital human need” (26). The very cultural authority that has made Shakespeare a tool of harm and inequity can make him an equally powerful tool on behalf of the “subaltern” voices Taylor identifies. We hope this collection lays a foundation for marshaling Shakespeare for this very use, one, we believe, needed now more than ever.

Notes

1. Indeed, Sanders differentiates appropriation from adaptation by asserting, “appropriation effects a more decisive journey away from the informing text into a wholly new cultural product and domain” (35). She adds, “certainly appropriations tend to have a more complicated, intricate and sometimes embedded relationship to their intertexts” in contrast to the tendency of adaptations to acknowledge their relationship to a source more directly (36). Hutcheon, however, merges the concepts, arguing, “Whatever the motive, from the adapter’s perspective, adaptation is an act of appropriating or salvaging, and this is always a double process of interpreting and then creating something new” (20).
2. In the theoretical model advanced by Diana E. Henderson, “collaboration focuses attention on the connections among individuals, allowing artists credit and responsibility, but at the same time refusing to separate them from their social location and the work of others.” Such collaboration, Henderson argues, “illuminates both the multiplicity and the richness of ‘Shakespeare’ for moderns, and the problems his collaborators seek to alter or carry, from his world into our own” (8). Building on such an approach, this collection urges a reorientation of conceptualization that places the collaborator, work, and context at the center.
3. A wealth of scholarship stresses both the social possibilities and seismic vulnerabilities of the digital information and influence landscape. Aden Evens characterizes that expansive agentic freedom and constraint: “The digital may offer to the user a vast terrain of choice, but as determined by the abstraction that is the universal tool of the digital, there is no choice but choice.” Shoshana Zuboff warns more pointedly that the logistics of “surveillance capitalism” transform human decision-making and online behavioral surplus into capital and utilize “social pressure” dynamics to “herd” human reactions and behaviors (436) in ways that threaten both human individuality and democracy itself (444).
4. Gauri Viswanathan, Martin Orkin, and David Johnson detail the specifically curricular means by which the Shakespearean canon enforced British imperial authority in colonial territories. Utilized to “initiate colonial subjects into Englishness and cement cultural unity with the mother country,” Leah Marcus summarizes, “The dissemination of Shakespeare’s plays was part of a broader colonial effort to create structures of hegemony through a flood of written documents meant to create bureaucratic and cultural coherence and uniformity” (6).
5. Kiernan Ryan presents a repackaged version of Shakespearean universality, one, he argues, that effectively reclaims the canonical works for progressive ends under the heading, “revolutionary universalism.” He asserts, “This revolutionary universalism is dramatically and poetically articulated in Shakespeare’s plays, which reveal the potential of all human beings to live according to principles of freedom, equality and justice” (9). Peter Erickson and Kim F. Hall roundly critique “the erasure of race” in such an approach:

- “Believing in universality makes it unnecessary to consider race seriously because Shakespeare has already demonstrated how to solve the problem” (5).
6. Imagining the cultural legacy of Shakespeare and his texts as a garden tended by appointed experts, Johnathan Pope evocatively characterizes, though certainly does not endorse, the control maintained over the work and field: “Shakespeare’s garden is open to all, but that does not mean we can pick all of the violets, litter on its footpaths, or call its roses by another name. Instead, we have a responsibility to tend the garden, pick sparingly from its blossoms, to acknowledge and appreciate its beauty, so that our fellow co-owners can continue to enjoy the garden. And the purveyors of Shakespearean official culture—scholars and other-wise—serve as the most prominent stewards and caretakers of that garden, even if they might disagree on the best practices for doing so” (71).
 7. On the matter of academic gatekeeping, Eleanor Collins discusses open access journals as a digital innovation that provokes debates concerning, “guardianship over knowledge and ‘gatekeeping’ as a means of control over the quality of research,” contentions that “speak directly to the issues of cultural heritage and authority that are so tightly bound up in the study of Shakespeare” (132).
 8. Courtney Lehmann’s *Shakespeare Remains* parses the complex role of the film auteur in Shakespearean adaptations—the force commanding “uncompromising” artistic control across all elements of the visual and aural representational field—a position, we might add, often privileging the so-called “genius,” authority, and imprimatur of white males (17).
 9. Ruben Espinosa calls out precisely this gatekeeping in the production and consumption of Shakespeare: “Unsurprisingly, the ambitions of people of color who seek to access Shakespeare—actors, dramaturgs, critics, scholars, and students alike—are often trivialized. Quite often, people of color are made to feel that their renditions, adaptations, readings, and understandings of Shakespeare are inauthentic, and that, in many ways Shakespeare does not belong to them” (*Shakespeare on the Shades* 7).

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