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The Semiotics of Shakespeare





THEATRE AS AN IDEOLOGICAL MECHANISM

A tool that influences the ideology of the audience consuming it

White Supremacy



The belief that white people and whiteness are inherently superior.
-This infects other structures of oppression as well

An artist's ability to create the art they want to make is also heavily dependent on that piece of art's marketability

- Francesca Amewudah-Rivers - Juliet
- Danai Gurira - Richard the III

- *Gender roles*
- *Racial stereotypes*
- *Class structure*
- *Heteronormity*

The worship of Shakespeare

The invention of the Gutnberg Press → England soars to cultural relevance in a way they previously hadn't
France and Italy had different communities because of location and trade, which England did not experience.

- Different audience to represent
- Art therefore, looks different



Many of the works that have been attributed to Shakespeare were collected after his death, and many scholars have questioned whether or not the true author was him.

Why Casting Matters



Normalization of whiteness as the standard

White supremacy reinforces the idea that whiteness is normal
Theatre is a tool used to reinforce this

It dictates the way society decides who gets to be the

- lover
- hero
- vilan

Adaptations



* Everything outside of the first show of an original production is an adaptation of the work that has been produced.

* Theatre, by nature, is meant to be replicable.
However, live theatre is powerful, though, because it is never the same twice

Where do we go from here

The Origins of Romeo and Juliet



The Tragical History of Romeus and Juliet

Published in 1562, Arthur Brooke's translation is considered the primary work that inspired Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet.

Pierre Boaistuau (1559) and Matteo Bandello (1554)

French poem that was said to be originally inspirid by the Italian novella of a similar name. Shakespeare was said to have consulted William Painter's 1562 English translation of Boaistuau's poem titled "Rhomeo and Julietta"

Giulietta e Romeo

One of the earliest versions that was found. Written by Luigi da Porto circa 1530. He was said to have also consulted other early Italian texts of the same story.

Exploring the Variety of Identities



Gender:
What would happen if Romeo and Juliet were girls? Boys?

Class
What if Juliet were rich and Romeo poor?

Age
What would happen if they were both middle age?

Time
What year should this take place?

Place
What if this took place in the Caribbean?

Types of Changes

What can you do with whats been done

Dramaturgy and other avenues



What if you do this?

Casting is such an important part of a piece's production process, and having casting that is conscious of the actors' identities as well as the characters' gives a richer set of tools for the storytelling process.

How to Market What You Make

It takes a specific set of skills to be able to market the choices that a production and creative team makes for a play. The play needs to be marketed not only to the paying audience but also to the shareholders of the theatre, whose donations are crucial.

Check your propaganda

Despite the changes that are made to a cast, it is important to make sure that in casting a show, we haven’t reinforced negative stereotypes in other aspects of the production.

Thank You