



Shakespeare and Its Re-Adaptations of Historical Plays in 20th Century-A Study

SOMYA

Research Scholar

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Shakespeare's works have remained relevant throughout the ages because of their unique insight into the human psyche. Among the topics he discusses are romance, murder, desire, betrayal, vengeance, & hatred. William Shakespeare crafted complicated characters who are unforgivably malevolent and heartbreakingly tragic. At the same time, they are incredibly courageous, brave, psychologically formed, and easily recognizable. Using a combination of poetry, prose, as well as blank verse, he depicts the ideas and sentiments which underpin human behaviour in a way that is sometimes difficult to define precisely as well as indescribable. Despite Shakespeare's increasing prevalence in the English language, most people have a mixed opinion of the playwright and his works. As we go on to Shakespeare's historical works (e.g., plays), it is essential to note that Shakespeare wasn't seeking to present an accurate depiction of the past in composing the historical plays. Whenever he wrote for a theatre audience rather than for history, he created historical events that met his audience's requirements. Examples of historical dramas & plays are King John, Richard II, and Henry V. Following that, and the research will focus on the re-adaptations of all these four plays, which will serve as the fundamental concept and ideology of the investigation.

I. INTRODUCTION

More than a hundred languages have been used to translate Shakespeare's works, with Esperanto & Klingon among the most notable. Depending on the socio-historical context, Bard's works have been interpreted to express impulses like resistance against tyranny or comfort in times of trouble. According to recent British Council research, almost half of the world's children study him because his themes are timeless. At least two eighteenth-century countries' leaders significantly transformed portions of Shakespeare's plays into French & Russian. Shakespeare's international popularity was inevitably marked. Around the eighteenth century, the first comprehensive

translations into German & French appeared, impacting other language versions and complicating the legitimacy issue even further. In the nineteenth century, old books were rediscovered and retranslated, introducing them into the modern era. They covered the Old Continent with Romanticism.

It was founded in Weimar, Germany, in the 19th century. During this period, "Julius Caesar" was also translated into Japanese and Chinese. However, Bollywood flourished in the 1960s, when Nelson Mandela was incarcerated for reading Shakespeare & Tanzania's first President, Julius Nyerere, gave the first Swahili version to his homeland. Most of its films were inspired by Shakespeare's works.

As indicated by his involvement in the World Shakespeare Festival during 2012, he has significant international popularity. He had productions from fifty nations portraying his masterpieces in thirty-eight languages at the Globe Theatre in London. Several major activities took place in the UK and around the world in 2014 to mark the 450th birth anniversary of Shakespeare. A new wave of festivals and celebrations is taking place worldwide in honour of Shakespeare's 400th birthday. "Shakespeare Lives, " a global initiative of the British Council, serves as an excellent illustration.

We recommend Andrew Dickson's latest book, *"Worlds Elsewhere: Journeys Around Shakespeare's Globe, for further information on Shakespeare's international influence"* - examining the human condition in great depth. It is not our stars, dear Brutus, but ourselves who are to blame, and it is this status as enslaved people that are to blame (Caesar Julius)." Hamlet's soliloquy to Romeo's balcony scene, the people and events described in Shakespeare's plays reveal a profound understanding of human challenges as well as themes. They were among the initial approaches ever made to the study of psychology. In terms of providing an understanding of the underlying workings of the human mind, they also give answers for a wide range of sentiments and responses to the



events of daily life. We can only marvel at this in light of Shakespeare's day, which was a time when social rank was everything when laws dictated what colours & materials people may wear depending on their class, and where massacres and atrocities were widespread. By comparison, Shakespeare's imaginative sphere is freer for characters to find and express their sentiments while still providing a moral framework for their experiences.

Even though they must often struggle to accept their humanity, Shakespeare's characters always presume their society. They routinely tackle some of humanity's most pressing issues openly and honestly—they hate, cheat, love, as well as act wildly, motivated by their feelings. Not uncommon to fall prey to their own irrational and selfish desires. As a result, they look (and entice) to us as truly human in every aspect because they are deeply human in all their sides and contradictions. Here, Shakespeare's brilliance and immortality can be explored for many years to come.

II. THE MODERN THEATRE: SHAKESPEARE IN FILM

"We're not bad people, Mac... just underachievers who have to make up for the lost time." (Pat Macbeth; *Scotland, Pa.*)

Consider the most contemporary medium for theatre and film to demonstrate that William Shakespeare has always been significant. Since the invention of films, Shakespeare's plays have been performed in front of cameras. According to the Internet Movie Archive, he has composed the music for 1,140 films. As a result, this makes him the most documented author in history, regardless of language. What an accomplishment for someone who lived more than three centuries before the advent of motion pictures.

Although several Shakespeare followers continue to appreciate his theatrical work, his version for the screen has attracted a younger and more modern audience. Sir Laurence Olivier had a significant influence among the first Shakespearean performers to adapt his plays for the screen in the 1940s successfully. Shakespeare's plays *Richard III*, *Henry V* and *Hamlet* are among the best-made cinematic adaptations of Shakespeare's works due to their realism while adopting cinematography's visual possibilities. This act marked a turning point in Shakespeare's theatrical journey.

Kenneth Branagh is evident whenever Shakespeare's modern world is discussed. After his 1989 movie adaptation of *Henry V*, which he directed and played in, Branagh was labelled the "next Olivier" by critics at the age of 28. He has

featured in 6 cinematic adaptations of Shakespeare's plays during his remarkable career. Branagh's and Olivier's dedication to the poet has led to cinematic adaptations which are faithful to the original screenplay — his highly acclaimed *"Hamlet"* (1996) is a classic 4-hour production.

Many films (both excellent and bad) have stayed close to Shakespeare's original Elizabethan English. There have also been several that have given the plots and language a modern twist. Since the author's themes are broad, these films tend to be popular and revolutionary. An excellent example of this is *Scotland, Pennsylvania* (2001). A fantastic example is *Scotland, Pennsylvania* (2001). The tale of Joe Macbeth, a mediocre hamburger restaurant worker, is presented in this modern adaptation of Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, which takes place in suburban Pennsylvania in the 1970s. Isn't that a little absurd? This is not true. The madness begins when the wounds on Lady Macbeth's hands turn into grease burns, and Scotland is transformed into the business of hamburgers.

There have been numerous teen movie plots that integrate Shakespearean stories. Shakespeare's comedic adaptations are typically regarded as more accessible to viewers unfamiliar with his writings. Some of these movies are important to mention, but we're not trying to recommend that they're all excellent. One such film is

"10 Things I Hate About You" features a young Heath Ledger with Julia Stiles & Joseph Gordon-Levitt. Shakespeare's work was brought to life at a typical American high school, which may seem small, but it showed that Shakespeare still appears alive and thriving today. His plays encapsulate the core of the human experience, whether performed in their original form or with adaptations for a modern audience.

On the adaptation of *Richard II*, one of Shakespeare's 1st historically significant dramas, which is thought to have been written around 1595, between the cycles of *Henry VI/Richard III* as well as *Henry IV/Richard V*. It is the only Shakespearean play that was written in verse from the start, making it a more ritualistic and stylized composition than the other historical dramas he wrote. It's a portrayal of the real-life events involving Richard's removal and replacement by his cousin Henry Bolingbroke as much as it is a reflection on the philosophical dilemma of what constitutes a monarch (the future *Henry IV*). There are no large-scale set scenes in *Richard II*, and there is plenty of psychological subtlety, which makes it a particularly well-suited adaptation for the closeness of the small screen.



Royston Morley's 1st production, featuring Alan Wheatley as Richard, Clement McCallin as Bolingbroke, Henry Oscar as John of Gaunt, Arthur Wontner as the Duke of York, and Joy Shelton as Queen Isabella, was aired by the BBC in Oct 1950. It appears to have been broadcast live, as were many Shakespeare TV adaptations at the time, and there is no evidence that it was recorded.

This is the oldest known TV representation of Richard II, which is included in the 1st two episodes of the BBC's ambitious series of historical dramas, *An Age of Kings*: "The Hollow Crown," broadcast on April 28, 1960, and "The Deposition of a King," broadcast on May 12, 1960. Several sequences concerning the Duchesses of Gloucester and York were removed, as was an entire storyline surrounding Aumerle, to concentrate attention on the King himself. The result was an effective two-hour shortening of the play's running time. Despite being less subtle than Derek Jacobi (see video below), David William's portrayal of the main character is wonderfully effete, with just the right amount of sadness when called for. Tom Fleming (Bolingbroke), Edgar Wreford (John of Gaunt), and a young Sean Connery (Harry Percy) appear in the film as supporting characters. The entire series, originally broadcast live, has been preserved through telerecording.

The BBC Television Shakespeare Cycle's second version, starring Derek Jacobi as the titular character, John Gielgud as John of Gaunt, Jon Finch as Bolingbroke (from Roman Polanski's *Macbeth*), Charles Gray as the Duke of York, and Wendy Hiller as the Duchess of York, was broadcast on 10/12/1978. The play's standard features were highlighted in a studio-bound production written and directed by Giles, who would produce many more historical plays for the BBC cycle (*Henry IV & V*, *King John*). The script was shown with minimum edits. Before it, historian Paul Johnson offered a short primer for Shakespeare in the perspective series, televised the same evening. Additional television versions of *Richard II* have been developed, each built on a critically praised theatre production of the same title. This adaptation of Richard Cottrell's Prospect Theatre Company performance, which premiered on the BBC on July 30, 1970, starred Ian McKellen & Timothy West, was also broadcast on July 30, 1970. Broadcasts of Deborah Warner's innovative National Theatre production in 1995, featuring Fiona Shaw, and a Globe Theatre performance starring Mark Rylance in 2003, with a discussion by Matt Woolf and a tour of the theatre, were presented on BBC2 & BBC4. During the making of Terry Jones' *Medieval Lives*,

the historical *Richard II* was one of a variety of medieval monarchs whose legacies were reviewed in his case to the audience's benefit (BBC, 2004).

Despite his introduction to Iran via theatrical performances in the late 1800s, Shakespeare's work has received widespread acclaim. Many of his works have been adapted for use in Persian literature & theatre. As a result of giving an excellent platform for focusing on modern Iran's socio-cultural and political challenges, the variety of adaptations of classical writings of Western literature, particularly Shakespeare, has increased considerably in modern Iranian drama. In *Richard*, a modernized version of Shakespeare's *Richard III* playwright Hamid-Reza Naeemi reworks the play to assert condemnation of undemocratic systems of government and complicated social and political concerns in contemporary Iran, especially during Pahlavi State (1925–79). Naeemi is an adventurous playwright who often adapts Western masterpieces for his theatre. Using intertextual research and Linda Hutcheon's adaptation idea, this study investigated how Naeemi modified Shakespeare's tragic drama to build his dissident discourse in the play mentioned above to oppose the powers of the government and the limitations of freedom. As part of Naeemi's contemplation on the overthrow of the Pahlavi Dynasty in winter 1979, she reframes and evaluates William Shakespeare's tragic topic of the ups and downs of a tyrant.

"*Cream Faced Loons*" adaptation of one of Shakespeare's lesser-known works, "*King John: A Theatrical Film*," which has made the transition from the stage to the big screen. An illegitimate child who is angry and resentful plots to obtain what she thinks is her rightful inheritance is one of the qualities of the original play, which may be identified from earlier, more good works of Shakespeare. English king John (Danny Childs) takes over, but things don't smoothly. There are obstacles in the form of Arthur (Tyle Holland) and the French Dauphin (Dan Bruce). His brother Arthur (Tyle Holland) and the French Dauphin pose challenges (Dan Bruce). The King has the assistance of his counsellors, most notably the villainous Bastard (Nicki Davy). In his rendition of the play, director Abey Bradbury cuts portions and combines characters. Through this method, she contributes to the sensation of a threadbare monarchy on the point of chaos, which is indicative of a work that draws power from its significant vulnerabilities.

The appearance of a TV commentator who serves as a presenter and fills in any storey gaps with helpful explanations contributes to the overall



impression that events are getting out of control. A phoney royal wedding is equivalent to a phoney night out in Blackpool, and it is guaranteed to end in a drunken brawl. Due to a low budget, significant conflict scenes are replaced by 1980s-style cinematic montages. Performers perform Soft-rock epics by Queen or Elton John in a glamorized production complete with colossal hair & dry ice. Bradbury makes extensive use of the possibilities of screen format instead of simply adapting the stage play for the big screen. The filmmaking style of Matthew Fordy, as well as Danny Childs, is suffocating in its intensity. The action takes place in poorly lit corridors or chambers with little space.

Characters are seen plotting in a rugby scrum as the camera moves. This is not to assume "King John: A Theatrical Film" is not depressing. Bradbury is constantly on the lookout for a sarcastic joke to boost morale. Since the actors perform many distinct parts, the names of Lords Salisbury and Pembroke are presented on hastily scrawled labels as they emerge. When a female character mentions her likeness to the monarch, the screen shifts to her portrait that features a hand-drawn moustache; even though the play's casting is gender-neutral, it may be more of a political thing than a depiction of contemporary new trends. Unlike the primary protagonists, who are all men (King, Arthur, and the Dauphin), the ones who do the most labour and run things behind the scenes are all females. Nicki Davy's portrayal as "The Bastard" is particularly noteworthy, as she manages the other players while also expressing concern about the implications of her decisions. Davy makes superb usage of one of the production's most popular parts, conveying her inner arrogance that emanates entitlement as well as privilege.

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