

## **The Bard and the Box Office: Shakespearean Adaptations in Film and Theatre as Tools for English Education**

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### **Abstract**

This theoretical article discusses the Shakespearean film and theatrical adaptations as new pedagogical practices in the re-energisation of English language and literature education. Although Shakespeare has always been maintained in the canon, his language and cultural dislocation can be difficult to modern students, as it encourages detachment. The study will build its argument on the concept of adaptations as multimodal bridges, which integrate verbal, visual, and performative components to improve the accessibility of the narratives, cultural relatability, and criticality, based on the adaptation theory (Hutcheon, 2013; Sanders, 2016), multimodality (Kress, 2010), reception aesthetics (Jauss, 1982), and constructivist pedagogy (Vygotsky, 1978). In comparison with the theatre productions, which look at the issues of the contemporary world through the lenses of Boal (1979) performative learning and queer theory (Sedgwick, 1990) and are more supportive in their embodied empathy and inclusiveness, film adaptations, including 10 Things I Hate About You and She is the Man, simplify their plots but approach the modern challenges through the prism of globalization (Appadurai, 1996). Repeatability of the film can be contrasted against immediacy in the theatre, as argued using the media theory proposed by McLuhan (1964), with a need to adopt hybrid solutions. To facilitate progressive learning, the article suggests a novel adaptive cycle of Literacy, the adaptive literacy cycle, including exposure, analysis, creation and reflection, in line with the updated taxonomy by Bloom (Anderson and Krathwohl, 2001). Adaptations address the eroding interest in classics and enhance inclusivity and service to diverse learners including ESL students by fostering transmedia literacy (Jenkins, 2006) and student agency (Barthes, 1977).

**Keywords:** Shakespearean Adaptation, Film and Theatre, English Education, Multimodality, Adaptation Theory, Pedagogical Framework, Transmedia Literacy.

### **Introduction**

The lasting place of William Shakespeare in the English education has its basis in his canonical reputation of being the greatest writer of English language in the genre of plays and poetry. The works by Shakespeare have been used in the world since the 19th century as a pivotal part of

educational programs in schools to signify the art and culture of excellence (Bloom, 1994). His plays and sonnets are frequently required in secondary and higher schooling and they build analytical and critical thinking and empathy. Nevertheless, modern educators have a great difficulty with making Elizabethan texts of interest to modern students. The antiqueness of Shakespearean language, convoluted syntax, and the time restrictions of the subjects and times of those who wrote the plays can confuse the digitally native learners, who are used to multimodal and direct communication. Such linguistic and cultural distance most often leads to the lack of engagement, where students view the texts as part of a different world or something that they cannot access.

The emergence of the adaptations in both the film and theatre presents the positive points of entry to Shakespeare oeuvre that is easy to reach. The retellings of the story in film, like William Shakespeare's *Romeo + Juliet* by Baz Luhrmann (1996), relocate the action to a modern metropolitan area, preserving the original script but combining visual effects with verbal accuracy to overcome the divide between generations. On the same note, theatrical performances are becoming fuller of modernized staging, inspired by new musicals like *Hamilton* by Lin-Manuel Miranda (2015), which uses hip-hop and nontraditional casting to revitalize historical work- elements used to produce a gender-swapped or culturally-appropriated *Twelfth Night* or *Hamlet*. These translations make Shakespeare democratic, and turn works of elite canons into vibrant, familiarizing events that can appeal to a wide range of audience.

The current body of literature concerning Shakespearean adaptations focuses mostly on the textual faithfulness, cultural influence and the postcolonial reinterpretations. Classical contributions to the theory of adaptation, like the work by Hutcheon (2013) on adaptation as a creative process and Sanders (2016) distinction between adaptation and the process of appropriation, tend to focus on analyses of adaptation disobedience to or respect to the original, and issues of authorship and intertextuality. Cultural critiques that have been informed by the postcolonial theory (ex: extensions of Said 1978 framework onto Shakespearean representations of the Other) analyse the functions of adaptations in the global propagation and ideological bargaining. Nevertheless, these debates also under-research adaptations as a purposeful pedagogic tool in English education. Although other researchers recognize the relevance of multimedia in instruction (e.g., multimedia learning theories), theorizing of film and theatre adaptation as a method of literacy, critical thinking and curriculum integration in formal teaching of English language and literature instruction is also lacking.

## **Literature Review**

### **Shakespeare in Education: Historical and Theoretical Context**

The canonization of Shakespeare in English school and university canons can be traced to the 19th century when the plays he wrote started to dominate the new field of English literature in English schools and universities. Shakespearean plays during the Victorian era were propagated as a form of moral enlightenment and national identity and fitted in with imperial ideology that placed English literature as a civilizing power (Baldick, 1983). His presence in the curriculum became a solid part by the early 20th century due in part to critics who made him the exemplar of humanistic expression. In his canonical defence, Harold Bloom (1994) states that Shakespeare is in a special place, and he invented the human by creating an extensive psychological depth and word play; his works are indispensable to the comprehension of individual consciousness and cultural heritage.

Nonetheless, this canonical supremacy is more and more undermined by the debates of the postcolonial circles. The orientalist scheme of Edward Said (1978) has been applied to Shakespearean criticism to show how plays such as *The Tempest* and *Othello* reiterate and continue the colonialist outlook on the Other. According to Postcolonial scholars, the imposition of Shakespeare in education curricula continues to promote Eurocentric discourses at the expense of non-Western voices and as a means of cultural imperialism in the world education systems.

### **Adaptation Theory: From Text to Performance**

Adaptation studies give a sound structure of comprehending Shakespearean reimagining through media. In her groundbreaking theory, Linda Hutcheon (2013) views the process of adaptation as a creative and interpretive one in which there is repetition with variation, in which adapters become dialogically involved with source texts. Adaptations are not derivatives but independent works that comment on originals in terms of cultures and history. Julie Sanders (2016) differentiates adaptation, typically featuring plot and setting transposition, and appropriation, which is more radically placing or recontextualizing the source, and making it their own ideological property.

These ideas shed light on filmic and theatrical adaptations of Shakespeare. Film adaptations focus on visual and narrative differences where cinematographic techniques are used to rebrand the texts. The example of *Henry V* by Kenneth Branagh (1989) uses gritty realism and non-linear flashbacks to make the king more relatable, which is contrasted to the previous versions of patriotism and is used to show ambiguities of war from a close-up perspective and battle

scenes. Theatrical versions, in their turn, place more emphasis on performativity and immediacy on stage. The contemporary performances of the Royal Shakespeare Company like the 2016 Hamlet by Simon Godwin with Paapa Essiedu acting as the prince in an African-inspired setting rely on various casting and contemporary staging to uncover the theme of identity and power, which the film, lacking audience engagement and embodiment, fails to convey. Both adaptations expand the presence of Shakespeare beyond fixed form to create living performance that hammers out the fidelity, novation, and cultural currency.

### **Pedagogical Applications of Media in English Teaching**

The multimedia learning theories emphasize the effectiveness of film and theatre translation in the teaching of English. The cognitive theory of multimedia learning by Richard Mayer (2021) assumes that the information is processed by the human brain in two parallel streams- verbal and visual- which creates less mental load in case words and pictures are brought together in a meaningful way. The concepts like multimedia (the combination of words and pictures contributes to the better comprehension) and coherence (the attention is paid only to useful information) correspond to the application of the Shakespearean alterations to explain the complicated Elizabethan language and the issues.

These are in line with the constructivist pedagogy, which is based on the experiential learning as defined by John Dewey (1938), the stages of cognitive development as outlined by Jean Piaget, wherein the social scaffolding facilitates development through active knowledge construction, and the zone of proximal development that is outlined by Lev Vygotsky, where the social scaffolding helps people to develop. Constructivist approaches are made easy, through film and theatre adaptation making students construct meaning by watching, talking, and acting linking archaic text to the present.

This is especially beneficial to learners such as English as a Second Language (ESL) students because visual cues and contextualization that can help learners understand and participate are present. Critiques however note shortcomings: adaptations can simplify themes, focus more on spectacle than textual subtlety or be restricted by directorial interpretation limiting student agency. Nevertheless, the Shakespeare pedagogy taught through multimedia adaptations fosters critical thinking, empathy and inclusivity.

### **Theoretical Framework**

#### **Core Concepts: Multimodality and Intertextuality**

The multimodality theory according to Gunther Kress (2010) assumes that meaning-making is done by combining various resources of semiotic modes, i.e. linguistic, visual, auditory,

gestural, or spatial resources. Within the Shakespearean adaptations film and theatrical adaptation, this theory highlights the fact that these reinterpretations break the constraints of printed texts to provide deeper viewing experiences of English literature. The conventional Shakespearean pedagogy tends to favour the verbal form of original plays, and learning is reduced to textual analysis and close reading. Nevertheless, adaptations mix verbal (e.g. dialogue) with visual (e.g. cinematography in film), and performative (e.g. gestures by actors in theatre) modes and form multimodal ensembles that are accessible to a variety of cognitive activities. As an example, in cinematic versions, such as the one by Baz Luhrmann in *Romeo + Juliet* (1996), the visual poetry of the Shakespearean text is overlaid with visual motives, such as neon lights, colourful costumes, and active camera movements, and students are thus able to decode the meanings in more than one way. This multi-modality can be used to make abstract concepts such as fate and conflict more concrete and accessible to particular learners such as the visual or kinesthetics learner.

Along with the phenomenon of multimodality is the idea of intertextuality which emphasizes the way in which texts allude to and reform one another. By its very nature, adaptations rely on intertextual conversation with the originals of Shakespeare, stealing, but adding new texture. The essential essay of Roland Barthes (1977) on the death of the author further theorizes this process by decentring the intent of the originating creator and allows the audience, or, in the given case, the viewer and the students, the status of active meaning producers. In learning institutions, this change promotes agency among students because accommodations encourage redefinitions and not memorization.

### **Reception and Reader-Response Theory**

The theory of reception, especially the aesthetics of reception developed by Hans Robert Jauss (1982), focuses on the historical and contextual horizons of reception and interpretation of texts. This theory describes the mediation of the film and theatre versions of Shakespearean adaptations between the Elizabethan source and the modern audiences to allow student engagement through alignment with modern horizons of expectation in the play. Incorrect readings of Shakespeare can lead to the conflict between the culture of students and the passive consumption; adoptions, in turn, reset such horizons with the new settings and stories. As an example, such a movie as *10 Things I Hate About You* (1999), which is a version of *The Taming of the Shrew*, reestablishes the gender nature of the play in a high school environment and thus issues of choice and romance become very relatable amongst teenagers. The model by Jauss

therefore puts adaptations as bridges whereby passive encounters with texts are transformed into active encounters where students negotiate meanings based on their experiences.

In addition to this, the idea of the interpretive communities by Stanley Fish (1980), according to which meaning is created in the process of shared strategies of interpreting the text by social groups instead of attributable to specific textual qualities, complements this argument. The adaptations in the classroom environment enable the development of such communities through the promotion of a group discussion about the Shakespearean works. Watching a theatre performance, i.e. the inclusive *Twelfth Night* of the Royal Shakespeare Company, makes students create an interpretive consensus or disagreement by discussing the play in the group, transforming a single reading into a shared sense-making.

### **Integrated Pedagogical Model**

In this paper, the author suggests a novel model called the Adaptive Literacy Cycle into which Shakespearean adaptations could be incorporated into the English curriculum. This cyclical model consists of four phases that integrate with each other, that is, exposure, analysis, creation, and reflection, which is meant to scaffold learning in a progressive order. Students in the exposure phase will watch film or theatre versions in order to have early exposure to the Shakespeare stories using multimodality to create familiarity without reading. This is followed by analysis, which entails comparative examination of adaptations in relation to originals in order to bring out the intertextual changes and produce the ability to think critically. The phase of creation gives power to the students by allowing them to reinterpret things practically, like writing a contemporary scene or a mini-performance, which encourages agency according to the theory of Barthes. Lastly, reflection involves critical essays or discussions that are synthesizing, which promote metacognition.

This model corresponds with the revision of taxonomy by Benjamin Bloom (Anderson and Krathwohl, 2001), which advances the former level of skills (remembering and understanding through exposure) to the higher level (analysing, evaluating and creating through further stages). Its iterative cycling strategy is the method by which it embraces a variety of learners including ESL students and deals with reception theory by contextualizing interpretations in the horizons of students. Finally, the theorized Adaptive Literacy Cycle conceptualizes the dynamic in adaptations into adaptive pedagogies, which rejuvenate the learning of Shakespeare in a way that is not rigid but dynamic and structured.

### **Decolonizing the English Education**

The inclusion of Shakespearean adaptations in movie and theatre in the English school environment can be considered at a deeper level in the context of Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS), which is highlighted in the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 of India. IKS is a collection of ancient Indian epistemologies, such as dramaturgy of Bharata Muni Natya Shastra (c. 200 BCE-200 CE), which theorizes theatre as a whole art form, rasa (emotional essence), bhava (expression), music, dance and narrative, to produce aesthetic experience and moral consideration. This native prism allows one to take a decolonizing perspective on Shakespeare, which, since Indian curricula have incorporated it since colonialism, represents a tool of western supremacy (Trivedi, 2016). Indigenizing adaptations can enable educators to make Eurocentric texts culturally hybrid by connecting them to Indian performative cultures, generating cultural hybridity, critical consciousness, and inclusive pedagogy.

Shakespeare, in the past, was introduced into Indian education through colonial systems and it represented cultural hegemony (Said, 1978). Nevertheless, the postcolonial adaptations have repossessed his writings and made them substantive to IKS principles of localized storytelling and rasa evocation. The trilogy of Vishal Bhardwaj is a good example: *Maqbool* (2003, based on *Macbeth*) switches ambition and destiny to the world of the Mumbai underworld, where Bollywood song-dances replicate the idioms of folk theatre based on the aesthetic of the Sanskrit language (Allen, as cited in Mukherjee, 2021). *Omkara* (2006, *Othello*) brings the theme of jealousy and betrayal to the countryside of Uttar Pradesh and employs local dialects and cultural images such as the *kamarbandh* (waistband) to signify truth to emotion and feeling, just as *Natya Shastra* did with symbolic props to express emotion. In *Hamlet*, Haider (2014, *Hamlet*), is set in the war-torn Kashmir, and using Kashmiri folk elements and political commentary turns Shakespearean soliloquies into reflective songs that bring out *shanta* (peace) or *bibhatsa* (disgust) rasas.

These are films which go along with IKS by creating parallels in the Shakespearean dramaturgy and Indian traditions. According to early critics, Shakespeare was attracted to the Sanskrit aesthetics, and adapted to classical forms such as Kathakali (Kerala) and Yakshagana (Karnataka). Adaptations of *King Lear* or *Othello* into Kathakali include kathakali mudras (hand gestures), costume/makeup (*aharya*) and nine emotions (*navarasa*), replicating the structure of *Natya Shastra* but humanizing Shakespearean characters by enacting them (Richmond, 1990). The *Barnam Vana* (1979 version of *Macbeth*) by Yakshagana incorporates

Carnatic music, lavish costumes and episodic storytelling to combine the Shakespearean tragedy with Indian epic stories of Mahabharata or Ramayana.

Such IKS-based adaptations in the educational setting are utilised as decolonization tools as per the NEP 2020 requirement to incorporate traditional knowledge (Government of India, 2020). They address Eurocentric fidelity arguments (Leitch, 2007) by advocating appropriation (Sanders, 2016) so that students are able to address the universality of Shakespeare by recognizing culturalscapes that they are able to recognise (Appadurai, 1996). As an example, comparing Haider with Hamlet helps to compare: students can watch how the song-dance sequence of Bismil as the modern-day Mousetrap was shot in Haider and bring up the rasa of karuna (compassion): the song-dance sequence is shot in the atmosphere of political oppression, and the moral dilemma of Indian epics will be reflected.

This theoretically represents an adaptation of Hutcheon (2013) of dialogic process, with IKS contributing the holistic multimodality (Kress, 2010). It corresponds to the constructivist pedagogy (Vygotsky, 1978), scaffolding archaic texts through visual-performative modes that appeal to the cultural horizons of Indian learners (Jauss, 1982). All these adaptations ensure inclusivity in a multiethnic classroom (such as ESL), gender fluidity in Omkara dialogs with queer theory (Sedgwick, 1990), and postcolonial critiques of identity and power (Loomba, 1998).

Problems still exist: the resources are limited to expose Kathakali/Yakshagana live, and fidelity purists will be misunderstood. However, this is overcome by hybrid models of screening Bhardwaj movies followed by student-led folk adaptation to facilitate a longer Adaptive Literacy Cycle into IKS dimensions.

## **Analysis and Discussion**

### **Adaptations of Films as a Pedagogical Tool**

#### **Narrative Accessibility**

Shakespearean films are maximally successful in terms of narrative approach, facilitating complex Elizabethan plots to learners with lower levels of experience and at the same time maintaining the depth of the theme, which is also consistent with the assumptions of the multimodal approach to learning presented in the theoretical model. Through visual narrative and use of modern vernacular, movies minimize mental obstacles created by archaism and allow students to master the basic narratives more quickly and turn to a higher-level analysis earlier. It is based on the cognitive theory of multimedia learning proposed by Mayer (2021), according to which two channels of processing information verbal (subtitles dialogue echoes)



and visual (action sequences) offload any unnecessary requirements, allowing one to understand everything during the exposure stage of the Adaptive Literacy Cycle.

The best example is *10 Things I Hate About You* (Junger, 1999) which is a free variation of *The Taming of the Shrew*. The original elements of Shakespeare include curved Paduan suitors, conceits, and a questionable subplot of taming, full of Elizabethan gender conventions. The movie simplifies this into high school rom-com: Kat Stratford (Julia Stiles) is as shrewdly independent as Katherina, refusing to accept superficial popularity in consumerist teenage culture, and Patrick Verona (Heath Ledger) is the typecast as Petruchio, who bets to date her to Bianca (Larisa Oleynik), in order to have romantic access. Other subplots such as the disguise of the tutor to Lucentio is reduced to a grave Bianca courtship by Cameron (Joseph Gordon-Levitt) and does away with obscure details such as the auction of Gremio. Pittman (2004), observes the ideological differences that come out in this transposition where the modern viewer will not accept the psychological techniques of starvation used by Petruchio instead accepting the voluntary softening of Kat who has experienced betrayal before, thereby sustaining the theme of agency and transformation without condoning abuse.

Thematic depth prevails: the relationships of power remain, although they have been transformed into mutual vulnerability, and Barthesian (1977) reader agency in which students redefine taming as empowerment. This helps to analyse in classes, as the films and texts can be compared through the multimodality of Kress, (2010) of montages of prom rituals to visualize the process of Bianca being commodified, which reflects the negotiations of the dowry which Baptista was negotiating. Visual cues are advantageous to ESL learners, as Pittman (2003) noted in responses of students where ontological subjectivity of films were more preferred to the static ontology of Shakespeare. So, this type of adaptation scaffolds Vygotskian (1978) proximal development that turns novices into interpreters.

### **Cultural Relevance**

The cultural relevance of Shakespearean film adaptation becomes pedagogically powerful in traversing Appadurai's (1996) globalization escapes, including mediascapes (flow of images through Hollywood), ethnoscapes (diverse teen casts), and ideoscapes (gender equity ideologies) to make the global themes locally relevant in the global fluxes. Such disjuncture enables the films to challenge the current world to think critically in the stage of creation of the Adaptive Literacy Cycle, where students can re-adapt Shakespeare to contemporary situations according to the adaptive repetition-with-variation by Hutcheon (2013).

As a derivation of Twelfth Night, *she is the Man* (Fickman, 2006) is one example of this through gender performativity. Viola Hastings (Amanda Bynes) disguises herself as a boy, Sebastian, and enters the soccer team of Illyria Prep (a girls soccer team) after the disbandment of her girls' team, just like Cesario did at the start of the shipwreck. Soccer substitutes Illyria with courtly intrigues, and Title IX-era ethnoscapings of American youth masculine sexism; physically, Viola dribbles and saves, as Katherina, battling binarism thanks to slapstick (e.g., hormone-pill laughs), and love triangles with Duke Orsino (Channing Tatum) and Olivia. Homosexual intimations of homoeroticism in locker-room talk liberalize Shakespeare among heteronormative viewers and inspires Sedgwickian (1985) queer discourse of fluidity as discussed by Klett (2008) in a teen cinema re-enactment of Viola.

The mediascapes of Appadurai can enhance relevance: the ideoscapes of feminism are spread globally, Elizabethan sumptuary laws are adapted to the cultural context of patriarchal sports, finding an echo in a variety of classrooms (e.g. ESL students who have to work around identity ethnoscapings). Local (U.S. high school) and global (Shakespeare, universality), these films harness the marginalized voices to overcome the objections raised against decolonization (Said, 1978) Principal Horatio, the person who fails, is reduced to the role of Malvolio, his puritanism. In teaching, this drives Jaussian (1982) horizon moves: the current demands of students (e.g. the gender equality demanded by the hashtag Me Too) to converse with the original, as Fish (1980) had proposed in his interpretive communities in group discussions. Therefore, adaptations Shakespeare democratize, theorizing transmedia literacy (Jenkins, 2006) as opposed to canonical elitism.

In spite of the presence of affordances, film adaptations generate the problem of fidelity, with Leitch (2007) critiquing the fallacy of fidelity, a fidelity-fuelled evaluation of films as determined by the text promotes literature over cinema in the autonomous semiotics of adaptation and students can fail to understand that the misogyny of *10 Things I Hate About You* is itself an instance of a paradox of fidelity, a failure of adaptation to function creatively. Leitch claims that fidelity discourse regards media disjuncture as insignificant, but pedagogically the discourse runs the danger of directorial overdetermination, the neon Romeo + Juliet of Luhrmann (1996) enforces spectacle, and Barthesian (1977) agency is constrained at the point of no analysis. Novices are doomed to misinterpretation: visual shorthand (e.g., the soccer proxy in *She's the Man*) can lead to loss of Shakespearean linguistic subtlety, which fits the coherence critique by Mayer (2021) on this point in case the additional teens tropes clog

the brain. The impact of classroom hybridity is based on Adaptive Literacy Cycle reflection, and access inequities remain a problem in under-resourced schools.

### **Adapting the Theatre in the Classroom**

#### **Performative Learning**

Theatrical interpretations of Shakespeare promote performative learning with a focus on embodied learning that promotes empathy and language, which uses the Theatre of the Oppressed by Augusto Boal (1979). The framework proposed by Boal, a follower of Freirean pedagogy, puts theatre as a practice of rehearsing the actual life, where the actors play the roles to act critically towards the societal structure. This can be translated into learning situations whereby the students are actively involved in performing or watching Shakespearean adaptations and no longer reading passively but are involved in a more kinesthetic form. Unlike the stagnant texts, live theatre requires the physical presence, which is consistent with the zone of proximal development as proposed by Vygotsky (1978) due to the scaffolded role plays that develop linguistic and emotional abilities.

As an example, in stagings makeovers such as the Hamlet of the Royal Shakespeare Company (2016) with Paapa Essiedu in an African-inspired setting, the performers and the audience are encouraged to play postcolonial identities, according to Boal's forum theatre in which spectators intervene to change events. Instead of learning monologues by heart, as Shakespeare did, students play the scenes, internalize the soliloquies and reflect the doubt and revenge, which is a great way to develop language skills through vocal modulation, gesture, and improvisation. This is a mode of performance that builds empathy: when acting out the roles of characters, such as the insanity of Ophelia or the sorrow of Hamlet, students get to explore a new dimension in themselves mentally and develop the emotional acuity that is essential to English instruction.

The oppression attacks that Boal makes further roll over to Shakespearean issues of power and marginality, and theorize the possibility of theatre as a dialogic learning tool. During the creation phase of the Adaptive Literacy Cycle, students practice the adaptations, and through the process of writing down the dialogues, students rewrite the text to reflect modern day injustices, thereby making abstract literacy a lived experience. This embodied method is theoretical, contrary to disengagement with Elizabethan language, though it is, empirically, aligned, with vocabulary and syntax being strengthened by muscle memory and social interaction, when performative repetition is engaged.

### **Interactive and Inclusive Pedagogy**

Theatrical performance encourages active and participatory pedagogy theorized based on the queer theory by Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick (1990) that challenges the normative binary of gender and sexuality. The epistemology of the closet as described by Sedgwick is the essentials of performances that expose and challenge suppressed identities and thus gender-swapped play such as *Twelfth Night* is powerful in all-inclusive classrooms. Through this destabilization of heteronormativity, these productions create a discussion of identity, which is consistent with reception theory (Jauss, 1982) with the growth of horizons of students due to the performative queerness.

An example of this can be the all-trans and non-binary 2025 production of *Twelfth Night* directed by Phoebe Kemp where an entirely trans cast transforms Viola cross-dressing into a trans story of fluidity and desire. In this case, the masquerade of Viola as Cesario reinforces the paranoid/reparative interpretation of Sedgwick, the "closet" is a place where homoerotic interests define the relationships between Orsino and Cesario, and Olivia, and constructs traditional gender dichotomies. This interactivity, in the form of audience participation or after performance discussion, in the academic environment, causes the students to challenge the text of Shakespeare, according to the death of the author, proposed by Barthes (1977), in which meanings are created within the queer reinterpretations.

It includes non-normative learners: the non-normativity of queer theory and performativity (Butler, 1990) supports non-normative identities to the benefit of LGBTQ learners, as well as teaching other students the importance of empathy. Algorithms based on deconstruction of such adaptations in the analysis and reflection stages of the Adaptive Literacy Cycle facilitate the interpretive communities proposed by Fish (1980) when shared queer lenses can provide the inclusive revelations. This, in theory, is a counter to canonical heteronormativity (Said, 1978), democratizing English education where the marginalised voices are put to the focus in live interactive formats.

Although there are merits, theatre adaptations have challenges of implementation such as access, theoretical overdependence on live performance. Unequal access due to resource differences: schools in urban areas can afford RSC tours or even local productions, whereas schools in rural or underfunded areas could use recordings, which reduces immediacy according to the embodied ethos of Boal (1979). This increases educational inequalities, because the transformative nature of live theatre still remains elitist. Others criticize excessive

dependence on performativity: It is an effective way to raise empathy but, unless scaffolds, it can be superficial to the extent that it is unfaithful to the text (Leitch, 2007).

### **Comparative Synthesis: Film vs. Theatre in Education**

The adaptations of films and theatre provide different affordances in Shakespearean education theorized through the media theory by Marshall McLuhan (1964) who theorizes the media as the continuation of human senses that influence perception. Films are cool mediums that demand high engagement at the visual level, which offers repeatability: students repeat viewing scenes such as the Verona Beach brawls by Luhrmann (1996), which can be analysed later in the stages of exposure and analysis of the Adaptive Literacy Cycle. This repetition is in line with the multimedia principles of Mayer (2021), where multimodal components can be decoded repeatedly, which are soundtracks, edits, and help to create a profound narrative understanding.

Theatre, on the other hand, epitomizes the hot media promoted by McLuhan: high-emphasis immediacy through the presence of the live requires low-participation and heavy-emotion involvement, as in the *Twelfth Night* (Kemp 2025) where the audience contributes to the meaning through their reactions. It is ephemeral, which makes empathy stronger by having unscripted moments, as Boal (1979) claims, but it is not as archival as the film.

Relatively, the universal nature of film through streaming negates the geographic nature of the theatre business, but theatre is more interactive, creating community (Fish, 1980), something lacking in the lone viewing. The tetrad in advance (both extend Shakespeare), obsolescence (film obsoletes the seclusion of print; theatre obsoletes passive spectators), retrieval (both recover oral traditions), reversal (overuse results in spectacle over substance) of the tetrad are used by McLuhan to shed light on trade-offs.

The suggestion to implement hybrid method can be the best: mix film previews with film workshops, merging predictability and immediacy. As an example, gender-swapped scenes can be developed by first screening *She's the Man* (2006) and later staging, which develops Vygotskian (1978) development. According to Hutcheon (2013), this synthesis views adaptations as palimpsests, which enriches curricula by means of transmedia navigation.

### **Broader Implications for English Education**

The adaptations of Shakespearean plays in film and theatre are precursors of changes in the direction toward transmedia literacy as theorized by Henry Jenkins (2006), where convergence culture is viewed as making participatory interactions across platforms possible. Transmedia narratives such as navigating originals, films such as *10 Things I Hate About You* (1999), and

theatre productions oppose the loss of people's interest in classics by outfitting digital ecosystems with Shakespeare to promote lifelong learning outside of rote curriculum.

Theoretically, this is an antidote to the canonical anxiety of Bloom (1994) in which adaptations democratize access, as Barthes (1977) puts it, and Kress (2010) in his multimodal landscapes students are made co-creators. Adaptations, in responding to the issue of disengagement, such as the use of archaic language to deter millennials, help to revitalize education in English, which is consistent with constructivism (Dewey, 1938) in seeking an experience.

Bigger pictures are to be found in inclusivity: queer and postcolonial perspectives (Sedgwick, 1990; Said, 1978) in hybrids foster equity, and the reduction of literacy drops by appealing formats. Finally, the tools develop critical and empathetic citizens, theorizing education as adaptive, lifelong conversation with the Bard.

## Conclusion

### Summary of Key Arguments

This paper has postulated Shakespearean forms in cinema and theatre as one of the most effective multimodal strategies to reinvigorate English education. It has also made use of the theory of adaptations (Hutcheon, 2013; Sanders, 2016), multimodality (Kress, 2010) and reception aesthetics (Jauss, 1982) to state that adaptations are crucial mediating factors between Elizabethan work and modern pedagogy. Adaptations address the obstacle of archaic language by incorporating the three modes of communication (verbal, visual, and performative) to facilitate the accessibility of narrative and cultural significance to diverse learners. Movies, like *10 Things I Hate About You* (Junger, 1999) and *She's the Man* (Fickman, 2006), make it easier to comprehend their plots without losing their themes and solving contemporary problems with the help of globalization structures (Appadurai, 1996). Adaptations within the theatrical arts are based on the performative pedagogy by Boal (1979) and the queer theory by Sedgwick (1990), which promote embodied empathy, interactivity, and inclusiveness, especially in the form of gender-swapped productions. The Adaptive Literacy Cycle, which incorporates exposure, analysis, creation, and reflection, is based on a constructivist approach that fits the updated taxonomy of Bloom (Anderson and Krathwohl, 2001) and scaffolding principles of Vygotsky (1978). A comparative analysis, based on the media theory by McLuhan (1964) shows the repeatability of film versus the immediate of theatre to propose hybrid methods. Finally, adaptations encourage transmedia literacy (Jenkins, 2006), decentre authorial intent (Barthes, 1977) and student agency in interpretive communities (Fish, 1980). Such contributions bring Shakespeare out not as an elitist antique but as a vibrant tool of critical,

inclusive and engaging English learning. The process of revitalizing the English education requires the adoption of these tools in their entirety, beyond textual faithfulness to the transmedia convergence. The inter-disciplinary engagement--between the scholars of literature, educators, media theorists and practitioners of the theatre--is needed to come up with inclusive curricula which acknowledge the universality of Shakespeare without perpetuating its historical privileges. By doing that, we make sure that the Bard is not an object of the museum but a living being, who makes generations think about the complexity of humans through the constantly changing prism.

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