## Unit: 16: Shakespearean Semiotics

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**Introduction**

Semiotics is the science of reading signs and their different combinations to understand meaning encoded in them. Both 'semiotics' and 'semiology' come from the Greek word 'semeion' and refer to the science of signs. Saussure used 'semiology' to refer to the study of signs as a 'science which studies the role of signs as part of social life', and Peirce saw 'semiotics' as the 'formal doctrine of signs' related closely to logic. Roman Jakobson associated 'semiology' with the European tradition and primarily as a tool of textual analysis; and 'Semiotics' with the American tradition of sign study and as a philosophical tradition. For Umberto Eco Semiotics it is concerned with everything that can be taken as a sign.

The large canvas of his verbal paintings with rich images and metaphors makes Shakespeare a rich material for semiotic analysis. In this unit, we will try to understand semiotics, and the semiotics of language, Shakespeare's script, and his representations in comics, drama, and cinema.

**Semiotics**

Semiotics developed simultaneously and unrelatedly in two different locations. The Swiss Linguist Ferdinand de Saussure (1857-1913) in France and the American cultural scientist Charles Saunders Peirce (1839-1914) in the USA almost parallelly developed similar notions about the nature of the sign. While Saussure called it Semiology, Peirce called it Semiotics. Although they both try to understand signs and the process of signification, they differ in their terminologies and approaches. Saussure's approach was linguistic and Peirce's approach was more based on logic.

In his *Course in General Linguistics* Saussure defended a theory that "language should be studied (…) not only diachronically (…) and synchronically" and wanted the language to be studied as a self-sufficient system. He saw language as two-dimensional: *langue* (the abstract language system) and *parole* (the concrete utterances speakers make), and linguistics as the study of signs and their relations. He interpreted the relationship between the concept (*signifié*) and the sound-image (*significant*) as arbitrary. Using the example of a *tree*, he explained that the "structural relationship between the concept of a tree (*signifié*) and the sound-image made by the word "tree" (*significant*) constitutes a linguistic sign".

For Peirce, a sign "stands for something (its *object*); it stands for something to somebody (its *interpretant*); and finally, it stands for something to somebody (*representamen*) in some respect (it's *ground*)". For Roman Jakobson, a sign has two aspects: "an immediately perceptible *signans* and an inferable, apprehensible *signatum*".

Everything is and can be, read as signs. A sign is something which signifies. It consists of a signifier and a signified. For example, take the word 'chair'. It has two parts: the signifier form which could be visual, orthographic or phonetic; and the signified is what the form refers to (in this case, the object chair). The relationship between the two is purely arbitrary. There is nothing inherent in the visual, orthographic or phonetic form to suggest that it has to the object chair itself. It could have been used for anything else. Otherwise, in all other languages also *chair* would have meant the same. However,

we use *kursi* (Hindi); *kasera* (Malayalam), *cadeira* (Spanish, Portuguese), *stol* (Danish, Norwegian, Swedish), s*tuhl* (German), *chaise* (French) etc.

The process of signification makes a signifier unique. It is not a one to one correspondence, rather an individualised process of intellection. To put it in simpler words, the word chair means different things for different people. If ten people are asked to draw the picture of a chair, we will get ten different pictures of the chair. Some will have four legs, some three; some may have hand-rests, and some may not; and made of wood, iron or plastic. Still, all are chairs. What makes a stool or a sofa different from a chair? And what is a chair after all? The difference is caused by our imaginative reconstitution of the signified at the level of intellection.

**Semiotics of Language**

Now, if it is so difficult for us to communicate and understand what a very concrete object like a chair is, how can we communicate abstract and complex concepts? Do we understand the meaning encoded by the speech of others? Then, how do we understand Shakespeare who plays with words and puns and toys with our imagination using the signifying potential of words? The conversation between Hamlet and Polonius, in *Hamlet* and between Troilus and Pandarus in *Troilus and Cressida* shows how "words" and "matter" signified differently:

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| Polonius: | …. What do you read, my lord? |
| Hamlet: | Words, words, words |
| Polonius: | What is the matter, my lord? (*Ham*. 2.2.181) |
| Pandarus: | … What says she there? |
| Troilus: | Words, words, mere words, no matter from the heart.<br>The effect doth operate another way. (*Tro*. 5.3.102-04) |

Shakespeare's texts were materials for the stage. But, they are used in a host of performance traditions. This adds to Shakespeare's semiotic potential.

A semiotic analysis of the dramatization of Shakespeare's narrative throws light into how Shakespeare means through his three dozen plays and had a huge vocabulary. He used more than 884,400 words and 31,534 different words (846 of them more than 100 times and 14,376 only once) must have known more words. Shakespeare's passive vocabulary must have been at least three times bigger His typical style made "abundant use of the most commonplace words to produce far from commonplace effects" (Craig 64).

Meticulous use of language bestows Shakespeare's rhetorical devices power. For example, both Romeo and Juliet feel the power of the word "banished" as Romeo is banished after the death of Tybalt:

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| Juliet: | Some word there was, worser than Tybalt's death,<br>That murder'd me:…..<br>'Tybalt is dead, and Romeo--banished;'<br>That 'banished,' that one word 'banished,'<br>Hath slain ten thousand Tybalts. |
| Romeo: | They are free men, but I am banished.<br>And say'st thou yet that exile is not death?…<br>But 'banished' to kill me?--'banished'?<br>… To mangle me with that word 'banished' |

Words create the syntagmatic and paradigmatic contexts to read a text. They also reveal the authorial self. We hardly know anything about Shakespeare's early life. Still, his uses of strange local words like *fap* ('drunk' *MWW* 1.1.164) and *quat* ('pimple; *Oth*. 5.1.11), *scamel* (uncertain bird or fish; *Tmp*. 2.2.88) gives away the linguistic traces of his regional origin.

It is impossible to understand exactly what Shakespeare meant; because the process of signification is unique. Nevertheless, we operate in the world of languages by arbitrarily fixing the meaning of words. By trying to imaginatively reconstitute in our intellection what his words mean for us we make Shakespeare mean today. It is our horizon of experience and expectations that create meaning for us. Shakespeare means differently across cultures.

**Semiotics of Script**

Primarily Shakespeare comes to us like text and his universe of signification is quite phenomenal. As his words are used in a different context of his plays, they also have different meanings and so, different significations. Therefore, the verbal signifiers of the same form (homophones) could signify differently.

The famous pilgrim dialogue between *Romeo and Juliet* is an example:

> ROMEO    If I profane with my unworthiest hand
> This holy shrine, the gentle fine is this:
> My lips, two blushing pilgrims, ready stand
> To smooth that rough touch with a tender kiss.
>
> JULIET    Good pilgrim, you do wrong your hand too much,
> Which mannerly devotion shows in this;
> For saints have hands that pilgrims' hands do touch,
> And palm to palm is holy palmers' kiss (Rom. 1.4.204-211)

The defamiliarization of every-day words "pilgrim", "holy", "shrine" and "hand", "touch", "lips" signify physicality and eroticism, sacred and profane, creating extraordinary effect. This makes Shakespeare open to multiple interpretations, and become a testing ground for new theories of meaning.

In his *Reading the Signs*, Serpieri gives a semiotic study of *Julius Caesar* and *Othello*, and among other literary texts, Thompson and Thompson try to understand the linguistic metaphors in *Troilus and Cressida, King Lear, Hamlet*, and Sonnet 63.

The text and its rendition matter. One may analyse the most repeated words in a script of the play to understand its literary semiotics and understand a play in depth. By analysing its most repeated words, images, and patterns, and the context in which they occur, one can map out how they contribute to the meaning of the text as a whole.

Let us looks at the play *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. It has four parallel plots—a pair lovers who are crossly matched, a king and a queen whose wedding is to be celebrated, a group of workers who rehears to stage a play for the king's wedding, and a group of fairies who rule the forest. The plot, set in Ancient Greece, revolves around the miraculous capacity of the juice of a flower which can make one fall in love with the first object one sees.

Put it in modern terms, it could be described as Shakespeare's psychedelic drama on a group of youth who sneak into the woods, use drugs and hallucinate things. The audience and the mechanicals share

their intoxicated dream in a world that remains turned upside down, till the order is restored when the king and the queen walk in to wake us up. The fast-paced drama is filled with magic, madness, and the irrational forces from within and outside controlling destiny and bringing characters from different worlds come into contact. The heightened romance driving youth to nonsense, the bewitching allure of the moonlit forest night, and the catalytic permeation of 'love in idleness' lull audience into a slumber and travel to and from the world of a dream where the impish Puck rules the roost. Every single verbal icon signifies the ephemerality of the real world and signifies for us the unreal nature of life as a dream.

*Translations and adaptations*

These texts come to cultures of the world not only in English but also in translations and adaptations. When translating a text into a foreign language which does not share the context of the source language, the meaning can become very different. This is a perennial challenge in translation. The discipline known as Translation Studies addresses the question of overcoming, circumventing and negotiating such issues. However, the issue is not that simple as Shakespeare is adapted for specific purposes within English and also in translations.

For example, a rendering of Shakespeare in modern English is likely to communicate better but moves away from the Elizabethan linguistic universe of Shakespeare. The feminist, black or postcolonial renderings of Shakespeare also deviate from Shakespeare towards their respective ideologies. How Shakespearean are these renderings is a technical question that has to do with the process of signification involved in these works.

Things become more complicated when his translations into foreign language are involved. Not only his words lose the power of their signification, but the context of Elizabethan English and English language also get substituted by the semantic universe of a different order. As the words in the target language have their signifieds, the texts mean differently to a foreign audience. Here, the crux is the language of Shakespeare. Shakespeare is not the story or his plot, but his language, and when that language loses its signifying capacity, Shakespeare ceases to be what he is. Another language recreates his story in a language that is not his.

It becomes even more complicated in the case of adaptations when Shakespeare's linguistic context that created meaning for his words are transplanted not only into a linguistic but also into another cultural context. When *Othello* is translated as *Abdulla* in Malayalam or *Macbeth* as *uMabatha* among the Zulus, the change in language and linguistic and cultural context becomes very significant.

When he is changed for a specific audience like children as in Lamb's *Tales from Shakespeare* or Bowdler's *Family Shakespeare*, the passages from Shakespeare is deleted, edited or modified so that Shakespeare does not offend the sensibility of the reader. This also affects the meaning of Shakespeare. There is nothing wrong with such exercises. However, such a version produced by altering his text produces different signification.

**Semiotics of Comics**

While some wants cartoons to appeal to children, some others want them to connect the adolescents to the play as it is. For Stanley Wells, they are "not primarily intended for people who already know the plays", rather "for people who either don't know them or who, knowing them, are interested in seeing what can be done with and through them in a different medium". These differing views highlight the several problems in these animations and cartoons. For example, some have reported difficulty

regarding depicting the marriage night of *Romeo and Juliet* regarding how much nudity is allowed or necessary, as it has to be neither too explicit nor too abstract.

Comic strips and cartoons are direct and easy means to communicate a message. They use exaggeration, contradiction, metaphor, and interaction of the verbal and the visual to generate meaning through language, image or their combination. Animators add life to their characters through anthropomorphism (morphing in human shape), therianthophism (combining human and beast features), transformation (becoming something else), mutation (becoming a hybrid entity), and translation (displaying the facet of a former state).

Semiotics analyses images and identify the signs used to give theoretical and methodological framework by isolating and explaining the meaning of the text and image. It does so by paying attention to all the verbal and visual details used. It also analyses the roles and relevance of the images used within the domains which developed them. As cartoons generate more than one meaning, semiotics limits the multiple meanings by identifying it as a social construct.

However, the assumption that children are naturally disposed toward the animated cartoon, and that translating Shakespeare as cartoon simplifies are also challenged, as seen from Neil Gaiman's *Dream*. The Classical Comics brings out Shakespeare as comic strips for primary school students (in "quick text" with very few words), for teenagers (in plain English) and for their teachers (using Shakespeare's own words). The first uses Shakespeare's own words, the second translates them into plain English while the third is a "quick text" version and uses as few words as possible. There are apprehensions about how these abbreviations would help students to tackle language and themes of the originals.

Shakespeare is used both as cartoon and as comics. The large corpus and wide recognition of his lines, characters and images lend Shakespeare easily to the medium. Some of them summarize Shakespeare. Mya Gosling's succinct Shakespeare comics "In 3 Panels" simplifies Shakespeare giving a concise beginning-middle-end guide to Shakespeare. Shakespeare loses much in the bargain
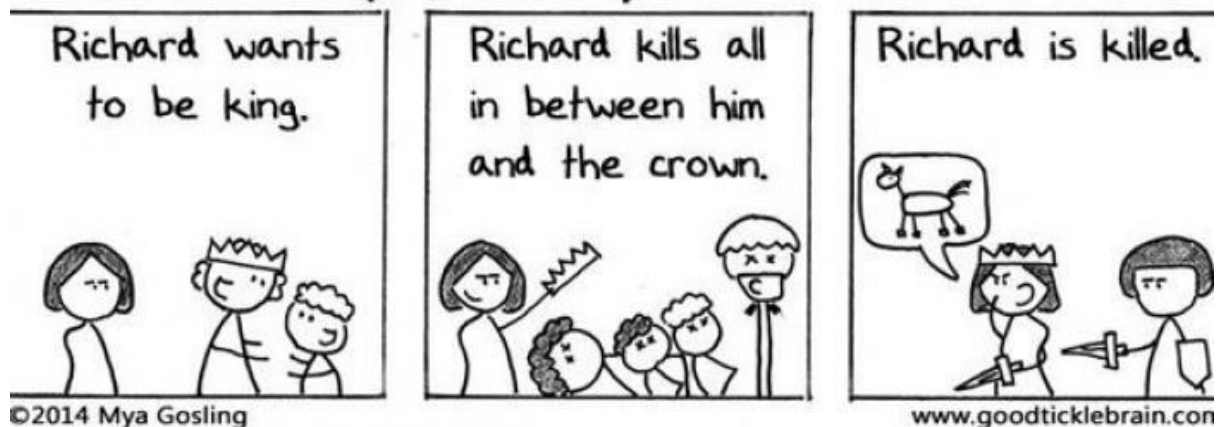


*Shakespeare comic Series*

The Japanese comic strip medium, *manga* also has featured Shakespeare. *Requiem of the Rose King* (2013) by Aya Kanno is an adaptation of major tetralogy—Henry VI and Richard III. Richard II is portrayed not as a hunchback, but as an intersex. *The Merchant of Venice* (2009) was put into manga format by Ryuta Osada as part of the Manga Shakespeare series by Richard Appignanesi.

*Shakespeare as Comic Character*

In No. 19 of his comic series *The Sandman*, Neil Gaiman's uses play as a focal point and portrays Shakespeare and company performing *A Midsummer Night's Dream* to an audience of real fairies and Oberon and Titania. It shows how Shakespeare, devoted to pursuing his dream forgets his family and how he enters into a pact with the Lord Dream, Morpheus at a great cost, almost like Doctor Faustus. It makes the story personal by portraying Shakespeare's son Hamnet as playing the Indian boy (Titania's 'Changeling') and links the real Hamnet's early death to Titania's affection towards him. The comic won the first and only World Fantasy Award for Best Short Fiction, in 1991.

*Shakespeare character remakes*

*Desdemona in Her Own Words*

Desdemona is a difficult Shakespearean heroine for modern audiences to grapple with. The spontaneity and affection she shows in defending her marriage to Othello are immensely appealing and 21st-century audiences are undoubtedly sympathetic to her efforts to involve herself in the political world outside the domestic sphere. But as the play progresses, frustration arises when Desdemona appears at first oblivious, and then distressingly accepting of Othello's increasing anger and violence, even to the point of absolving him even for her murder.

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| Emily Martin (1953-). *Desdemona in Her Own Words* ([Iowa City, Iowa]: Naughty Dog Press, 2014): the edition of 14 | Manga Shakespeare *Romeo and Juliet* |

Martin's *Desdemona in her Own Words* interprets *Othello* through Desdemona who speaks in Shakespeare's words but a reorganised manner, openly expressing her anger and frustration and made Desdemona say things "for herself. not as anyone's pawn."

Van Vliet's Vision of King Lear

King Lear's tragic events are set in motion when the elderly King Lear chooses to place his faith in his two older daughters' hyperbolic descriptions of their love for him, rather than his youngest daughter's plainer truth that she loves him as a daughter should. Interpretations of the play have gravitated towards two opposing views: a regenerative vision in which Cordelia's love redeems Lear after he has learned wisdom from his suffering or an apocalyptic view of Lear's (and Cordelia's) suffering as meaningless.

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| The Tragedie of King Lear; [p. 11]<br><br>The Tragedy of King Lear (Bangor: Theodore Press, 1986); woodcuts by Claire Van Vliet | The Tragedie of King Lear; [p. 133] |

R.A. Foakes, the editor of *King Lear* (Arden Shakespeare: Third Series), suggests that reading Shakespeare is a matter of acting out a play in the mind by deeply immersing oneself in the language and personality of each character. This kind of intense reading is encouraged by fine-press editions such as Theodore Press' The Tragedy of King Lear (1986) for which artist and typographer Claire Van Vliet provided woodcut illustrations. Van Vliet's stark black-and-white images present an unflinching portrait of Lear's transformation from reigning monarch and pater familias to a broken man bereft of all the trappings of his worldly existence.

**Semiotics of Drama**

Theatre is more than the mere physical realization of a written text on a stage. It involves the text of the play, its performance, the audience's and actors' experience of the theatre, and the social context in which it is enacted. Apart from the literary dramatic text, the physical enactment of the text and the relationship between the two is also important.

Drama comes from the Greek *dran*, ('to do'). 'Acting' is a word with two layers suggesting both 'performing an action' and 'playing a role'. This confounds the meaning 'doing' with 'making-believe'. Drama is a performance in which language describes things as well as does things. Aristotle's famous definition of tragedy maintains that tragedy is "… action", and that "not in a narrative form"

Keir Elam regards Pragmatics, derived from the Greek word *pragma* ('to act') as apt to study the language of performance (Elam, Shakespeare 177). As there are many elements which contribute to the meaning of drama, "Semiotics provides a most valuable method for a better understanding of the way dramatic performance creates its mimesis of human interaction through setting before its audience of duplicate, mimetic, the illusionary image of the world in all its complexity" (Esslin 21).

The performative power of the curse, as one sees in the case of Queen Margaret who curses those who made her suffer: Richard III for murdering her husband Henry VI and her son Edward (1.3.119-120); Queen Elizabeth for stealing her throne (110); Edward IV to die of sickness, Edward V to die young (200); Rivers, Dorset and Hastings for not helping her son when Richard killed him (212 -214); and Buckingham for insulting her by not breaking with Richard. The irreversibility of the curse constitutes the tragedy.

His use of performative language while conducting Rosalind's marriage with Orlando on stage makes one wonder about the power to make the speech act. What makes marriage happen—the participants' saying "I do," or the power of the minister who uses the performative words "I now pronounce you man and wife"?

Complicating this is the question "what happens to a Shakespeare play when it is adapted and appropriated into another language and culture". This is to do with the semiotics of its production and reception. Semiotics analyses how theatrical signs are produced, received and interpreted by the audiences who develop interpretive strategies from both within and outside the production system.

Although Shakespeare's proscenium stage at the Globe and the Blackfriars had their peculiarities which conditioned the production and reception of the plays before the Elizabethan audience, the modern versions of the play differ in text, language, stage, stage conventions, actors and audience. Does this mean that we are producing a different play, and not Shakespeare's? Such an analysis will have to incorporate within the study reception theory, hermeneutics, and phenomenology to analyse the signs of the theatre.

Communication depends upon the use codes. We make sense because we follow a code that enables us to do so. Language is certainly accepted as a system of codes. In the same way, there are sub-linguistic (gestures and facial expressions etc.) and supra-linguistic (literary devices) codes which are important in drama and performance. Apart from these light, sound, scenery, costume, background score etc. also play their roles. In the Interpretation of a dramatic moment involves the simultaneous use of many codes and its successful interpretation based on the system of codes used.

Each theatre has its own set of codes, which are arbitrarily agreed upon by the actors and the audience. A simple example is that of death on the stage. The audience willingly suspends their disbelief and accept the death of the character on the stage, even though they fully know that the actor is not dead, but only acts out the death convincingly. How this is performed also varies. In realist drama, it is done in realistic terms, but in symbolic drama, signs are different. For example, in the most ancient surviving Sanskrit theatre Koodiyattam, the death of a character itself became a major performance and lasted for a long time. Ammanur Madhava Chakyar's performance of the death of Baali has been one of the most remarkable performances, down even to the minute level of breathing.

When Shakespeare is transformed into such theatre traditions, the codes of performance is bound become different. His Elizabethan theatre conventions like five acts, sparse stage, stylized language and exaggerated actions, soliloquy, aside, prologue, epilogue, chorus etc. may not be the codes used in other theatres like Japanese Noh and North Indian Nautanki. The long stylized movements in Kabuki, facial muscle movements in Kathakali, the quick wit and repartee in Parsi theatre, and the elaborate movements in Therukoothu have their places in the codes of those theatre traditions.

Like the act of thanking occurs in saying "thank you", a speech act is an action performed with words (Austin). A basic speech act is a sentence with a first-person subject and uses a performative verb in the present tense. It has as its object the second person and might involve a prepositional addition to describe the specifics of the act. An example could command, bid, beseech, demand, plead, deny, confess, vow, protest, etc.. (Elam, Shakespeare 202)

Austen's performative speech act theory could not accommodate the language of literature and drama as it conflated 'doing' with 'pretending' and he thought that a "performative utterance will … be in a

peculiar way hollow if said by an actor on the stage" (Elam, Shakespeare 200). Unlike Austin, today, speech act theory is applied to theatre although it is complicated.

An example of a speech act in Shakespeare is found in *Hamlet*. The ghost wants Hamlet to swear to remember him and insists that Horatio and Marcellus also swear not to reveal what they have seen. WH Auden notes that Hamlet's tragedy is his inability to translate speech acts into physical actions and that his status as a tragic hero comes from "his inability to act, for he can only 'act,' i.e., play at possibilities" (Bloom 410).

It is interesting to look at the meaning of contemporary production of Shakespeare's play if it is reproduced as he had staged it in his times. It is an impossibility because that ambience and the audience have changed irrevocably. When we do, we only make an intellectual exercise to understand how Shakespearean plays were staged during the Elizabethan period. Whether it means to us other than that depends on our theatre experience.

This is one of the reasons why the famous Indian Shakespeare theatre company *Shakespeareana* failed in post-Independence India. Before the Independence, it was the British machinery that propped up the imperial productions of original Shakespeare. However, in the wake of Independence, Indians increasingly distance from everything English—including Shakespeare—because of political reasons. This made the Kendal family who had prospered in pre-Independence India become desperate.

Parsi theatre, on the other hand, which used Indian signs to express Shakespeare, flourished in India since the nineteenth century and evolved into Bollywood. The theatre experience of the audience and the tools of their interpretation were quite different from that of a western audience. Another example for the success and failure of a Shakespeare production because of the presence or absence of Indian semiotic universe is the Bengali productions of *Macbeth* (1983) by the doyen of Bengal theatre Girish Chandra Ghosh (1844-1920) and *Hariraja* (1894) by his understudy Amarendranath Dutta (1896-1916). *Macbeth* was performed painstakingly with authentic British English pronunciation received big press and laurels form the critics for retaining the Scots style and unique English features. However, at the box-office, it was a disaster. The indigenised *Hamlet*, which featured Tarasundari (1878-1948) as Aruna (Desdemona) opposite Dutta's Hariraja (Hamlet) was a phenomenal box-office success. It ran for a decade, and earned Dutta the title "the Bengal Garrick".

*Theatre Adaptations*

Cultures and ideologies create theatres to articulate their concerns. Race, gender, religion and nationality are major shaping forces of theatres. While traditional theatres try to maintain social power structures, subaltern theatres use polemics to challenge and destabilize the accepted social and stage conventions to challenge power structures. They insist on incorporating the subaltern perspective and use unfamiliar techniques to theatricalize unseen identity strain and challenge hegemonic social structures.

The Black theatre movement significantly adapted Shakespeare to articulate their discourse of 'negritude'. *Voodoo Macbeth* directed by young Orson Welles for Federal Theatre Project (1936) which promoted African-American theatre, and Welcome Masomi's *uMabatha* (1970) which read Macbeth through 19th century Zulu culture show how ideological concerns use theatres.

Gender discourses also use feminist ideologies and feminist theatre tools to interpret Shakespeare. Gender discourses not only gave rise to feminist theatres, all-female cast, changing the gender of Shakespeare's characters, and women playing male roles. In James Joyce's *Ulysses* one sees Leopold

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Bloom wondering whether Hamlet was indeed a woman after noticing that Millicent Bandmann-Palmer played as Hamlet the previous night. He toys with the idea if Hamlet was indeed a woman in disguise, and whether Ophelia committed suicide after discovering that secret. Mrs Palmer was not the first. Many female artists starting with Sarah Siddons (1778) and celebrated actress like Sarah Bernhardt (1899) have also performed Hamlet. In Japan, Kabuki-trained Yaeko Mizutani (1933) and Rei Asami (1995) played Hamlet against local acting conventions.

*Birnam Van* by MV Karanth used the semiotics of Yakshagana theatre of Karnataka and experimented it with modern theatre to stage Macbeth. The costume and acting style significantly differed from other theatre performances. Some theatre adaptations like *A Midsummer Night's Dream* adapted by Naya Theatre in Chathisgarhi as *Kamdeo ka Apna Basant Ritu Ka Sapna* (1993) and directed by Habib Tanvir adapted Shakespeare to local conditions and he concentrated on the mechanicals and ignored the two pair of young lovers in it.

*Kathakali Theatre*

Even as each has its place and value within its system of signs, the complete transference of performance to another tradition is neither desired nor possible. Each theatre embellishes and enriches the performed text using its signs. To understand Kathakali Shakespeare, one has to understand the codes of Kathakali. King Lear, for a Kathakali artist, is only a pretext to perform his mastery of the medium. When all such performances come together, King Lear gets enunciated in Kathakali stage. One cannot expect a Kathakali artist to perform Lear realistically because its codes are different.

However, commercial pressures have made artists to present elaborate theatres in abridged formats. Traditional Kathakali performances are night-long performances. Sadanam Balakrishnan, who performed Kathakali *Othello* in the abridged format in two hours, explained that if one has to perform the complete *Othello* in Kathakali it might take some ten nights.

**Semiotics of Cinema**

The motivated, iconic signs of the film became the units of the language of cinema as opposed to the arbitrary signs of natural language. It discusses how syntagmatic and paradigmatic use of signs result in connotative communication; how the story is narrated using various arbitrary and infinite combinations of dialogue, sound, visual image, gesture and action, colour, angle, metonyms, metaphors, montage, etc. and editing techniques. It analyses cinema as a universe of ideologies arranged in codes and sub-codes, which like language, represent meaning. These codes include those of perception, recognition, transmission, tone, icon (figures, signs, sememes), iconography, taste and sensibility, rhetoric, stylistics, and unconscious. Like a linguistic discourse, the discourse of the cinema is also analysed by a systematic analysis of these codes. Shakespeare films, apart from being semiotic signs themselves, can also be analysed in terms of these codes to study their ideology, narratology, intertextuality and psychology.

Many studies on the semiotics of film and other media (Elam, Semiotics; Serpieri; Thompson and Thompson; Esslin; Rozik) can be used to study Shakespeare.

*Early Shakespeare films*

Shakespeare was performed in cinema from the early days of film when two-minute and fifteen-minute reels were used and faithfully reproduced stage actions. An early film is that Sarah Bernhardt playing Hamlet. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Mp_v_dP8s-8. It is less than two minutes.

*Parsi Theatre to Cinema*

*Modern Shakespeare remakes*

*ShakespeaRe-Told* (November 2005) comprises of four BBC TV adaptations of *Much Ado About Nothing, Macbeth, The Taming of the Shrew,* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Each play is adapted and is relocated to the present day. *Much Ado* is set in a TV news studio and is revolves around its quarrelling anchors try to get the weathergirl and Sports Presenter who, a jealous visual effects manager try to break up, together. Macbeth is set in a restaurant around Duncan who is a celebrity chef, his assistants Joe and Billy. Joe and his wife kill Duncan after three trash collectors predict Joe becoming the chef, and warn them to be wary of the head waiter Peter. The Taming of the Shrew is relocated to politics with an abrasive Katherine hoping to become the leader of the opposition and has to marry to improve her public image, and marries a penniless nobleman. *A Midsummer Night's Dream* is set in a family's visit to Dream Park to celebrate the engagement of their daughter whose true lover shows up, a security guard who hopes to become entertainment staff, and the fairy rulers of the woods.

*Shakespeare Animated Tales*

The multinational venture TV serial *The Animated Shakespeare* (1992, 1995) adapts twelve Shakespeare plays in two series of six plays each lasting thirty-minute (*MND, Tmp, Mac, Rom, Ham, TN; 3R, Shr., AYLI, JC, WT, Oth.*). It was originally conceived by Christopher Grace, of the Welsh Channel S4C in Welsh Language Channel SC4 as *Shakespeare: Y Dramau Wedi'u Hanimeiddio.* It was also broadcast in English on BBC2. It won critical acclaim with the episode *Hamlet* winning Emmy awards in 1993 and *The Winter's Tale* in 1995.

Their 30-minute format has resulted in drastic cuts in many scenes. It is widely and internationally distributed and promoted. It became very popular in schools to teach Shakespeare. Its abridged script resulted in Shakespeare School Festival (2000) where schools performed half-an-hour Shakespeare in professional theatres across the UK.

The animation is a rapid placing of a chain of still images. The details added to these images add to the symbolism significantly. For example, *The Tempest* in *Animated Shakespeare* replaces the gods blessing the couples with flowers springing up on rocky terrain, the shy fawn and the little white unicorn beside Miranda can signify the hopes and aspirations of the new couple.

Disney movie *Lion King I* and *Lion King II* are remakes of *Hamlet* and *Rome and Juliet* using the codes of the animal world.

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