

Unit: 10: Shakespeare on Stage

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Introduction

Although Shakespeare wrote for the stage, most people find him on the page. Although his play is no more than a script written for his company of actors, many of his readers find that reading gives them reader better control over their understanding of the text. The key to a literary text is the culture in which it is produced. When they are recast in different literary genres, the key to unlocking them is the literary conventions of the cultures which produced them.

Shakespeare Play as Script

The very fact that Shakespeare who published his poems and sonnets did not bother to publish his plays shows that he regarded his plays as scripts and not as literary works. He saw them coming to life on stage, and not on the page. But, today we read him more on the page than watching him on stage. It is generally held that he wrote 37 plays. However, it is certain that he was involved in more plays and had collaborated with others just as others were involved in his works. His plays, other works and their period of composition, according to the best estimates, are as follows: *Henry VI Part 1* (1589-90), *Henry VI Part 2* (1590-91), *Henry VI Part 3* (1590-91), *Richard III* (1592-93), *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* (1592-94), *The Taming of the Shrew* (1593-94), *Titus Andronicus* (1593-94), *The Comedy of Errors* (1593-94), *Romeo and Juliet* (1594-96), *The Merchant of Venice* (1594-97), *Richard II* (1595), *Love's Labour's Lost* (1595), *King John* (1595-96), *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (1595-96), *Henry IV Part 1* (1596-97), *The Merry Wives of Windsor* (1597), *Henry IV Part 2* (1598), *Henry V* (1598-99), *Much Ado About Nothing* (1598-99), *As You Like It* (1599), *Julius Caesar* (1599), *Hamlet* (1600-01), *Troilus and Cressida* (1600-08), *Twelfth Night* (1601-02), *All's Well That Ends Well* (1602-03), *Measure for Measure* (1604), *Othello* (1604), *King Lear* (1605), *Macbeth* (1605-06), *Coriolanus* (1607-08), *Antony and Cleopatra* (1607-08), *Timon of Athens* (1607-08), *Pericles* (1607-08), *Cymbeline* (1609-10), *The Winter's Tale* (1610-11), *The Tempest* (1611), *Henry VIII* (1612-13), and *The Two Noble Kinsmen* (1613-14). His poems and their dates are: 'A Lover's Complaint' (1591), 'Venus & Adonis' (1592-93), 'The Rape of Lucrece' (1593), 'The Passionate Pilgrim' (1599), 'The Phoenix & Turtle' (1601), and *The Sonnets* (1609).

Shakespeare himself likely wrote most of the stage directions in his plays. He used stage directions to indicate necessary action on stage as in "Exit pursued by a bear" (*WT.3.3*), name a character on his first appearance as in the case of Pinch (*Err. 4.4*), indicate disguises as in the case of Rosalind as Ganymede and Celia as Aliena (*AYLI 2.4*), to call for sound effects like the flourish of trumpets (*Ham. 1.4*), to indicate groupings as in "All gather to see" (*Err. 5.1*), display a scene as Prospero discovers Ferdinand and Miranda playing chess (*Tmp. 5.1*), indicate a specific acting area (*Rom. 3.5*) (Greg).

Today his plays come to us neatly divided into acts and lines. However, this was not how Shakespeare wrote them. Mostly, it was the work of later Shakespeare editors, starting with the First Folio editors who were following the European stage-conventions. Regarding act-division, there were some European conventions for Shakespeare to follow. His scenes are divided based on the location of the action in a scene, and when the stage gets cleared. When the stage is cleared, it is presumed that the next scene follows. There are many exceptions found to this principle in Nicholas Rowe's (1674-1718)

six- volumes edition of Shakespeare (1709) which first standardized this scene division. Scene-division in his plays like *Antony and Cleopatra* and *Macbeth* are notoriously difficult.

Aristotle's *Poetics* (350 BC) maintains that that drama is not an imitation of character, but life. Life consists of action, and a play is more about action than about events or character. Aristotle also suggested that a play must have a beginning, a middle, and an end. The beginning consisted of the presentation of a character who the audience is expected to identify with. The play progresses to its climax because of a decision and action by that character. The reversal of fortunes and the final resolution follows the climax. Years later, the Roman critic Horace (65 – 8 BC) made it conventional and his contemporary Seneca (4 BC-AD 65) divided plays into five acts and separated them with musical interludes. Editors discover in Shakespeare this five-act structure. Shakespeare roughly follows what the German theorist Gustav Freytag (1816-95) later categorized as *exposition* (introduction of characters and the setting), *complication* (which complicates the significant action of the play), *climax* (reversal of the fortunes of the characters), *resolution* (the result of the reversal making the final outcome in doubt), and *denouement* (the consequences of the resolution).

Shakespeare not only followed the conventions of his day, but also broke away from them. During his time, English dramatic literature and theatre had developed greatly. The completion of the first professional playhouse of London, The Theatre, gave an impetus to the development of dramatic literature in English. Playwrights like John Lily, George Peele, Thomas Kyd, Robert Greene, Christopher Marlowe, and Ben Jonson influenced him and he modelled his plays on those of his predecessors, making Greene criticize him as “a crow beautified by our feathers.” According to the neoclassical conventions they followed, drama followed the unities of time, place and action, which they attributed to Aristotle, who, however, mention only the unity of time. Renaissance scholars and neoclassical critics attributed him the unities of place and action also. Shakespeare does not follow them strictly. His *Antony and Cleopatra*, for example, move back and forth between Alexandria and Rome. His *Troilus and Cressida* have too many independent plots and subplots. Marina grows into a young woman during the time of *Pericles*. However, in his last play, *The Tempest*, Shakespeare follows the unities so strictly that its performance time matches the narrative time, the entire action is set in an unnamed island, and all subplots are seamlessly and integrally woven into the main plot.

As HW Wells' *Poetic Imagery from Elizabethan Literature* (1924), Wilson Knight's *The Wheel of Fire* (1930), Caroline Spurgeon's *Shakespeare's Imagery: What It Tells Us* (1935), Una Ellis Fermor's *Some Recent Research in Shakespeare's Imagery* (1937), tell us Shakespeare's verbal imagery enriched the persons, properties, and actions seen on the stage and enhanced the expression of the themes. The garden scene (2R), murder's torch (*Mac*), Falstaff's cushion (4H2 2.4.146), the crown (4H2), adder on Cleopatra's breast (*Ant.*), verses were written on the back of Eleanor (6H2), the banquet scene, severed head, and vanishing dagger (*Mac*), The clothing, embroidery, jewels, badges, pageants, emblem books, stained glass windows, illustrations etc. were suggestive imageries for the Elizabethan audience. These are unique to the Elizabethan stage, and need not communicate in a different cultural theatre, say Indian.

Shakespeare used the vocal and instrumental musical resources available to him. Background score as well as onstage musical performance were part of his theatre. Music accompanied the songs and dances in his plays. Most of the boy actors like Beeston who impersonated female characters were trained in the choir and could sing and play the lute. Often, the songs have significance in the play, sometimes, they are only meant for entertainment. He uses pedlar's song (*WT* 4.220-32), drinking songs (4H2 5.3, *Oth.* 2.3.71-75, *Tmp.* 2.2.48-56); serenades (*TGV* 4.2.39-53, *Cym.*2.3.21-30), masque music (*AYLI* 5.4.114-

ff, *Cym.* 5.4.30-92, *Tmp.* 4.1.106-117), and the many purposeful songs like the one in (*MV* 3.2.63-72). Although Shakespeare himself wrote the lines, occasionally he leaves it to the singers as in “a Welsh song” (*6H1* 3.1.249), “music and a song” (*JC* 4.3.257). A band of musicians sat in the balcony supplying incidental music and often, actors sang to the accompaniment of a lute. Musicians used stringed instruments like lute, cittern, pandora, theorbo; wind instruments like a fife, flute, oboe, born, trumpet; and percussion instruments like kettledrum, tabor, military drum etc. musicians generally occupied the gallery, but also performed onstage, offstage and even under the stage. Cannon-balls were rolled down wooden plans to create the sound of thunder, and perhaps, lighting was imitated using special effects.

The number of lines on the page does not necessarily indicate the length of the play on the stage. Based on the first edition of *The Riverside Shakespeare* (1974), the longest play is *Hamlet* (4042 lines and 29,551 words), and *The Comedy of Errors* (1,787 lines and 14,369 words) the shortest. While enacting the play in a theatre, many things that were overlooked while reading becomes significant. Dialogue, jokes, wordplay, acting, movements, postures, positions, and even the slight inflexions actors make to mark the transition from prose to verse become meaningful. Although Shakespeare’s stage did not need many props, the modern stage performance of Shakespeare’s plays requires elaborate sets and arrangements.

Shakespeare’s Theatre and Stage

Other than the Globe Theatre which is most commonly associated with Shakespeare, there were many other theatres in London. The major ones were the Cockpit / the Phoenix, the Salisbury Court Theatre, the Boar’s Head, the Royal Cockpit, the Curtain, the Fortune, the Hope, the Red Bull, the Red Lion, the Rose, the Swan, the Theatre, and the Whitefriars. Shakespeare’s later plays were meant to be staged more at The Blackfriars, a closed upper-class theatre. Many of his works were played at other theatres also.

Very little was known about the Red Lion playhouse — “the red lyon” and “a farme house”, which had an outdoor stage and seating — mentioned in the two lawsuits in 1567 and 1569. The Red Lion playhouse which marked the dawn of Elizabethan theatre was built in 1567 near the Whitechapel. It was built by John Brayne, Richard Burbage’s collaborator in building *The Theatre* (1576) at Shoreditch. The excavations by UCL’s Institute of Archaeology at 85 Stepney Way following the accidental discovery of the site during a housing redevelopment in January 2019 at Whitechapel in London. It unearthed a 40ft by 31ft. the site and a rectangular timber structure made up of 144 surviving timbers with postholes around it, which could have been “scaffolds” or galleried seating (BBC News, 2020).

The Globe Theatre housed more than a thousand people in the pit and more in the three tire galleries around the stage. The King’s Men took over the Blackfriars in 1608 as their winter playhouse till the English Civil War broke out. The Blackfriars was smaller. Its 100 ft. x 50 ft. rectangular hall with two galleries accommodated between 600-1000 rich spectators and the performance at Blackfriars was more lucrative for the King’s Men. Elaborate costumes, masques, and finer performance and nuanced stories the “sound and fury” of the Globe Theatre.

Shakespeare’s men also played at other theatres in London. Shakespeare and his team probably moved around the country when London theatres were closed from 1592-94 due to the Bubonic plague. The Lord Chamberlain’s Men played at *The Theatre*, the first theatre in London till 1596. As they were evicted from there, they moved to *The Curtain* during 1597-99 and then to *The Globe* in 1599. *The Curtain*, the “wooden O” staged *Romeo and Juliet* and *Henry V* first. This movement from one theatre to

another was usual as we see that the Boar's House was occupied by many acting companies including the Earl of Derby's Men (1599-1601, 1602-1603), the Earl of Worcester's Men (1601-02, 1604-06), and Prince Charles' Men (1609-16). It is interesting to note that when Charles I became king, the Prince Charles' Men became the King's Men. As the Red Bull Company began staging Shakespeare's plays, styling themselves as King's Players in 1627, John Heminges made Henry Herbert ban them from doing so.

Acting companies either owned or hired theatres to play and had to adjust their staging and acting to suit the conditions of the theatre and the stage available. Even Shakespeare's Globe was used by other companies. The first firm record of production in the Globe is that of Ben Jonson's *Everyman out of His Humour* at the end of 1599. For example, the Boar's Head, an inn modified into a theatre from lodging, stable, barn, garden etc. Like the theatre, it was relatively small. Its playing area was square, unlike the spacious polygonal Globe, Swan and Rose. The Cockpit/Phoenix was only 52ft. x 37ft. in size. Actors had to adapt their performance to these conditions as Peter Quince reminds his actors:

Pat, pat; and here's a marvellous convenient place
for our rehearsal. This green plot shall be our
stage, this hawthorn-brake our tiring-house; and we
will do it in action as we will do it before the duke. (*MND* 3.1.2-5)

The Globe was built by Lord Chamberlain's Men in London in 1599, using the timbre of the first theatre, The Theatre. Although the exact layout and dimension of three-storey is 50 ft-radius open-air Amphitheatre, it housed about 3000 spectators. It got destroyed in a fire on 29 June 1613, and by about this time, Shakespeare had retired. It was reconstructed at the same site by June 1614 and is depicted as a round building on Wenceslas Hollar's 'Long View of London' (1647). The 1989 excavation at its original site—behind Anchor Terrace on Park Street, some 200 m. away from the new Globe theatre—showed that it was a 20-side polygon.

The Globe's 43 ft. x 27 ft. rectangular apron stage thrust out into the yard some 4-5 ft. above the ground. Two large Roman columns on the stage supported the roof called the "heavens" painted with clouds the sky and signs of the zodiac over the rear part of the stage. A trap door in the heavens enabled performers to descend using some form of rope and harness. And the trapdoor on the stage was used for the grave (*Ham*), apparitions (*Mac*), sudden disappearance (the witch's cauldron in *Mac*., Harpy's feast in *Tmp*.). The back wall of the stage had three doors with the curtained door at the centre acting as the inner stage. The other two doors led to the 'tiring house' where dressed actors waited. The floors above were used to store costumes and props. The balcony above the inner stage stationed the playhouse musicians and was also used as the balcony (*Rom*), Brabantio's window (*Oth*), Jessica's window from which she throws down the casket of jewels to Lorenzo (*MV*). Actors moved back and forth from the tiring house behind the stage into the midst of the surrounding audience of standing groundlings. Unlike in the modern proscenium stage in which entrance is from the wings, its entry was from the tiring house at the back of the stage. The scenery was minimal, and by means did not create any illusion, but suggestive only. As they created thunder and lightning (*Mac*., *Tmp*), Harpy scene (*Tmp*), Cleopatra's entrance (*Ant.*) etc., the scenic effect could not have been very simple.

However, they were conscious of the limitations of the stage, to which they were confined. Shakespeare was conscious of this limitation as he makes the Chorus in Henry V say:

Can this cockpit hold
 The vasty fields of France? or may we cram
 Within this wooden O the very casques
 That did affright the air at Agincourt?
 O, pardon! since a crooked figure may
 Attest in little place a million;
 And let us, ciphers to this great accompt,
 On your imaginary forces work (5 *Hen.1.* Prol.)

As his plays moved across to other cultures, they adapted the plays to the spaces they got. Kathakali theatre of Kerala, Jatra theatre of Bengal, Noh and Kabuki theatres of Japan have used their stages, techniques and conventions to stage Shakespeare, giving him a local habitation.

Shakespeare's Stage Conventions

Stage conventions refer to the frequently repeated stage practices which were tacitly understood by the audience. This refers to the way a play is categorized, the dialogue, acting conventions, and staging conventions it uses. They had different dramatic genres as Polonius explains;

The best actors in the world, either for tragedy,
 comedy, history, pastoral, pastoral-comical,
 historical-pastoral, tragical-historical, tragical-
 comical-historical-pastoral, scene individable, or
 poem unlimited (*Ham.* 2.2)

Shakespearean stage conventions were the same as those followed by his contemporaries who included the likes of Marlowe, Jonson, Dekker, Kyd, Heywood and Greene. The conventions they in dialogue, soliloquy, aside, eavesdropping, acting style, boys performing female roles, masques, play within a play, stagecraft etc. are very recognizable.

Shakespeare himself tells us about the stage conventions of his days in his critique of the company of boy actors and the travelling actors (*Ham*), the Mechanicals' rehearsal (*MND* 1.2, 4.2, 5.1), the masque of gods (*Tmp.* 4.1), and various references to actors like Roman actors (*JC* 2.1.226). Shakespeare's acute consciousness of his stage gets reflected as Jacques reminds us that "All the world's a stage" (*AYLI* 2.7.139), Lear comment that "When we are born, we cry that we are come / To this great stage of fools" (*Lr.* 4.6.155), which *Antonio* admits to be "A stage, where every man must play a part" (*MV* 1.1.78), of life which is but "a poor player / That struts and frets his hour upon the stage" (*Mac.* 5.5.25), for about the "two hour's traffic of our stage" (*Rom.* 1.1. Prol). He makes North ask the audience "let this world no longer be a stage / To feed contention in a lingering act" (*4H2* 1.1.155-6), and Prologue carry the audience to Pericles' ship reminding them that "This stage the ship, upon whose deck" Pericles appears to speak (3.1.Prol) and to imagine "A kingdom for a stage, princes to act" (*4H1.1.Prol.*). York speaks how "a well-graced actor leaving the stage, (2*R* 5.2.24) and Sonnet 23 speaks about "an imperfect actor on the stage" who with his fear is put beside his part (1-2).

Hamlet's description of acting tells us about Shakespeare's stage itself:

an excellent play, well
 digested in the scenes, set down with as much
 modesty as cunning. I remember, one said there
 were no sallets in the lines to make the matter

savoury, nor no matter in the phrase that might
indict the author of affectation (*Ham* 2.2.281)

And as he reflects on the player's acting in his Hecuba soliloquy:

Is it not monstrous that this player here,
But in a fiction, in a dream of passion,
Could force his soul so to his own conceit
That from her working all his visage wann'd,
Tears in his eyes, distraction in's aspect,
A broken voice, and his whole function suiting
With forms to his conceit? and all for nothing! (*Ham* 2.2.560-66)

Shakespeare self-consciously makes his characters comment on the meta-theatricality of the stage, as he makes Fabian say "If this were play'd upon a stage now, I could condemn it as an improbable fiction" (*TN* 3.4.69), and makes Cleopatra wonder how her life will be presented in theatres in future:

Nay, 'tis most certain, Iras: ...
... the quick comedians
Extemporally will stage us, and present
Our Alexandrian revels; *Antony*
Shall be brought drunken forth, and I shall see
Some squeaking Cleopatra boy my greatness
I' the posture of a whore. (*Ant.* 5.2.16-22)

Shakespearean plays were overtly performance and used the presentational acting style. Awareness of the presence of an audience, unlike the modern way of completely ignoring them, characterized Elizabethan theatre and so, they used more stylized and dramatic movements and gestures unlike in a realistic drama. It used heightened speech patterns for dramatic effect.

The plays represented the patriarchal low attitude to gender. It regarded men as strong and women as weak. It featured "clowns" and "fools" who were licensed to be humorous. They could be court jesters, or wise servants and were licensed to comment on the wisdom, or lack there-of, of the other characters.

Shakespeare's plays are full of poetic, dramatic dialogues in language heightened beyond the normal speech of the day. Here too, while lower-class characters speak in somewhat colloquial prose, the upper-class characters used stylized, rhythmic verse. The style of the day used Blank Verse, or unrhymed iambic pentameters to compose a line. Besides, there were monologues like soliloquy and aside. Soliloquy is a dramatic technique in which a character talks aloud one's inner thoughts to oneself. It is loud but is as if it not heard by other characters. Typically, a soliloquy is long, philosophical and has a dramatic touch. An aside involves a character giving the audience valuable information 'on the side' about the plot or characters, empowering the audience with more knowledge about the events on stage than most of the characters to have. These informed audiences about a character's actual thoughts, which is hidden from others. Eavesdropping involves characters strategically overhearing the conversation of others on stage. Use of aside, prologue, epilogue and puns connected characters directly to the audience.

Staging conventions like stylized acting, boy actors, masques, play within a play, elaborate costumes are also characteristic features of Elizabethan play. Elizabeth's England regarded acting as a profession unsuitable for women, and women were not permitted to act on the stage until King Charles II allowed

it in 1660. Shakespeare cast young boys in the roles of women. So Shakespeare was responding to the repertoire of the actors he had when he wrote plays. It is interesting to note that in a particular phase, many of his comedies (*AYLI, MV, TN*) have two young girls, one tall and the other short, who played female characters who 'disguised' themselves as boys. This allowed his boy actors to play undisguised. Masques, which presented allegorical characters with actors wearing elaborate face-hiding masks, were mostly performed indoors at courts. It used heightened verse, stylized acting gorgeous costumes, elaborate singing, and formalized dancing. It catered to the tastes of the elite class by stories and involved. Staging of a play inside a play was judiciously used as in *Hamlet* or playfully used to cast the entire play as a play within a play as in *The Taming of the Shrew*.

The different parts of the Shakespearean stage represented many things. A balcony could serve as an upper floor to observe what happens on the lower floor; an upper window, from which outside is visible, battlements, city-walls, etc. or simply a balcony. The stage jutted into the audience in the pit and used very little or no scenery. The scenery was mostly suggestive. As they mostly used the bare stage and minimal props, they had to compensate it with dialogue rich in imagery and descriptions, as well as rich, and colourful costumes that denoted characters' social status. Stage lights were not required as plays were performed during daylight. The balcony represented Heaven, and the trap door represented hell. Entrances and exits were through the two doors at the rear and not the side wings, as is today. A change of scene is indicated when everyone departed (exeunt) from the stage. Since 1609 when the King's Men moved to the Blackfriars and catered to an elite audience, the custom of inter-act music spread also to the Globe and other public theatres, with musicians playing from tiring-house boxes. The play often ended with an epilogue and jigs. Dance, songs and bawdy farce rolled into one in a jig.

Most of the actors were poor, and a few of them were rich as shareholders in their companies and as entrepreneurs. Shakespeare was a successful actor-playwright. It was a demanding profession with playing six days a week and continuous rehearsal. Edward Alleyn the greatest tragic actor of his period, learned more than 50 new roles in three years.

Elizabethan Life in Shakespeare's Plays

Shakespeare hardly sets his plays in contemporary England, except perhaps in *Merry Wives of Windsor*, and in England, except in his history plays. However, his plays reflected Elizabethan life on the stage because he portrayed life as he knew it. And his Greek, Roman or Middle Eastern characters were Elizabethan and Jacobean in character, conduct, class and speech. *Macbeth* has "a servant fee'd" (3.4.131) as Elizabethan aristocracy did; *Macbeth's* horror at his "hangman's hands" (2.2.26), refers to the Elizabethan hangman hanging, cutting down alive, dismembering, and disembowelling the victim, who is often "hang'd, drawn and quarter'd" (*KJ* 2.1.508). His characters wore English dress, not foreign ones. The Egyptian queen Cleopatra and the Bohemian queen Paulina ask in English way to "Cut my lace" (*Ant.* 1.3.71; *WT* 3.2.160). Martin Holmes claims that when Shakespeare makes Enobarbus describe Cleopatra's barge, Plutarch's description becomes Elizabethan as Elizabeth's royal barge was often seen floating on the Thames (Holmes). He has clocks that strike for dinner at Ephesus (*Err.* 1.2.49, 2.1.3, 4.2.54, in Rome (*Cor.* 2.2.90), in Verona (*Rom.* 2.5.1, like the Windsor bell in *MWW* 5.2.10, 5.5.1, 5.5.48).

English form of social behaviour could be observed in Shakespearean characters, whether they are English or not. The form of address is one of them. Husbands addressed wives as "my lady", "Madam" or "wife" while wives addressed their husbands as "my lord", and "husband"; children addressed motherless as a mother than "madam" as Juliet does, and address their fathers less as 'father' than as

“my lord” or “sir” as Lear’s daughters do. Servants, even in Verona, mirror Elizabethan expectation of the servants they hired annually from fairs: fetch and carry, milk, brew good ale, sew, knit, wash and scour, and spin (*TGV* 3.1).

The Elizabethan life Mrs Quickly portrays is distinctly Elizabethan

Thou didst swear to me upon a
parcel-gilt goblet, sitting in my Dolphin-chamber,
at the round table, by a sea-coal fire, upon
Wednesday in Wheeson week, when the prince broke
thy head for liking his father to a singing-man of
Windsor, thou didst swear to me then, as I was
washing thy wound, to marry me and make me my lady
thy wife. Canst thou deny it? Did not goodwife
Keech, the butcher's wife, come in then and call me
gossip Quickly? coming in to borrow a mess of
vinegar; telling us she had a good dish of prawns;
whereby thou didst desire to eat some; whereby I
told thee they were ill for a green wound? And
didst thou not, when she was gone downstairs,
desire me to be no more so familiarity with such
poor people; saying that ere long they should call
me madam? And didst thou not kiss me and bid me
fetch thee thirty shillings? (*4H2* 2.1.92 ff)

Shakespeare in foreign Performances

When he lived, Shakespeare belonged to a language and culture; not any more. He has transcended the borders of English language and culture—primarily because of the colonial expansion of the British, who as a part of that promoted their language and their culture in the colonized countries. This has resulted in the cultural invasion, cultural resistance, cultural integration and cultural synthesis. Leading to Shakespeare being seen in terms of a product of his culture, interculturalism and multiculturalism, and of the host culture.

Shakespeare was first taken abroad by travelling actors. Germans claim that Shakespeare was performed there ever since 1606 when a travelling team of actors brought him to Germany some 300 miles east of London. Over time, Shakespeare is regarded as one of their national poets by Germans who regard Shakespeare as “one of our own.” At Neuss, there is another replica of the Globe. Germans who visited England and saw performances at the Globe took him to Germany and it is claimed that *Hamlet* was performed in Germany in 1605 itself by travelling actors. It was from Germany that Shakespeare travelled to the rest of Europe. Shakespeare’s ideas of nationalism, especially in his history plays have guided Germany in its march towards becoming a nation in 1871. The likes of Goethe, Schiller, Schlegel and Tieck appropriated him for literary and ideological education projects.

Germans have never regarded Shakespeare as a British cultural export. Germany produces more Shakespeare productions than those of any German author and the number of Shakespeare productions in the whole of England. If the German National Socialists liked him for his portrayal of *Führerfiguren*, German Democratic Republic preferred to see humanism and realism in Shakespeare. He also became

a source for their socialist literature. Germans found in Shakespeare, critical responses to the social, political and economic reality defined by class struggle. Karl Marx analyzed Shakespeare's *Timon of Athens* for its portrayal of money, and repeated after Timon, that money is "the common whore, the common procurer of people and nations" (4.3.43). Shakespeare's German appropriation is a subject taken up in Ferdinand von Freilingrath's "*Deutschland ist Hamlet*" (1844) and a term "nostrification" was put forward by German Shakespeare Society in 1864 to indicate the German appropriation of Shakespeare. Friedrich Gundolf's "*Shakespeare und der Deutsche Geist*" (1911), and Gerhart Hauptmann's address "*Deutschland und Shakespeare*" (1915) and the works of the great theatre personality Heiner Müller (1929-95) produced many Shakespeare-inspired plays, like *Hamletmaschine*, *Anatomy Titus Fall of Rome A Shakespeare Commentary* and *Macbeth*.

The story of Shakespeare into Arabia is related to Keeling's Red Dragon, which anchored at Socotra, an island off Yemen. Cairo in Egypt saw the first performance and translation of *Othello* (1884), Najib al-Haddad's translation of *Romeo and Juliet* as *Martyrs of Love* (1890), and *Hamlet* in the translation of Tanius Abduh (1893). These were not done directly from English but through French translations or abridgements of Shakespeare. For example, Abduh's *Hamlet* was translated from the French translation of Shakespeare's play by Jean-François Ducis (1769) who depended on a French synopsis of the play and had little of Shakespeare's play. It had a happy ending with Hamlet, blessed by his father's ghost, ascends the throne. However, as many critics have pointed out, the Arabic translations of Shakespeare were not "simply a process of imperialist transmission and passive colonial reception" but assimilated into the fabric of Arab creative process, and transplanted him into Arab soil in a process of cross-cultural exporting and migration across borders (Holderness 143). The Arab world has adapted Shakespeare to the local conditions of Arabia so well that he is even appropriated as a crypto-Arab, Sheikh Zubair.

Overtly political adaptations appeared on Egyptian stages around the First World War, responding to the increasing British control of Egypt. Along with *Hamlet*, the most popular Arab adaptations of Shakespeare are *Lear*, *The Taming of the Shrew*, *Macbeth* and *Othello*. The future Egyptian President Gamal Abdel-Nasser had starred in *Julius Caesar* (1935) which portrayed Caesar a vanquisher of the British. Arab playwrights use Shakespeare to escape censorship and air their revolutionary ideas. Unlike the direct *Macbeth* which rarely escapes censoring and so, is hardly staged in any Arab country, the more subtle *Hamlet* has had many adaptations in Arabia. Even seemingly innocuous *Romeo and Juliet* become political tools in Arab discourses. Nevertheless, *Hamlet* remains a favourite of the Arab directors and authors. They use parody, meta-theatrical discourses and political satire to read the political subtexts of contemporary Arab reality.

The Arab world has been caught between adapting *Hamlet*, for example, as a romantic hero or as an intellectual. By around 1970s, the traditional postcolonial reading of the romantic freedom fighter image of Hamlet gave way to emotionally crippled and impotent hero rebelling against Arab despots. The Kuwaiti playwright Sulayman Al Bassam's *The Al Hamlet Summit* (2002) maps *Hamlet* on to an Arab political tragedy. The background of petrodollar economy, local unrest against the despotic rule, international arms trade, Arab-Israeli conflict, the plight of the Palestinians help him portray Ophelia as an Arab girl dying as a suicide bomber. His play is divided after the five times of Islamic prayers. The eclectic use of the language of Islamic discourse transforms play into a local one. Arab adapters of Shakespeare has always looked at *Hamlet* as one of political dispossession, based on their experience of

Middle East politics and in al Bassam's work, Hamlet's rebellion only paves way for Fortinbras who occupies, quoting scriptural sanction.

When Shakespeare is performed for an audience of other languages and cultures, or by people of other languages and cultures, or even across time even in England which has a different culture than Shakespeare's, Shakespeare gets adapted into the new. Hardly one finds a faithful reproduction of Shakespeare today as people all over the world feel Shakespeare as their own, and so, can manipulate him as they like, as with their myths.

Indian Shakespeare

Indian theatre refers to the dramatic narrative, dance, and music. The classical theatre or the Sanskrit theatre which is contemporary to that of Greek and Roman theatres was significantly influenced by the Greek theatre following the invasion of Alexander the Great. The Sanskrit treatise *Nāṭyaśāstra* (between 200 BC-200 AD), is the oldest complete work of dramaturgy and is attributed to Bharata. It deals with acting, dance, music, dramatic divisions, architecture, costume, make-up, props, troupes, audience, and theatrical practices. It focusses on acting (*abhinaya*) which is categorized into two styles: *lokadharmi* (realistic) and *natyadharmi* (conventional). Professional acting troupes of men and women trained rigorously in vocal and physical techniques and performed under a *sutradhar* (director). *Kutiyattam* is the main surviving specimen of Sanskrit theatre. Other forms of Indian folk theatre include *Bhavai* of Gujarat; *Bhaona* and *Ankiya Nats* of Assam; *Raslila* of Uttar Pradesh, *Tamasha* of Maharashtra, *Jatra* of Bengal; *Swang* of Rajasthan and Haryana; *Maach* of Madhya Pradesh; *Dashavatar* of Konkan and Goa; *Bhand Pather* of Kashmir; *Therukoothu* of Tamil Nadu; *Yakshagana* of Karnataka; *Kathakali* of Kerala etc. Urdu theatre, puppet theatre, and street theatre are other popular forms of Indian theatre.

Classical Sanskrit drama uses both Sanskrit and Prakrit languages, stock characters like *nayaka* (hero), *nayika* (heroine), *vidushaka* (clown). The theory of *rasa* is a major influence on Indian theatre. *Rasa* refers to *bhavas* (emotional states) produced in a *sahṛdaya* (sensitive person) who relishes a text/performance. According to *Natyasastra*, "Rasa is produced from a combination of *vibhava* (causes), *anubhava* (effects) and *vyabharibhava* (transitory states). Bharata names nine *rasas*: romance (*srungara*), mirth (*hasya*), fury (*raudra*), compassion (mercy), disgust (*bhibhatsa*), horror (*bhayanak*), heroism (*veera*), and amazement (*adbhuta*), and others add peace (*santha*). These are expressed in terms of *abhinaya*, which relies on highly stylized movements and expressions.

A Shakespeare drama expressed in theatre, as *Othello* by Sadanam Balakrishnan or *Hamlet* by Margi Madhu is a highly stylized performance. Similarly, Japanese theatres like *Noh* and *Kabuli*, which require highly trained artists, also have localized Shakespeare. At the same time, folk theatres have adapted Shakespeare more popularly across the world. *Jatra Macbeth* (by Utpal Dutt), *Sangeet Natak Othello* (*Jhunjarrao* by Govind Bhallal Dev), *Nautanki Twelfth Night* (*Piya Behroopiya* by Atul Kumar), *Chathisgarhi A Midsummer Night's Dream* (*Kamdeo ka Apan Basant Ritu ka Sapna* by Habib Tanvir) are some of the popular adaptations of Shakespeare in India.

More about this will be discussed in the unit 'Shakespeare in Indian Theatre'.