

Such Stuff podcast
Season 6, Episode 3: How whiteness dominates education

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Imogen Greenberg: Hello and welcome to another episode of Such Stuff, the podcast from Shakespeare's Globe.

This week we're bringing you another episode from our series on **Shakespeare and Race**.

Last week's episode looked at the way whiteness has dominated the way we read the works of Shakespeare from the first moment we pick up a play.

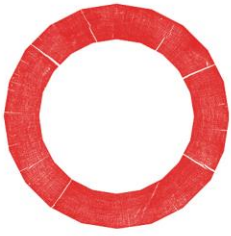
In this week's episode, we're gonna take a closer look at the education system, and how we're teaching our next generations.

The way we teach and learn is so important for the way we understand the world if that education is permeated with this idea that whiteness is the norm and everything else is the other that is what we take out into the world. And when it comes to Shakespeare it means generations are brought up with a narrow set of ideas about what Shakespeare's plays mean, who they are for, and why they matter. More and more across schools, universities and drama schools we're hearing calls to decolonise the curriculum. In this episode we'll be exploring what that means and what a decolonised curriculum might look like. And of course we'll be asking what that means in the way we learn the works of Shakespeare.

The audio quality on this isn't quite what we'd normally offer you, the perils of working and recording from home, but please do stick with us.

Here's our very own Professor Farah Karim-Cooper.

Farah Karim-Cooper: In this episode of our podcast series on whiteness and education we explore the ways in which systemic

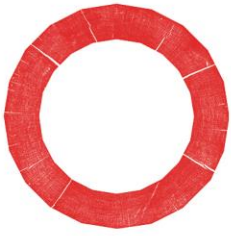


racism permeates the educational context. Our very own Dr Will Tosh speaks to Dr Shona Hunter, Reader in the Carnegie School of Education at Leeds Beckett University, where she is a member in the Centre for Race Education and Decoloniality. She and Will discuss her work at the Centre and on critical whiteness studies, an academic discipline which studies how whiteness works as a formation of power and how it feeds into racism. We'll also hear from playwright, actor and recently head of acting at ArtsEd London Steven Kavuma who is also founder of the Diversity School Initiative, which was set up to address underrepresentation and diversity in drama schools in the UK. I sat down with him via zoom to discuss his own experiences of drama school and the structural racism at the heart of actor training in this country.

[Music plays]

FK-C: So I'm here with Steven Kavuma. Steven thank you so much for agreeing to participate in our podcast, it's so great to have you and I know you've been involved with Globe events in the past so it's really great to welcome you back. I met you really because of your work in the Diversity School, and I know that you're really passionate about drama school training. So I wanted to ask you first of all how you would characterise the whiteness of drama school training in the UK?

Steven Kavuma: That's a really good question and I don't think there is a set answer for that question. I think it's sort of about the curriculum, it's about the people who are there, it's about the building, the space, it's you know also about the language that people use and that whiteness seeps in through many things. I don't know there's something very uncomfortable being, being at drama schools and knowing that you're in a space that doesn't facilitate for you. And there's also something very uncomfortable in knowing that you are a minority inside that place, that, that school, that thing because there's so many other people who don't look like you. When I was at Central I was the only black male in a year of 90 students so already I had to navigate my way around that school and think about ok how is it gonna work right? What conversations

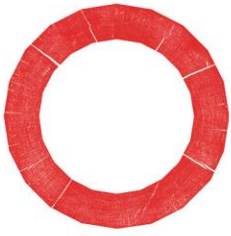


would I be having? And then when we were talking about race, and it always felt like I was that person who was defending my right to exist or my right to-to be, and then often really weird bizarrely it kind of steered onto the conversation about like the diversity of the institution, so it was like ok cool white people know that there's a problem but nobody really wants to do anything about it. But yeah I think whiteness in drama schools is about many things, there's the culture of drama schools that is so white, you know that enables white people and then there is the-the language and the building itself, like for example when you walk into central you see these steps, and these steps are the famous actors and directors and people who graduated at Central who are white, and then when you go up the steps you're greeted by this amazing portrait of the founder of the school that has gold frames which straight away tells you about class, then you get into the corridor and you see this massive glass golden chandelier that again represents class and represents whiteness already in a space that you know, oh crap I've never been around this space before and this space isn't facilitated for me. Yeah, it's very uncomfortable.

FK-C: Did you get a sense there was an awareness about your feelings of alienation in that way in the school?

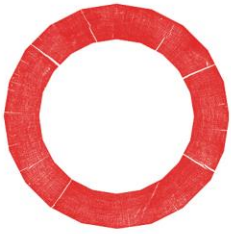
SK: At times I did but also I think people didn't want to hear it, so there's a sense of knowing that there's a problem but nobody really wanting to address it or unpick it or even talk about it. So then you always feel like you're the person who's having to drag or push or fight for having this conversation when really and truly it shouldn't be because you're not the one who made the problem, you're just there to study or to be a student so you unpicking the problem as the student really shouldn't be your job because you didn't create it.

FK-C: Yes. So I mean the next thing I was gonna ask you about were those specific challenges as a student from start to finish, I wonder if you could talk a little bit about for example the texts that you were working with? And you said something about language as well, I wonder if you could elaborate on that?



SK: Yeah so I did an applied theatre course in Playwriting at the school and we were in lectures and sometimes seminars and you know I said that look a lot these people that we're referencing or a lot of people that we're looking at and focusing on are white people, and they don't cater or facilitate towards me and my peers. So there was one challenge there and trying to talk to a school and trying to be like please can you change your curriculum, please can you fit your curriculum in line with me because I don't need to know about that person, I need to know about this person because maybe my dissertation might be about myself or like my race and how I navigate, so I need to know I need to know to educate myself, you are a building, an institution that educates, I need educating. And then a lot of my peers who were on the acting course kind of felt like a lot of what they were doing, monologues or the plays that they were doing were written by white men, they were directed by white men, and they never got a chance to really work with directors who were black or brown or directors who were from other-other backgrounds. And then also I think for me a lot of times as a student there was something very uncomfortable seeing black students in these very classical plays, the kind of plays that the Shakespeare or the Chekhov's that in those plays describe blackness as dirty or as a crime, and then you've got black actors in those plays and then they're being referenced to, and then it's like there isn't care, there isn't a care in this, there isn't a care for me as a black audience watching this, there isn't a care for those black people in those plays and that's when I was like ok cool this school is really neglecting the care for black people which was kind of one of the challenges and one of the things that you kind of want to see the school understand and face.

FK-C: That is a challenge with historical texts isn't it and if you're teaching it there's a responsibility you have to understand the language and to sort of open up those conversations in the rehearsal room and the classroom about how this feels and what it means and why we're still doing it and why we're still saying these things in these plays. And I think there's, you correct me if I'm wrong, but I think a lot of faculty in you know Higher Education

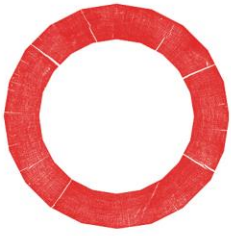


across the board don't have the language to have those conversations.

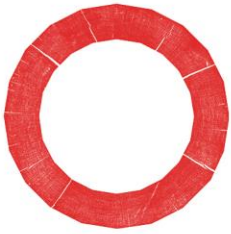
SK: No, no no no and they don't have the lived experience to be able to have those conversations. I brought up something in my first year about wanting to learn more about race and, and race in applied theatre and then we were studying colonisation in applied theatre, and when we were studying it we were in this boardroom and at the time it had their famous alumni around and all the faces were white faces, so I was in this room, there were two black people in this lesson and surrounded by this class of all white people and then we were learning about colonisation and the person who was teaching us colonisation was this white guy, and it's things like that where you just have to take yourself out of it and think like is this actually happening, this is actually crazy that you can't make it up. Yeah so there isn't anyone in there to- who know about these conversations, who feel, understand it, or are able to do justice to teaching then, do you know what I mean.

FK-C: Yeah. Can you tell me about the Diversity School and you know what it does and why you set it up?

SK: Yeah so the Diversity School was set up because there was a real need to put diversity and representation in drama schools on the agenda. So I felt being alienated, I felt having to fight for my right to be there, I felt yeah excluded out of the curriculum and out of the student body so I wanted for us to have those conversations and be able to say to the school why should I feel like this? And what are you gonna do about it to change it, so then kind of set up Diversity School to do that to have that conversation with schools? Obviously over like 4, 5 years it has now grown and it's an organisation that supports students to empower them to be able to ask or to feel like they can ask uncomfortable questions because I think there's that thing about being a student, especially in a drama school, but being grateful that you were given a place and being reminded that somebody could replace you, that 1000 people auditioned or you know 10,000 people auditioned and I selected you so you should be happy that you are here. So automatically that



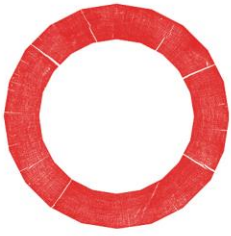
kind of silences you so you don't feel that you have that voice or able to speak, on top of all the other stuff, on top of race, on top of class and you know disability. So we kind of wanted to make sure that students were able to question their training in a way that wasn't the conventional way of doing so, so like if they wanted to have protest they could have a protest if they wanted to have a petition they can do that, and they wouldn't have to feel like anything is gonna happen to them for doing that because that's their right, you know they are paying there to be there so of course they should be able to question their training. But also the other thing was to be able to support drama schools in order to do these things and we identify from the get-go like the change that we wanted to see was about all the structural change so it was about the curriculum changing, it was about the teachers changing, the freelance teachers changing, so we kind of identify that from the beginning. And a lot of what we've been doing is working closely with five drama schools on how they can improve and structurally change policy, but also to understand these problems because a lot of you know institutions have heads and principals who have no idea of these things, that's why Gavin Henderson was able to say what he said at Dear White Central where he said that he thinks that bringing in more black students or students of colour would put the quality of the school down, but there's no one else who's challenging it or saying actually Gavin that's a really racist thought and we should be actually striving for diversity because diversity is the thing that makes us great right that's the thing that improves us, the more people we have round the table the more thoughts and ideas we have. It's been really interesting kind of seeing how we were four years ago and where we are now, and I think we started there was a difficult thing of trying to put this thing on the agenda, it's now on the agenda people know it, and now the kind of work we are having to do is to push and push and push for that change. It's already happening, it's not a coincidence that ArtsEd have Julie Spencer and LAMDA have Sarah Frankcom and Guildhall have Ola, like all these people who have been pushing for change and doing it and are doing it, you know if you look at ArtsEd they have like massively improved in terms of their diversity and Julie has been spearheading that which is amazing to see but we can now



see the change in some ways but there's still more pushing that we need to do.

FK-C: Yes you must feel quite hopeful then, if you're, if you're seeing that kind of shift in five years, that's extraordinary. So thinking about what we've been discussing in terms of the drama student experience and when finishing now, so obviously due to the pandemic theatres are in a crisis and they're thinking about their existential lives and whether or not they're actually going to exist beyond this pandemic so I'm just wondering if you could say a little bit about what you think about the future of theatre in terms of representation given the situation that we're in. When theatres start to recover what will you see, what do you hope to see regarding representation?

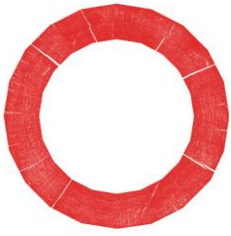
SK: I mean I hope to see theatres have lessons and I hope that theatres have used this time to readdress their problems. With everything that's happened I think you know COVID happening is one thing so that gives you time, but even the whole thing that's happened with George Floyd kind of gives you time to understand and unpick these things, so I hope that theatres have done that work and when we come back we can come back to theatres and institutions that look like the communities that we live in, but I don't think it will happen and I'm really pessimistic because I think a lot of theatres right now are in need of making money and the problem with this industry it never sees the work in terms of diversity or you know in terms of black work or brown work it never sees that work as able to make box office like hits it never sees that, it always sees it as a risk and that's why people always say 'I'm taking a chance on you I really wanna give you this opportunity' and we're never in the mainstream. So I think with everything that's happened now I don't think we're gonna be in the mainstream, I think it's gonna push us right back, we're gonna have to push and push and push. Before COVID hit theatres were taking amazing steps to do this work and they were you know working with commissioning artists that look and sound like us and the stories that mirror our lived experiences, but I think we're gonna see that go backwards because to them that work doesn't make money in a way as like I



don't know putting you know celebrities are gonna sell tickets, let's put Chekhov, Chekhov's gonna sell, so I think we're gonna go backwards but I hope that theatres have taken this time because I know theatre's gonna come back, so people saying 'I don't know if theatre's gonna come back' it's a ridiculous question it is gonna come back but it's a matter of how we come back as an industry that's more important and how we make and open our doors so that they are more inclusive and accessible. In terms of film and theatre, film looks and sounds more like us, you know I'm not saying it's amazing, I'm not saying it's brilliant TV and film have their challenges but in terms of looking at the catalogue or the cannon film and TV is kind of leading on that so if film and TV was dying there would be more an uproar but because theatre isn't accessible there isn't an uproar in our communities to save this thing because it's never reflected us, like why should we save it, why should we be out protesting, so I think theatre needs to take this time to really look about how they can be more inclusive and accessible so that everyone feels like theatre is for them, you know.

FK-C: So do you think a lot of those solidarity statements that came out after the murder of George Floyd do you think that that was just band wagoning?

SK: Oh absolutely, absolutely was, and it's really sad, it's so sad because at the beginning of when it happened we black people, people who have faced racism have put ourselves in the very uncomfortable positions to do the labour and the work when it first took place and theatre's wanted to speak to us or theatre's wanted to discuss it and they said they're gonna readdress it and they're gonna do it. But since then lots of theatres and organisations have been very very quiet, we don't know if they even have an action plan, we don't know what they're gonna do in terms of these issues, it's been like tweet something, change your dp, hashtag something and then be silent. And this thing that's come up that's called 'Pull up or shut up' which is an amazing thing that's come up, I don't know if you've seen it, but all these stats are coming out and they show us what we're seeing, what we've always known so there's something very deeply saddening about seeing it in black and



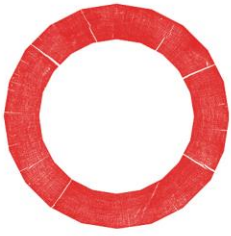
white. White people know that some things you just gotta do, you know you don't need a diversity specialist to tell you you need to programme more black work, you need to work with more black artists, you need to develop black artists or black directors, that's basically common sense right, the fact that you get a diversity specialist is just to prolong change because they don't want to do it so I think it's, even that seeing organisations take part in that but yet still not give a detailed kind of action plan, or then wanting to address this seriously and take it on just shows where we might be in the future.

FK-C: Yeah that's, it's a hard reality but it is a reality and you're absolutely right about, well if we get a diversity specialist then you know it looks like we're doing something, you know it's really easy to interpret it that way.

SK: Absolutely, it's a lot easier than doing the work.

FK-C: Yeah absolutely. So the question that we're asking everybody who participates in our podcast is do you have any thoughts about how to decolonise Shakespeare? And the reason I ask this question is because you know it's something that as the Head of Research at the Globe who works on Shakespeare and Race it's something that I've been wanting to do for a long time but a lot of people don't know what that means and-and how you go about and you know you may not need to talk about Shakespeare but talking about decolonising the canon or you know the texts that students in drama school and that universities and schools are constantly being fed, how do we begin to decolonise that?

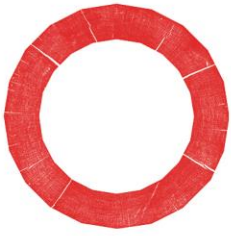
SK: I think we need to break it apart I think we need to completely start afresh or anew. I think the problem is that a lot of these things, Chekhov, Shakespeare, The Globe, Old Vic, The National, they've always seemed as if they belong to a certain group of people so even when you attempt to decolonise it those groups of people will be 'Oh my god, why are you doing that, that's mine' so then you have to make it in a way that sits or has to include them but actually I think you just need to break it all apart and start afresh and be like



what is this, why are we doing this play what does this play represent, what does it mean. I've never seen Shakespeare as someone I can relate to and I'm a playwright and that's crazy, but because in terms of education, and secondary school, primary school and drama school, Shakespeare has always been told as it's something that belongs to white people. It's even the way we perform Shakespeare you know with RP and with people acting as if they're performing in front of the queen, and it's like what does this text mean? Like what is Shakespeare trying to say like? Why are we doing this play? What does it mean? What does it relate to us here? Rather than just doing it because I like it and I think it's gonna sell a lot of tickets if we put this famous actor in it, so I think we need to completely break it apart. I think with actor training I think we need to look at why we do Shakespeare in drama school, why is that necessary? And what does it do for the actor going out of drama school? Why are we training them? I think there needs to be a real like radical look at training and who it really kind of fits and suits, I think we sort of know those answers, we know it suits white people, we know it's catered for them because the way they perform it or the way it's been taught. You know when you look at The Globe, The Globe was sort of this space that was like you know working-class people, I mean it wasn't for the middle class the elite, you know Shakespeare didn't write like that. In a sense when you're doing Shakespeare like that and we're constantly being told this is who Shakespeare is, this is how Shakespeare should be performed, this is the history, we're constantly being told that Shakespeare is not for you, you know. So even decolonising it I don't think is a, I don't think it works really. I think we need to look at Shakespeare as if Shakespeare is an unknown playwright in order to do Shakespeare properly if that makes sense.

FK-C: Totally, to completely dislodge him from the 400 years of construction, yeah.

SK: Absolutely. The fact that this man sort of represents our culture is wrong, you know he doesn't yeah.



FK-C: That is brilliant. I want to thank you for your time and thank you for all the work that you're doing it's amazing.

SK: Thank you for all the work you're doing as well Farah.

FK-C: You take care.

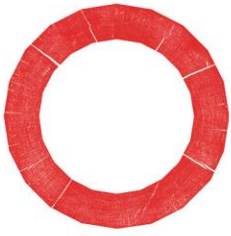
SK: You too have a lovely day.

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IG: Thinking about these experiences and how to make broad lasting change across the sector our very own Dr Will Tosh got in touch with Dr Shona Hunter to take a broader look at what it is about our education system that is broken and how this idea of Whiteness is part of that. They also chatted about what that slightly abstract term decolonising the curriculum might look like in reality for the education sector.

Will Tosh: So Dr Shona Hunter, can you start Shona by telling us what whiteness studies is and why it's important?

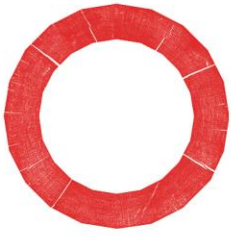
Shona Hunter: Ok so I think the first thing to say is I would always put the critical in front of it, for the most part now most people who are interested in scholarly ideas around whiteness would use that notion of the critical to differentiate what we're interested kind of from a political allegiance with whiteness as a kind of political formation that maybe we'll talk about a little bit more in a moment. It's an area of study that is interested in trying to understand how whiteness works as a formation of power, there's lots of different ways into that so identities of whiteness, kind of white cultures, but usually and certainly from a critical perspective always how this maps into and relates to the issue of racism and structural issues of racial disadvantage are kind of at the core of that. It's probably important to flag up an ambivalence to the notion of whiteness studies and critical whiteness studies as a field of study, really one of the key bones of contention is around the kind of reinstatement of a position of dominance for white people, so this bringing a



scholarly focus onto whiteness actually may be problematic in that it re-centres whiteness which is already kind of a frame of dominance for social life. I suppose where should our concerns lie when we are exploring matters of social justice and when we're addressing issues of systemic inequality. So the issue of the way in which white studies might get kind of tangled up with or be understood as having some sort of an allegiance with white supremacy that's probably less the concern in relation to the way in which critical whiteness studies has developed and it really is more about this kind of white narcissism which can be about reinstating the constant desire to explore all issues from the point of view of people who have always been able to define kind of history if you like.

WT: In that case is there a sense of the field of study is asking us to explore that sense of privilege and narcissism that says a white perspective is seen as the default so let's interrogate that assumption of default rather than just allow it to stand.

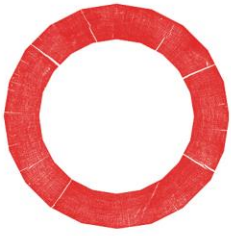
SH: Yes absolutely a key concern is around how do we explore issues of dominance in a way which recognises our bound upness, so I'm a white woman, that's something we haven't kind of talked about yet, but I am a white woman, there are constant sets of questions around that as a starting point really and indeed it wasn't really my starting point actually getting into these issues. I certainly didn't start reading about race and think what about white folks. My background I started off in policy studies, social research which is an important part of policy and policy making was very interested in mapping and understanding the other, so creating an other so I was very interested in the ways in which we were doing social justice research which were actually reinforcing and creating images of people who were unequal systemically but also potentially figures of victimhood. It's power that interests me, thinking about radically reforming systems of power, I mean that's really where my interests lie. Really an interest in whiteness takes us to a set of issues which is actually about how white supremacy and I use that term to explore the whole of the context we're all living in actually frames our understandings of what it is to be human, what it is to be in an



institutional space, what it is to be a learner, but these things are really deeply encoded in our understandings of humanness.

WT: Well that seems like quite an interesting way to sort of nudge the door into education and syllabus and curriculum and an ongoing debate is to decolonise the curriculum to think about texts and writers and forms of thinking that are not just in the white European mould, which I think lots of people have claimed is more challenging for the early modern period or for perhaps longer ago where there isn't that latch of post-coloniality that people have had with literature since the 19th century, how does one decolonise a literature curriculum stretching back to 16th century and before, and how might that begin to help us think about Shakespeare?

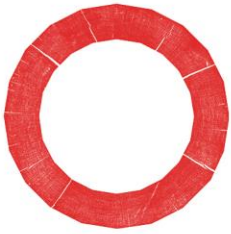
SH: Yeah well actually I think that's really important to unearth that difference between ideas of post coloniality which as you say have been really helpful for us thinking about what I would call the heyday of whiteness if you like, so whiteness as we live it now was historically really coming to its power at the height of the 19th century and so we've got quite a lot of very explicit ways of thinking about whiteness as a position of dominance through state making, through colonialism, but I think what becomes really important from a decolonial point of view is to go back further than that actually, at the point that modernity started so the Elizabethan exploration stroke pillaging stroke basically the ground laying if you like of the capital colonial relations that we see then in the development of kind of slavery and that as a global system are actually starting at the very point that Shakespeare certainly is kind of doing his work, so I think actually you've potentially got some really brilliant ins substantively, historically, that aren't necessarily explicitly talked about in the plays, although actually maybe they are [laughs] or they are coded there very heavily. So there's that but I think there's also other things in relation to really thinking about how we decolonise the curriculum, really getting to grips with this understanding of modernity and how that structured our ideas of the human, it structured our ideas of exploration, of possession, who gets to own what, we start to develop our ideas of gender that contemporary ideas of gender have come about through historical



colonial relations all of these things were being created ideologically as part of these practices of kind of exploration and what have you.

WT: That's so fascinating to hear because it also tallies with some of those takes on Shakespeare and early modern drama that says Shakespeare teaches everyone to be a human being but actually of course what you're suggesting is the era that Shakespeare is living in is one in which all of these structures are beginning their process of being set up. I'm really struck by your, your approach to this through the lens of power and power that as you write often kind of has lots of overlaps with white middle-class masculinity, middle-age masculinity and establishment masculinity and one of the objections of course to an undecolonised curriculum is the prevalence of kind of white maleness on the syllabus, so do we do if you like with the fact that Shakespeare's their-their kind of monolith that needs challenging.

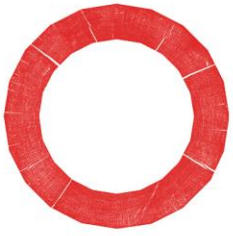
SH: I don't know whether this is the thing to say on The Globe podcast but there does need to be a really quite serious expansion of what we understand to be kind of art and culture, how do we understand culture, do we understand it as something that is obvious or is it something that's hidden and how do we do that work of exposure. But I also think there's something about practices and there's something about measurement and by that what I mean is a key part of any decolonising practice is that it is a practice it's about doing education learning pedagogy in a completely different kind of way than we are used to because again it comes back to [laughs] what are our ideas of pedagogy rooted in, well they're rooted in our understandings of what it is to be an ideal type person [laughs] an ideal type learner who goes out into the world in the way that we want them to, so I think if we can start to unpack through different sorts of teaching practices and actually rethinking the dynamics of power in educational spaces, so what we mean by educating? How we actually do that who has the power in that process? What sort of questions do we ask? And what sort materials do we bring together in that process? Then I think all of those things become a part of a broader decolonising process. I think this issue of measurements then becomes quite important so ideas of excellence, success in



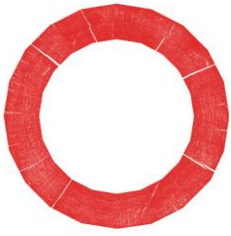
the academic context, what we're actually looking to produce at the end of an educational encounter looks a particular way if we have whiteness and dominate ideas about how we come out of education systems looking and behaving the way that we imagine is appropriate for the given society we're in well that there is something there that's about reproducing ourselves through the process of education and I think if we start to think about education as maybe undoing ourselves then we can get to a place of kind of different relationship to coloniality, and that would be potentially very dismantling of whiteness but we need to be having those conversations explicitly. You know a very kind of common one at the moment is hair, what's good hair? Well we all know there's a code there right when we're talking about good and bad hair and that code is racialized. So that's the sort of mapping, sort of cultural mapping that we need to start to do so developing a racial literacy that enables us to understand good and bad, things that we understand as good and bad or right and proper is actually deeply racialized and usually deeply coded as white, so this is how race works really.

WT: And this probably a very hard question but what would a decolonialised education or university education that brought into its very structures an idea of kind of deracialising look like? Is there something that can, that you can [laughs] I appreciate that this is not an easy question.

SH: Well you know it's kind of classic isn't it because I can certainly tell you what it wouldn't look like [laughs] which is most contemporary university spaces sadly, but this is about us understanding the products of a society that reproduces itself you know. I think it's very difficult to describe what something would look like the actual contours of it partly because we are so steeped, and the 'we' there I'm using very explicitly so I'm talking about myself as a white woman but I'm also talking about myself as somebody who has grown up for the most part in the context of the global north right and in a world that's globally, colonially created, so it becomes very difficult to see in advance of doing the world differently. I think the first thing that I would say we need to be able to do, and this



sounds so deceptively simple I think, is not to be structured in our everyday practices through the sorts of spacial dynamics that we're used to actually, we need to really be able to allow ourselves to work freely and so I mean I think it's interesting this is probably one of my romanticizations about drama [laughs] but actually it is about play I think, it is about really pushing ourselves, constantly push ourselves outside of our comfort zone, and to basically deal in difference and deal in different practices, I suppose the other thing that I haven't really maybe made clear is that race and whiteness, so our dynamics of racialisation and of coloniality and how that works now, they're relational and actually if you allow yourselves to reconfigure spaces differently then you can end up with I think relationships which are not power free, they're never power free, they're never comfortable, but spaces where you can question what power dynamics are framing that space and when you can start to name those collectively and I think the way we think about educational spaces at the moment, certainly in formal educational contexts that feels really quite scary, the idea of kind of coming into a room and all of the people in that room being allowed to explore how they feel power is working in that room and then to start unpacking that and think about how that frames practices, how that frames how you could speak to each other, how that frames how people even move bodily in a room, the body in our educational spaces is not given the ability to breathe and whiteness it works through our bodies, it's absolutely utterly embodied so I mean in a way for me drama which again my romanticisation of aspects of drama but certainly The Globe you know [laughs] which you would have really brilliant ways to engage with how the body moves in a space and what that means in relation to race you know, race works on the body, it works through the body. And this isn't just about touch and it's not just about the visual, it's about how we take up space and it's even about our kind of habits you know. Just inserting a conversation and an acknowledgment of the body in formal educational spaces would be an absolutely fundamental part of starting to really decolonise. We can't decolonise just by talking about stuff, it's completely impossible.



WT: I was going to ask actually where do you see this work happening already and what are the ways that researchers can work together to pull out some kind of consistent threads of critical whiteness?

SH: Well the work that I've been doing as founder, kind of leader of White Spaces, that really brings together scholars, activists, professionals, as well as academics together to think about how whiteness works in institutional spaces but our understanding of the institution is very expanded, so we understand institutions as maybe the family or I mean the church is a very traditional one but as well as formal institutional spaces. One of the things that's been really useful in developing that knowledge is partly around this the notion I suppose of play again or of moving in and out of your comfort zone so it's completely interdisciplinary, all working together to kind of push one another to think very expansively about what whiteness is so you get away from this idea of thinking about whiteness or about racialisation as an identification so as an identity it's actually part of a system of power and you then get into really starting to unpack what that system of power is, how that works, how it's sustained across all aspects of life and how it can also be disrupted in all sorts of ways that we don't imagine and it really is a tracing project I think. We have to understand these dynamics kind of globally because of this situation of the global colonial that we're in and then that takes us into all sorts of interesting directions around capitalism, anti-capitalism, you know.

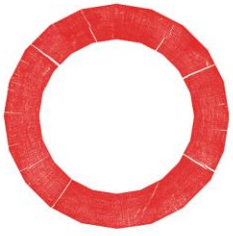
WT: Well we need further series I suspect in that case.

SH: [Laughs]

WT: That was so brilliant thank you so much.

[Music plays]

IG: That's it from us but we'll be back next week with another episode in our **Shakespeare and Race** series, when we'll be taking a closer look at our stages and how whiteness dominates the



stories we tell, the actors we see and the way our theatre spaces are set up.

You've been listening to Such Stuff with me Imogen Greenberg, Professor Farah Karim-Cooper and Dr Will Tosh.

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