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# teaching shakespeare

POLICY • PEDAGOGY • PRACTICE

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GLOBAL RESURGENCE OF AUTHORITARIANISM WITH WENDY LENNON  
EAL CURRICULUM DESIGN WITH EDWARD KEY  
LATINX SHAKESPEARE WITH CARLA DELLA GATTA  
HAUNTOLOGY AND WHITENESS WITH SHENG-HSIANG LANCE PENG  
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**G**UEST EDITOR, DR WENDY LENNON, earned her PhD from the Shakespeare Institute, University of Birmingham in 2024. Lennon is an academic researcher and English teacher working across literature, geography, history, and race. Her first academic book, *Shakespeare, Race & Pedagogy: Early Modern Colonialism to the Windrush* is to be published by Cambridge University Press and she has a chapter titled *Skin/Pedagogy* forthcoming in an Arden Bloomsbury collection. Lennon has been appointed a Fellow of The Arden Shakespeare Fourth Series 2024–2026. She is a member of the British Shakespeare Association’s education committee, a Fellow of the English Association, a member of the Early Modern Scholars of Colour Network and is on the editorial board for the journal *English*. Wendy is also on the Advisory Board for a joint project between the University of Oxford and University College London researching the teaching of empire. The international ‘Shakespeare, Race & Pedagogy’ education initiative #shakeracepedagogy was founded by Wendy in 2019, and she project managed an ERC funded education scheme at the University of Oxford which received the 2022 Vice-Chancellor’s Innovation and Engagement award. Following her undergraduate English BA (Hons) at Royal Holloway, University of London and University of Exeter Secondary English PGCE, Wendy has been a secondary school English teacher for twelve years.

Founding the Shakespeare, Race & Pedagogy education initiative in 2019 gave me an opportunity to develop my research, reflect upon my teaching practice and build an international community of educators and learners. Through this community we have shared our experiences and approaches to teaching Shakespeare. Being the guest editor for this Shakespeare, Race & Pedagogy

special edition of the *Teaching Shakespeare* magazine to disseminate further examples and experiences of teaching Shakespeare is certainly one of the highlights of my career. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Myfanwy Edwards, the British Shakespeare Association and the amazing writers who have contributed articles from classrooms around the world.

Here, teachers and students of Shakespeare share their insightful perspectives. Edward Key, an Assistant Principal at a high school in China, shares the potential for curriculum reform to develop the teaching of Shakespeare for EAL learners. Adam Thorpe reflects on his approaches to teaching faith and race in *Othello* in his specific



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context of Batley Girls' High School. Sheng-Hsiang Lance Peng, a PhD candidate at the University of Cambridge's Education Faculty, considers 'Hauntology in Education Practice' and the 'fertile terrain' for discussing 'concepts of whiteness'. Danielle Skinner, a student at the University of the West Indies, bridges the gap between Shakespeare and Caribbean students. Carla Della Gatta, based at the University of Maryland, shares her work on Latinx Shakespeares and bilingual Shakespeare as a pedagogy of ethics. Scottish and Jewish teacher, Conrad Cohen, discusses the personal and professional complexities of teaching *The Merchant of Venice* to combat antisemitism. American High School teacher, Jodi Nathanson, makes a case for watching teen show *Riverdale* which, Nathanson argues, plays homage to Shakespeare's *Hamlet*.

I have been inspired and invigorated by these brilliant and thought-provoking international contributions. I am very grateful to the wonderful teacher writers for giving

"I HAVE BEEN INSPIRED AND INVIGORATED BY THESE BRILLIANT AND THOUGHT-PROVOKING INTERNATIONAL CONTRIBUTIONS."

us a sneak peak into their classrooms and pedagogical thinking.

My own contributions simultaneously raise the alarm and offer hope. It has been an incredibly challenging year of teaching Shakespeare for me. The global resurgence of authoritarianism that has been applied to the teaching

of Shakespeare has devastated my secondary school teaching career. Making the heartbreaking decision to leave my wonderful students owing to the detrimental approach of an academy trust regime was incredibly hard. However, like *King Lear's* Cordelia, I had to follow my conscience at all costs. I have been encouraged by working with education charities who offer safer teaching and learning environments for both staff and students. The Royal Shakespeare Company's production of *As You*

"my own contributions simultaneously raise the alarm and offer hope. It has been an incredibly challenging year of teaching Shakespeare for me. the global resurgence of authoritarianism that has been applied to the teaching of Shakespeare has devastated my secondary school teaching career."

*Like It* that I review and reflect on here, also offers hope and opportunities for learning.

This Shakespeare, Race & Pedagogy special edition is another opportunity for our community to share and inspire one another. The conversations that are initiated within these pages will be developed further in the next symposium . . . are you ready for Shakespeare, Race & Pedagogy event number two?

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# the gLoBaL resurgence of auThORItARIANISM

*'It is absolutely imperative that you listen very carefully to the information I give you and follow the instructions exactly. You must follow my instructions, even when you disagree with them.'*

These are the words that I was forced to read aloud to my Year 11 class from an English school academy trust script. In the Autumn term of 2023, scripted English lessons were our newly enforced method of teaching English to secondary school students aged 11 to 16 years.

I say 'forced to read' because every 3 minutes a member of SLT, leaders of the new trust, or a member of middle leadership would burst into my classroom to check that I was reciting from the script in my hand and that all students were sitting in total silence, facing the front. Managerial intimidation as opposed to lesson observation.

The lesson scripts were not allowed to be adapted or differentiated to meet the needs of our students, or to include knowledge from teachers, but the same script for each year group was to be obediently recited class after class for the students to receive and regurgitate. Each lesson inscribed on a week-by-week 'precision plan' which had been prescribed by a self-declared English 'expert' who is a senior member of an academy trust. An academy trust who have assigned themselves the title of 'World Class Experts' and swooped in to take control of a failing seaside school. With sufficient finances to seize power and self-declared clout, they have decided, word for word, exactly what I must say to my students about each Shakespeare play, even though they've never met my pupils and certainly haven't taken the time to read the needs of my classroom.

Noticing grammatical errors, factual inaccuracies (no, Shakespeare wasn't born in '1592') and disturbing sociopolitical stances as I was forced to read from the lesson booklets, restricted by the confines of working for an English school academy trust, I kept wondering:

- *Who has decided that these essays and lesson scripts are the best way to deliver English curriculum content to the 1,100 students in the school?*
- *Which research justifies this pedagogy of oppression?*
- *How have they managed to infiltrate six secondary schools in the region?*
- *Who has decided that this is 'English teaching'?*
- *Why are these fictions being fed to our children?*

If these are 'World Class' teaching and learning resources, why are there serious inaccuracies and even errors related to allocated exam timings? (All AQA English Language teachers know that Language Paper 2 is one hour forty-five minutes long, not '2 hours' outlined in the lesson booklet).

I am writing this to sound the alarm which has been ringing throughout our schools for years. I am writing to emphasise the importance of us, as teachers, having our own autonomy. I am writing to urge educators to have the courage to facilitate our students' autonomy to ignite their passion for their learning, to build a foundation for their success, to improve their life chances for the exciting, unknowable future careers that we are supposed to be preparing them for.

In an attempt to develop our careers during an English department training day, we were informed that no other subject would be allowed in our English classrooms. There would be no art (although English Language paper 1 is often inspired by an image for creative writing) and no drama (except Shakespeare is drama. Shakespeare wrote plays to be performed in a theatre). My own Shakespeare, Race & Pedagogy key principles, case studies and pedagogical practice confirms the many benefits of creativity and interdisciplinarity.

Instead, during English lessons and for homework, students were forced to learn pre-prepared *Macbeth* essays off by heart and complete aimless gap fill activities slotting in memorised information into booklet after booklet. For all of their literature and language courses, students were told to learn and recite essays or information then fill in the gaps. The homework and class booklets were also littered with errors; mistakes that even my students would spot. Students would immediately lose interest in the work because they lost trust in the resources being poured into them. My students were begging me to teach them and mark their work, as I used to be able to. There was even a prescribed *Macbeth* booklet for students aiming for 5+ and 7+ grades. I would like *all* my students (especially those looking to gain grades 5 or above, students who should become English undergraduates and English teachers of the future) to read, to discuss, to think and to write their own responses, not copy!

What are we turning our children into through this pedagogy of oppression when we tell them not only to sit



“students would immediately lose interest in the work because they lost trust in the resources being poured into them.”

in silence but also instruct them exactly what to think, feel and say about a Shakespeare play? Phil Beadle declares that: ‘Supporters of this practice seem to have confused Orwell’s *1984* with a how-to manual’.

As educators, we must not allow our incredible, unique, life giving subject to become sites of oppression or stagnation in which teachers recite and students receive to regurgitate. Robert Poole alerts us to the ‘global resurgence of authoritarianism [which] is increasingly infiltrating our educational institutions’. Whilst Phil Beadle argues that ‘working-class children, black or white, are actively being deculturalised, treated as empty vessels who are to be filled with qualitatively ‘better’ ruling class knowledge in order to destroy any thoughts whatsoever of them understanding the distinction between their conditions and the conditions of the class ruling over them, or of considering any action of sedition’.

It is essential for the well-being, safety, and success of our young people that we staunchly defend our profession, our expertise, and our children. We must develop our own skills and knowledge so that we can remain vigilant to the insidious ways authoritarianism eclipses and crushes creativity, freedom, common sense, and learning. As teachers, we must be able to discern and challenge the pedagogical approaches being prescribed to us. The justification for the cruel behaviour policy and limiting teaching style is always that it is ‘research backed’. The party line response to any queries that I made to the senior leadership team about these ‘tough love’ approaches was: ‘We do this for learning and for life’.

There is no point reading about exciting and invigorating approaches to teaching Shakespeare, such as the articles included in this edition of *Teaching Shakespeare*, if we do not address and stop heavy handed school take overs which prevent us from sharing the most effective teaching methods in our classrooms, for our particular group of children. It is essential that we challenge curriculum design, behaviour policies and the creep of authoritarianism in order to save the teaching of Shakespeare, and, more broadly, to save our subject.

Thank you for taking the time to read these articles, to consider, to try out, and to reconsider how to teach Shakespeare. To excel in our craft, it is educators like us who are open to the journey of lifelong learning that will best serve our children and our intellectual community.



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It is teachers like us who are flexible in our approaches and respond to the needs of our students (rather than reciting draconian absolutes) who will revolutionise and reinvigorate the teaching of Shakespeare’s plays.

A recent *Guardian* article reported that the new Labour government will urge ‘English schools to phase out “cruel” behaviour rules’. We cannot allow total anarchy. For our children’s safety and learning there must be high standards and rules. However, the extremes that I hope the new government will tackle are academy intimidation tactics that teachers and students are subject to. During swift lesson observations, students were being checked for sitting upright with silent attention and facing the front. If students look out of the window they will receive a warning, then slung into isolation for the rest of the day if they repeat the offense of briefly glancing away from their teacher script reader. If a student calls out the right answer or asks a question ‘enthusiastically’ they are similarly punished for speaking. Phil Beadle denounces the obsession with silence and the ‘pedagogy of obedience’ which is an extremely concerning trend in education which silences both students and their teachers. How can we recreate an Elizabethan theatre or perform Shakespeare’s plays in such conditions?

Under these regimes, children are being unnecessarily punished. Zack\*, a pupil premium child in care, managed to complete 80% of his homework. A huge achievement for him as he is dealing with very difficult living arrangements. However, the rules state that he must complete 100%, therefore, he was put in Reflection, missing vital GCSE lessons which put him even further behind his peers. Being punished for his best efforts led him to avoiding lessons and school altogether.

Joshua\* had an almost fatal accident which left him with life changing injuries. Nothing short of a miracle, Joshua survived. The injuries have impacted Joshua's memory, focus and his body but he has finally returned to school on a reduced timetable. Unfortunately, Joshua called out to ask for extra explanations because the brain injury continues to impact his comprehension. Joshua received a named reminder. Later in the lesson, with tiredness impacting his memory and his thoughts becoming muddled, Joshua called out again. Calling out for the second time, Joshua (a medical miracle) was removed and put in Reflection. Joshua was forced to miss vital study time, with no care or consideration for his individual medical needs. Joshua used the only opportunity he was allowed, his non-examined Speaking and Listening Endorsement, to speak about his injuries. He received a Distinction but this element of the English curriculum (the one in which children have the freedom to choose and to speak) is almost irrelevant in its lack of weighting towards his overall English Language grade.

I'm delighted by and welcome the possibilities of the Oracy Education Commission chaired by Geoff Barton, but I am deeply concerned by the trend of punishing students for speaking, for having an opinion and for being their brilliant, wonderful, complicated selves. How can the commission expect to achieve their aims with this type of silencing in schools? If the behaviour systems and curriculum design don't facilitate learning, writing, reading and oracy, if they don't allow us to share and apply the best strategies for learning and child development, if our children cannot study and enthusiastically discuss Shakespeare's plays in all their complicated, frustrating, theatrical glory, the commission and other research projects may as well be disbanded. We cannot reach or teach Shakespeare whilst these policies and approaches remain in place.

Restricted from effectively teaching Shakespeare, like *King Lear's* Cordelia I had to follow my conscience at all cost. It was absolutely devastating to leave my incredible students. In spite of my 100% Literature and Language exam pass rate track record, my English BA (Hons) degree, my secondary English PGCE and PhD in Shakespeare Studies, I was not allowed to teach Shakespeare. If qualified teachers are not allowed to teach, they cannot and must not stay in schools.

Owing to the exodus of qualified English teachers, PE teachers and unqualified teachers are now reading these scripted lesson booklets to 'teach' English to our secondary school students. Not just for a cover lesson but for entire English Language and Literature GCSE courses. Lowering the standards of teachers and teaching is

**"Lowering the standards of teachers and teaching is Lowering the standards of our children's learning and life chances."**

lowering the standards of our children's learning and life chances. Moving forward, English teaching must be taught by professionals who have the autonomy and the subject knowledge to deliver a diverse curriculum. Furthermore, our examination system should not allow didactic teaching to be the route to high grades. This style of education does not sufficiently test for or demonstrate the reading, writing, speaking and listening English skills our young people should leave school with.

Fortunately, as for many of you I'm sure, rereading and studying Shakespeare has saved me. I have been working with an education charity who academically and holistically provide safe teaching and learning spaces. The cycles of resistance that we must activate to question oppressive impulses is exhausting and often seems futile. However, I am determined to hold onto my radical optimism. The writing of bell hooks also reminded me that teaching is 'a vocation rooted in hopefulness' and classroom settings are places where 'we can all learn the practice of freedom'. Each day I step into or login to a learning environment, I advocate for hope and freedom in service of my students. In the face of adversity, Paulo Freire encourages us to 'maintain hope even when the harshness of reality may suggest the opposite'.

Together, we can turn the tide. We have an opportunity to return the teaching of Shakespeare to teachers. We have an opportunity to give the gift of learning about Shakespeare to our young people. We have an opportunity to give our teachers and students greater autonomy.

**Dr Wendy Lennon**

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*\*All student names have been changed.*



# what's past is prologue

## THE POTENTIAL FOR CURRICULUM REFORM AND EAL LEARNERS

**e** DWARD KEY is the Assistant Principal of Primary and Middle School English Curriculum at Shanghai High School International Division in China.

In the creation of curriculum, one is always faced with the precedent. We reflect, refine, and reinstate what is in the old dusty folder for the sake of time and energy. Yet, in my current context at a KS1–KS5 school in China, I was faced with the somewhat daunting blank page, no precedent, and a pressure-free objective: create an extracurricular 20-week hourly course to introduce KS3 EAL learners to Shakespeare in preparation for higher study. Easy, right, but where to start?

I found myself in the liberating position of no assessment standards, no pedagogical prerequisite – just make it engaging. Within this bliss, thousands of miles away from the shores of the UK, I questioned the construction of Shakespeare as the compulsory author in English education: where do we find the value of the Bard? How is this value created and reinforced? How relative is all this linguistic hegemony to an 11-year-old learner without permanent immersion in English language? I engaged with these questions alongside my students as we embarked on an inquiry-based programme into the question: Who is William Shakespeare? The assessment objectives were created to facilitate learners focusing on the language, purpose, context, and connections (to self, world, and other texts). The emphasis was pre-dominately on the latter: engage learners with the works through eliciting connections to their context and, more importantly, their inner voice.

### BACKWARD DESIGN

My focus was stimulated by these questions with which I attempted to explore alongside my learners. I started with the notion that I would, as per my wider practice, remove the preconception that language proficiency dictates skill level. Whatever it took in terms of adaptive teaching and learning, I would create an environment where all students could meet the following assessment objectives:

“I QUESTIONED THE CONSTRUCTION OF SHAKESPEARE AS THE COMPULSORY AUTHOR IN ENGLISH EDUCATION: WHERE DO WE FIND THE VALUE OF THE BARD? HOW IS THIS VALUE CREATED AND REINFORCED?”

- AO1: Analyse Shakespeare’s work for dramatic, narrative, and poetic devices.
- AO2: Appraise Shakespeare works for purpose and context.
- AO3: Evaluate Shakespeare for connections to the world, self, and other texts.
- AO4: Apply a variety of critical lenses to guide a reading and interpretation.

### ASSESSMENT

Building on England’s National Curriculum ties to formalist literary theory, I tried to facilitate critical analyses of his works through inquiring into the purpose, relevance, and linguistic fabric of Shakespeare. Yet, as per my personal educational philosophy, I believe that challenging learners to critique the precedent is key. I wanted learners to apply critical lenses (postcolonialism, psychoanalysis, gender criticism, and so forth) a practice usually reserved for further and higher education. From this point, the construction of key assessment points was formulated for both formative and summative assessments.

#### ASSESSMENT 1: Shakespeare Inquiry

Who is William Shakespeare? Learners will inquire into this question through choice of a narrower focus: biography; his plays; legacy; his theatre; and history. Learners will choose the assessment form: creating a play; a poem; flash-fiction; a diorama/3D-model. Assessment will be based around creativity and originality and AO1, AO2, and AO3.

#### ASSESSMENT 2: *The Tempest* Essay

A focus on genre, purpose, meaning, history, or inter-textuality. Assessment will be based around creative, and originality as founded in the first assessment with a stronger focus analytical and evaluative skills and AO1, AO2, AO3, and AO4.

Learners were also provided with an interactive notebook to document their formative steps into Shakespeare study. The premise was for learners to communicate their personal, critical response to what’s been read: cut and paste key quotes from reading materials, illustrate their emotive responses to the language, extract and reimagine characters from the play into their world – anything in which creativity was the driving force.

### IN PRACTICE

Despite the constraints of the extracurricular format of

one hour per week for 20 weeks and the diverse range of current language proficiency, I aimed to challenge the learners to explore the key categories of Shakespeare's works as per the *First Folio* with a summative study of the most ambiguous drama: *The Tempest*. Each week, learners were introduced, through active learning strategies, to a genre, a synopsis of the drama studied, 1–2 key scenes, and a new critical lens to apply. For example:

### WEEK 2: *The Sonnets*

Building on the first session's establishment of the key question, we turned to appraising the poetic language of Shakespeare. Scaffolding the iambic pentameter of Shakespeare, and as inspired by *The Hip-hop Shakespeare Company*, I engaged learners with recognisable examples of contemporary music to model the power of Shakespeare's language to uncover the search for human truth that permeates music. From here, comparisons were made through guided annotation and close reading of Shakespeare's most evocative Sonnets. Learners placed lines of sonnets next to lines from their favourite pop stars, compared, contrasted, and reflected on the power of poetry through what it evoked within themselves.

### WEEK 10: *The Tragedy of Julius Caesar*

Following a fleeting study of *Richard II* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, learners were introduced to the archetypes of Shakespearean tragedy and the new historicism lens. This critical lens enables learners to consider their own impact on a reading and situates their own experiences on an equal field to the author and the era from which the text emerges; this approach facilitates a stronger sense of learning from the past. We divided the play into three sociohistorical contexts: Ancient Rome; Elizabethan England in 1599; and our world in 2024. Using Act 3 Scene 2 as the anchor scene, we explored Shakespeare's design of Brutus' prosaic logic and reason in conjunction with Mark Anthony's verse fuelled by pathos to discuss the power of rhetoric and the response to this scene across different historical contexts. This initiated discussion about the plebeian behaviour as indicative of modern examples of herd mentality and the bystander effect.

### WEEK 12–20: *The Tempest*

Learning accumulated throughout the programme and as we entered the summative stages with our study of *The Tempest*, the learners were armed with the key tools needed to tackle an extended study of Shakespearean drama. Each week, learners were tasked with creating a semantic map for each character to accompany the reading of a scene. For example, in Week 13, learners were tasked with a reading of Act 2 Scene 2 to facilitate a reading of Caliban. After preliminary discussion about Caliban's

divisive characterisation, "Is he a dangerous monster? Is he human/sub-human? Does he represent something outside of the play?", learners were tasked to perform and analyse key Caliban moments (Caliban's soliloquy (II. 2. 1–14); Prospero's colonisation and enslavement (I. 2. 331–343); Prospero's monologue on nature and nurture (IV. 1. 188–193); Caliban as native to the island (III. 2. 135–143)). Subsequently, learners were presented with postcolonialism: how does Caliban reflect colonial ideas towards "the Other"? Learners then revisited the earlier scenes, through performance and close reading, empowered with the thematic focus on power dynamics, identity, language and representation, resistance, agency, and slavery. To further contextualise and elicit connections to the world and self, learners were presented with James Baldwin's "Why I Stopped Hating Shakespeare" (1964). The sentiments explored by Baldwin resonated with the nature of EAL learning as well as echoing the voice of Caliban and his representation in *The Tempest*.

### SO WHAT?

By looking at the state of how Shakespeare is currently taught from a different angle, one free from constraint, the potential for positive change is revealed. Despite being a very distinct context for the emergence of this course, there is an unsurprising revelation that removing the shackles that our curriculum holds upon Shakespeare study facilitates engaging, purposeful, and challenging pedagogy. Moreover, removing the preconception that language level dictates the assessment of higher order thinking skills further reveals the reductive nature of our approach to Shakespeare study and the necessity to meet the needs of the modern classroom.

**"THERE IS AN UNSURPRISING REVELATION THAT REMOVING THE SHACKLES THAT OUR CURRICULUM HOLDS UPON SHAKESPEARE STUDY FACILITATES ENGAGING, PURPOSEFUL, AND CHALLENGING PEDAGOGY."**

The experience provided, and rewarded, a voice of dissent towards the incontestable nature of Shakespeare's place at the forefront English learning. This allowed me, as part of the classroom community, to reconnect and re-evaluate the potential of Shakespeare pedagogy addressing my initial questions of purpose and value. My experience empowered me and my students to revel in Shakespeare: undoubtedly, the Bard, once reappraised as the great surveyor of the human condition, can empower individuals from all backgrounds to learn English both critically and creatively.



# othello: faith AND race

**a** DAM THORPE is an English teacher and head of KS4 and KS5 English Literature at a school in Leeds; he completed his English Literature Masters by Research at the University of Huddersfield in 2020 and can often be found reading the works of Shakespeare to his dog Zelda.

This article is adapted from my Masters by Research thesis entitled ‘Teaching Tragedy: Pedagogical approaches to Shakespeare’s *Othello*’. The findings of my research demonstrated a clear tension that exists at the heart of the study of English Literature between the crypto-nationalist agenda prevalent throughout the Conservative government’s 2015 educational reforms and the multicultural, multidimensional makeup of the students it serves.

I have taught English across all three Key Stages at Batley Girls’ High School for twelve years and have been teaching A Level from the beginning of my career. At the time I conducted my research, school data showed that 83% of students at my school were Muslim. Throughout my time at Batley Girls’ the school community has undertaken an incredible amount of work to help both staff, students and their parents strengthen community bonds. One of the many ways in which the school tried to achieve this was through working closely with the former MP for Batley and Spen, Jo Cox.

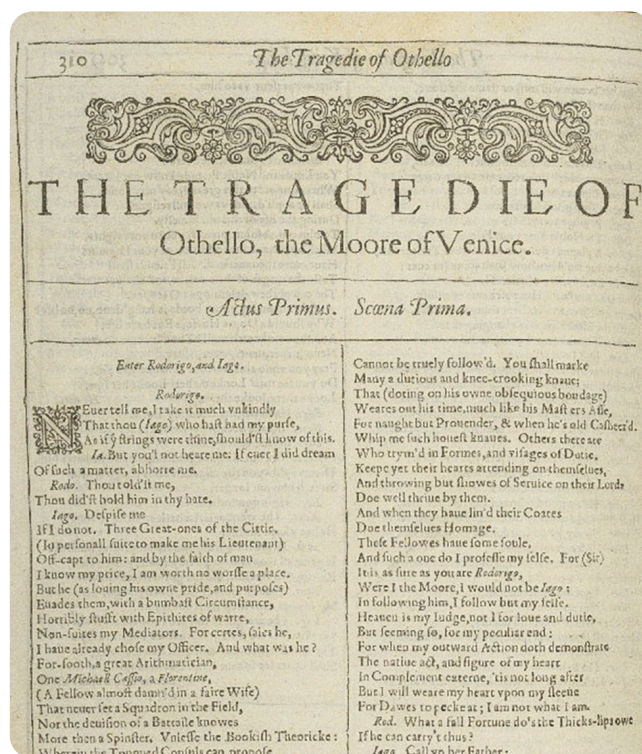
Jo spent huge amounts of time working with local communities to emphasise the need for social integration for those new to the area, coupled with the obligation for a strong and meaningful cohesion between its members. As reported by *The Guardian* (2016), Thomas Mair, the far-right terrorist who murdered her, referred to Jo as ‘one of the collaborators’ pitching ‘a very bloody struggle’ between ‘the white race’ and migrants who, according to Mair, sought to ‘invade’ Great Britain. Following Jo’s murder, when trying to understand how such a terrible crime could be committed less than a mile away from their school, my students often referenced the divisive and toxic rhetoric of the Leave campaign (UKIP’s ‘Breaking Point’

“students often referenced the divisive and toxic rhetoric of the Leave campaign (ukip’s ‘breaking point’ poster was an example frequently used) to emphasise their growing sense of vulnerability at being seen as ‘outsiders’ in a country most have lived in all of their lives.”

poster was an example frequently used) to emphasise their growing sense of vulnerability at being seen as ‘outsiders’ in a country most have lived in all of their lives.

The educational context in which my students find themselves is one of great significance when evaluating their experience of studying Shakespeare, with the dynamics of both their gender and religion of central importance to this experience; indeed, a notable finding in a 2016 study conducted by Tania Saeed (2016) concerning the experiences of female Muslim students in the UK found that, ‘Muslim students’ freedom of expression and freedom to challenge the status quo is compromised’ due to UK education institutions adhering to the ‘government’s Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015, which imposed a “statutory” responsibility on educational institutes including universities to pass on information about “vulnerable” students “at risk” of radicalisation, predominantly focuses on Muslim students’ (Saeed, 2016, p. 86).

Across decades of multiple iterations of the National Curriculum for English, Shakespeare’s inclusion has been compulsory in the study of the subject. To consider the teaching of Shakespeare and his placing as cultural shibboleth within British literary heritage is to also consider the ways in which *all* students of English are able to see themselves reflected in his work. Shah, reflecting on



Photograph: William Shakespeare, Isaac Jaggard and Edward Blount (printers) © Wikimedia Commons

the complexities faced when teaching canonical texts in a British school to students from multicultural backgrounds, suggests that the ‘diversity of my students meant that much of the power of original interpretation lay with them’ and that ultimately ‘their responses are entrenched in the readings they make of the world: they produce worldly readings of canonical texts’. Indeed, Shah argues that the complexity of students’ ‘cultural identities are not to be severed for the sake of conformity. They are vital to the books read in classrooms and to personalized learning’ (Shah, 2013, p.201).

The tension surrounding the influence of immigration in Britain, and particularly London, at the latter end of the sixteenth century, just as Shakespeare himself arrived in the capital, was one which Shakespeare most notably portrayed in *Othello* and *The Merchant of Venice*. As Andrew Dickson (2016) notes, Shakespeare’s contribution to his collaborative work with several different authors on *The Book of Sir Thomas Moore* included a speech referring to immigrants in the play as ‘strangers’ with the timeless warning that if the British were to travel ‘to France [...] to any German province [...] Nay anywhere that not adheres to England: Why, you must needs be strangers’. These lines, Dickson argues, were written by a playwright who ‘had a sharp eye for the troubled relationship between ethnic minorities and majorities’.

Shakespeare’s willingness to confront the hypocrisy and xenophobic rhetoric evident in Elizabethan England laid the groundwork for his delving into ‘the tensions between urban communities’ and the ‘fractured complexities of multiculturalism’ (Dickson, 2016) that are so evident in both plays. In light of this, it has been interesting to note that some of my students see the ‘stripping away’ of Othello’s ‘sense of worth’ and, in essence, his religious and cultural identity, is particularly significant when considering their response to the tragedy of the play. My students often note that when Othello announces that the, ‘Turks are drown’d’ (2.1.195–196), we come to realise that Othello presumably has more in common spiritually, culturally and religiously with the ‘turban’d Turk’ (5.2.349) than with the ‘potent, grave, and reverend’ (1.3.76) Venetian senators whose interests he is sworn to serve and protect. During one class discussion about the root of Othello’s role as tragic hero, Zainab said: ‘Othello’s tragedy isn’t his death, it’s that he’s lost his sense of worth. His identity has been stripped away and all that’s left is his “accomplishments” of taking a prominent role in the Venetian military and, to some extent, society.’

My students saw this parallel between the institutional abuse Othello suffers at the hands of those around him with

contemporary attitudes towards Islam, multiculturalism and the political climate surrounding immigration. During a class presentation on the depiction of Othello’s character, Aasifah said:

*Othello tells us that because he has shared with Brabantio stories of his life as well as winning battles for Venice that he (Brabantio) “loved” Othello. However, the moment Othello stopped ‘providing a service’ to Brabantio and now became part of his bloodline suddenly Othello was seen as a ‘disease’ that needed to be removed. Similarly, some attitudes towards immigration in the West appear to be that we will use it to our advantage when it benefits us, but the moment it causes us concern we reject it.*

The inherent hypocrisy that my students identified through the dominant powers within the play, and their perception of the immigration policies of Western superpowers, further highlights their growing sense of being ‘othered’ by the society in which, just like Othello, they fully intend to contribute to socially, politically and economically.

The destructive nature of this clash of cultural and religious identities, so prevalent in the lives of my students, also played a prominent role in Richard Twyman’s production of *Othello* we watched at the Lawrence Batley Theatre in Huddersfield. This production placed significant emphasis on the hypothesis that Othello originated from a Muslim heritage. The play opened with Othello and Desdemona taking part in a traditional, but secret, Islamic marriage ceremony; however, when Othello next appears on stage, he dresses himself first with a bullet proof vest and then hangs a crucifix around his neck. Here, Othello conforms to the expectations of the society in which he lives, adopting Christian values and belief systems at the expense of his own. As a consequence of the production focusing on the links that can be made between Othello and his Islamic faith, there was a sense that my students felt legitimised in bringing their own experiences to their readings and responses to the play.

In terms of looking at *Othello* as a historical text, and thus the depictions of race as reflective of attitudes held by Elizabethan and Jacobean audiences, on the whole my students placed less value on this in terms of its relevance to a contemporary audience. Instead, a view that resonated with my students is reflected in Ben Okri’s assertion that: ‘*Othello* “must be viewed as the white man’s myth of the black man”’. He should not be viewed as a fully formed character with a clear psychology because he really represents a white myth or stereotype about black masculinity’ (DeGravelles, 2011, p.160); for many in the class the ‘historical’ reading of Othello’s character,

and specifically the ‘mythological’ understanding of ‘black masculinity’ left them dissatisfied.

Husna, reflecting on this piece of criticism, referenced rapper, journalist and author Akala and his explanation of the depiction of knife crime in London. We searched for his views on this issue and one particular video in which he was interviewed by *The Guardian* (2019) caught their attention when he suggested that:

... the idea of black on black knife violence is rooted in this nineteenth century pseudo-scientific gene based racism. Black people are genetically violent. It doesn't make any difference if they're a Premier League footballer, well educated, or a corner street drug dealer ... black on black violence is literally rooted in that history of empire, in the inherited historical guilt, in fear and in the sense that black people are irredeemable ... when a small number of black kids participate in violent crime, it's black on black violence, and doesn't need explaining because, of course, blackness is a perfectly reasonable explanation.

Indeed, the class made several references to the outpouring of racist and xenophobic attitudes from characters who Othello initially claims to love and respect him. Iago's assertion that our perception of Othello's character should be reduced to ‘an old black ram’ (1.1.89–89) who, taking on the form of the ‘devil’ (1.1.92), has stolen half of Brabantio's ‘soul’ (1.1.88), serves to reinforce the ‘myth’ of the black experience. Additionally, Dymna Callaghan (1991) extends this argument, noting that the depiction of Othello's character on the Elizabethan and Jacobean stage is a, ‘... double impersonation of Othello – the white actor playing a Moor who is trying to assimilate in Venice’ (Callaghan, 1991, p. 87).

In a follow up lesson, the students were keen to discuss the various views the rest of the class had on the systematic racism evident in the play. Afifah pointed out: ‘To me the Duke's idea that Othello is “more fair than black” might be the most racist comment made about him in the whole play. The Duke's attitude towards Othello suggests that he's linking goodness with white, and negativity with black. He's taking away everything that Othello is and placing on him the white version of the man that he wants Othello to be.’

On the whole the class found the premise of Afifah's argument intriguing and hard to deny. This initial idea led to a discussion about Othello's ‘othering’ by the entire scope of Venetian society. If the Duke is representative of the power structure governing Venice, then his implication that ultimately Othello should be considered ‘fair’ in character despite being ‘black’ highlights the underlying

“aLL students must be aLLowed to see the value of their own experiences reflected back at them through the literature that they study, only by doing so can we continue to claim that shakespeare speaks for aLL of us.”

racist profiling of Othello. Looked at in this light, it was not surprising to the class that, as Othello's life descends into chaos, he declares that Desdemona's ‘... name, that was as fresh//As Dian's visage, is now begrimed and black//As mine own face’ (3.3.388–389). Direct correlation was drawn between the ‘blackness’ of Othello's reputation along with his view of Desdemona's reputation once he believes in her infidelity, with the supposition that both characters ultimately now appear ‘black’ in his eyes.

The teaching of *Othello* then, must continue to encourage students to engage with presentist readings of the play; at the forefront of this approach teachers must allow their students not just to understand *how* Shakespeare became representative of British canonical literature but *why* his work still resonates with a student body made up of various cultures, religions, and ethnicities. All students must be allowed to see the value of their own experiences reflected back at them through the literature that they study, only by doing so can we continue to claim that Shakespeare speaks for all of us.

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## HAUNTOLOGY IN EDUCATIONAL PRACTICE

**S**HENG-HSIANG LANCE PENG, a PhD candidate at the University of Cambridge's Education Faculty, navigates and connects the domains of social work and education, exploring cross-disciplinary issues. A proponent of hauntological perspectives and the monster lens, he also pens a hotchpotch of articles discussing their application across various spheres. Visit <https://lancep.notion.site/e534b17d426f4a0890d5a9278f95e5f4> to explore his webfolio.

In the domain of Renaissance literature, there exists a fertile terrain for discussing the concept of whiteness. Unlike conventional discourses on race which often centre on marginalised groups, it is essential to dismantle whiteness itself (Hall, 1996). By fixating solely on the 'other', discussions on race may inadvertently overlook the underlying power dynamics at play. As McIntosh (2001) elucidates in her reflections on white privilege, traditional pedagogical approaches to race often perpetuate racial inequalities. In many instances, students in Renaissance classrooms may find themselves similarly conditioned to disregard the intricacies of white privilege and power dynamics. Thus, integrating the notion of hauntology into the study of Shakespeare can proffer a nuanced comprehension of race relations, fostering critical engagement with issues of privilege and power.

Hauntology (Derrida, 1994), within the context of Shakespeare's classroom, refers to the exploration of residual spectres from the past that persistently influence present-day societal structures. It entails scrutinising how historical ideologies, such as white supremacy, continue to exert their sway in contemporary contexts. By applying hauntology to the analysis of Shakespeare's works, educators can unearth concealed strata of meaning and expose the spectral presence of race and power dynamics within his texts. Moreover, incorporating hauntology into the curriculum can furnish students with a novel vantage point on Shakespeare's plays. Instead of regarding these works as antiquated artifacts, students can perceive them as dynamic texts that reverberate with contemporary

**"By applying hauntology to the analysis of Shakespeare's works, educators can unearth concealed strata of meaning and expose the spectral presence of race and power dynamics within his texts."**

18.  
**S**hall I compare thee to a Summers day?  
Thou art more lovely and more temperate:  
Rough windes do shake the darling buds of Maie,  
And Sommers lease hath all too short a date:  
Sometime too hot the eye of heauen shines,  
And often is his gold complexion dimm'd,  
And euery faire from faire some-time declines,  
By chance, or natures changing course vntrim'd:  
But thy eternall Sommer shall not fade,  
Nor loose possession of that faire thou ow'st,  
Nor shall death brag thou wandr'st in his shade,  
When in eternall lines to time thou grow'st,  
So long as men can breath or eyes can see,  
So long liues this, and this giues life to thee,

Photograph source: <http://una.folger.edu/una/service/shv2g21>

issues. Through the hauntological lens, students can scrutinise how Shakespeare's depiction of race and power mirrors and perpetuates 'both native Englishness and racialised whiteness' (Weissbourd, 2023, p. 208).

**"Infusing Hauntology into the Shakespearean Classroom offers a transformative educational milieu, empowering students to become active agents of change in dismantling racial inequalities."**

Furthermore, hauntology urges students to critically interrogate their own positionalities within these power dynamics. By acknowledging the spectral presence of white privilege and power, students can cultivate a more introspective and empathetic understanding of their role in perpetuating or challenging these structures. Infusing hauntology into the Shakespearean classroom offers a transformative educational milieu, empowering students to become active agents of change in dismantling racial inequalities. The hesitance to deconstruct the spectres of white privilege hinders meaningful dialogues about race, particularly when it pertains to unpacking whiteness, posing a formidable obstacle. Moreover, surface-level engagements with racial discourse risk exacerbating rather than ameliorating societal tensions.

Nevertheless, akin to Hall, I advocate that to cultivate classrooms that prefigure pathways to liberation, it is essential to foster discourses on race and whiteness, particularly within Renaissance educational settings where such discourse may appear unexpected. By embracing hauntology, the examination of lingering phantoms from the past that continue to influence today's social fabric, students can navigate the intricacies of race



“I advocate that to cultivate classrooms that prefigure pathways to liberation, it is essential to foster discourses on race and whiteness, particularly within Renaissance educational settings where such discourse may appear unexpected.”

and privilege with depth. Exploring past chronicles and hauntings with economic, political, social, and religious significance can serve as a gateway to understanding the entanglement of white power structures, standardisation, and entitlements. This method prompts students to view race as a concept marked by various forms, nurturing historically contextualised conversations on race that hold significant relevance for students' experiences.

To integrate hauntology into pedagogy, drawing inspiration from Stacey's teaching plan (2023) centred around 'Sonnet 18' as a focal point for instruction. The initial task entails the class excavating resonant textual echoes within the sonnet. The pedagogical objective transcends mere literary analysis to unearth spectral threads embedded within the poem, revealing latent narratives of race and identity. Adhering to evidential rigour and meticulously dissecting the language of the poem and its historical context is not only fundamental to sound critical analysis but also aligns with assessment criteria at A-Level, specifically AO2.

Commence by organising students into small groups and prompting them to explore the following inquiry: Which words or images in 'Sonnet 18' manifest spectral undertones related to race and privilege? Allocate five minutes for group exploration, encouraging students to excavate textual fragments that evoke ghostly traces of racial discourse. Examples can then be visualised on screen via the word cloud function using the designated code. Students are likely to unearth various sections of the poem, including 'gold complexion' (line 6), 'eye of heaven shines' (line 5), 'fair' and its derivatives (e.g., 'every fair from fair sometime declines' in line 7 and 'lose possession of that fair thou owest' in line 10), 'summer shall not fade' (line 9), and 'wandere'st in his shade' (line 11). Through this spectral excavation, students not only hone their skills in textual analysis but also unveil the hidden spectral dimensions of 'Sonnet 18', shedding light on the spectral aspects of race and identity embedded in purportedly unbiased subject matter.

The subsequent stage involves transmuting their examples into an exploration of spectral narratives. Formulating a thesis from evidence not only facilitates the synthesis of analytical competencies, building upon AO2, but also fosters engagement with haunting phenomena within the

text, resonating with investigation of personal responses to literature and consideration of diverse critical perspectives. Pose the following inquiry to the students: How do the lexicons and imagery you have pinpointed evoke spectral manifestations within the poetic portrayal of whiteness in 'Sonnet 18'? Allocate another five to six minutes for group deliberation, prompting students to discover spectral echoes of racial classification and entitlement embedded within the text. Afterwards, instruct each group to project their spectral interpretations onto the large screen. Encourage students to reflect on the spectral dimensions of each other's insights. For instance, the comparison between the intended recipient and the sunny day can be reframed as a spectral discourse, wherein the beneficial characteristics of the latter are overshadowed by spectral traces of racial identity and entitlement. If the sun possesses a 'fair' complexion (line 7) and 'gold complexion' (line 6), then the lover is depicted as imbued with whiteness, a manifestation of societal norms and privilege.

The metaphorical description of the sun as the 'eye of heaven' (line 5), which 'shines' (line 5) akin to gold, introduces an ethereal dimension to the aesthetic appearance of the beloved, entwining standards of goodness and benevolence with spectral whiteness. The term 'fair' (lines 7, 10), encapsulating both the visible and principled attributes of whiteness, becomes spectralised through its association with ownership, serving as a spectral marker of white ethnic identity in Renaissance literature (Little, 2016). Moreover, students with a background in floriculture may recognise the significance of the 'darling buds' (line 2) as manifestations of spectral whiteness, blooming in 'May' (line 3) as spectral remnants of privilege. These interpretations serve to deepen students' engagement with the hauntological dimensions of 'Sonnet 18', enriching their understanding of the ghostly tales of ethnicity and entitlement interwoven within seemingly impartial content.

“Integrating Hauntology into Shakespeare and Race Studies in Education provides a dynamic exploration of the past through present lenses.”

ARTICLE CONTINUES ON PAGE 17 . . .



## BRIDGING the gap

**D**ANIELLE SKINNER is a young academic from Trinidad and Tobago and is on a journey to become the leading expert in Shakespearean Literature in the Caribbean. As a student of the University of the West Indies, she received her Bachelors of Arts in Literatures in English with a minor in Linguistics and a Master's in Literatures in English which looked at Shakespeare's Construction of Black Masculinity in *Othello* and *The Tempest*. Her doctoral research starting in September will look at Shakespeare and the Carnavalesque, centering Shakespeare's influence on performance and theatre in the Caribbean and its influence on culture and Caribbean Carnival.

If we are to believe that those who ignore history are doomed to repeat it, then we should explore the countless implications Shakespeare's Caliban suggests in his speech, 'you taught me language; and my profit on't is, I know how to curse' (1.2. 366–368). While contextually, Caliban is described as a colonised subject we are still capable of seeing how Caliban is highly representative of the Caribbean, colonised subject. Many scholars have determined Caliban's racial identity a 'Native American savage, a Caribbean cannibal and an African slave' and when juxtaposed against Prospero, these two characters highlight the relationship between Britain and the Caribbean, more so Shakespeare and the Caribbean. Metaphorically, this complex relationship shared between these two characters paints a picture of Caribbean history. Whether derived from Trinidad and Tobago, Barbados or even Jamaica, several Caribbean territories that were former British colonies were extensively and systematically influenced by British governance. If we are to take this notoriously known quotation into consideration, it raises the question of how Caribbean people have navigated the 'profits' of our colonial past. By recognizing the relationship that exists between these two cultures, the difficulties of teaching Shakespeare may be uncovered as well as ways in which we may decolonise Shakespeare's language for Caribbean students.

While the difficulties surrounding the teaching of Shakespeare in the Caribbean may stem from the apparent opaque Shakespearean language, for Caribbean people – that are descendants of slaves and indentured labourers – this may stem from the painful colonial past the Caribbean shares with the British Empire. At times, Shakespearean language is representative of a realm of educational status that was unattainable to Caribbean people. As the



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former leading expert in Shakespearean Literature in the Caribbean, Dr. Giselle Rampaul suggested, 'Shakespeare was fed to the colonial subjects early on because Shakespeare was being touted as a symbol of British literary, cultural and intellectual superiority'. In fact, we can see the essence of this strained relationship with The Bard in Caribbean Carnival practices that still take place even until today.

**"CONSIDERING THAT MOST CARNIVAL CELEBRATIONS ACROSS THE ISLANDS STEM FROM COLONIAL ENCOUNTERS AND IN SOME WAY OFFERED AN OPPORTUNITY FOR MIMICRY, RECITING THESE SHAKESPEAREAN ALSO MEANT THE ENSLAVED WERE MOCKING THE LANGUAGE OF THEIR OPPRESSORS."**

For instance, Shakespeare Mas' is a pertinent aspect of Carriacou, or in other words Carnival in Grenada. While Carnival exists across all Caribbean territories, this particular event stands out as Shakespeare Mas' is derived from the island's early colonisation by 'the French and the imposition of Catholicism among the majority of its enslaved population via the Code Noir'. The most unique aspect of the Shakespeare Mas' is that a masquerade is a brightly dressed masman reciting speeches from the works of William Shakespeare. Additionally, considering that most Carnival celebrations across the islands stem from colonial encounters and in some way offered an opportunity for mimicry, reciting these Shakespearean also meant the enslaved were mocking the language of their oppressors. As suggested by Dr Rampaul, 'Shakespeare was used as a weapon for nationalists who bent his characters and messages to their mission in a post-colonial Caribbean landscape' and even after emancipation of the slaves and at the end of indentured servitude the British Empire still

ensured that Shakespeare was a mandatory focus of the curriculum across all territories.

Furthermore, many years after independence, we see that even today in the Caribbean, our educational system still models that of the United Kingdom; with the Caribbean Secondary Examination Certificate (CSEC) being directly equivalent to O'Level Examinations and the Caribbean Advanced Proficiency Examinations (CAPE) being directly equivalent to A' Level Examinations. Further to this, studying Shakespeare's plays, especially at the CAPE Level examinations is a compulsory aspect of their school curriculum as opposed to Caribbean playwrights. This is indicative of the so-called 'profit' Caliban suggests in his speech, which, by extension, makes Shakespeare an integral aspect of the colonisation process. As such, Shakespeare is unknowingly etched into the very fabric of Caribbean culture, especially since he was formatively showcased to the colonial subjects during the time of pre and post emancipation and pre-independence. Therefore, on the one hand, Shakespeare was an export to the colonies of European literature and language as a part of their policy of cultural domination while on the other hand, it also enabled the colonised groups to revise and remake Shakespeare's works in ways which related to their own social conditions. In effect, this highlights the analogical 'language' Caliban suggested was taught to him, with its 'profit' as curses he chose to utter in response or in other words, what Caribbean people choose to do with it today. All this to say, if we are to address the difficulties in teaching Shakespeare in the Caribbean, the region's history must be factored in, especially since it has forged the disconnectedness and unwillingness to understand his opaque language in Shakespeare's plays in many Caribbean classrooms today.

The practice of decolonising Shakespeare could be seen as metaphorically removing from his ivory tower and reimagining his messages in a way that is more easily connected to Caribbean readers. While Shakespeare's influence in the English-speaking world is understandably monumental, considering the Caribbean's past, continuing to place Shakespeare on a pedestal only feeds former imperial ideologies. As well as enabling previous ideologies that painted Shakespearean language as more prestigious than our Creole Vernacular. By reclaiming Shakespeare in the classrooms, Caribbean people become

**“By reclaiming Shakespeare in the classrooms, Caribbean people become their own version of Caliban as they reclaim a literary art form that is not inherently their own but is systematically, inevitably a part of their culture.”**

their own version of Caliban as they reclaim a literary art form that is not inherently their own but is systematically, inevitably a part of their culture.

Many educators, production managers and even script writers have gone the route of translating Shakespearean language into Caribbean Creole in order to appeal to students. Caribbean productions of plays like *Twelfth Night*, *The Taming of the Shrew* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream* have introduced Caribbean elements and conventions that have been well received by Secondary and even Undergraduate students. For instance, The University of the West Indies' Department of Creative and Festival Arts staged *A Midsummer Night's Dream* performance in April, 2023. While the essence of the play was maintained, the play's Director, Michalean Taylor introduced several Caribbean elements such as traditional Trinidadian folklore and folk dance. The natural and repetitive rise and drop of alternating words mirrored the 'sing-song' nature of the Trinidadian dialect. These Caribbean elements even extended to the costume choice that intertwined Bélé inspired skirts and Pierrot Grenade-esque coats. As minor as these aspects may seem to the outside eye, they still contribute to the connectedness students may feel when studying Shakespearean plays in the pursuit of their studies.

The introduction of Caribbean elements in the portrayal and teaching of Shakespearean plays through creole, Caribbean folklore, traditional dances, songs and clothing, amongst many others, are beneficial for students to understand his plays and grasp its messages. It is only by decolonizing Shakespeare and bridging the gap between his works and Caribbean students, can Caribbean people rewrite their own version of Caliban's speech, 'you teach meh language an ah go mash up de place with it'.

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# BIlingual Shakespeares as a pedagogy of ethics

**C**ARLA DELLA GATTA from the University of Maryland is a performance theorist and theatre historian whose work explores the intersections of aurality, ethnicity, and performance. She built and maintains the only archive of Latinx theatrical adaptation, [LatinxShakespeares.Org](http://LatinxShakespeares.Org). She serves on the Steering Committee for the Latinx Theatre Commons and leads workshops on casting for theaters.

Nearly a decade ago I composed my first lesson plan in translation for my Chekhov unit on *Uncle Vanya*. I wanted the undergraduates to think critically about translation, so I selected two passages and asked them to choose one to translate. Some students were quite nervous, expressing that they did not speak, read, or write well enough in another language to do so. I replied that language proficiency was part of their degree requirements, and simply to give the assignment their best shot. What resulted was an astute and moving conversation on racism, prejudice, family heritage, and advocacy that resulted in wonderful questions about creativity and ethics. Living between languages and feeling isolated in many academic circles for that reason, I had wrongly assumed that my interest in translation would not resonate in the classroom. Instead, I learned so much from my students that week that we barely had time to examine the dissolution at the end of the play.

My work on Latinx Shakespeares and the larger field of Shakespeare and Latinidad is grounded in bilingual and semi-bilingual theatre. When staging bilingual Shakespeares, or any bilingual adaptations of classical theatre, dramaturgical and ethical considerations about where language signals power must be considered. Pedagogically, I transform the questions of linguistic racism and the ethics of translation into an exercise with Shakespeare. For actors, this exercise offers as a premise that changing the words, or the order of the words, changes the image. This leads to a change in motivation, thereby changing the actor's performance. In the critical studies classroom, my use of the translation exercise is twofold: to explore assumptions about text and subtext, and to raise questions about the ethics of interpretation. Two outcomes of the exercise include an investigation of how cultural differences are formulated through language and an understanding that all translation is adaptation.

I begin with a passage that everyone has heard before, 'Fair is foul, and foul is fair.' After immediate attention

to rhetorical terms such as antithesis, chiasma, and consonance, I shift the discussion to meaning. I show the students Spanish scholar Ángel-Luis Pujante's translation of the line to 'Bello es feo y feo es bello.' Most of my students are familiar with Spanish and recognize these words as 'pretty' and 'ugly'. This raises the question of the limiting connotation of these terms compared to the more capacious definitions of 'foul' and 'fair.' Here we discuss which words in Spanish might be best to capture the essence of both the language and versification in Shakespeare's play. They begin to understand translation as an act of interpretation, and we discuss how the role of the translator differs from their role as either reader or actor in offering a discrete interpretation of the same line. I then direct them to Mexican scholar Alfredo Michel Modenessi's translation of the same line, which he expands to the following:

***Lo malo es lo bueno, lo limpio es lo sucio;  
lo blanco es lo negro, lo injusto es lo justo;  
lo bello es horrendo; lo puro es impuro.***

I point to the expansion of the metaphor as an atypical move in Modenessi's translation style, and in Spanish translations of Shakespeare more broadly. It is so unusual that Modenessi composes a note for his reader, writing that the passage's 'absolute denotative void, which is therefore polysemic, is not satisfactorily accessible through a single binary combination in Spanish.' Modenessi's note directly addresses the syntactical challenge of translating Shakespeare's verse, but also the ethical challenge. To adhere to a singular binary in Spanish would close off the gap between the spoken dialogue and what is not said. By extending the metaphor, Modenessi argues that he is staying truer to the original; he must expand the metaphor to convey what Shakespeare is able to in English with concision.

Following this, I take the students to a passage where the translators are in close agreement, such as 'It is a tale / Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, / Signifying nothing.' (V.v.29–31). Modenessi translates this passage as 'el cuento de un imbécil, lleno de ruido y furia, / que nada significa,' and Pujante chooses, 'Es un cuento / que cuenta un idiota, lleno de ruido y de furia, / que no significa nada.' It is easy for students to understand the distinct cultural usages of 'imbecil' versus 'idota' and the stylistic preferences for 'que nada significa' or 'no significa nada.' Where the classroom dialogue becomes



generative is in the attention to both translators' selection of 'ruido' for 'sound.' Sound translates to both *sonido* and *ruido*, but the former term is often used to designate the wider category of sound while the latter describes the specific category of noise. Both Pujante and Modenessi interpret Shakespeare's meaning as the latter, foreclosing an interpretation of sound as sensation or as tone and instead putting forward an explicit pejorative intention.

I then ask the students to create a bilingual passage from the play, selecting the lines to have in English and those to choose from Spanish. They work in pairs or small groups to negotiate which language expresses their interpretation of the text most faithfully. This instigates a conversation about the meaning of Shakespeare's verse, the efficacy and clarity of translation choices, and how to move between languages in a fluid manner that eases understanding and conveys the rhythm and affective qualities of the original text.

A fluid bilingual script combines the creativity of wordplay – a key element that brings my students to Shakespeare, though in this exercise the wordplay involves another language – and questions of interpretation and intent. The conversations that students have with each other form a Möbius strip of exploring text and subtext. Many of my students are reticent at first to go to a theatrical production in a language they do not speak, or do not know well. This often has to do with a concern that they will not understand the play, but it also illuminates a prevailing linguistic bias that values English over other languages. By working with translation, they learn about how language constitutes power both in and through Shakespeare. Simultaneously, the lesson opens the door to languages, and therefore cultures, that may be outside their experience.

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#### ARTICLE CONTINUED FROM PAGE 13:

Initial skepticism greeted the application of contemporary race frameworks to early modern literature, leading scholars of Shakespearean race to validate their strategies. Post-Colonial Shakespeares advocates for analysing early modern texts with modern understandings of racial heritage and colonial subjugation (Espinosa, 2016). Loomba and Orkin (2003) caution against interpreting identity through conflict and conquest, urging a subtle methodology that guards against oversimplification of historical contexts. They emphasise the interconnectedness of past and present, recognising the value of contemporary perspectives in illuminating historical narratives.

Integrating hauntology into Shakespeare and race studies in education provides a dynamic exploration of the past through present lenses. Hauntology reveals the echoes of colonial hegemony and racial injustice, enriching our understanding of power dynamics and marginalised voices in Shakespeare's works. By acknowledging these lingering spectres, hauntology challenges us to carefully evaluate the ongoing impact of historical injustices on contemporary society. Using hauntological methodologies, we elucidate the interaction of race and identity in Shakespeare's literature, thereby cultivating a pedagogical milieu conducive to a more comprehensive and inclusive interpretation of these seminal texts.

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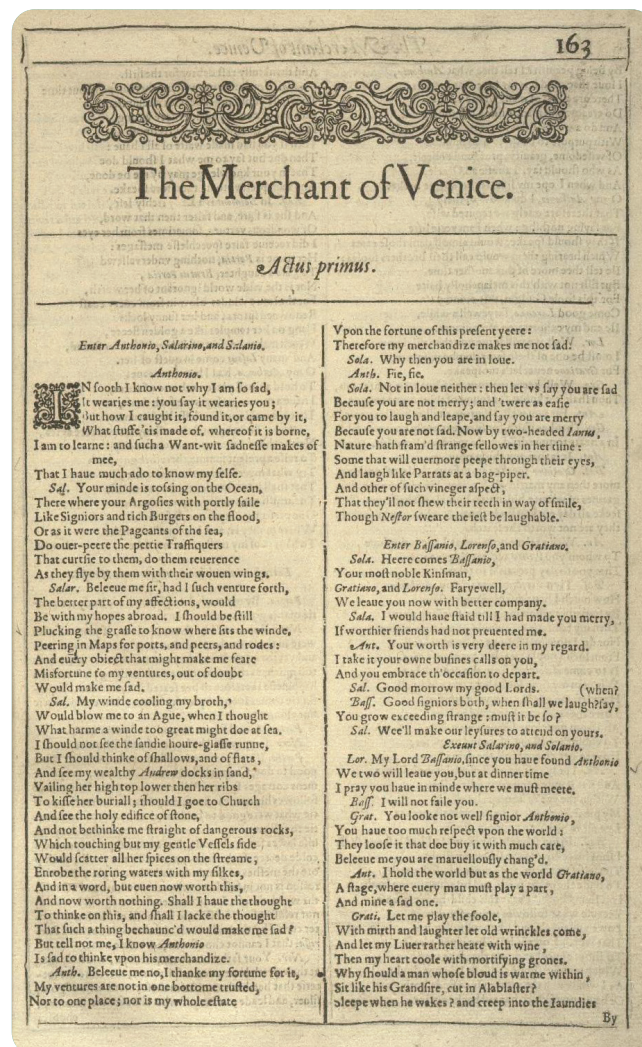
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## REFLECTING ON TEACHING *THE MERCHANT OF VENICE* TO COMBAT ANTISEMITISM

**C**ONRAD COHEN BSc (Hons), AOS, PGCE, MFA is an actor, director, teacher and Teachers Programme Manager at the Royal Shakespeare Company. He has experience working in theatres and schools across the UK and the USA, and is a lecturer and tutor in acting and classical and contemporary performance practices. His most recent work is a chapter in *Stanislavsky and Race on the Jewish influences of Stanislavsky-based actor training*, published by Routledge in September 2023.

*The Merchant of Venice*, likely written around 1596, is the only play belonging to William Shakespeare to feature actual Jewish characters. This is against a background of several anti-Jewish references peppered throughout Shakespeare's other plays, all written in an England which violently expelled its Jewish communities hundreds of years earlier, in 1290, under the tyrannical anti-Jewish and anti-Scottish Edward I. As a Scottish and Jewish teacher, my sense of identity thus becomes particularly highlighted when teaching this extraordinarily complex and difficult play which, despite said difficulties and complexities, remains one of the most common Shakespeare plays encountered in classrooms across the UK. In my position now as Teachers Programme Manager at the Royal Shakespeare Company, I have engaged with initiatives to promote more inclusive and anti-bias ways of exploring these texts for children, young people and their teachers. In this paper, I will seek to evaluate these processes by analysing activities framed with specific anti-bias teaching methodologies, as well as more widely reflect on the position of such an antisemitic play in our literary education canon.

To some extent, there's the rub. Is *The Merchant of Venice* an antisemitic play? Or is it rather a play *about* antisemitism? Many scholars and educators land on one side or the other of this dichotomy, although most Jewish sources tend towards the former; see for example Gross (1992), Bloom (1999) or Horn (2021). Personally, I believe that both statements are true at the same time: the play *is* antisemitic, and it also explores antisemitism. The manifestation of antisemitism here is very specific and takes the form of a racist anti-Jewish bigotry perpetuated by gentile Venetian characters within a very specific fictional Venice framed by a very specific



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writer in Elizabethan London. The complexity with which Shakespeare presents his texts, characters and plots leaves plenty of room to use them as a vehicle to combat prejudice rather than perpetuate it. However, as time has shown over the last 400 years, this has not been common practice for either commenting on antisemitism in our societies or discussing the wider prejudice present within both Shakespeare's canon of work and wider English language literature.

**“the complexity with which shakespeare presents his texts, characters and plots leaves plenty of room to use them as a vehicle to combat prejudice rather than perpetuate it.”**

A key contention to this whole discussion is the fact that the phrase ‘antisemitism’ was not even coined until long after Shakespeare, in nineteenth century Germany. So perhaps there is value in going further back to fully understand the prejudice against Jews which existed in

Shakespeare's society. As explored in length by David Nirenberg (2013) in his chapter on Shakespeare and his world, even though Jewish people were not allowed in Shakespeare's England, this culture still utilised a prejudice towards Jewish individuals and ideas in order to frame how they understood their own society's relation to important issues of the day. For example, Antonio (the titular merchant) is described as both 'melancholy' and like a 'publican' in the play, which were both subtle references for 'Jewish' in Elizabethan vernacular. Shakespeare was utilising his society's prejudice towards anything thought of as 'Jewish' to comment on an increasingly mercantile England where even theatre itself became a commercial endeavour, whereas before this time it was a pretty exclusive pastime of England's Christian pageanties. What must it have been like to pay for theatre for the first time in this society? With all the anti-Jewish prejudice which informed their (bigoted and false) perceptions of anything 'commercial' to be associated with Jews, it must have felt interesting. Interesting enough, perhaps, to explore these issues in a play that features a Jewish money-lending merchant (Shylock) and a Christian moneylending merchant (Antonio) facing off with typical Shakespearean energy and humour. Before we can even begin to teach *The Merchant of Venice* in our classrooms today then, we must engage with a critical and active understanding of the multifaceted manifestations of prejudice against Jews both historically and in contemporary society.

This results in rather a large ask! So where to begin? In a study focusing on how to reduce racism, Devine et al. (2012) articulate that there are three steps to this:

1. Awareness: gaining knowledge of implicit race bias and how it manifests.
2. Empathy: developing concern about the effects of that bias.
3. Action: engaging with an application of strategies to reduce bias within specific contexts.

In the context of teaching *The Merchant of Venice* this first step, awareness, involves both learning about antisemitism (as anachronistic as the term is) as well as the original social context of anti-Jewish prejudice specifically in Shakespeare's England and the real historical Venice. In the former there is the tragic tale of Roderigo Lopez who, despite being a professed Christian descended from Portuguese Jews forcibly converted during the Inquisition, was brutally tortured and executed outside the Tower of London for the (almost certainly false) accusation of attempting to poison Elizabeth I. It is

*“before we can even begin to teach *the merchant of Venice* in our classrooms today then, we must engage with a critical and active understanding of the multifaceted manifestations of prejudice against Jews both historically and in contemporary society.”*

undoubtable that the tragic fate of Lopez was due to his Jewish heritage, as not only did the crowd at his execution shout antisemitic jeers that would not feel out of place in a list of contemporary hate speech, but the whole ordeal was “rapturously reported in the press with myriad antisemitic embellishments” (Horn, 2021, 199). This awful affair took place only a couple of years before Shakespeare wrote *The Merchant of Venice*, where we see a vengeful and bloodthirsty Jewish character taunted and jeered at by the play's Christian protagonists. This truly tragic tale is but one example of the horrendous experiences of persecution and violence which Jewish people were subjected to throughout European history. We could also look to the real historical Venice where Jewish people's rights were never guaranteed. For example, the real Jews of Venice were expelled from the city at least twice, and were forced to live in an urban prison that gave us the modern word for ghetto. Context such as this must surely be a part of the learning our pupils undergo when understanding how prejudice and hate permeate our literary heritage.

The second step outlined above, developing empathy, is just as important as the first. This can be very difficult to achieve however, especially amongst school communities without access to Jewish colleagues or resources to provide opportunities for empathy-inducing contact, including in the West Midlands where the Royal Shakespeare Company is based. This led me to look at the rehearsal room-based activities which form the core of our pedagogy in our work with pupils and teachers to identify where we can develop empathy in the same way that actors working on a production might. I began with looking at an old Cicely Berry punctuation exercise: you read a Shakespeare speech out loud and change direction on each piece of punctuation. This exercise aims to unlock a character's line of thinking and state of being for the actor, and by extension the student studying Shakespeare using our active approaches, by having them embody the changes of pace and tempo throughout a section of text.

When it came to applying this activity to what is perhaps Shylock's most famous speech in *The Merchant of Venice*, the “Hath not a Jew eyes” speech in Act 3 Scene 1, I discovered something interesting. Most modern renderings of this speech style it as fifteen or sixteen neat and grammatically correct sentences. This makes for several opportunities to change direction when exploring



it using Berry's exercise, however it also suggests that Shylock is rather cold and calculated in this moment, able to form cohesive thoughts as he tries to generate empathy for himself and all Jewish people in two antisemitic bullies (Solanio and Salarino). But looking at the wider circumstances of this scene results in this interpretation feeling not quite right. In addition to having had to face these two antisemitic characters who Shylock addresses the speech to, he has also just been chased through the streets of Venice by a crowd of youths taunting him for the tragedy of having had his daughter run away. This suggests a distraught man at the end of his tether, rather than a cold and calculated villain which has, unfortunately, so often been the interpretation of what is perhaps the most famous Jewish character in English literature throughout its 400-year performance history. Going back to the beginning of that history then, I looked at how this speech is presented in Shakespeare's First Folio. Imagine my surprise when I discovered that the speech is not presented in around sixteen neat and grammatically correct sentences, but instead is presented in only five. Five sentences to say all that! Exploring this speech as only five sentences in the physical ways that Berry's movement and breath exercises implore presents a much more haggard and distressed victim than before, providing (I argue) a wonderful opportunity to develop empathy for this marginalised and racially abused character.

The third step, action, is perhaps the most difficult. Turning again to the rendering of this play in the First Folio reveals some interesting insight. As becomes quickly apparent, the prefixes which precede character's lines are often different than those presented in modern editions. Sometimes these involve simple abbreviations, but other times potentially reveal something. Neil Freeman (1999) explores the example of Juliet's mother, who is prefixed at different points as Wife, Lady or Mother in various scenes throughout *Romeo and Juliet*. Freeman suggests that these changes were not superfluous but in fact indicated a deeper meaning behind the role this character was playing in different scenes. In some scenes she is wife to Lord Capulet, dutifully following his, often overbearing, commands. In others she is a noble lady of Verona, fulfilling her societal duties and meeting the expectations of women in this patriarchal society. And then sometimes she prioritises being mother to Juliet, putting her daughter's needs ahead of everything else. Freeman highlights that this is not some hidden call to tell actors how to perform Shakespeare, but merely offers a suggestion of how some originators of these roles might have interpreted them. We see a different but similar suggestion for the character of Shylock. In some scenes he is given his name as his prefix, but in others he is simply referred to, rather antisemitically

I might add, as 'Jew'. Freeman here suggests that this possibly indicates the double-coded nature of Shylock's character, who sometimes must placate and be polite amongst the hateful bullies of Venice's gentile elite, who spit on him and call him a dog, in order to guarantee his own (and his family's) continued safety, and when he is able to code-switch and be more comfortably himself.

"it can be difficult to find much authenticity in this character in the text alone. we are therefore left in a place where we must teach and learn about this character, and the play as a whole, in ways that clearly communicate a sympathetic interpretation in performance."

Unfortunately, as much as we can read nuance and empathetic context into Shylock, he was still at the end of the day written by a non-Jewish writer. It can be difficult to find much authenticity in this character in the text alone. We are therefore left in a place where we must teach and learn about this character, and the play as a whole, in ways that clearly communicate a sympathetic interpretation in performance. This is not to say that there is necessarily a right or a wrong way to 'do' Shakespeare, but highlights the need for us to combat such prejudices when we facilitate learning about his stories.

For more about the RSC's work with teachers, please visit: [www.rsc.org.uk/cpd](http://www.rsc.org.uk/cpd)

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## the case for watching *RIVERdale*

### THE CASE FOR WATCHING *RIVERdale*; ON CLOSER EXAMINATION, THE SHOW PAYS HOMAGE TO SHAKESPEARE'S *HAMLET*

**J**ODI NATHANSON has been a High School English Teacher (grades 9–12) for over 20 years and currently teaches at Tanenbaum CHAT in Toronto, Canada. She received her degrees from Queen's University, where she majored in English, minored in Drama and graduated from the University's Concurrent Education program. Jodi holds an English Honours Specialist from OISE and has also filled the role of Co-Head of the English Department at Tanenbaum CHAT. Her articles have appeared in *Canadian Teacher Magazine*, *The Wilderness House Literary Review*, British Shakespeare Association's *Teaching Shakespeare Magazine*, *The Bangalore Review*, *Literary Yard* and *Jewish Women of Words*. Jodi lives with her husband, two teenage girls, a dog and a cat in Toronto. She loves fiction novels (especially the classics) and believes strongly in the power of words.

I am a High School English Teacher with a passion for teaching. *The Tragedy of Hamlet* and watching the CW's teen show *Riverdale* is my guilty pleasure. I confess that when I began watching Season One, it was because I was longing for the comic book characters of my youth. I grew up in the 80s and the 90s, a time period without iPhones, social media or Netflix; if you wanted to watch your favourite show on television, you were at the mercy of the network's programming schedule. Consequently, for light hearted amusement, we voraciously devoured Archie comics. The comics weren't laugh out loud funny, but they were colourful and entertaining and Betty and Veronica were style mavens (especially the affluent Veronica Lodge, who served the role of fashion icon and influencer). Therefore, when the show *Riverdale* premiered in 2017, I watched.

My first observation was that the casting was impeccable; the characters were like live versions of the comic book personalities. It was so delightful to see a re-creation of "Pop's Chock'lit Shoppe" and "Riverdale High", Archie's jalopy, and the list goes on. The TV series, unlike the comics, is dark and ominous. The clever choice to include 80s and 90s legends such as *Beverly Hills 90210*'s Luke Perry, who sadly passed away in 2019, and Molly Ringwald, the ultimate 80s Teen Queen, had some viewers tuning in for a weekly dose of nostalgia. For me, however, it wasn't just escapism and eye candy; I encourage you to consider

the following literary and Shakespearean connections before you dismiss *Riverdale* as mindless fluff.

"I ENCOURAGE YOU TO CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING LITERARY AND SHAKESPEAREAN CONNECTIONS BEFORE YOU DISMISS *RIVERdale* AS MINDLESS FLUFF."

Archie Andrews portrays a modern-day, American version of the moody, Renaissance man, Prince Hamlet of Denmark. Archie, like Hamlet, is multi-talented; he is charming, handsome, a gifted musician and also *Riverdale*'s Star Athlete. Early on in the series, Archie, sadly, finds himself in a similar position to Hamlet after his altruistic father is shot and injured by *Riverdale*'s terrifying antagonist. Consequently, Archie feels the pressure and responsibility to exact vengeance on his enemy to honour his father and to purge *Riverdale* from evil and corruption, but such a task feels unnatural to him. Substitute the murdered Hamlet Senior for the injured Fred Andrews and the "rotting" Denmark for the crumbling town of *Riverdale*, and it plays like a parallel universe. Moreover, Archie shares Hamlet's hamartia or error in judgement; he is unable to act with reason or translate thought into agency and when he does act, he acts rashly and goes too far. Archie, like Hamlet, has difficulty balancing emotion with reason. *Riverdale*'s favourite redhead is sensitive and vulnerable and experiences deep psychological pain, much like Prince Hamlet does. Archie communicates his suffering to his best friend, Jughead, Archie's Horatio, if you will. Jughead is also the storyteller of *Riverdale*; he expertly narrates each episode where he speaks at length about legacy, conveying legacy's pivotal relationship to language. Horatio may not narrate the *Hamlet* play, but he becomes the bearer of Hamlet's legacy and his character reveals the power the storyteller holds.

Additionally, it is worth noting that *Riverdale* cleverly uses symbolism to convey prominent connections to the *Hamlet* story. For example, The serpent on Jughead's tattoo symbolically wears a crown for several reasons, the most obvious being that Jughead is known for wearing a crown shaped hat in the original comics and a crown shaped beanie in the TV show. Jughead's serpent tattoo also signifies his membership to the South Side Serpents, a gang in the new *Riverdale*. The connection? In *Hamlet*, the

"IT IS WORTH NOTING THAT *RIVERdale* CLEVERLY USES SYMBOLISM TO CONVEY PROMINENT CONNECTIONS TO THE *hamLet* story."

ghost of Hamlet's father tells the perturbed Hamlet, "The serpent that did sting thy father's life now wears his crown" (Shakespeare 1.5. 39-40). Claudius, Hamlet's Uncle, is the evil serpent who metaphorically *stung* his innocent brother, Hamlet Senior, by poisoning him. The theme of evil as well as Biblical allusion is evident in both cases; Denmark and Riverdale can each be viewed as a "Lost Eden" by the characters who are disillusioned by the surrounding filth, crime and corruption. Another noteworthy and symbolic example is the Sisters of Quiet Mercy Abbey in the show and its connection to the dramatic Nunnery Scene in Act 3, Scene 1 of *Hamlet*. One interpretation of Shakespeare's Nunnery Scene is that Ophelia should go to a convent to repent her sins and for protection from all the "arrant knaves" (3.1.129) or harmful men in her life who are using and abusing her. Another interpretation is that Hamlet feels Ophelia is a sinner- an impure, seductive and lecherous whore- who ignorantly destroys men like himself. The word "nunnery" (3.1.121), in Shakespeare's play, has two possible meanings – *convent* and *brothel*. In *Riverdale*, some characters are unjustly punished for their perceived sexual misdemeanours and are sent, against their will and under the guise of protection, to the Sisters of Quiet Mercy, a frightening place which specializes in "conversion therapy". At one point in show, Hiram Lodge even mentions how he might be the town's despicable antagonist, but that he would never use his power to turn the Sisters of Quiet Mercy *convent* into a *brothel* asserting that he still has some hint of a moral compass. Only people familiar with Shakespeare's controversial and misogynistic scene, where Hamlet repeatedly tells Ophelia to "Go thy ways to a nunnery" (3.1.130), would recognize Hiram's deliberate literary reference and the two possible meanings associated with the word "nunnery", ripe with innuendo, ambiguity and most likely, cruelty.

Furthermore, *Riverdale* quotes directly from Shakespeare on many occasions. Gertrude's famous line, "The lady doth protest too much, methinks" (3.2.226) is used when the students are accusing each other of foul play in a clever *Breakfast Club* inspired detention episode. Another memorable moment occurs when Veronica defies her controlling father and says, "Something is rotten" (1.4.90) in reference to his criminal activities and sins, which are destroying Riverdale, much like how King Claudius's sins are ruining the once idyllic Denmark. Even the title of select episodes draw from Shakespeare. "Dog Day Afternoon" connects to Hamlet's famous line, "The cat will mew and dog will have his day" (5.1.285); Hamlet might be viewed as the underdog, but he develops new confidence and resolve on his journey, much like Veronica, who thinks she can outplay her antagonists. In addition, one character quotes Hamlet's infamous "To Be Or Not To Be" speech

and says, "There is a realm beyond this *mortal coil*" (3.1.67) in reference to her newfound spiritual beliefs. And finally, Jughead playfully says Horatio's famous line to Archie, "Goodnight, Sweet Prince" (5.2.351) in a touching bonding moment between the two close friends.

*Riverdale* is self-reflexive in many ways and there is a meta aspect to it, which cleverly employs Shakespeare's use of the "play within a play" convention to mirror the main story and to provide insight in a self-aware way. In one of my favourite episodes, the students perform the musical *Heathers* and the song "Beautiful" is brilliantly used to convey how the Riverdale teens all long for the past, an idealized time where life was simpler and they were younger and carefree. Hamlet's memories of Denmark, when his noble father was alive and King, were his happiest moments as well. In both cases, theatre is a powerful medium and Hamlet's "Mousetrap" play as well as the First Player's speech about the Trojan War, reveal how transformative the theatre experience can be and how it has the power to evoke emotion, influence action and change lives.

*Riverdale* is so much more than it appears on the surface and as an English teacher, it can be exciting to reference and use clips from the show as an example of the relevance of Shakespeare and its effects on popular culture. Certainly, the more one knows about Classical Theatre, the more one can appreciate the hidden depth of a show like *Riverdale*, which also makes reference to Greek Theatre and other famous Shakespearean works. One episode title "Fortune and Men's Eyes" draws literally and thematically from Shakespeare's "Sonnet 29" and in the episode called "Strange Bedfellows", the title is taken from a line in Shakespeare's *The Tempest*. Students who are studying the Classics today will begin to pick up on these references once they know to look for them. One of my students noticed that Principal Featherhead's body was treated in a similar way to Polonius's rotting, malodorous body and another student acknowledged that the word "chalice" (Shakespeare 4.7.161), a Shakespearean word for goblet, was used in that same episode. Cheryl Blossom has a manipulative evil Uncle named Claudius, which several students connected to the evil Uncle Claudius in the *Hamlet* play. Thus, I applaud *Riverdale*'s creators and writers for their innovative creativity and for giving this Shakespeare enthusiast some thoughtful escapism and a new avenue into Classic Literature.

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## A REVIEW OF THE ROYAL SHAKESPEARE COMPANY'S SUMMER 2024 PRODUCTION OF SHAKESPEARE'S *AS YOU LIKE IT*

A sweltering 29 degree July day in Stratford-upon-Avon, set the scene for the Royal Shakespeare Company's edited version of William Shakespeare's *As You Like It*. The Holloway Garden Theatre, a beautiful, well-constructed, outdoor venue in the wonderful surroundings of the Swan Theatre Gardens, was the perfect location for a summer's day outdoor production. Fainting audience members (due to the heat) and swooning lovers (onstage) created the climax to the (plot spoiler) wonderful Act 5 weddings.

The RSC production carefully curated and clipped the production to a swift 1 hour 20 minutes, but I didn't feel shortchanged by the editorial decisions. In this programme fanning heat, we probably couldn't handle many more minutes! An audience member who is unfamiliar with the play commented that: 'the condensation of the story to sit into an abbreviated slot was done well and made for a coherent and satisfying story even if I ached for a little more back story. I thought the performers interacted well with the audience. It was a f\*\*king hot day and they should have laid on free ice creams or ice lollies'.

**"IN THIS PRODUCTION, THE RANGE OF ACCENTS ACROSS THE CLASS DIVIDE AND THE DIVERSITY OF CASTING CHOICES WAS A MARKED IMPROVEMENT FOR THE THEATRE INDUSTRY."**

I really appreciated and enjoyed the play's fun, light heartedness. The musicality of the production also added to the summertime atmosphere. In my review of Christopher Luscombe's 2014 production of *Much Ado About Nothing*, I was frustrated by the race, class and accent distinctions made in their casting choices. However, in this production, the range of accents across the class divide and the diversity of casting choices was a marked improvement for the theatre industry. Each cast member brought something unique and valuable which added another dimension to their role.

In spite of the summery lightness, the brilliant and poignant delivery of Jacques' 'all the world's a stage' lines by Trevor Fox, reminds us of our own mortality but also inspires us to live, to speak up, to learn, to make the most of each phase of life.

More broadly, Shakespeare's *As You Like It*, as a whole play



Photograph © Dr Wendy Lennon

or edited version, offers fantastic learning opportunities for our classrooms. Shakespeare's play with its gendered disguises opens up discussions about identity, sexuality and gender roles. The family feuds urge us to reflect on the futility of such disagreements or potentially the necessity for removing ourselves from such toxicity. These are exciting and complicated discussions for both then and now.

The potential for enthusiastic discussions that Shakespeare's words can provoke is invigorating and encouraging. Underpinned by my six Shakespeare, Race & Pedagogy key principles of: Interdisciplinarity; Collaboration; Perspectives; Reading, Writing Speaking & Listening; and an Ethics of Excellence', I look forward to exploring and sharing the themes, contradictions, language and production possibilities online, in lectures and in classrooms throughout the next academic year.

**Dr Wendy Lennon**

