

6 “What doth your speech import?”

The Implication of Accents in Indian Shakespeares

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Recent studies have questioned the use of Received Pronunciation in Shakespeare productions and there has been a global shift in trying to represent a more diverse array of accents in Anglophone Shakespeares.¹ The question of accent, however, becomes more thought-provoking in Indian productions given the significance of a cosmopolitan English accent in modern-day India and everything that accent might represent as I will explain. A further layer of complexity is added when one considers the expectation of “a fastidious precision in the use of English language” (to use a problematic phrase by Michael Billington in his review of Iqbal Khan’s 2012 RSC *Much Ado About Nothing*²) in colonial and post-colonial productions of Shakespeare in India thanks to the presumed superiority of English medium educations since the days of Macaulay and the Bengal Renaissance. *Othello* has consistently been among the most popular of Shakespeare plays in India for students and audiences since the 19th century: “More students probably read *Othello* in the University of Delhi every year than in all British Universities combined,” Ania Loomba wrote at the end of the 1980s.³ Therefore, *Othello* adaptations are particularly useful examples in discussing how accents affect the reception and framing of Shakespeare adaptations in India.

In this chapter, I will look at an appropriation of *Othello* in the Bengali film industry in the 1960s and an adaptation of *Othello* in Bollywood in 2006 as examples. From Laurence Fishburne’s African-English accent in the 1995 *Othello* directed by Oliver Parker, to André Holland’s American-English accent in the 2018 Globe production, *Othello*’s accent has frequently been used in Western productions as a signifier of his status as “Other.” In India, on the other hand, the use of English itself is steeped in multiple sites of tension; the use of English in Shakespeare adaptations adds another dimension to these problematic spaces. This chapter argues that in a country which boasts of 22 major languages and where the use of English both invites derision and is a signifier of status and education, the particular ways in which English and Shakespeare has been used in two filmed adaptations of *Othello*—*Saptapadi* and *Omkara*—gives us a glimpse into the problem of Shakespeare and

accentism in India and argues for a deeper evaluation of the subject of Shakespeare and accentism globally.

The Value of Englishes and the Accent of Shakespeare

In “The Economics of Linguistic Exchanges” French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu uses a market analogy to explain how value is assigned to speech depending on context and how, consequently, the conditions of reception affect discourse production.⁴ In Bourdieu’s account language in any situation is worth what those who speak it are deemed to be worth: Its price will depend on the symbolic power relation between the speakers, on their respective levels of “symbolic capital.”⁵ Extending this market analogy, I suggest that accents can also be said to have symbolic capital based on a common world history of imperialism and the presumed superiority of certain kinds of accents in current society. I will support this by using research in linguistics and data from attitudinal studies conducted on Englishes in India. Sociolinguists have demonstrated that, in practice, a listener’s biases and stereotypes lead them to subconsciously attribute certain qualities to speakers. The matched-guise technique experiments conducted by Wallace Lambert and Howard Giles are perhaps the best examples of this phenomenon.⁶ Lambert’s results, for instance, proved that monolingual French and English speakers in Canada rated English speakers more favorably than French speakers even when they were listening to the same person, while Giles demonstrated that Received Pronunciation (henceforth RP) receives more prestige than regional English accents with “foreign accents” falling in between. These experiments and studies tend to reflect the mainstream cultural values of the part of the world the studies are conducted in, however, subsequent studies across the world have replicated similar results.⁷

In terms of “doing” Shakespeare, we find a comparable situation. Across the world there is an expectation regarding how Shakespeare should sound and there have been instances where actors and audiences have taken for granted that Shakespeare is to be done in RP for it to sound suitably Shakespearean, though that accent only developed in the late 19th century. Rob Pensalfini, for instance, illuminates the oddity of RP being the standard in Australian productions of Shakespeare while Ruben Espinosa attributes Columbian-born Shakespearean actor Antonio Ocampo-Guzman’s embracing of his “rich Columbian accent” as giving the right to Latino/a students to “access Shakespeare from their own identity.” Turning to social media, it is easy to identify the multiple ways in which this prejudice against accents is still the norm. An actor talking about auditions shared on twitter: “When I did get into one I was rejected by ‘voice’, told I didn’t have a good enough voice for theatre and definitely would never do Shakespeare” (#ShareYourRejections).⁸ Another

commentator tweets: “Worrying that so many tweets praise Andrew Scott for using his own accent as #Hamlet – people are so used to hearing Shakespeare in RP that it’s all they can associate it with. Something still wrong with the industry if people are shocked to hear Shakespeare in a ‘regional’ accent.”⁹ I lay out these instances of accent prejudice to provide a snapshot of the biases that listeners across the world have toward certain accents which influence their reception of Shakespeare productions.

In India there is a certain amount of condescension toward accented English as well as a high degree of regionalism. There is a clear North/South divide in accents, as well as a divide between rural and urban accents. In cities like Kolkata and Chennai where there are educational institutes being run by Jesuit priests and Roman Catholic nuns, there is a further refinement of accent that comes with being educated at certain institutions which produces English speakers such as Utpal Dutt and Shashi Tharoor who are widely regarded as “good speakers,” but also criticized for speaking “posh.”¹⁰ Research in linguistics establishes that there is a defined hierarchy of accents in India with British English (BrE) accents being received most favorably, followed by Indian English (IndE) accents, and then American English (AmE) accents.¹¹ I will therefore use two examples of *Othello* appropriations on film in India to analyze the way accents have been used to manipulate the inherent biases of film audiences with regard to language and Shakespeare.

Before applying my reading of the use of accents in “Indian Shakespeares,” however, it would be useful to delve a little deeper into the linguistic history and biases that Indian speakers of English have toward Indian regional accents, British English Accents (generally understood as the RP accent), and American English Accents (as understood by the Standard American accents of Hollywood and US television). To do this, I will refer to Schneider’s Model of Postcolonial Varieties of English which describes the development of post-colonial varieties of English in five stages beginning with the first contact with traders or settlers (foundation stage/stage one), followed by a strong linguistic orientation to the mother dialect (exonormative stabilization/stage two), and from which a new dialect arises through contact between the colonized and colonial population.¹² Stage three, nativization, witnesses many innovations in the new dialect, which in stage four, endo-normative stabilization, slowly become accepted, eventually leading to stage five, differentiation. IndE, if we are to apply Schneider’s Model, has currently reached stage three, characterized by a high degree of linguistic insecurity caused by tensions between old “exonormative” orientations and new “endonormative” orientations. To add another layer to these linguistic tensions, Bernaisch and Koch’s experiments, moreover, reveal that young male and young female speakers of IndE have markedly different attitudes toward their local variety with young women generally rating IndE more

positively than their male counterparts. This is particularly interesting in the light of Claudia Lange's (2012) finding that it is generally (young) women who adopt and use syntactic features characteristic of IndE such as topicalization constructions, left-dislocation, and presentational itself and only more readily than men.¹³ In conjunction, the facts that (young) female IndE speakers use IndE structures and display a particularly positive attitude toward their nativized model of English may be an indication that this female speaker group is currently leading a linguistic change in the local speech community.¹⁴ This factor will be particularly germane to my reading of the way Dolly's accent is used in *Omkara* and I will demonstrate how *Omkara/Othello's* mistrust of her is underlined due to her education and speech patterns.

Nevertheless, as one attitudinal study by Annika Hohenthal demonstrates, 70% of her informants felt that RP would serve as the best model for Indian English, 10% thought General American English would be better, and 17% preferred the Indian variety of English.¹⁵ Given India's colonial history, the preference for BrE is perhaps as expected as the tensions between IndE and BrE. However, AmE is also relevant in the Indian context, not just because of Hollywood, American television, and call centers, but also because a number of native speakers of AmE started their work as missionaries in India since the beginning of the 19th century. Thus, while BrE speakers easily outnumber AmE speakers in India, it is important to note that the model of AmE made its way into the Indian linguistic ecology at the relatively early stage of local variety development and is still relevant as Indians continue to emigrate to the United States for work and keep in touch with their family back in India. However, as Robert Fuchs has demonstrated, while there is acceptance of a diverse array of regional and international accents within speakers of English in India, there is also a marked level of intolerance toward Indians using British or American accents. Such accents were called "fake" by many informants, and there was a general conviction that no matter how hard an Indian speaker of English might try, their approximation of a British or American accent would remain imperfect: "They speak with their polished British/American accent, but at some point their Bangla/Telegu/Hindi etc. accent resurfaces" (exceptions were made for persons of Indian origin that grew up in the United Kingdom or United States).¹⁶ This prejudice against "fake" accents will help me examine later on why Kesu/Cassio is an easy target for Langda/Iago and why he inspires mistrust among the rest of *Omkara's* gang in *Omkara*.

English Accents in Indian Shakespeare Films

Any study of *Othello* in India draws attention to the politics of accent within the country, though accentism is not a topic that has been explored

in much detail by “Global Shakespeare” scholars thus far. *Othello* is a play which “remains haunted by its own cultural history” and the racially and politically charged subtexts of the play find particular resonance in post-colonial India.¹⁷ The colonial production that has attracted most attention was when, in 1848, the racially segregated English theatre, Sans Souci, decided to present Shakespeare’s *Othello, the Moor of Venice*, with the part of Othello being played by a “Native Gentleman,” the Bengali actor Baishnab Charan Adhya.¹⁸ Parmita Kapadia identifies Adhya’s performance as a resistance to colonial supremacy which sought to disrupt power structures.¹⁹ English theatres were an important aspect of English social life as well as an instrument of empire and Sushil Mukherjee, in his history of the theatres of Calcutta, remarks, “a Bengali youth in an English play in an English theatre catering to a [largely] English audience in ... the nineteenth century, is certainly a memorable event in the history of Calcutta’s theatres.”²⁰ James Barry’s production and recruitment of a Bengali actor had the support of the English and the Bengali elite and was “part of a movement in English theatres in Calcutta at the beginning of the nineteenth century toward ‘ethnic correctness’ of representation.”²¹ Sudipto Chatterjee and Jyotsna G. Singh describe the reviews of the performance as “a mixture of praise and condescension.”²² The reviews tend to focus on Adhya’s accented delivery of Shakespeare’s lines: “his delivery was somewhat cramped but ... his pronunciation of English was for a Native remarkably good.”²³ The underlying anxiety on the part of the colonizers about the possible cultural and racial contamination of the English stage and society in Calcutta is perhaps proved by the fact that when an attempt at a reprisal of the production was made in September 1848, it was immediately “shot down by the English reviewers” despite the “thunderous applause” that the production apparently received in August of the same year.²⁴

Some of this tension can be observed in the Bengali appropriation of *Othello* in 1961 where the story is set in colonial India. Bengal, in particular, is a site of identity crisis for generations who are still brought up with the dual reality of the superiority of the English language in juxtaposition with a nationalistic reclaiming of tradition and vernacular languages. Moreover, this reclamation of the vernacular which was begun immediately before independence has currently taken centre-stage in politics under the present fundamentalist Hindu Indian government.²⁵ 1960s India experienced a resurgence of interest in Shakespeare both on stage and on film.²⁶ This renewed interest in Shakespeare, however, reactivated some of the tensions around accentism that was observed in Adhya’s performance of Shakespeare with a Bengali accent in the 17th century. *Saptapadi* is a mainstream Bengali film structured around a performance of *Othello*, heavily influenced by the Orson Welles 1951 film, which is used as an exemplar to validate an inter-racial romance

between a Hindu Bengali boy and a Christian Anglo-Indian girl; the film replicated some of the mistrust of miscegenation that perhaps underlined the Sans Souci production.²⁷ The male protagonist, Krishnendu, is depicted as a modern Indian, proud of his culture but not held back by its orthodoxy. The question of race is given prominence at the beginning of the film: Krishnendu literally means “black moon” in Bengali; it is also one of the names of the dark-skinned Lord Krishna (which is a recurring motif in all the *Othello* appropriations in India). Questions of racism and of color prejudice are thus problematized as the straightforward dichotomy of Black and White cannot be applied in a uniform manner in India, a country which suffers from multiple prejudices of color, caste, religion, and race. Given the possible apprehensions about inter-caste/inter-faith alliances during the time in India, the female protagonist is half-caste and is thus culturally considered inferior to the Hindu Brahmin male protagonist and these subtexts are underlined by the various ways in which accents are used in the film. However, the purpose of my bringing up this film is to highlight how the murder of Desdemona is enacted in the film and what the language cues, influenced by an American adaptation of the play, signify in this particular instance of “Indian Shakespeare.”

Saptapadi cites *Othello* by using cinematic visual and auditory echoes rather than by having characters speak lines from the text. There are repeated references to Welles’ film: The enactment of the murder scene is closely based on the American film, for instance, as well as the whistling wind sound played during the performance. Richard Burt contends that the film “narrates a transition from postcolonial performance, in which Shakespeare serves as a kind of mimicry, to Shakespeare as international cinema.”²⁸ This, he argues, is achieved by the performance of the murder scene in *Othello* in two separate instances in the film. In the first occasion, Rina is depicted as rehearsing the scene with her English classmate, John Clayton, who is used as a foil to Krishnendu through the first half of the film. When Rina encourages John to put more feeling into his lines, we hear Krishnendu reciting the lines off-camera, and then see him delivering the lines on his balcony. This is an interesting demonstration of an experiment mentioned in Pensalfini’s aforementioned article measuring the tonal range of General Australian (henceforth GA) versus RP performances of the same piece of text by four professional actors.²⁹ The experiment demonstrated that for all the participants, the tonal range of the GA versions of the speeches were greater than those for the RP version. This countered the wide-ranging perception of reviewers in Australia who consider GA limited in tonal range and therefore unsuitable for dramatic verse.³⁰ In the first part of the movie Krishnendu has been deliberately contrasted with the Englishman Clayton to highlight his superiority as a character: Krishnendu is a better student, a

better sportsman, and a better actor, and is frequently shown as not only being confident within his own cultural identity, but also equally able to inhabit English culture. Therefore, it is implied that he can also speak Shakespeare “with more feeling.”

Nevertheless, the second performance of the murder sequence in the film appears to directly contradict this stance and thus underlines my point about the complexity of accent and language as markers of mainstream cultural values in India. This sequence is shot like a film clip within a film, based closely on Orson Welles’ *Othello* (1954). The direction for the murder sequence on stage has been credited to Utpal Dutt in the title sequence, consequently making this second sequence, in some way, more formal and thus more “authentic.” Attitudinal studies of Englishes in India have demonstrated that qualities such as “humbleness” and “friendliness” are associated more with IndE than with BrE possibly due to the colonial baggage that the latter carries in South Asia. Bernaisch and Koch contend:

BrE was used in rather formal contexts and usually between interlocutors of different social standing, who may not have frequently engaged in friendly conversation. The indigenous varieties, in contrast, often are the medium to which close friends on an equal footing who share a certain degree of proficiency in English resort when they talk to each other, which may be an explanation for the attitudinal discrepancy as regards “humble” and “friendly” in BrE and the respective local South Asian varieties.³¹

Most importantly, while Suchitra Sen and Uttam Kumar, the actors playing the protagonists in *Saptapadi*, voice the Shakespearean lines the first time the murder scene is enacted, the Shakespearean lines are voiced by actors from the Shakespeareana troupe: Krishnendu’s *Othello*, in fact, is voiced by Utpal Dutt, an actor trained to speak Shakespeare in RP by a British mentor. This reinforces the use of RP as the default for an “authentic” Shakespeare performance which is peculiar given the earlier use of accent in the first version of this sequence. However, when we keep in mind that the purpose of the first rendition of the sequence is to point out that the post-colonial Indian character has mastered Shakespeare in his own voice (in much the same way Ocampo-Guzman does), whereas the purpose of the second version of the sequence is to foreground Shakespeare and the relevance of *Othello* to the plot of the film, this shift in accent becomes a necessary, albeit subtle, narrative tool.³²

Omkara (2006) is a different experiment with language in the context of Indian cinema. For the purposes of adaptation, firstly, Bhardwaj dexterously translates Shakespeare’s words into the language of cinema. A

close adaptation of *Othello*, *Omkaara* translocates the play to the “lawless Wild West setting” of Uttar Pradesh, India.³³ The film seamlessly melds the Shakespearean text with Bollywood narrative and visual codes and, in doing so, replaces Shakespeare’s language with rich visual metaphors. For instance, Dolly/Desdemona almost always wears White which emphasizes “that whiter skin of hers than snow” (5.2.133), and Omi/Othello always dresses in Black, thereby underscoring the main theme of racial difference at various points of the film in unobtrusive ways. Similarly, Langda/Iago wears green throughout the film and is almost always shot through a green filter to emphasize his role as the “green-eyed monster” of jealousy (3.3.168). Moreover, the film recognizably quotes episodes and lines from the play, for instance, when Rajju/Roderigo threatens to “incontinently drown (him)self” (1.3.306) or when Raghunath warns Omi about trusting a deceitful woman: “*Jo ladki apni baap ko thag sakti hain who kisi aur ki sagi kya hogi*” [A girl who can deceive her father cannot be loyal to anyone] which echoes Brabantio’s warning to Othello. Even the profanity and vulgarity in the language, which has been reported to have kept families away from screenings of the film, is an allusion to the coarseness of Iago’s language.³⁴ The casual swearing and profanity in *Omkaara* is an allusion to Iago’s use of profanity while the famous “*Beedi* [cigarette] Song” picks up on Shakespeare’s metaphors of bedding (“twixt my sheets he has done my office”), thus assimilating the dramatist within the stock “item number” device of masala films. The lyrics refer to the borrowing of a neighbor’s quilt to ward off the cold as a suggestion of an illicit affair. Similarly, the refrain from the “*Naina*” song: “*Naino ki mat maaniyo re, naino ki mat suniyo, naina thbhag lenge thbhag lenge, naina thbhag lenge*” [Do not believe your eyes, do not judge based on what you see, your eyes may deceive you] is both a warning to Omkaara who will be deceived by what he thinks he sees and a nod to the deceitful nature of Langda. I highlight these innovative and deliberate translations of Shakespeare’s language to provide a background for my reading of how the English accents of various characters are used in the film to manipulate the way in which the audience perceives them.

Lynne Magnusson has identified elsewhere how Iago deals with the issue of “voice potential” of the other characters in the play.³⁵ Keenly aware that limited verbal repertoires of those of superior social standing garner them easy profits that his own rhetorical expertise cannot attain, Iago devalues the products of civil conversation not because he cannot replicate them, but because he is not socially positioned to receive advantage from them.³⁶ In *Omkaara*, Iago displays extreme contempt for the linguistic accents of Cassio, and to an extent Dolly, as he recognizes the social advantages they gain from merely speaking a certain way. The film contrasts Iago’s superior caste to his inferior accent

marked by vulgarity within a framework of value that is recognizable to multilingual speakers in modern societies. English is used in interesting ways in this film which foregrounds the rise of the Hindutva mentality in India, a situation underlined by the characters’ wearing western clothing and using the latest technology but resorting to Khariboli for speech instead of Hinglish or even the standardized Hindi of Bollywood films. Shakespeare’s Othello is clearly an outsider: He has no family, thereby making him dependent on Iago and, consequently, more vulnerable to the latter’s insidious suggestions about Desdemona’s possible infidelity. In *Omkaara*, however, the characters who are outsiders are Kesu *Firangi* and Dolly, as indicated by their names and the fact that they are both college-educated and literally do not speak the dialect of the other characters in the film.³⁷ Their common background and their mutual feelings of insecurity in their new situation naturally bring them closer, thereby making Langda’s insinuations plausible to Omkara. This is a comment on the social milieu depicted in the film itself, a reality in many parts of India, where despite social advances such as technology and the education of women, there is a sense of resentment against modernity and “Englishness,” which in this case is a reference to the corrupting influence of the urban elite in India on old fashioned values such as *izzat* and *tehzeeb* [cultural pride and etiquette].

However, there is a further, much more nuanced layer of experimentation with accents on top of the experiment with languages in this film. *Firang* is a derogatory name given to *videsis* or foreigners, but it also refers to Indians who have become Westernized or modernized, as modernity in India is primarily associated with foreign influence, especially by the fundamentalist advocates of Hindutva.³⁸ However, while Kesu is nicknamed *Firangi*, Dolly, despite her educational background, is never referred to as a *Firang*. Dolly speaks heavily North-Indian-accented English, thus indicating that while she is English-educated, she has not lost her Indian roots and is therefore cast in a more innocent light than Kesu in her *firanginess*. This is supported by research which I have referred to before, which suggests that young women adopt and use syntactic features characteristic of IndE more readily than men, thus displaying a positive attitude toward nativized models of English and falling in line with the Hindutva practice of cultural stalwarts defending endo-normative standards.³⁹ This is highlighted in the sequence where Kesu is teaching her the English song “I just called to say I love you” by Stevie Wonder and she cannot hear the difference between how she pronounces “bottom of my heart” and how Kesu softens the /t/ sounds in “bottom.” Throughout the film, Keshav is known as Kesu *Firangi*; *Firangipana* [Foreignness] is associated much more closely with Kesu and in a clearly derogatory way when Langda uses the word. Kesu has a marked American accent, a hallmark of the call centre generation which

is frequently blamed for the corruption of Indian culture.⁴⁰ Moreover, the song he teaches Dolly to sing to Omkara is by an American singer, thus underlining that his “Englishness” comes from the corrupting influence of the American West rather than the “authentic” English of Shakespeare’s homeland or even Dolly’s “endo-normative” accent. In other words, the underlining biases demonstrated by sociolinguistic research against AmE in India reinforces the inferiority of Kesu’s accented English against Dolly’s more “natural” IndE. This attitude refers back to the finding of intolerance toward “fake” accents referred to earlier from Fuchs’ research where Indians with an American accent are often perceived as “phony” or “stand-offish” by other speakers of IndE.⁴¹ The *firangi* moniker, combined with Kesu’s relative inexperience and his educated background, is also in keeping with Iago’s disgust of the “great arithmetician ... a Florentine (among Venetians) ... That never set a squadron in the field/ Nor the division of a battle knows” (1.1.18). It also chimes with his resentment of how easily Cassio’s speech gains credit with his auditors, a credit which Magnusson opines, Iago himself cannot earn by employing the same speech patterns.⁴² When Langda is thus overlooked by the half-caste Omkara to be his successor, despite being more obviously qualified for the role and despite their closer relationship (Omi refers to Langda as his *bhai* or brother who will understand his decision), in favor of Kesu *Firangi*, his jealousy and hate toward both Omi and Kesu is inevitable and thus a powerful motivation for the chain of destruction that he initiates as opposed to the “motiveless malignity” that Samuel Coleridge once observed in Shakespeare’s Iago.

Conclusion

Theatre and cinema are a reflection of society and debates on diversity have begun to bear fruit in multicultural casting on stage and on screen across the world. Shakespeare is frequently used to “to hold as ’twere the mirror up to nature” (*Hamlet* 3.2.17–24) and is often intentionally or inadvertently a site where issues of race and diversity find expression. However, accentism is an area that is relatively less explored in film and drama scholarship, despite multiple studies conducted on Original Pronunciation and Received Pronunciation, particularly in organizations such as Shakespeare’s Globe in London. And yet, accent bias is a reality, as demonstrated by numerous experiments conducted by socio-linguists; examples from everyday life are easy to find as my brief snapshot of social media in the introduction proves. This chapter has attempted to briefly unpack some of the issues regarding Shakespeare and accentism in India, specifically, the way accents are used in productions to consciously manipulate listeners’ biases for or against certain characters. It has demonstrated how Desdemona’s murder scene in *Saptapadi* becomes

an instance where the post-colonial protagonist accesses Shakespeare through his own identity and then immediately reverts to the standard RP used globally for Shakespeare thus resisting and mastering the language simultaneously as a “foreign” actor inhabiting a Shakespearean character. It has then taken up the difference in the use of English between two characters with different accents in the context of modern-day India and what their accents signify to their Indian audiences. It would be interesting to expand the case study to include audiences outside of India and to reflect on the biases that reviewers and critics may have regarding English accents on an English stage. For instance, Varsha Panjwani establishes how the multiplicity of Indian accents in the RSC *Much Ado About Nothing* (2012) led reviewers to conclude that the Indian cast did not “have a firm grasp of Shakespeare’s language.”⁴³ Similarly, Ryan Gilbey of *The New Statesman* expresses confusion about all the actors’ inability to pronounce chutzpah “properly,” thereby missing one of the most enjoyable wordplays in Vishal Bhardwaj’s *Hamlet* adaptation set in Kashmir, *Haider* (2014).⁴⁴ These examples make the case for more in-depth study on the topic of Shakespeare and accentism which could not only contribute to the teaching and production of “Global Shakespeares,” and to future Shakespeare Studies scholarship, but also to issues of race and diversity across a variety of sites and contexts.

Notes

1. See, for instance, David Crystal’s work in *The Oxford Dictionary of Original Shakespearean Pronunciation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016). Furthermore, the British Library has completed a new recording of 75 minutes of the bard’s most famous scenes, speeches, and sonnets, all performed in OP and some of the research using these recordings has been discussed online: NPR Staff, *Shakespeare’s Accent: How Did the Bard Really Sound?*, March 24, 2012. <https://www.npr.org/2012/03/24/149160526/shakespeares-accent-how-did-the-bard-really-sound?t=1579200492323>, accessed January 16, 2020.
2. Michael Billington, rev. of *Much Ado About Nothing*, *The Guardian*, August 2, 2012.
3. Ania Loomba, *Gender, Race, Renaissance Drama* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1989), 10.
4. Pierre Bourdieu, “The Economics of Linguistic Exchanges,” *Information (International Social Science Council)* 16 (1977): 645–668.
5. Lynne Magnusson, “Voice Potential: Language and Symbolic Capital in *Othello*,” in *Shakespeare and Language*, ed. Catherine M.S. Alexander (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004): 213–225.
6. The matched-guise technique essentially involves a single speaker adopting multiple accents being heard by listeners who are told that they are listening to multiple people. In various instances, when the listeners were told they were listening to the same person, they refused to believe it. See for instance, Wallace E. Lambert, Hannah Frankle, and G. Richard Tucker, “Judging Personality through Speech: A French-Canadian example,” *Journal of Communication* 16 (1966): 305–321;

- Wallace E. Lambert et al., "Evaluational Reactions to Spoken Languages," *The Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology* 60 (1960): 44; and Howard Giles et al., "The Social Meaning of RP: An Intergenerational Perspective," in *Studies in the Pronunciation of English: A Commemorative Volume in Honor of AC Gimson*, ed. A.C. Gimson (London: Routledge, 1990), 191–221.
7. Rob Pensalfini, "Not in our Own Voices: Accent and Identity in Contemporary Australian Shakespeare Performance," *Australasian Drama Studies* 54 (2009): 153.
 8. Jade Anouka, *Twitter*, August 17, 2018. <https://twitter.com/JadeAnouka/status/103052227211910144?s=09>, accessed September 12, 2018.
 9. Bryony Corrigan, *Twitter*, March 31, 2018. https://twitter.com/bryony_corrigan/status/980184343954980864?s=09, accessed April 2, 2018.
 10. Utpal Dutt began his acting career as part of Geoffrey Kendall's Shakespeareana troupe and was part of the movement to decolonize Shakespeare in the 1960s in Bengal. Jyotsna G. Singh, "The Postcolonial/Postmodern Shakespeare," in *Shakespeare: World Views*, eds., Heather Kerr et al. (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1996), 29–43 writes that Dutt reacted "violently" toward his western colonial education: "the fact that he could recite Virgil and Shakespeare dismayed him." Shashi Tharoor is an Indian MP (Member of Parliament) and writer who is famous for his use of complex vocabulary: See, for instance, Amulya Gopalakrishnan, "Why we are so Charmed by Tharoor's English?" *Times of India*, February 11, 2018. <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/blogs/to-name-and-address/why-we-are-so-charmed-by-tharoors-english/>, accessed May 23, 2019.
 11. For a detailed study on Indian speakers' attitudes toward BrE, AmE, and IndE, see Tobias Bernaisch and Christopher Koch, "Attitudes Towards Englishes in India," *World Englishes* 35 (2016): 118–132.
 12. See Edgar W. Schneider, *Postcolonial English: Varieties Around the World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).
 13. See Claudia Lange, *The Syntax of Spoken Indian English* (Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 2012).
 14. Bernaisch and Koch, "Attitudes Towards Englishes in India," 129.
 15. Annika Hohenthal, "English in India: Loyalty and Attitudes," *Language in India* 3 (2003). <http://www.languageinindia.com/may2003/annika.html#chapter5>.
 16. Robert Fuchs, "'You're Not from Around Here, Are You?'" in *Prosody and Language in Contact*, eds. Elisabeth Delais-Roussairie et al. (Berlin: Springer, 2015), 125.
 17. Thomas Cartelli and Katherine Rowe, *New Wave Shakespeare on Screen* (Cambridge and Malden: Polity, 2007), 123.
 18. See Kironmoy Raha, *Bengali Theatre* (New Delhi: National Book Trust, 1980).
 19. Parmita Kapadia, "Jatra Shakespeare: Indigenous Indian Theatre and the Postcolonial Stage," in *Native Shakespeares: Indigenous Appropriations on a Global Stage*, eds. Craig Dionne and Parmita Kapadia (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008), 95.
 20. Sushil K Mukherjee, *The Story of the Calcutta Theatres, 1753–1980* (Calcutta: K.P. Bagchi, 1982), 7.
 21. Sudipto Chatterjee and Jyotsna G. Singh, "Moor or Less? The Surveillance of Othello, Calcutta 1848," in *Shakespeare and Appropriation*, eds. Christy Desmet and Robert Sawyer (New York: Routledge, 1999), 70.
 22. *Ibid.*, 70.

23. Kapadia, “Jatra Shakespeare,” 95. Reviews referenced are from *The Calcutta Star* and other contemporary English language newspapers such as *The Englishman* and *The Bengal Hurkaru* referenced in Amal Mitra’s *Kolkatay Bidesi Rangalay [Foreign Theatres in Calcutta]* (Kolkata: Prakash Bhaban, 1967).
24. Chatterjee and Singh, “Moor or Less?,” 78.
25. See, for instance, Manisha Basu, *The Rhetoric of Hindutva* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017); Deepa Reddy, “Hindutva as Praxis,” *Religion Compass*, 5 (2011): 412–426; and G. Aloysius, “Trajectory of Hindutva,” *Economic and Political Weekly*, June 11, 1994. 1450–1452.
26. Rosa M García-Periago, “The Re-Birth of Shakespeare in India: Celebrating and Indianizing the Bard in 1964,” *SEDERI* 22 (2012), 51.
27. For a more detailed description of the film, see Paromita Chakravarti, “Modernity, Postcoloniality and *Othello*: The Case of Saptapadi,” in *Remaking Shakespeare: Performance Across Media, Genres, and Cultures*, eds. Pascale Aebischer et al. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 39–55.
28. Richard Burt, “All that Remains of Shakespeare in Indian Film,” in *Shakespeare in Asia: Contemporary Performance*, eds. Dennis Kennedy and Yong Li Lan (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 85.
29. Pensalfini, “Not in our Own Voices,” 152.
30. *Ibid.*, 150.
31. Bernaisch and Koch, “Attitudes Towards Englishes in India,” 127.
32. Antonio Ocampo-Guzman, “My Own Private Shakespeare; Or, Am I Deluding Myself?,” *Colorblind Shakespeare: New Perspectives on Race and Performance* (London: Routledge, 2006), 136.
33. Stephen Alter, *Fantasies of a Bollywood Love Thief: Inside the World of Indian Moviemaking* (New York: Harcourt, 2007), 35.
34. “Families Stay Away from *Omkara*,” *The Times of India*, August 1, 2006. <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/entertainment/bollywood/news-interviews/Families-stay-away-from-Omkara-/articleshow/1833494.cms?referral=PM>, accessed February 4, 2015.
35. See her “‘Voice Potential,’” 213–225.
36. *Ibid.*, 220.
37. Names, which are an indicator of social and financial status, religion and, in many cases, regional accents, hold unique importance in this film. All the characters in *Omkara* have distinctively high-caste Hindu last names: Iago/Ishwar Tyagi’s last name designates him as the uppermost sub-caste among Uttar Pradesh Brahmins, which also suggests a preference for endo-normative standards of accent.
38. Check out Jyotirmaya Sharma, *Hindutva: Exploring the Idea of Hindu Nationalism* (New Delhi: Penguin Books India, 2003) for a more detailed description of Hindu nationalism and the relationship of Hindutva to Muslims in India.
39. See Bernaisch and Koch, “Attitudes Towards Englishes in India,” 118–132, and Fuchs, “You’re Not from Around Here, Are You?,” 123–148.
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41. Fuchs, “You’re Not from Around Here, Are You?,” 126.
42. Magnusson, “Voice Potential,” 220.
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