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## CHAPTER 4.5

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# Global studies

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The works of Shakespeare are closely associated with global studies, because imaginations of world cultures inform his plays and those plays have subsequently had afterlives on a global scale. Shakespeare's plays often feature locations outside England, Scotland and Wales, and characters from the Mediterranean, France, Vienna, Venice, Cataian (Cathay) and elsewhere. Foreign characters play a key role even in the history plays that focus on the question of English identity, such as Katherine of Aragon in *Henry VIII*. Shakespeare's plays demonstrate influences from a rich treasure trove of multilingual sources in Latin, Italian, Spanish and French. Before Shakespeare's plays became widely performed outside England and Europe, international visitors brought a global flair to performances in London. European visitors such as Thomas Platter witnessed the plays on stage at the Globe in 1599 and left behind diary records. While visiting London from the 'new world' in 1710, the King of the River Nations Etow Oh Koam himself became a competing spectacle with a performance of *Macbeth* on stage at the Queen's Theatre. During his lifetime, Shakespeare's plays were performed in continental Europe and were subsequently taken to corners of the globe that seemed remote from the English perspective, including colonial Indonesia in 1619. Since the late sixteenth century, Shakespeare's plays have been translated, critiqued and performed in many parts of the world. Shakespeare's oeuvre has also been referenced, used and abused by politicians for a wide range of purposes from cultural imperialism to cultural diplomacy.

The first phase of sustained study of Shakespeare and globalization unfolded over the past few decades and has brought international affairs to bear on the story of Shakespeare in global contexts. There are detailed histories of national Shakespeares in which 'Shakespeare in India' is shorthand for postcolonial, political merits of adaptations of Shakespeare that serve as a tool for resisting Western hegemony. South Korean Shakespeares would be seen as allegories of the divide between North and South Korea, while productions in the Eastern Bloc would be thought to contain attenuated allusions to subversive politics. Anglophone Shakespeares are assumed to have broad theoretical applicability and aesthetic merits, while foreign Shakespeares – even when they focus on artistic innovation on a personal rather than an epic level – are compelled to prove their political worth. Critics are on the lookout for potentially subversive political messages in these works, which are compulsorily characterized as allegories of geopolitical issues. In other words,

some types of scholarship instrumentalize global Shakespeare to serve superficial definitions of diversity.

In the current, second phase of global studies of Shakespeare, performances and criticism are challenging fixed notions of cultural authenticity. Shakespeare performances across various media from stage to screen have entered a postnational space, where lines between identities are blurred by the presence of diasporic performers, tourist audiences, transnational corporate sponsors, and the logics of international festivals. The transnational cultural flows go beyond the scope of geopolitical divisions of nation-states and cultural profiling. The postnational space shares characteristics of liminal spaces that are discursively formed. Performing Shakespeare not only creates channels between geographic spaces but also connects different time periods. Therefore, in modern times, global Shakespeares have been recruited as a transhistorical and intercultural practice to revitalize performance genres, exemplified or resisted as a colonial appendage or rhetoric and admired as a centrepiece in an exotic display. As such, the ideological encodings of the international avant-garde inform the works by Ariane Mnouchkine, Peter Brook, Tadashi Suzuki and others, and influence international politics and tourism in late capitalist societies. As Sujata Iyengar and Miriam Jacobson observe, scholarship on global Shakespeare has ‘moved on from concerns about fidelity [in the previous era] to investigations of the new artforms that Shakespeare can enable in global contexts’ (2020: 3).

Performing Shakespeare in different languages opens up new pathways to some often-glossed-over textual cruxes in Anglophone traditions. Take *The Tempest*, for example. What exactly do Prospero and Miranda teach Caliban? The word ‘language’ is ambiguous in Act 1 scene 2 (Caliban: ‘You taught me language ...’). It is often taken to mean his master’s language (a symbol of oppression). But it can also mean rhetoric and political speech writing, a new tool for him to change the world order. One way to excavate the different layers of meanings within the play and in performances is to compare different stage and film versions from different parts of the world. Caliban’s word, ‘language’, is translated by Christoph Martin Wieland as *reden*, or ‘speech’ in German. In Japanese, it is rendered as ‘human language’, as opposed to languages of the animal or computer language. Prospero announces in Act 4 scene 1 that ‘our revels now are ended’. The word ‘revels’ in the Elizabethan context refers to royal festivities and stage entertainments, but it carries different diagnostic significance in translation. Wieland used *Spiele* (plays) and *Schauspieler* (performer) to refer to Prospero’s masque and actors (‘Unsre Spiele sind nun zu Ende’ in German). Sometimes translators working in the same language have different interpretations. Liang Shiqiu translated it as ‘games’ in Mandarin Chinese in 1964, alluding to the manipulative Prospero’s cat-and-mouse games on the island, but Zhu Shenghao preferred ‘carnivals’ (1954), highlighting the festive nature of the wedding celebration.

Global studies enables us to examine deceivingly harmonious images of Shakespeare. This chapter focuses on the modern period and introduces readers to a number of key concepts in Shakespeare and global studies, namely censorship and redaction, genre, gender, race and politics of reception. Readers are invited to view images and videos of many of the films and productions discussed in this chapter at MIT Global Shakespeares (<https://globalshakespeares.mit.edu/>).

## CENSORSHIP AND REDACTION

As powerful as the Shakespearean oeuvre may be in its canonical status in many cultures, it has historically been subjected to editorial redactions and censorship. Contrary to popular imagination, censorship is not a top-down operation. It is a communal phenomenon involving both the censors and the receivers who willingly accept the Shakespeare that has been ‘improved’ upon. Shakespeare’s words have been used to divert around censorship, ‘sanitized’ and redacted for children, young adults and school use. While censors have reacted differently to Shakespeare, self-censorship by directors and audiences is part of the picture as well.

Not all censors work in the capacity of a public official. Editors act as gatekeepers of images of specific characters. For example, the ‘Abhorred slave’ speech toward Caliban in *The Tempest* (1.2.351) is assigned to Miranda in the *First Folio* and most modern editions but to Prospero in Lewis Theobald’s, John Dryden’s and other pre-twentieth-century editions. In turn, in modern performances these lines are sometimes reassigned depending on how the director wishes to characterize Miranda and Prospero. It makes Miranda less innocent and more complicit in colonial crimes against the natives if she joins Prospero in calling Caliban a slave. There is another side of the coin. It can be empowering for Miranda to speak thus. Melissa E. Sanchez observes that, when the lines are spoken by Miranda, she is intruding ‘into the political debate’ between two men, Prospero and Caliban, and establishing herself ‘as an independent agent’ (2008: 65). Studies have shown that the reasons for reassignments of these particular lines are rarely stylistic but instead ideological (Clayton 2016: 436).

Educators also act as gatekeepers of specific forms of knowledge. In US school systems, *Julius Caesar* is often deemed one of the more appropriate plays to teach and perform because the themes of honour, free will and principles of the republic are considered inspiring and suitable in the educational context. Conversely, the themes in such plays as *Romeo and Juliet* (teen exuberance and sex), *The Merchant of Venice* (anti-Semitism), *Othello* (racism and domestic violence) and *The Taming of the Shrew* (sexism) make modern audiences uncomfortable, but they compel us to ask harder questions of our world.

While Shakespeare has been a large part of US cultural life, the ‘Shakespeare’ that is taught and enacted in schools has often been redacted and even censored. But this is not a new phenomenon. The history of bowdlerized Shakespeare goes back to the nineteenth century. To bowdlerize a classic involves expurgating or abridging the narrative by omitting or modifying sections that are considered vulgar.

In fact, the term ‘bowdlerized’ comes from Henrietta ‘Harriet’ Bowdler, who edited the popular ‘family-friendly’ anthology *The Family Shakespeare* (1807), which contains twenty-six edited plays. The anthology sanitized Shakespeare’s texts and rid them of undesirable elements such as references to Roman Catholicism, sex and more. The anthology was intended for young women readers. Multiple ambiguities in Shakespeare are replaced by a more definitive interpretation. Ophelia no longer seems suicidal in *Hamlet*. It is an accidental drowning. Lady Macbeth no longer curses ‘Out, damned spot’ but instead she says ‘Out, crimson spot!’ Prostitutes are omitted,

such as Doll Tearsheet in *2 Henry IV*. The ‘bawdy hand of the dial’ (Mercutio) in *Romeo and Juliet* is revised as ‘the hand of the dial’. *Family Shakespeare* was itself a family project. Thomas Bowdler worked with his sister Henrietta to clean up the classics. The subtitle of the volume states that ‘nothing is added to the original text; but those words and expressions are omitted which cannot with propriety be read aloud in a family’. Shakespeare is credited as the author, though Bowdler made clear the Bard needed quite some heavy-handed editing.

Ironically, Henrietta Bowdler was herself censored. Thomas Bowdler’s name appears on the cover. It took two centuries for Henrietta to be credited for the anthology, for obviously there was no way she could have admitted that she recognized the bawdy puns in Shakespeare, much less edited them out. The Bowdlers are among the better-known ‘censors’ in the nineteenth century who editorialized the classics, including Shakespeare. When laying out her editorial principles in the preface, Bowdler does not hesitate to criticize the ‘bad taste of the age in which [Shakespeare] lived’ and Shakespeare’s ‘unbridled fancy’:

The language is not always faultless. Many words and expressions occur which are of so indecent Nature as to render it highly desirable that they should be erased. But neither the vicious taste of the age nor the most brilliant effusions of wit can afford an excuse for profaneness or obscenity; and if these can be obliterated the transcendent genius of the poet would undoubtedly shine with more unclouded lustre. (1843: vii)

She further explains her motive in an advertisement in *The Times* in 1819, emphasizing that the ‘defects’ in Shakespeare have to be corrected:

My great objects in the undertaking are to remove from the writings of Shakespeare some defects which diminish their value, and at the same time to present to the public an edition of his plays which the parent, the guardian and the instructor of youth may place without fear in the hands of his pupils, and from which the pupil may derive instruction as well as pleasure: and without incurring the danger of being hurt with any indelicacy of expression, may learn in the fate of Macbeth, that even a kingdom is dearly purchased, if virtue be the price of acquisition. (quoted in King 2019)

While censorship carries a negative connotation in our times, *The Family Shakespeare* did broaden Shakespeare’s audience and readership. While US schools continue to redact Shakespeare, they also infuse Shakespeare into US cultural life in various forms.

Wars, censorship and political ideologies can suppress or encourage the translation or performance of particular plays or genres for one reason or another or outlaw Shakespeare altogether (as was the case during the Chinese Cultural Revolution, 1966–76). The 1930s was a time when political expediency drove readers, performers and audiences to a select set of Shakespearean plays in the Soviet Union, Japan and China. The regicide and assassinations in *Hamlet* raised the eyebrows of the Japanese censors in the decade when Japan was preparing to challenge European and US supremacy. *Hamlet* was banned, along with half a dozen other plays, from

the International Theatre Day organized by the Japan League of Proletarian Theatres (led by Murayama Tomoyoshi) on 13 February 1932 on the grounds that the play might incite rebellions against the rightist government. Ironically, Stalin expressed a distaste for dark, tragic plays such as *Hamlet*, having famously declared that life had become more joyful for the communist state in 1935. Shakespeare's comedies fit the propagandistic goal and therefore had a firm place in the state-endorsed repertoire for the stage and reading materials in the USSR and its close ally, China, during this time. Shakespeare became, in Soviet and Chinese ideological interpretations, the spokesperson for the proletariat, an optimist and a fighter against feudalism through such 'bright' comedies as *Much Ado About Nothing*.

Another aspect of censorship manifests itself in modern-day protests against specific plays and their perceived link to discrimination. At the London Globe in May 2012, pro-Palestinian activists protested a Hebrew production of *The Merchant of Venice* by the Israeli company Habima from Tel Aviv. Both the play and its supposed anti-Semitic sentiments have been the subject of debate in critical history, but this protest brought contemporary international politics into the mix. Leading actors – Mark Rylance, Emma Thompson and others – called for the Globe to boycott the company because it had performed in Jewish settlements in the West Bank. The protest targets the company's history rather than the performance or ideological issues with *The Merchant of Venice*.

Censorship of politically sensitive contents and redaction to enhance a play's political correctness are two sides of the same coin. Shakespeare has been used as a platform to explore politically and socially sensitive issues. Set in modern Iran, *HamletIRAN* suggests that 'something is rotten' in the country where the Green Movement arose in the wake of voting fraud during the 2009 presidential election. Directed by Mahmood Karimi-Hakak, the production features characters singing Persian folk songs and courtiers wearing turbans, with an image of Mount Damavand in the closing scene. The performance takes place around a pool, a traditional centrepiece of Persian gardens. The tormented hero of the play wishes to set things right, but he does not act rashly for fear his country may fall into chaos. Likewise, the Tibetan-language film *Prince of the Himalayas* (dir. Sherwood Hu, 2006) explores the sensitive topic of Tibet's place in modern Asia. Set in ancient Tibet, the film centres on the young prince Lhamoklodan, who sets out in a quest to find his and his country's identity. In the Thai metatheatrical adaptation of *Macbeth*, titled *Shakespeare Must Die* (dir. Ing Kanjanavanit, 2012), the characters stage a play in which a general takes the throne through a series of bloody murders. The story parallels that of a superstitious and murderous contemporary dictator known as Dear Leader. The two worlds collide when the players stage *Macbeth* in a world ruled by the dictator. *Shakespeare Must Die* is political in nature and critiques Thai politicians. The film was censored due to its sensitive subject matter, and Shakespeare's canonical status failed to save the film from the censors.

Censorship and redaction stem from a moralistic investment in Shakespeare. When Shakespeare is referenced in the global cultural marketplace, the canon is often given an additional ethical burden, and the same play can end up being valued in quite different ways depending on its use. The dialogues between

Shakespeare and his modern interlocutors are driven by ethical claims and the use of Shakespeare for political expediency. While artists and critics alike gravitate toward inspirational narratives, there is the risk of selling out on art's impact on social justice. As the following sections show, advertising trends – or cultural paratexts around performances – are one area where artists' ethical claims are sometimes countered by marketing shortcuts for various topics, such as presentations of racial and gender diversity.

## GENRE

The phenomenon of censorship leads us to transformations of genres in Shakespeare's oeuvre and in world literature. A society's aversion to a genre reveals the exigencies of an age. In contemporary post-Holocaust, post-9/11, post-Brexit Anglo-European contexts, it is difficult to imagine *The Merchant of Venice* as a comedy – at any character's expense – as it was performed on the late sixteenth-century stage. *The Māori Merchant of Venice* (dir. Don Selwyn, He Taonga Films, 2002) presents the narrative as a colonial allegory. The suffering of Waihoroi Shortland's Hairōka (Shylock) parallels the subjugation of the Māori at the hands of British settlers in New Zealand who forced the Māori to sign the Treaty of Waitangi in 1840. In the Japanese tradition of performing *The Merchant of Venice*, the play is often retooled as a romantic comedy, a Bildungsroman of an attractive woman lawyer, or an outlandish tale involving a pound of human flesh. Early modern concepts of comedy – playful yet laden with moral concerns and even political implications – remains challenging to grapple with, while tragedy is often banned by totalitarian governments. Specific works have been singled out for scrutiny. Stalin was known to dislike *Hamlet*, for a play about a police state was deemed too close to home. Shakespeare could in such a context transform entire genres.

Some of the most commonly asked questions about global Shakespeare include: 'Which play is the most popular?', 'Why do the tragedies seem more universal and transportable from culture to culture than other genres?' and 'Can the comedies be enjoyed in another language?' The answers to these questions depend on cultural location and historical period. In modern times, tragedies such as *Hamlet* and comedies such as *A Midsummer Night's Dream* are more frequently adapted around the world because of their capacity to be detached from their native cultural settings. For example, *Hamlet* and *The Merchant of Venice* have more than fifty translations each in India alone, while *Henry V* and *Richard II* are the only history plays to have been translated into Hindi, each translated only once (Trivedi 1978: 83). But this should not be taken as a sign that the tragedies and comedies alone dominate the global circulation of Shakespeare's work and reputation.

While translations of Shakespearean tragedies and comedies and the Sonnets seem to fuel his global reputation and reach, the history plays have their own, if lesser known, histories of global transmission (Hoenselaars 2004). British performances are more frequently geared toward constructing a coherent national identity in relation to Britain's friends and foes on the European continent. Translations of

history plays, on the other hand, often use the plays to interrogate notions of national history. For example, *Richard III: An Arab Tragedy* uses the history play to question a unified Arab identity (Litvin 2007). Written in English and directed by Anglo-Kuwaiti playwright Sulayman Al-Bassam, the production has toured widely around the world in Arabic and English. Some critics have accused the play of reinforcing and benefiting from Western prejudices against the Arab region. Plays such as *Henry V* that place English interests in opposition to those of the French can serve as a forum for the formation of national identities, artistic experiments and political debates in the UK and Europe. Still farther ashore, plays from both the first and second tetralogies, excluding *King John*, found new homes in nationalist projects of modernization in many parts of East Asia. While modern adaptors' interests do not always align with Shakespeare's early modern visions of such feuds as that between the Houses of York and Lancaster, they draw parallels to inspire analogous reflections on local histories.

Global adaptations of Shakespeare often connect different genres, turning tragedy into comedy or parody. The Singaporean film *Chicken Rice War* (dir. Cheah Chee Kong [CheeK], 2000), a comedy revolving around a college production of *Romeo and Juliet*, pointedly parodies global teen culture by echoing the trope of censorship-as-collaboration in the metatheatrical Japanese film *University of Laughs* (dir. Mamoru Hoshi, 2004) and unchecked romanticism in Australian director Baz Luhrmann's campy film *William Shakespeare's Romeo + Juliet* (1996). Films sometimes reference visual arts. Shot in Tibet with an all-Tibetan cast, Sherwood Hu's film *Prince of the Himalayas* (2006) contains visual echoes of Sir John Everett Millais's iconic Pre-Raphaelite painting *Ophelia* (1851) and creates an Ophelia figure who is deeply associated with water. Wearing a floral wreath, Odsaluyang (Ophelia) gives birth in the Namtso Lake to Hamlet's and her baby, who floats away, only to be rescued by the 'Wolf Woman' (a prophetess) while Odsaluyang dies in the lake. The scene alludes not only to Millais's depiction of Ophelia in the instant before drowning but also to the cyclical quality of life and death in Tibetan Buddhism. Other adaptations bring texts from secular and religious traditions together. Michael Almereyda appropriates Eastern spirituality in his Buddhist-inflected film. Set in twenty-first-century Manhattan, *Hamlet* (2000; starring Ethan Hawke) features the Vietnamese monk Thich Nhat Hanh in a spin-off of the 'To be or not to be' speech. Ophelia is depicted as a woman interested in Krishnamurti's *Living and Dying*, and in another scene a clip from Ulrike Koch's documentary about a pilgrimage, *Die Salzmannen von Tibet (The Saltmen of Tibet, 1998)*, appears on the back-seat video monitor of Claudius's limousine. This is one of many examples of how even English-language films of Shakespeare contain rich multicultural and multigeneric references.

## GENDER

Embodiment – the act of bringing characters to life through actors' bodies – is a key factor in the creation of global Shakespeare. The first element of embodiment we will examine is gender. The force of performance arises in the 'terrain between

language and its enactment', as W. B. Worthen's analysis shows (2003: 3). Gender identities and words – in any language – may acquire meaning when embodied and spoken in context. Drama gains efficacy through stage behaviours and embodiments. This section explores two themes of global performances of gender, namely uses of gendered pronouns and the representations of Ophelia.

How do gender roles travel across cultures? When Viola, disguised as page boy Cesario and finding herself being pursued by the lovelorn Olivia, declares that 'I am the man [of the hour ... and] a dream' in *Twelfth Night* (2.2.25–6), she speaks with double irony as a doubly crossdressed boy actor on the early modern English stage and as an adult male actor (Johnny Flynn) in Mark Rylance's all-male production at the Globe Theatre in London (2012, dir. Tim Carroll). As an *otokoyaku* (male impersonator) in the all-female Takarazuka musical production (dir. Kimura Shinji, 1999; starring Yamato Yuga) derived from *shōjo* (teen girl) mangas, Viola would embody enticing gender fluidity when speaking Japanese, a language that often elides the subject. In addition to making the right choice of employing the familiar or the polite register based on the relation between the speaker and the addressee, male and female speakers of Japanese are limited to gender-specific first-person pronouns. Limitations create opportunities to reframe Orsino's comments about love from a masculinist perspective and Viola's apology for a woman's love when in her male guise as Cesario (2.4.78–125). These works draw attention to the actors' bodies and thereby enable new paths to the cultures being represented, as evidenced by the gender discord in *Twelfth Night*.

Uses of gendered personal pronouns shape the dynamics in several scenes in Akira Kurosawa's film *Throne of Blood* (Toho Company, 1957), a samurai adaptation of *Macbeth*. While obscured by English subtitles, the uses of personal pronouns and salutations reflect moral and political agency or the lack thereof. When conversing with each other, Washizu (Macbeth) and Miki (Banquo) refer to each other with first names, deepen their voices and use informal language and the informal, masculine 'I' (*ore*). They often laugh things off, as in the scene when they are lost in the forest, as part of their bravura. Singular first-person pronouns in Japanese serve important discursive functions, according to discourse and cognitive linguistics. In addition to *ore*, other first-person pronouns include the informal *boku*, typically used by young men, and the more formal but more feminine *watashi*, commonly used by women (Ono and Thompson 2003). Washizu and Miki eschew formality to build male camaraderie and ascertain their masculinity. The bravura around the pronoun *ore* buttresses their denial that they are lost in the woods in the opening scene. Yet even if they are, they remain brothers, lost together in the woods.

Washizu attempts to create a similarly intimate bond with his wife Lady Asaji (Lady Macbeth) in private, but she rejects his attempt and maintains verbal and physical distance. It is notable that when Washizu addresses Asaji, he does not use any honorific; he does not address her as *tsuma* (wife) or *okusan* (lady of the house). Meanwhile, Asaji uses the most formal singular first-person pronoun *watakushi*, rather than the informal, feminine *atashi* (or *atakushi*), which is usually used in private conversations between a husband and a wife. Moreover, she addresses Washizu with the general second-person pronoun *anata*. This word is often used in television

commercials to refer to a general audience of all ages and genders. When using *anata*, Asaji speaks in a register that conveys condescension and rejects intimacy. Asaji uses the formal *watakushi* and the usually more casual *anata* alternately to create tension and conflicts between desired intimacy and rejected informality; it confuses Washizu, who is unsure how to respond. In contrast, English-language productions and films of *Macbeth* – such as Fassbender’s 2015 film (Kurzel) – use tone, register and body language, rather than gendered pronouns, to articulate the friendship between Banquo and Macbeth and the relationship between Macbeth and Lady Macbeth.

Performances of gender in a global context shed light on some of Shakespeare’s most iconic female characters, including Viola, Lady Macbeth and Ophelia. Ophelia has historically been performed both as an innocent ‘rose of May’ and a sexually aware singer in Act 4 of *Hamlet*. Both her lyric sufferings and her suicide-as-resistance-to-the-patriarchy enabled contrasting interpretations. Laurence Olivier’s 1948 film *Hamlet* cuts Ophelia’s soliloquy to make her seem even more powerless and vulnerable. In one scene an angry Hamlet pushes Ophelia down the stairs, making her literally a fallen woman. Michael Almereyda’s 2000 film takes a different approach to give Ophelia ‘an inner life’ (Iyengar 2016: 1323) by referencing such self-help books as Mary Pipher’s *Reviving Ophelia*. This interiority, in fact, is a defining feature of twenty-first-century screen representations of Ophelia.

Ophelia in feminist performances revises traditional notions of victimhood. For example, French philosopher Gaston Bachelard connects a particular form of femininity, water imagery and drowning in his theory of the Ophelia complex. The figure of Ophelia symbolizes a young woman who is vulnerable yet powerful, undermined and empowered by her femininity. Contemporary directors leverage Shakespeare’s own propensity to undermine dominant ideologies of gender in their effort to renew Asian performance traditions. Along with the rise of Korean feminism in the 1990s, several South Korean adaptations of *Hamlet* recast Ophelia as a shaman who serves as a medium to console the dead and guide the living. Since a shaman is outside the Confucian social structure, she has greater agency. The action of Kim Jung-ok’s *Hamlet* (1993) takes place under an enormous hemp cloth that is suspended from the ceiling to resemble a house of mourning. It is customary for a mourning son to wear coarse hemp clothing, because hemp cloth is associated with funerals. Appropriately enough, the play begins with Ophelia’s funeral. Possessed by the Old King’s spirit, Ophelia conveys the story of his murder. Kim Kwang-bo’s *Ophelia: Sister, Come to My Bed* (1995) also opens with Ophelia’s funeral. Ophelia is possessed by the dead king’s spirit: she urges Hamlet to avenge his father’s death. When the ghost of Old Hamlet appears, in the form of a large puppet operated by three monks, Ophelia moves in unison with the ghost and changes her voice to that of an old man. The dual soundtrack is unsettling. The use of shamanism as a thematic device creates a pathway to agency through ghosts.

Japan’s Yukio Ninagawa often draws on metatheatricality as a theme in his productions. He prepares the audiences to take on the play world through pre-show action (e.g. in *The Tempest* and *Titus Andronicus*) and through creative visual framing devices (*Hamlet*). Before curtain time for *Titus*, audiences rubbed shoulders with actors in Roman costumes who were warming up and walking in the aisles.

In the 1995 *Hamlet* (similar to the 2015 *Hamlet*), the audience saw actors busy preparing for the performance in cubicles in the dressing rooms on stage before the show started. Ophelia followed the Japanese custom of arranging ornate *hina* dolls – a pastime for ladies at the court and now part of the Dolls’ Festival in March celebrated by Japanese families. The dolls will eventually be set afloat to carry misfortunes away so that the family’s daughters can grow up healthily and happily. Since the dolls represent hope, Ophelia’s giving away dolls rather than flowers in her mad scene carried a grave suggestiveness. The metaphorical connection between drowning – dolls adrift – and despair was also evident. In the play-within-a-play scene, performers sat on a tiered platform resembling a *hina* dolls cabinet. They formed a human tableau and drew attention to the artificiality of the performance. The audience’s attention was redirected away from the representational aspect of theatrical realism to the presentational aspect of Ninagawa’s metatheatrical narrative.

While these works epitomize revisionist approaches to gender roles in Shakespeare, in other cases queerness is framed as a defining feature when a production does not actively engage with gender diversity.

## RACE

Gender issues intersect with racial identities in performance, because both gender and race are markings of difference. It is one thing for Indian actors to perform Shakespeare in India, where the actor is not part of a minority. It is quite another to do Shakespeare in a country where one is perceived to be non-mainstream (such as Yellow Earth Theatre’s Mandarin-English bilingual *King Lear* in Stratford-upon-Avon) or in the United States (such as *American Moor* by Keith Hamilton Cobb, Anacostia Playhouse, 2015; Young Jean Lee’s *Lear*, Soho Rep, New York, 2010; and Oregon Shakespeare Festival’s pan-Asian *Winter’s Tale*, dir. Desdemona Chiang, 2016) where classic theatre is assumed to be aligned with some versions of upper-middle-class white masculine culture. This section examines three themes: the precarious position of diasporic mixed-race actors; uses of dialects and accents; and multiethnic casting.

When global adaptations explore racial identities, they tend to highlight diasporic and ethnic identities that emerge in the spaces between cultures. Sangeeta Datta’s 2009 film *Life Goes On* draws on the framework of *King Lear* to depict the conflicts in an immigrant family of Hindus that moves from Bengal to London. The film draws on Bollywood conventions to create a cultural location that is neither here nor there. Despite the success of many intercultural works, the last thing diasporic actors want is to be pigeonholed and shoehorned into an ethnic ghetto where they are expected to only appear in such plays. It is both aesthetically and politically important to see, for example, Sophie Okonedo playing Queen Margaret in the BBC’s television series *The Hollow Crown* (dir. Dominic Cooke, Richard Eyre, Rupert Goold, Thea Sharrock, 2012–16) and *The Black Macbeth* (directed and adapted by Peter Coe, Roundhouse, 1972). The ultimate goal for minority artists is to transcend the label of a postcolonial subject or a perpetual other. US actor Hector Reynoso, for

example, is strongly opposed to any labels, particularly ‘persons of colour’. During a panel discussion at Washington, DC’s Gallaudet University on Shakespeare and diversity on 29 March 2016, he made it clear that colour-conscious or colour-blind casting does not work for him. He envisions a postracial world where his talents, rather than his ethnicity, will draw the spotlight. At the same conference, actor Deidra Starnes complained that she is ready to take on stately roles and would love to play, for example, Cleopatra. However, she is repeatedly asked to be the nurse in *Romeo and Juliet*. Deaf actor and director Monique Holt reminded us that a diverse world calls for a diverse cast even if Shakespeare may not have envisioned nonwhite actors staging *Hamlet*.

Language is sometimes used as a marker of racial difference. British-Kenyan director Jatinder Verma, Artistic Director of the Asian theatre company Tara Arts, uses the term Bilingual (i.e. the theatre praxis of featuring Asian or black casts in productions by independent Asian or black theatre companies) to challenge the dominant conventions of the English stage. In April 2015, Tara Arts produced its adaptation of *Macbeth* set in a migrant Asian family. Verma deliberately avoided picking an Asian-themed play. Instead, Tara Arts wanted to give black and Asian actors an opportunity to do Shakespeare.

Race and ethnicity are not only visible but also audible in global adaptations of Shakespeare. The aforementioned film *Chicken Rice War* uses different dialects and accents to demarcate ethnic differences. The feud in *Romeo and Juliet* is marked linguistically in the comedy as one between generations. The parental generation converses in Cantonese, while the younger generation speaks mostly Singlish. The feud between the two families appears both arbitrary and historically rooted, given the roles of Britain and Malaysia in Singapore’s colonial past. The parents’ feud is arbitrary, since they speak the same dialect. As a result, they are aligned against the younger generation in terms of linguistic difference. The characters are self-aware of the cultural crossroads where they stand and where Singapore finds itself. The familiar trope of ‘star-crossed lovers’ is turned inside out in this tragedy-turned-parody. *Chicken Rice War* questions the Singaporean government’s promise that the four official languages – Malay, English, Mandarin and Tamil – are equal. In the film, English is repeatedly demonstrated to be the preferred language that conveys authority and power, both in the framing device featuring a television newscaster reporting on the conflicts between the Wong and Chan families and in scenes that align English – even with a Singaporean accent – with global, modern culture. Many characters speak Singlish, a creole used colloquially that is based on vernacular English, Malay and Mandarin. It is bad enough for characters whose primary language is not English. It is even worse for those who do not speak even one of the four official languages, such as the Cantonese-speaking owners of the chicken rice stalls.

The oeuvre of Shakespeare has also been used to initiate reparative discourses about race. In particular, *King Lear* has frequently been adapted in this vein. Anthony Sher and John Kani’s play *Kunene and the King* (Stratford-upon-Avon and Cape Town, 2019; a co-production of the RSC and Fugard Theatre) depicts how two characters come to terms with ageing, cultural biases and their mortality through situations that parallel those in *Lear* and their re-enactment of scenes from

the play. *Kunene and the King* features Lunga, a South African black male nurse, and Jack, an ill-tempered white actor coping with terminal liver cancer in South Africa. Throughout the play they recite passages from *King Lear* to expose each other's cultural biases and eventually reconcile their differences. They rehearse South African racial histories through the text of *Lear* as well.

Hong Kong–British director David Tse staged a Mandarin-English production of *King Lear* in 2006 with his London-based Yellow Earth Theatre in collaboration with Shanghai Dramatic Arts Centre in Shanghai and Stratford-upon-Avon (part of the RSC Complete Works Festival). Lear, a business tycoon, solicits declarations of love from his three daughters. Regan and Goneril, who live in Shanghai, are fluent in Chinese, but Cordelia, who lives in London, is unable to communicate in Chinese with her father. Her silence is both a result of her inability to speak Mandarin and a gesture of resistance to the patriarchy. Cordelia, a member of the Chinese diaspora in London, participates in this important family and business meeting via video link. Ironically but perhaps fittingly, the only Chinese word at her disposal is *meiyou* ('nothing'). Both Tse's *Lear* and the aforementioned *Life Goes On* frame the different world views of Lear and Cordelia in terms of linguistic difference and offer a redemptive arc.

Multiethnic casting is an increasingly popular approach to adapting Shakespeare, but it is not a magical solution to racial inequality. In some cases, what appear to be multiethnic performances based on the casts turn out to be aesthetically incoherent, such as a pan-African *Macbeth* directed by Liesl Tommy for the Shakespeare Theatre Company in Washington, DC in 2017. Featuring African dance, this production reimagined the Scottish play in a North African political landscape with visual references to Russian and CIA (or rather, UIA in the production) intervention in civil wars and regime change in an unnamed third world country. The production boasts nontraditional and gender-bending casting, featuring more women and actors of colour than previous productions with the same company, with Jesse J. Perez (*Macbeth*) and Nikkole Salter (*Lady Macbeth*) in the lead roles. Not coincidentally, Hecate and the witches were the only Caucasian white characters in this universe, which accentuated not only the clash between Western imperialism and the third world but also the power imbalance between black and white communities. The transposition strategy of adaptation reflected the life experience of Liesl Tommy, an African-American director who was raised in Cape Town, South Africa during the apartheid era.

The production's predominantly multiethnic cast brought to mind Orson Welles's landmark 1936 *Macbeth* (Federal Theatre Project in New York), which was set in Haiti and featured an all-black cast. In both cases, the ethnicity and race of the cast matched those of the characters and cultures in the adaptation's respective universe. Tommy's production engaged in two models of nontraditional casting outlined by the Alliance for Inclusion in the Arts and Ayanna Thompson: namely, conceptual casting, a model 'in which actors of color are [self-consciously] cast in roles to enhance the play's social resonance', and cross-cultural casting, an approach that translates the universe of the play to a different culture and location (Thompson 2011: 76).

## CONCLUSION: POLITICS OF RECEPTION

Global Shakespeare is a promising arena to recast racial and gender roles, counter censorship and expand dramatic genres, but multicultural works, whether made locally or imported as touring theatre, can receive a mixed reception due to audiences' investment in some form of cultural authenticity. Iqbal Khan's *Much Ado About Nothing* (RSC, Stratford-upon-Avon, August 2012), for example, was set in contemporary Delhi and performed by a cast of second-generation Indian British actors. The production appropriated Bollywood-inspired music. Within the context of the UK, it was quickly compared by the press to two touring productions at the London Globe from the Indian subcontinent that were perceived to be more authentic, including Company Theatre's Hindi adaptation of *Twelfth Night* (dir. Atul Kumar) at the London Globe's 2012 World Shakespeare Festival.

For intercultural films and stage works, there is often a gap between artistic intent and audience response. The gap is less visible in relatively homogenous contexts (such as a Royal Shakespeare Company production in Stratford-upon-Avon), but it is enlarged in intercultural contexts where artists and audiences do not share the same cultural heritage. Some directors find these accidental meanings productive, while others resist being pigeonholed or profiled on the basis of their cultural origins. This phenomenon can produce the artistically positive effects of flipping stereotypes and offering an alternative pathway into a classic work with established interpretations (e.g. postcolonial interpretations of *The Tempest*).

The overworked theme of colonialism in *The Tempest* loses its power over time. An example is the 2009 pan-African *Tempest* co-produced by the RSC and Cape Town's Baxter Theatre Centre and directed by Janice Honeyman. In this allegory of colonialism, Antony Sher's white, dominant Prospero had John Kani's black Caliban – who bears traces of a South African shaman – on a tether, but in the final scene, Prospero delivers the epilogue to Caliban as an acknowledgement of his crimes. Shakespearean scholar Anston Bosman, a South African native, argues that the production 'signaled the exhaustion of *The Tempest* as a vehicle for that allegory and the urgent need for South African theater, now fifteen years into democracy, to appropriate Shakespeare in freshly imaginative ways' (2010: 108). However, when this production went on tour 'on the global stage' outside South Africa, it received favourable reviews in Britain. The worthy and politically correct allegory about the third world was recruited to help British critics justify enjoyment of the African carnival. Kate Bassett found the production 'universally poignant' (2009), and Michael Billington was struck by how the performance's combination of 'racial politics with visual playfulness' liberated 'this all-too-familiar play' and turned it into 'a deeply moving cry for forgiveness of the colonial past' (2009). The overseas success of the production, ironically, was due to its apolitical nature. Bosman wrote that the production was 'political only in the most predictable sense – as a call for anticolonial insurrection and indigenous self-governance – which, in 2009, is no longer very political at all' (2010: 114). The disparity in reception is the blessing and curse of touring theatre.

Another example is the strong contrast between the Japanese and the foreign reception of Ninagawa's 'cherry blossom' *Macbeth* (1980 in Tokyo, 1985 in Amsterdam and Edinburgh). Audiences at Japanese and international venues saw it alternately as a spectacle with strong visual motifs; a samurai story infused with Buddhist rituals; a stage work with Kurosawa-inspired cinematic qualities; an innovative Kabuki performance; a relatively conservative interpretation of the universal morals of *Macbeth*; a self-serving, self-Orientalizing production that appropriates Japanese traditions out of their local context; and sometimes all of the above. Self-Orientalization refers to a tendency of 'Oriental' artists – themselves typically the object of Western appropriation – to frame their works in stereotypical *chinoserie* or *japonisme* in order to meet the expectations of the Western gaze. Intercultural works thrive on the parallel and conflicting voices they foster.

Global Shakespeare has been shaped by censorship in the form of redacting the canon, transformations of genres, and performances of racial and gender identities. Global adaptations promote self-reflexivity by making artists and audiences more aware of their assumptions about cultural differences. As such, adaptations are productive because they generate new worldviews.

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