

Joya Mannan\*

## Publishing Shakespeare in India: Macmillan's English Classics and the Aftereffects of a Colonial Education

**Abstract:** India's rejection of Macmillan's English Classics series constitutes an important counter-origin that exposes and dismantles underlying assumptions about how colonial Indian readers valued and consumed Shakespeare. In this paper, I examine the failure of Macmillan's English Classics series to bring about Indian assimilation to British values. I specifically consider Kenneth Deighton's Shakespeare editions in the series and argue that Deighton's Shakespeare attempted to utilize its extensive explanatory notes as a primer on Englishness for Indians. The pedantic notes, as well as the manner in which the texts were appropriated into Indian educational systems, were determining factors in their ultimate failure to gain widespread popularity in the colony. The imperial agenda that insists upon one dominant, valid discourse led to Macmillan misreading the market and misreading an already viable field of Shakespeare studies in India. Reflecting on narratives and histories surrounding the origins of Shakespeare studies in India, as well as how Shakespeare's works were produced for the colonies and the way in which they were duly rejected, reveals how exchanges of power and capital between metropole and colony shape Western systems just as heavily as they do others.

**Keywords:** Kenneth Deighton, William Shakespeare, postcolonial, colonialism, Merchant of Venice, Othello, The Tempest, Macmillan, English Classics, resistance, race, publishing, translation, book history, India

Thomas Babington Macaulay's 1835 "Minute on Education" was a damning testimony to Britain's desire to Anglicize colonial India: "[w]e must at present do our best to form a class who may be interpreters between us and the millions whom we govern; a class of persons Indian in blood and colour, but English in tastes, in opinions, in morals and in intellect." These words are frequently cited "as the nail in the coffin of a possible Indian modernity ... [and] the decisive

---

\* Independent Scholar, US. [joyamannan@gmail.com](mailto:joyamannan@gmail.com)

moment, too, after which the English language was bound to become the language of the ruling class in South Asia” (Stephenson 30). Despite Macaulay’s aims, Indian modernity is very much a reality, and English is one among many languages currently prominent in South Asia. Macaulay’s proposal to manipulate Indian education as a means to control colonial India came into existence as early as 1792, when the British economy began to feel the impact of Indians who did not want to buy goods from the East India Company. The solution to this problem was to teach Indians “to value and crave British manufactures, and to have a proper awe for British culture and the Christian religion”—a message that is mimicked in Macaulay’s 1835 speech (Chatterjee, “How India Took” 102). Top industry leaders adhered to Macaulay’s goal and did what they could to add to the British apparatus by using Macaulay’s plan to create class hierarchies in colonial India and, as a result, create a class of Indians who would be useful to the British in running the empire.

The British publisher Macmillan, founded in 1843 as a bookstore by brothers Daniel and Alexander Macmillan, was among the companies enacting Macaulay’s plan. They were publishing educational textbooks as early as 1844, and with Alexander’s management, they quickly became leaders in British publishing, releasing hundreds of titles annually. By 1876, Daniel’s son Frederick became a partner, and eventually, his brothers Maurice and George took up leadership positions at the publishing house as well (“Macmillan Publishing Ltd.”). In an attempt to follow Macaulay’s imperial mission, Maurice Macmillan produced the English Classics series, a book series containing famous works of literature specifically annotated for Indian school students.

However, as I will show through a select examination of Kenneth Deighton’s editions of Shakespeare’s plays in Macmillan’s English Classics series, Macmillan’s attempt to inculcate English literary studies using Macaulay’s purported aim to sideline and devalue Indian culture altogether was unsuccessful since India’s ingrained cultural values and literary traditions preceded British rule. Instead, Macmillan’s series resulted in an almost immediate cultural resistance to Western perceptions of Shakespeare, and that resistance would eventually take shape in Shakespeare adaptations across various mediums in India and the Bengal region. While there is no evidence to indicate a natural progression between these various forms of resistance, together they contribute to an idea of how Shakespeare was viewed as epitomizing British influence, and how people made this influence serve their own ends. This paper is a preliminary examination of cultural rejection as a form of resistance and also explores some possible reasons for this rejection in the context of British educational policies. In this sense, I trace something of a “counter-origin” of Shakespeare studies in India—one that sets Shakespeare on a decidedly anti-imperialist track.

The English Education Act of 1835 marked a shift in how British influence in Indian education ideologically divided the British colonialists into the Orientalists and the Anglicists.<sup>1</sup> The Orientalists viewed “education in English ... to be a waste of valuable time and resources,” especially since the new act would ignore Parliament’s 1813 “[ruling] that one hundred thousand rupees should be budgeted each year for Indian education.” The Anglicists, on the other hand, “[felt] that access to English would allow Indians to deal with their new rulers on their own terms and help to dispel the mystique surrounding the foreigners” (Chatterjee, “How India Took” 103). The debate between the Orientalists and the Anglicists as well as Macaulay’s thoughts on Eastern languages makes it appear as though the issue is merely about the language in which Indians are educated; however, as Gerald and Natalie Robinson Sirkin have argued, “the important matter was to teach “useful knowledge,” and the question was, which language was the most expeditious for that purpose” (409). The issue, then, is in the subjectivity of the term “useful knowledge,” but to Macaulay and those following his credo, usefulness of knowledge lay in the fact that a class of Indians should be created who could help the British in establishing and maintaining their empire. As a result, the Anglicist framework became crucial at this time in any venture aimed toward controlling colonial Indians.

Maurice Macmillan attempted to define “useful knowledge” as it pertains to Macaulay’s “Minute” when he was chosen to direct efforts to produce educational texts for colonial India. His solution to offering useful education was through the English Classics series, which included inexpensive editions of English classics, marketed and annotated especially for Indian school students (Chatterjee, “Macmillan in India” 157). William Shakespeare, John Dryden, Sir Walter Scott, and Alfred Tennyson are among the authors included in the English Classics series, and all editions in this series were published with notes and introductions written by British men who held influential positions in the Indian education system. As “eminent citizens who worked on a voluntary basis [and] ... were thus all-powerful in the matter of accepting and rejecting a given school textbook,” they were most likely aware of editorial choices that would be viewed favorably among Text Book Committees. “Macmillan ... went to great lengths to stay on the right side of” colonial Text Book Committees and was diligent in researching and justifying what they believed to be the needs of Indian education (Chatterjee, “How India Took” 106). Despite his efforts, Macmillan did not account for resistance from Indian parents and schoolteachers. While his series was widely considered a success in the Western

---

<sup>1</sup> The English Education Act of 1835 would reallocate funds the East India Company was required to spend on Indian education and literature. Initially, the funds were used to offer Indian education in regional languages, but with the passage of this act, the funds would be used to support a Western curriculum that promoted English ideals.

world, it was poorly received in India. The imperial agenda that insists upon one dominant, valid discourse led to Macmillan misreading the market and neglecting an already viable field of Shakespeare studies in India. As a result, I posit India's rejection of Macmillan's English Classics series constitutes an important counter-origin that exposes and dismantles underlying assumptions about how Indian readers valued and consumed Shakespeare.

In this paper, I examine the failure of Macmillan's English Classics series to bring about Indian assimilation to British values. I specifically consider Kenneth Deighton's Shakespeare editions in the series, as well as the marketing decisions made with regard to the editions as reflected in book catalogues and circulars of the day. I argue that Deighton's Shakespeare attempted to utilize its extensive explanatory notes as a primer on Englishness for Indians. The pedantic notes, as well as the manner in which the texts were appropriated into Indian educational systems, were determining factors in their ultimate failure to gain widespread popularity in the colony. Reflecting on narratives and histories surrounding the origins of Shakespeare studies in India, as well as how Shakespeare's works were produced for the colonies and the way in which they were duly rejected, reveals how exchanges of power and capital between metropole and colony shape Western systems just as heavily as they do others.

### **Macmillan's Interests in India, Education, and Shakespeare**

India's fascination with Shakespeare dates back almost as early as its history with print culture. By 1770, theatre troupes were performing Shakespeare's plays, "long before Macaulay's famous 1835 Minute," and by the 1820s, "English schoolmasters had their Indian students [performing] scenes from the plays" (Lynch 256; Ganapathy-Doré 10). In fact, the themes of education innate in Shakespeare's works make his plays a perfect form of cultural capital for educational publishers. *Merchant of Venice*, for instance, features "Portia's speech on the crux of the play's educative process, the discrepancy that exists between knowing the good and doing the good: 'the brain may devise laws for the blood, but a hot temper leaps o'er a cold decree'" (Holmer 307; *MV* I.ii.17-19). British schools tended to highlight the more black and white elements from Shakespeare's plays since "the primary purpose of teaching Shakespeare in British elementary and secondary schools is to prepare students for their place in a class-based society and labor market" (Cunningham 297). Hence, this is the same mindset that was taken into consideration when British publishers conceptualized educational texts for the colonial market.

With critics, scholars, and theatre folk such as David Garrick, Samuel Johnson, and Alexander Pope actively working to place Shakespeare at the heart of British identity, it is no wonder that Shakespeare has been associated with

idealized perceptions of high culture, class, and education across the world over time; however, Macmillan assumed its own successes in England as evidence of the timelessness of Shakespeare, and that prompted them to advance into the colonial book market with Shakespeare's works (Holmer 296). Macmillan's 1864 Globe edition, Alexander Macmillan's "pride and joy," was reprinted several times, which was "influential ... in stimulating an interest in English masterpieces"—the entire point of Macmillan's English Classics series (Chatterjee, "Macmillan in India" 154; Altick 19). Moreover, in the English translation of an 1876 essay called "Shakuntala, Miranda and Desdemona," Bankimchandra Chattopadhyay somewhat grandiosely and exaggeratedly claims that "everyone has Shakespeare at home; everyone may open the original text and read it" (qtd. in Banerji 11). In essence, the success of Macmillan's Globe edition of Shakespeare's collected works proved to them that there was still a demand for Shakespeare, and assertions such as Chattopadhyay's confirmed that Shakespeare was still a popular commodity in colonial India, at least among the English-speaking, largely upper-class populations. Therefore, it is no wonder Maurice Macmillan chose to include Shakespeare in the English Classics series marketed to India.

Macmillan had long been known primarily as an educational publisher; Maurice Macmillan's choice to launch the English Classics series for Indian schools was thus presumably a wise business decision (Panofsky 185). The English Classics were produced as small books "requiring less paper and binding material per volume" compared to typical printed books, and the series also fit perfectly with the cultural renaissance sweeping across colonial India, which placed renewed importance on ancient literature and religion as well as the wide dissemination of new literature (Altick 16). This movement impacted all facets of colonial life but especially featured efforts to purify Indian languages "polluted by rusticity, loose colloquial forms, and an abundant sexuality" (Ghosh, "An Uncertain" 27-28). Because "reading Shakespeare" has long been considered "the apex of intellectual achievement," at least by the elite, Shakespeare's analogous connection to the Indian cultural renaissance meant incorporation of Shakespeare's plays in the English Classics series was an excellent opportunity for Macmillan to capitalize on such a moment in Indian history (Scheil 93).

However, Macmillan operated under the assumption that the origin of Shakespeare studies in India could only be defined as narrowly and imperiously as they allowed, effectively ignoring the fact that colonial Indians may have already held certain ideas regarding Shakespeare prior and subsequent to British rule. Shakespeare's texts first arrived in India by way of trade vessels, and although there is only limited information about the performances and reception of Shakespeare prior to the consolidation of British rule, it does offer some evidence that at that time, Indians were interpreting Shakespeare on their own terms, and that there was already considerable interest in his plays (Lynch 256).

Deighton's editions allowed no such scope for a nascent form of Shakespeare study and education, so they were rejected by most of the Indian market, except for educational institutions that could not afford to refuse the texts thrust onto them as a result of contracts and deals they were forced to honor. This resulted in cultural rejection as a tentative form of resistance to Macmillan's distinctly Western interpretation of Shakespeare in its efforts to adhere to Macaulay's imperial agenda. The main problem with Macmillan's approach to publishing for Indians was that Macmillan subscribed to the values emphasized in Macaulay's "Minute on Education" and believed that the Indian education system needed to be Anglicized. So, even though Maurice Macmillan took into account economic factors that resulted in his English Classics series being cheap and portable books, his decision to "deliberately [avoid] India-specific notes" in the English Classics series worked against him (Joshi 206; Chatterjee, "Macmillan in India" 157). Such a blatant oversight leads one to conclude that Macmillan's ethnocentric and culturally arrogant ideas affected their early business decisions with regards to the colonial market.

### **Kenneth Deighton and Shakespeare**

Upon returning from his "honeymoon tour of India," Maurice Macmillan set to work on his English Classics series, the goal of which was to present classic English texts for Indian school students, "with careful explanations of those words and concepts which would be unfamiliar to [Indians]" (Chatterjee, "Macmillan in India" 157). W. T. Webb and F. J. Rowe were designated series editors, and men who at one time held influential positions within the Indian education system were chosen to be editors of select titles or authors included in the series (Towheed 134; Chatterjee, "Macmillan in India" 157). This is how Deighton found himself employed by Macmillan.

The little that is known about Deighton's work experience prior to his employment with Macmillan appears to have been sufficient preparation for the publisher to hire Deighton to edit Shakespeare's works for a colonial market. "He had already published school editions of Shakespeare for India when he took on the Macmillan project," and all the first editions of the Shakespeare plays that he edited for Macmillan's English Classics series state his credentials as a government-appointed school inspector of Bareilly, India, and the principal of Agra College, where he worked for eighteen years (Marcus 139). Both of these positions show that Deighton had ample knowledge of the inner workings of the Indian school system, which qualified him to be the Shakespeare editor in a major colonial book series. Other than that, not much else about Deighton is easily accessible or published. However, Deighton's "insider" knowledge makes his miscalculation of the market for Shakespeare in Indian education even more

surprising, and discloses the deep entrenchment of the colonial ideas that underwrote these editions.<sup>2</sup>

In all, Deighton edited the following 24 of Shakespeare's plays for Macmillan's English Classics series:

Table 1. Deighton's Editions of Shakespeare

Deighton's Shakespeare Editions in Macmillan's English Classics Series		
<i>Anthony and Cleopatra</i>	<i>As You Like It</i>	<i>Coriolanus</i>
<i>Cymbeline</i>	<i>Hamlet</i>	<i>Henry IV, Part 1</i>
<i>Henry IV, Part 2</i>	<i>Henry V</i>	<i>Henry VIII</i>
<i>Julius Caesar</i>	<i>King John</i>	<i>King Lear</i>
<i>Macbeth</i>	<i>Merchant of Venice</i>	<i>Midsummer Night's Dream</i>
<i>Much Ado About Nothing</i>	<i>Othello</i>	<i>Richard II</i>
<i>Richard III*</i>	<i>Romeo and Juliet</i>	<i>The Tempest</i>
<i>Twelfth Night</i>	<i>Two Gentlemen of Verona</i>	<i>Winter's Tale</i>

\* Deighton co-edited this play with C. H. Tawney.

Source: *Catalogue of the Publications and Importations of the Macmillan Company*.

Upon first glance, it is difficult to identify any pattern or reason in Deighton's selections, but closer examination reveals thoughtful considerations were made when determining which of Shakespeare's plays would be included in Macmillan's English Classics series. For example, it is interesting that Deighton's editions feature all of Shakespeare's histories and tragedies, many of which are tied to the development of the English nation. Yet he is very selective when it comes to comedies and romances, perhaps because interpretations and ideas regarding comedy and romance are extremely subjective, especially within

<sup>2</sup> In the preface of the first Shakespeare edition Deighton published with Macmillan, he bemoans the challenge of teaching Indian students "cast in a mould of thought and living in an atmosphere so remote from anything English." Deighton argues that "the explanation of things that to an English boy would be plain enough, of things that no one who had not had experience of teaching Indian students would suppose possible to be misunderstood, is vitally necessary" (qtd. in Marcus 132). He claims "no sneer is intended at the intellect of Indian students," but he is in no way as understanding as some of his contemporaries (qtd. in Marcus 140). Orientalist James R. Ballantyne, who published an edition of *Macbeth* in 1848, notes Indian students' propensity for critical thinking, remarking that they "demand closer reading of the text than do their British counterparts, and the denser annotation required for Indian students is more a matter of meeting their need for precision than of repairing their deficient cultural literacy" (qtd. in Marcus 134).

varying cultures. *Titus Andronicus*, arguably Shakespeare's most gruesome and gory play, is also not included, and *Pericles*, a play that features father-daughter incest as one of the main problems that plagues the title character, also did not make the cut. For the most part, it is fairly simple to decipher Deighton's conservative editorial choices since Deighton was editing these editions for Indian students. Conversely, Deighton's careful deliberation over plays to exclude from this series might also have to do with the cultural renaissance impacting the colonial book market during the time he was publishing his editions. Even though the openness to new literature was a part of this movement, it was also concerned with avoiding rampant sexuality and raunchiness in literature—all qualities relatively common in many of Shakespeare's plays. As a result, Deighton appears to have worked only with plays that are comedies or romances or boast reputations grand enough for critics to overlook questionable issues such as excessive violence and gore, for example, in tragedies like *Hamlet* and *Macbeth*. Deighton's editorial choices also highlight the interplay between the development of the editorial tradition and the consolidation of the British Empire. Leah S. Marcus cogently explains the rationale for sanitizing Shakespeare for a colonial market:

Colonial educators were not necessarily unaware that Britain had committed outrages in the course of its conquest and government of its territories. They saw Shakespeare as a force that could heal the breaches they had created through the messy, violent process of colonization by appealing across political and cultural differences to the common humanity they shared with their subaltern students. Shakespeare had to be innocent of colonial designs so that he could deliver the colonial message. (Marcus 23)

In spite of any perceived misgivings regarding the harsh realities of colonization, positioning colonial editions of Shakespeare as shining examples of all that is refined, cultured, and English only served the imperial agenda and has left a lasting impression on Shakespeare studies. The mere fact that colonial editions of Shakespeare have been reprinted in this century and continue to reintroduce audiences to editorial choices made in service to the British Empire validates the importance of post-colonial study of Shakespeare.<sup>3</sup>

### **Case Study: Deighton's Editions of Shakespeare**

Because the English Classics series as a whole was ultimately deemed unsuccessful, it is necessary to examine how Deighton's Shakespeare editions might have contributed to the failure of the series in India, and what kinds of

---

<sup>3</sup> See Forgotten Books' 2012 Classic Reprint series.



cultural resistance they encountered. For this purpose, I will briefly examine only Deighton's editions of *Merchant of Venice* and *Othello*.

Although Deighton's organization seems simple enough, based on the table of contents, the formatting for his editions is off-putting if the target audience is meant to be students (Indian or not). To clarify, in each edition, the play and notes are separated, so students who wish to utilize the notes section will consistently need to flip to the back of the book to read Deighton's annotations; moreover, there are no indicators within the text of each play to represent which words or phrases are further explained or defined in the notes section.<sup>4</sup> Theoretically, the lack of such indicators makes the notes section somewhat useless, which is a problem in and of itself, but especially because it was not uncommon for other educational texts produced at the time to use small dots or circles to mark words for which editors had provided annotations.<sup>5</sup> In spite of this flaw in formatting, should any students demonstrate the incredible patience required to utilize Deighton's notes sections, they would be assaulted by entirely too many notes that are largely philological in nature, not consistently useful, and appear to underestimate their intellectual capacity. For example, Deighton's half-page annotation for the first instance of the word "it" in *Merchant of Venice* is far too much detail, in comparison to his rather vague explanation of the word "stuff" as a word that is "often used by Shakespeare ... of non-material things, e.g. *J. C.* iii. 2. 97, 'Ambition should be made of sterner stuff'" (*MV* I.i.2; *MV* I.i.4; 82). And even when Deighton's notes appear to be useful, the details are vague. This can be seen in *Othello* when he annotates "God bless the mark!" and explains, "No satisfactory explanation of the origin of this phrase has yet been discovered. Kelly says it was used by the Scotch in comparing one person with another" (*Oth.* I.i.33; 109). In spite of the explanation for the phrase being somewhat unclear, the larger problem is this is the only instance where the name Kelly appears in the entire edition, placing the credibility of the person Deighton has cited as indeterminate and indeterminable. Half-page annotations for simple words, referencing examples of words in Shakespeare's other plays as definitions for certain terms that appear in Deighton's editions, and notes that are unhelpful overall seem unnecessary. The frustrating organization and excess of information, factored in with the language barrier many students surely experienced, makes Deighton's editions impractical for all audiences.

---

<sup>4</sup> This frustrating organization was standard practice at the time. The more modern practice of including footnotes located at the bottom of any given page would come later.

<sup>5</sup> Oxford University Press and Penguin Books are two publishers whose editions featured small dots or circles to indicate words with annotations in the notes section. By the time Macmillan produced the Pocket Classics series for the American market, they also adopted this technique as standard practice.

All of Deighton's editions of Shakespeare's plays are similarly dense; his edition of *Merchant of Venice* includes 89 pages of notes and a four-page index to the notes, following an 82-page play and 20-page introduction, and his edition of *Othello* includes 95 pages of notes and a four-page index to the notes, following a 107-page play and 12-page introduction. It appears almost as though the strategy was to colonize the Indian reader's mind by overwhelming it with information Deighton had no guarantee that foreign students would diligently read. Each edition begins with an introduction that provides an outline of the play, historical context, important dates, and other relevant facts, but often, the information is not useful for readers since Deighton either fails to take a firm stance on issues he chooses to discuss or outright refuses to elaborate on certain points. For example, when he introduces the Wilson-Halpin Double Time theory in his introduction for *Othello*, he only explains it is a theory regarding how time passes in the play but does not elaborate further because apparently "it is impossible to discuss here" (*Oth.* xii). Deighton is similarly vague at the end of his introduction for *Othello*, where his final remarks declare that it would be impossible "to summarize even upon a single point the vast mass of criticism which in England, Germany, America, and France has grown up round *Othello*," and then addresses Indian students specifically:

To Indian students, to those at all events who are reading the play for the B. A. degree, I would suggest that they should confine themselves to some one commentator; and of all the commentators with whom I am acquainted, Hudson in his *Shakespeare: his Life, Art and Characters*, seems to give in the simplest language the most satisfactory conspectus of the various points of interest, together with a clear and intelligent analysis of all the important characters in the play. (*Oth.* xviii)

This note is strange, considering the point of Deighton's introduction is to provide "a clear and intelligent analysis of all the important characters in the play," so it does not make sense for him to advise readers consult a different book for the same purpose<sup>6</sup> (*Oth.* xviii). Furthermore, Hudson's summary of *Othello* is an odd reference for Deighton to point his readers to, given Hudson was American and explicitly defined himself against Britain, and also because Deighton seems reluctant to express bold statements about characters and plot points in his introduction, while Hudson's summary is incredibly problematic as

---

<sup>6</sup> Many books at the time contained introductory notes explaining the purpose of a specific book, but pointed messages addressed to students were rare both in books produced for the colonial market and those produced for other venues such as the American market. Even across Deighton's editions, his message to the reader in *Othello* stands apart from his other introductory notes.

it is brazenly racist and sexist, among other things.<sup>7</sup> Perhaps that was the point. For example, after an excessive discussion questioning whether Othello is black at all (Hudson surmises perhaps he was “a dark-skinned white person”), Hudson claims Desdemona’s beauty is a result of her ability to appreciate Othello for his “unattractive appearance” and also praises Iago for his cleverness in using Othello’s “peculiar features” in harassing him and creating lies about him<sup>8</sup> (Hudson 449, 455). In fact, Hudson echoes many Romantic-era critics and spends a great deal of his summary lauding Iago’s character, describing his mind as “sleepless, unrelenting, inexhaustible, with an energy that never flags, and an alertness that nothing can surprise, he outwits every obstacle, and turns it into a help,” while repeatedly criticizing Othello for falling victim to Iago’s manipulation. The only time Hudson seems to praise Othello is at the end of his summary, when he claims Othello’s murder of Desdemona is “the most heroic self-sacrifice” since “the taking of Desdemona’s life is to him far worse than to lose his own,” which does not seem very heroic at all, as it strips Desdemona of her humanity (Hudson 460).

One might argue Hudson’s words cannot be held against Deighton, in spite of Deighton’s endorsement of Hudson’s book; however, Deighton’s deliberate effort to avoid including notes that might in any way encourage Indian readers to reflect on the ways in which they differ from their British rulers as Othello and Shylock differ from others in Venice speaks volumes.<sup>9</sup> To clarify, Shakespeare’s characters occasionally highlight the social implications of fair

---

<sup>7</sup> Hudson’s commentary on Shakespeare “occurred when modern English departments were first taking shape” and, therefore, greatly influenced the state of Shakespeare studies in the western world (Bayer 274). As a result, Deighton likely overlooked Hudson’s pointed criticism against the intellectual pretension he claimed pervaded Britain’s critical establishment and, instead, appears to focus on how Hudson approaches Shakespeare studies as a way to engage readers “from all walks of life and [instill] in them a sense of moral personhood”—a goal that aligns well with Macaulay’s “Minute” and the overall imperial agenda (Bayer 276).

<sup>8</sup> Ania Loomba depicts the early seventeenth century as “either the last period in history where ethnic identities could be understood as fluid, or as the first moment of the emergence of modern notions of ‘race’” (203). “Colonial assumptions” such as Hudson’s are rooted in the impulse to align Shakespeare’s heroes and themes in such a way that they may be viewed favorably with imperial English values. Thus, to illustrate Othello unquestionably as a person of color would be to associate the colonial “other,” as well as the other “uncomfortable” elements of his character, with Englishness (Marcus 11).

<sup>9</sup> Oddly, this was one of Hudson’s points, at least in an American context. But it seems Deighton only refers to Hudson’s scholarship so long as it aids him in propelling Britain’s imperial mission, which further adds to the incorrect assumptions he made about the colonial market that eventually would cause the English Classics series to fail in India.

and dark skin, but Deighton carefully avoids discussing the significance of such instances in his annotations. For example, in his introduction for *Othello*, he fails to mention Othello's skin color, and how it might have played a role in Othello's jealousy and Iago's ability to manipulate him so skillfully. Addressing how race is handled in Shakespeare plays that include racial themes is crucial to connecting with the characters and plot, as it enables audiences to "recognize and talk about the barriers that divide us and suggest ways that we can rethink and improve on our collective responsibility of living together in a plural society" (Smith 124). Furthermore, many non-white characters in Renaissance drama are minor or side characters, often depicted rudely as stereotypes; thus, critical discussions about race are even more important in examinations of a play like *Othello*, which features a black man as the protagonist—as a character who cannot be dismissed as a mere caricature (Hendricks 6). Regardless of Deighton's own stance on race, he is absolutely at fault for completely avoiding the mention of the topic in his notes for *Othello* as it is an integral part of the title character's development and the discourse surrounding the play. The persistent negative commentary Othello must endure essentially labels him as "other" and becomes the seed for much of his self-doubt throughout the play; so, even though Othello does not detest his own skin color, it is important for Deighton to point out the ways in which people use the fact of it against him. Indian readers might have been more receptive to Deighton's edition of *Othello* if he had made more of an effort to include annotations and notes that reflect the fact that colonial subjects under British rule cannot experience Deighton's edition of *Othello* with the same appreciation or perspective as a reader, editor, or publisher with a decidedly British background and imperial agenda.

Deighton once again dodges mentioning skin color in his plot summary for *Merchant of Venice*, a play that is solely about conflicts that arise from differing religious and cultural ideals. In the play, when Portia prepares to see potential suitors, she declares, "If he have the condition / of a saint, and the complexion of a devil, I had / rather he should shrive me than wive me," indicating that marrying someone with a dark or "devilish" skin tone would be less than favorable (*MV* I.ii.123-25). And later, when the Prince of Morocco, a moor, chooses the wrong casket and fails the test designed to find a suitable husband for Portia, she states with relief, "Let all of his complexion choose me so" (*MV* II.vii.77). Deighton, however, glosses over the Prince of Morocco's small yet significant role as a potential suitor, never even mentioning in his copious introductory notes that he is a moor, and he also fails to consider Portia's conflicted views regarding race and culture. The closest Deighton comes to writing about character details that bring to light differences between Indians and their British counterparts is in his notes about Caliban and Prospero from *The Tempest*, who represent the colonized and their colonizers, respectively. A post-colonial reading of Caliban "champion[s him] as the first rebel to

misread and re-write what he has learned under Prospero's instruction: he takes Prospero's language as his own, using it to deny Prospero's version of reality and to subvert Prospero's rule" (Brydon 75). Deighton, however, labels Caliban as "a devil who has known no other state than his fallen one. To Prospero he owes it that he possesses the faculty of speech ... Fear is the only motive by which he can be held in obedience" (*Tmp.* xvii-xviii). And Prospero, though at fault for studying magic and losing his kingdom on account of his inability to be an effective ruler, should be revered for how "he liberates Ariel from the spell by which Sycorax had bound him and ... employs him ... for such purposes only as are beneficent," for how "he devotes himself to the education of Miranda," and for how "he endeavours, so far as it is possible to humanize the brutal Caliban" (*Tmp.* xiii). In essence, in the rare instances when Deighton cannot ignore character details that emphasize differences, his words clearly paint a picture wherein the British are depicted—even symbolically—as a boon to their subjects.

Deighton also fails to address adequately Shylock's ostracization throughout *Merchant of Venice*, which is clearly evidenced in his notes from Act 1, Scene 3, when Antonio and Bassanio have a laugh at Shylock's expense when they invite him to dine with them as they eat pork for dinner. Deighton's note explains that pork is "an abomination to Jews," and then he goes on to elaborate further, "for the miracle in which Christ, when casting out the devils with which two men were possessed, caused them to enter into a herd of swine, see *Matthew*" (*MV* 97). Deighton's choice to refer only to information from the Bible further demonstrates how he used his editions to push purely English values and culture.<sup>10</sup> While it is easy to comprehend why Deighton would annotate in this manner—and Macmillan by extension since the publisher essentially endorsed the editor's notes—it is equally understandable why such methods would not be entirely convincing or stimulating to an otherwise intelligent Indian readership, a group already somewhat familiar with Shakespeare, including the educators who would peruse Macmillan's editions before choosing or refusing to pass them along to students.

Another possibility as to why the English Classics series did not sell well, resulting in the failure of the series as a whole, is that Macmillan was competing with itself. At the time, Alexander Macmillan's 1864 Globe edition of Shakespeare's collected works was selling for \$1.75, while Deighton's

---

<sup>10</sup> This cultural insensitivity is not unlike Ballantyne's religious insensitivity in the preface of his edition of *Macbeth*, where he discourages "young Hindus" from becoming preoccupied with long, challenging passages, "which the Indian pupil is prone to do, as the flesh-fly is to settle on the tainted specks in the sirloin" (qtd. in Marcus 135). As Marcus goes on to point out, "most if not all [Indian students] were probably vegetarian, and in any case unlikely to consume like 'flies' the flesh of an animal revered by Hindus."

individual editions of the Shakespeare plays were selling for 40 cents each (*Catalogue*). These are prices to the booksellers, who would then mark up those prices to make a profit based on their understanding of local Indian economies and book markets. However, a comparison of prices cannot be the only component considered when sales numbers are factored since Macmillan allowed colonial booksellers to set their own prices for books being sold in India, and booksellers' prices were not consistent or deemed important enough to maintain records (Chatterjee, "Macmillan in India" 155). In fact, the practice of allowing booksellers to set their own prices continues today with major British publishers such as Macmillan, Routledge, and Oxford University Press.

The next time Macmillan prepared individual educational editions of Shakespeare's plays was with the Pocket Classics series, which was meant to provide classic literature in books that were easily portable. Though the series appears to have been geared toward an American market, scholars such as Rimi B. Chatterjee have argued Maurice Macmillan's insistence that Deighton's colonial edition not include any India-specific notes makes it possible to compare the Pocket Classics with the English Classics to determine how Macmillan might have learned from the mistakes made in Deighton's editions. For instance, Charlotte Whipple Underwood's 1899 edition of *Merchant of Venice*, published as a part of the Pocket Classics series, includes small circles (°) within the text of the play to indicate words that contain explanatory comments in the notes section. Unfortunately, the notes section is still 77 pages long, followed by a nine-page index to the notes. Of course, there is no stipulation that there should only be a few notes since if many notes are needed, they ought to be included; however, Underwood's notes are often excessive and unhelpful, like Deighton's. Furthermore, while Underwood's notes resemble Deighton's, in that both include annotations for several of the same phrases and concepts, Deighton's explanations are not open to interpretation and leave no room for questioning, whereas many of Underwood's notes seem geared toward inspiring more critical thinking in students. For example, when Underwood includes an endnote for the term "want-wit" from *Merchant of Venice*, instead of explaining what the term means, her annotation reads as follows: "Of the several meanings given in the dictionary for *wit*, which is the one intended here?" (*MV* I.i.6; 122). Deighton, on the other hand, provides a somewhat vague note, though leaves no room for questioning by explaining that "want-wit" is an "appellation ... which [Antonio] gives himself" (82). Underwood's notes also include pronunciation guides, such as how the word "ocean" from "Your mind is tossing on the ocean" should be "[pronounced] as a trisyllable" to remain consistent with iambic pentameter; Deighton, in contrast, never provides notes to assist with proper pronunciation (*MV* I.i.8; 122). Deighton's decidedly poor editing choices further indicate he did not care for his Indian readers—a typical colonial attitude.

Overall, Underwood's annotations illustrate a good balance between providing clear explanations for terms or ideas students might find confusing or unfamiliar while also encouraging critical thought—a marked improvement on Deighton's editions. After all, the primary reason why British publishers were making educational texts for Indian students was, in part, to teach them how to think, feel, and be British. Most likely, critical thinking was not something deemed important to stress in British-produced educational texts meant for Indian students, even though Parna Sengupta's examination of the "object lesson" shows that colonial India was actually very much interested in teaching students to think critically (96-97).

Oddly enough, when the English Classics series was a failure in the colonial market, Macmillan was able to sell the surplus of print copies to English students who appreciated the plethora of notes and used Deighton's editions almost like an early version of *SparkNotes* since "they had been more fully and considerately annotated than ordinary English textbooks," according to many students who wanted to avoid the critical thinking aspects of education and preferred straightforward answers for their exams and papers instead<sup>11</sup> (Chatterjee, "Macmillan in India" 157). This reaction in the English market resulted in at least three reprints of Deighton's colonial edition of *Merchant of Venice* during the Age of Imperialism; so, the English Classics managed to turn a profit anyway because they were successful in the English market.

## Cultural Rejection as a Form of Resistance

Imperial Britain's goal to use propaganda, products, and texts, as is the case in this study, to somehow change colonial India into a satellite Britain was flawed from its inception. Cultures appropriate texts they deem useful and reject those they do not because it is not the text that gives meaning to the culture that has claimed it, but rather the culture that gives meaning to the text. The most significant outcome of Macmillan's failure with the English Classics series is that in attempting to limit and control colonial India's interpretation of

---

<sup>11</sup> Andrew Murphy discusses how later editions such as the Arden Shakespeare, for which Deighton edited three editions after his work with Macmillan, followed an approach similar to school editions like the English Classics by assigning specific texts to individual editors who worked under general editors' supervision (207). Marcus argues the lingering colonial influences pulled into subsequent editions of Shakespeare highlight the lasting influence of Macmillan's publications, the persistence of the imperial mission—particularly in the development of English studies as a field, as Gauri Vishwanathan establishes in *Masks of Conquest*—and the dovetailing of both in post-colonial Shakespeare studies.

Shakespeare only to what is expressed in Deighton's editions, they inadvertently removed their Shakespeare texts from being considered by Indian citizens at all.

By 1905, Macmillan realized that if Indians were rejecting their texts, then they needed to use other means to sell them. Macmillan did so by signing an exclusive deal with Bombay, India, where publishing of school textbooks "was solely in the hands of the government," that promised Bombay would only purchase educational textbooks from Macmillan. Naturally, other British publishers were jealous of such an incredible contract and tried to find ways to impinge on Macmillan's deal with Bombay—all to no avail; Macmillan was able to maintain a good relationship with the colonial market and profit from the deal with Bombay for over twenty years (Chatterjee, "How India Took" 107). In essence, even though Macmillan initially approached the colonial market incorrectly by overlooking the value Indians understandably place on their own cultures and perceptions of the world, investigating the failure of the English Classics series in India displays how Macmillan was able to revise its relationship and marketing strategies toward colonial India.

It is important to note, however, that Macmillan and Deighton did not really care how Indians received Shakespeare, given Deighton's editions did not contain enough contextual information to make the texts have any value to Indian readers. Both failed to acknowledge that Indians' engagement with Shakespeare did not originate with the English Classics series; thus, it is no surprise Indians almost instantly rejected Western interpretations of Shakespeare as peddled by the colonial British since such texts ignored the reality of Indian adaptations that preceded British rule, that Shakespeare studies in India while perhaps not robust as in Britain, was nevertheless already a viable field of education (Lynch 256; Ganapathy-Doré 10). Sensing rejection of and possible resistance to colonial cultural influences, the British passed censorship laws to prevent public Indian performances of Shakespeare in languages other than English in hopes of controlling British efforts to Anglicize India, but some Indians were able to resist this means of control as well by performing Shakespeare in English with Indian cultural elements incorporated into stage performances such as the ones produced by Utpal Dutt early in his career. These performances featured cultural symbols and values relatable to local audiences, connecting with Indian citizens far more effectively than Macmillan's English Classics series. Macmillan's initial unyielding commitment to Macaulay's imperial agenda prevented them from understanding that Shakespeare could be significant and memorable for Indians, as evidenced by India's rich history of colonial and post-colonial adaptation and appropriation of Shakespeare.



## WORKS CITED

- Alexander, Catherine M. S., and Stanley Wells, eds. *Shakespeare and Race*. London: Cambridge University Press, 2001.
- Altick, Richard D. "From Aldine To Everyman: Cheap Reprint Series Of The English Classics, 1830-1906." *Studies In Bibliography* 11 (1958): 3-24. *MLA International Bibliography*.
- Banerji, Rangana. "'Every College Student Knows By Heart': The Uses Of Shakespeare In Colonial Bengal." *The Shakespearean International Yearbook*. London: Routledge, 2012. 29-42
- Bayer, Mark. "Henry Norman Hudson and the Origins of American Shakespeare Studies." *Shakespeare Quarterly* 68.3 (2017): 271-95. *JSTOR*.
- Brydon, Diana. "Re-writing *The Tempest*." *World Literature Written in English* 23.1 (1984): 75-88. Web. 29 March 2016.
- Catalogue of the Publications and Importations of the Macmillan Company*. New York: Macmillan, 1907.
- Chatterjee, Rimi B. "How India Took to the Book: British Publishers at Work under the Raj." *Les Mutations Du Livre Et De L'édition Dans Le Monde Du Xviiiè Siècle À L'an 2000: Actes Du Colloque International Sherbrooke 2000*. Eds. Jacques Michon and Jean-Yves Mollier, Sainte Foy, Québec: Presses de l'Université Laval, 2001. 100-121.
- Chatterjee, Rimi B. "Macmillan in India: A Short Account of the Company's Trade with the Sub-Continent." *Macmillan: A Publishing Tradition*. Ed. Elizabeth James, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002. 153-69.
- Cunningham, Karen. "Shakespeare, The Public, And Public Education." *Shakespeare Quarterly* 49.3 (1998): 293-298. *MLA International Bibliography*.
- Ganapathy-Doré, Geetha. "Shakespeare In Rushdie/Shakespearean Rushdie." *Atlantis: Revista De La Asociación Española De Estudios Ingleses Y Norteamericanos* 31.2 (2009): 9-22. *MLA International Bibliography*.
- Ghosh, Anindita. "An Uncertain 'Coming Of The Book:': Early Print Cultures In Colonial India." *Book History* 6 (2003): 23-55. *MLA International Bibliography*.
- Hendricks, Margo. "Surveying 'Race' in Shakespeare." *Shakespeare and race*. Eds. Catherine M. S. Alexander and Stanley Wells. London: Cambridge University Press, 2001. 1-22.
- Holmer, Joan Ozark. "The Education Of The Merchant Of Venice." *SEL: Studies In English Literature, 1500-1900* 25.2 (1985): 307-335. *MLA International Bibliography*.
- Hudson, Henry Norman. *Shakespeare: His Life, Art, and Characters*. Boston: Ginn & Company, 1872.
- Joshi, Priya. "Culture And Consumption: Fiction, The Reading Public, And The British Novel In Colonial India." *Book History* 1 (1998): 196-220. *MLA International Bibliography*.
- Loomba, Ania. "'Delicious Traffick:': Racial and Religious Differences on Early Modern Stages." *Shakespeare and race*. Eds. Catherine M. S. Alexander and Stanley Wells. London: Cambridge University Press, 2001. 203-24.

- Lynch, Jack. *Becoming Shakespeare*. New York: Walker & Company, 2007.
- “Macmillan Publishers Ltd.” *Encyclopaedia Britannica*. Encyclopaedia Britannica, Inc., 2016. Encyclopaedia Britannica. Web. 8 May 2018.
- Marcus, Leah S. *How Shakespeare Became Colonial: Editorial Tradition and the British Empire*. New York: Routledge, 2017.
- Murphy, Andrew. *Shakespeare in Print: A History and Chronology of Shakespeare Publishing*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021.
- Panofsky, Ruth. “One Series after Another: The Macmillan Company of Canada.” *The Culture Of The Publisher’s Series, Volume Two: Nationalisms And The National Canon*. Ed. John Spiers, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011. 184-98.
- Scheil, Katherine. “Women Reading Shakespeare in the Outpost: Rural Reading Groups, Literary Culture and Civic Life in America.” *Readings on Audience and Textual Materiality*. Eds. Graham Allen, Carrie Griffin, and Mary O’Connell, London: Pickering & Chatto, 2011. 91-9.
- Sengupta, Parna. “An Object Lesson In Colonial Pedagogy.” *Comparative Studies In Society And History* 45.1 (2003): 96-121. *MLA International Bibliography*.
- Sirkin, Gerald, and Natalie Robinson Sirkin. “The Battle Of Indian Education: Macaulay’s Opening Salvo Newly Discovered.” *Victorian Studies: A Journal Of The Humanities, Arts And Sciences* 14 (1971): 407-428. *MLA International Bibliography*.
- Shakespeare, William. *The Merchant of Venice*. Ed. Charlotte Whipple Underwood. New York: Macmillan & Co., 1899.
- Shakespeare, William. *The Merchant of Venice*. Ed. Kenneth Deighton. London: Macmillan & Co., 1890.
- Shakespeare, William. *Othello: The Moor of Venice*. Ed. Kenneth Deighton. London: Macmillan & Co., 1890.
- Shakespeare, William. *The Tempest*. Ed. Kenneth Deighton. London: Macmillan & Co., 1890.
- Smith, Ian. “We Are Othello: Speaking of Race in Early Modern Studies.” *Shakespeare Quarterly* 67.1 (2016): 104-124. *JSTOR*.
- Stephenson, Adam. “The Whig Interpretation Of History Applied To The Empire: Macaulay’s Minute On Indian Education.” *Cercles: Revue Pluridisciplinaire Du Monde Anglophone* 24 (2012): 29-45. *MLA International Bibliography*.
- Towheed, Shafquat. “Negotiating the List: Launching Macmillan’s Colonial Library and Author Contracts.” *The Culture Of The Publisher’s Series, Volume Two: Nationalisms And The National Canon*. Ed. John Spiers. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011. 134-51.