Chapter 9

Shakespeare's Mixed Stock: Biracial Affect in the Field

Roya Biggie and Perry Guevara

With renewed urgency, the field of Shakespeare studies has turned its collective attention to race, not only to more fully understand a literary milieu characterized by British imperialism, the transatlantic slave trade, and emergent global capitalism, but also to critique the material conditions of a field that historically was built and maintained by white scholars and that ideologically buttressed the ascendance of the university as a settler colonial institution. The formation of the university, as a brick-and-mortar site of Indigenous displacement and cultural exclusion, necessarily involved the institutionalization of multiple and insidious racial anxieties within the canon, curriculum, and archive. For the past thirty or so years, the tendency in the field, in an effort to responsibly account for racial difference in Shakespeare, has been to center and study white anxieties about racialized others—fears of contamination, replacement, and miscegenation—that animated and continue to animate racial hostility in Anglophone societies. These anxieties abound, in part, due to the archive we have inherited: sermons, travelogues, epistolary correspondences, poetic and dramatic texts that evince deep worry, disgust, and fear, on behalf of European writers, of foreign bodies. The study of these affirms what we have always known: Shakespeare was never meant for most people. We have simply redistributed his texts to unintended readers. This fact, amplified by naysayers who not only doubt the presence of people of color in early modern England but also lodge accusations of anachronism, elicit *feelings* of unbelonging for these accidental readers.[1] Ambereen Dadabhoy

[1] See, for example, Patricia Parker and Margo Hendricks, eds., *Women, "Race" and Writing in the Early Modern Period* (London: Routledge, 1994), who in their introduction write against historicist objections to race and anachronism.

asks, "What happens when you read texts for whom you are not the intended audience, by writers who could not have imagined you as a reader?"[2] Moreover, what happens when a reader identifies with the racialized stranger, villain, or outcast because their sense of self misaligns with whiteness? Reading is an affective encounter, and these misalignments prove vexing at best and damaging at worst. In this chapter, we regard these frictions and their repetitions in higher education as *institutional*, if not as *institutionalized*, affect.

By affect, we refer to the range of feelings, sensations, sentiments, impressions, and atmospheres generated by and through relation, and we intend to register the ways in which affective experience is modulated, in large part, by race. In *Race and Affect in Early Modern English Literature*, Carol Mejia LaPerle queries, "What are the emotional experiences of racial formation and racist ideologies? How do feelings . . . come to signify race?"[3] These questions prompt us to ask what becomes possible if we set aside white anxieties about race to consider instead minority anxieties, what Kathy Park Hong identifies as "minor feelings," "the racialized range of emotions that are negative, dysphoric, and therefore untelegenic, built from the sediments of everyday racial experience and the irritant of having one's perception of reality constantly questioned or dismissed."[4] To show how "[r]ace informs affective experiences and vice versa," Mejia LaPerle points us to the work of cultural theorist Sianne Ngai, who argues that "emotional qualities slide into corporeal qualities in the case of racialized subjects, reinforcing the notion of race itself as a truth located, quite naturally, in the always obvious, highly visible body."[5] That is to say, race and affect are visceral, occurring at the interstices of skins, organs, and nerves, and "blur[ring] what is felt and what is embodied."[6] In *Shakespeare and the Cultivation of Difference*, Patricia Akhimie writes poignantly about the painful, lived experience of racism as "a persistent and particular kind of

[2] Ambereen Dadabhoy, "Imagining Islamicate Worlds: Race and Affect in the Contact Zone," in *Race and Affect in Early Modern English Literature*, ed. Carol Mejia LaPerle (Tempe: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies Press, 2022), 1, https://asu.pressbooks.pub/race-and-affect/chapter/1-imagining-islamicate-worlds-race-and-affect-in-the-contact-zone/.

[3] Mejia LaPerle, back cover of *Race and Affect in Early Modern English Literature*.

[4] Kathy Park Hong, *Minor Feelings: An Asian American Reckoning* (New York: One World, 2020), 55.

[5] Sianne Ngai, "'A Foul Lump Started Making Promises in My Voice': Race, Affect, and the Animated Subjects," *American Literature* 74, no. 3 (2002): 573, qtd. in Mejia LaPerle, "Introduction," *Race and Affect in Early Modern English Literature*, xix, https://asu.pressbooks.pub/race-and-affect/front-matter/introduction/.

[6] Mejia LaPerle, "Introduction," xx.

injustice, the signs of which are as fluid as they are injurious."[7] Visual "signs" of race, as materializations of disciplinary power, are somatic markers signifying beyond their raw physicality and thereby rationalizing the domination of one group of humans by another. The stakes are high, even in the study of literature. Mejia LaPerle admits:

> [A]ffect's power to cultivate and intensify belonging or exclusion, its ability to render visceral and thus naturalize machinations of control enacted on bodies, its influential yet unthinking priming towards how we treat people, in other words, affect's contributions to racial subjectivity and race relations are as formidable as they are understudied.[8]

As a beginning, we focus our attention on a related crux in Shakespeare: that of biracial affect—notably, as biracial scholars ourselves—and the ramifications for Shakespearean pedagogy.[9]

In this chapter, we reframe biraciality in early modern studies to show how the offspring of interracial couplings in Shakespeare reveal distinct structures of feeling rooted in uncertainty, ambivalence, and silence. We connect these representations in Shakespeare to not only the early modern archive, inclusive of travelogues, treatises, and natural histories, but also critical scholarship on early modern race. In so doing, we lay the groundwork for pedagogy that is attentive to racial affect and to the growing number of multiracial students in higher education. Moreover, we intend for this pedagogy to serve as a counterpoint to long-standing institutionalized affects engendered by settler colonial anxieties about racialized others and fortified across the history of the university. Finally, we end with a proposal for an advanced college-level course, Shakespeare's Mixed Stock, to not only explore biraciality through literature in the Shakespeare classroom but also model how university communities might confront racial inscrutability and thereby imagine institutional transformation.

What does it mean to be biracial in Shakespeare? First, we acknowledge that biraciality—much like race—is difficult to define in an early modern context. Shakespeare uses the term "race" a mere eighteen times across his body of work, and as Ania Loomba

[7] Patricia Akhimie, *Shakespeare and the Cultivation of Difference: Race and Conduct in the Early Modern World* (New York: Routledge, 2018), 9.

[8] Mejia LaPerle, "Introduction," xix–xx.

[9] In this chapter, we use "biracial, "mixed race," and "multiracial" interchangeably. Although we acknowledge that, to some, each might shade toward nuanced or different modes of identification, by and large, the terms easily slip into one another in our cultural lexicon on race.

observes, in ways that are "both distinct from" yet nonetheless ground "later deployments of the word and of the concept."[10] Shakespeare culled racialist tropes from a range of discourses including faith, lineage, natural history, and nationhood. In effect, what we find in Shakespeare is what Étienne Balibar calls "racism without race."[11] By that logic, we also seek to understand biraciality "without race"; that is, without reducing it to decontextualized skin color or physiognomy. Instead, we frame biraciality as a somatic and affective process of racialization shaped by overlapping discourses on difference and hybridity. According to Kerry Ann Rockquemore and David Brunsma, the term "biracial" is used inconsistently: "Some researchers use the term 'biracial' to describe . . . specific racial combinations (e.g., those with one black parent and one white parent), while others use the term 'biracial' to make the distinction between first- and second-generation children of interracial couples."[12] Others regard biracial people as even smaller minorities within minorities: for example, *mulatto* as a subset of Black or *mestizo* as a subset of Hispanic. While these definitions are helpful in understanding how the term "biracial" is used sociologically, for the purposes of this chapter, we find more compelling Brigitte Fielder's articulation of race as primarily relational:

> Race is constructed in a maelstrom of social convergences, but it is also experiential, lived. To be racialized is to experience, to be subjected to forms of racial privilege and oppression—to live in racial relation . . . . Racial embodiment is a state of being in the world, not necessarily having racial materiality or performing race, although these are also involved in racial being. Race is identifying or being identified as a racial being, but it is not only individual. Race is collective.[13]

Racial identity—and biracial identity in particular—is not a mere matter of genealogical inheritance: the transmission of biological and cultural matter along patrilineal or matrilineal conduits. Rather, as Fielder argues, "race follows different lineages in narratives of interracial kinship, which themselves defy neat boundaries between

[10] Ania Loomba, *Shakespeare, Race, and Colonialism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 22.

[11] Étienne Balibar, "Is There a Neo-Racism?", in *Race, Nation, Class: Ambiguous Identities*, ed. Balibar and Immanuel Wallerstein, trans. Chris Turner (London: Verso, 1991), 23, qtd. in Loomba, *Shakespeare, Race*, 37.

[12] Kerry Ann Rockquemore and David Brunsma, *Beyond Black: Biracial Identity in America*, 2nd ed. (New York: Rowman and Littlefield, 2008), 18.

[13] Brigitte Fielder, *Relative Races: Genealogies of Kinship in Nineteenth-Century America* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2020), 10.

races and clear correlations of familial and racial identification."[14] In other words, biracial identity is perpetually under negotiation, especially when self-determination is prohibited or impossible. Rockquemore and Brunsma observe that "most mixed-race people fail to gain acceptance in white society," despite efforts to assimilate, and they instead construct their identities according to physical appearance and contextual factors such as family history and "intergroup relation."[15] Monoracial norms seek fixed identity, while simultaneously barring membership to not only dominant but also minoritized groups to those whose racial identities prove ambiguous. In her research, Theresa Williams found that people with racially "ambiguous appearances" were routinely confronted with the question "What are you?" by acquaintances and strangers alike.[16] The question is not benign; it is pointedly racial, seeking clear and unequivocal categorization. However, taken at its word, the question also registers as an ontological inquiry, as if the subject's humanness were inscrutable; their taxonomy, illegible; and their very being, up for debate.

How does inscrutability feel? And why ought we pay attention to biracial affect? We believe that such attention might avail new research methodologies and pedagogical approaches in support of a generation of students who increasingly identify as multiracial. Census data reveal that the multiracial population in the United States grew from approximately 9 million in 2010 to nearly 34 million in 2020, a 276 percent increase. Today, multiracial people make up over 10 percent of Americans. These numbers track with college enrollments, according to Kate Hermsmeyer, George Dou, and Kelsey Oberbroekling, who, in a recent essay for *Inside Higher Ed*, argue that colleges and universities have failed to meet the moment, neither devoting resources nor developing programming for multiracial students: "In higher education, students who identify as multiracial have been simultaneously oppressed and neglected as a result of societal and institutional practices that construct a monoracial-only view of race."[17] While biracial students might find support in organizations like a Black Student Union, such groups

[14] Fielder, *Relative Races*, 3.

[15] Rockquemore and Brunsma, *Beyond Black*, 24–25.

[16] Theresa Williams, "Race as Process: Reassessing the 'What Are You?' Encounters of Biracial Individuals," in *Racially Mixed People in America*, ed. Maria Root (Newbury Park: Sage, 1992), 15.

[17] Kate Hermsmeyer, George Dou, and Kelsey Oberbroekling, "When the Boxes No Longer Fit," *Inside Higher Ed*, November 23, 2021, www.insidehighered.com/views/2021/11/23/colleges-must-change-better-serve-multiracial-students-opinion.

"may not *feel* accommodating to students with multiracial identities" (emphasis ours).[18] Most campuses are "not structured in a way that supports the intersection of more than one identity," adhering too tightly to color binaries and ignoring the diverse experiences of racial mixture, hybridity, passing, not passing, self-determination, doubt, and unknowability that characterize biracial feeling.[19]

Students bring these experiences to the Shakespeare classroom because, as Dadabhoy reminds us, "Reading is an affective relation."[20] The readerly position determines with whom—that is, with which characters in the text—the reader connects. When encountering Muslim characters in early modern literature, Dadabhoy "experience[s] the stigma of demonization because I embody the identity of the antagonist in almost everything I read, study, and analyze. My identity challenges the canon's universalism . . . . I, then, must stand apart—or more accurately—be prohibited from the universal."[21] Whiteness depends on its capacity to project itself as the norm; it is universal and, therefore, invisible. How, then, might a biracial person experience a Shakespearean text? With which characters would they connect? European patriarchs? Maligned blackamoors? Passing references to ontological hybrids like mermaids and centaurs? We cannot say with certainty, but from personal experience, we suspect an impulse to "attend to that estranged other in whom [we] perceive a distorted reflection, a construction [we] can succor by illuminating the very many political, cultural, and ideological forces contouring [our] discursive being."[22] Although blatantly presentist, *this* is how the text is felt, with critical sympathy.

We recognize that some might allege conspicuous anachronism in applying the term "biracial" to early modernity. "Biracial" did not come into use until the middle of the twentieth century and then mostly within an American context.[23] However, we are convinced that Shakespeare's mixed characters signal something distinct about racial formation in the period and, therefore, present opportunities for reopening his plays to a growing number of biracial students.

[18] Hermsmeyer, Dou, and Oberbroekling, "When the Boxes." Nonetheless, we do not mean to discount the radical impact of BSUs and racial affinity groups and clubs that offer marginalized students a sense of belonging and community amidst academia's whitewashed walls.

[19] Hermsmeyer, Dou, and Oberbroekling, "When the Boxes."

[20] Dadabhoy, "Imagining Islamicate Worlds," 1.

[21] Dadabhoy, "Imagining Islamicate Worlds," 1.

[22] Dadabhoy, "Imagining Islamicate Worlds," 3.

[23] "biracial, adj.," *OED Online*, June 2022 (Oxford University Press), https://www.oed.com/view/Entry/19316 (accessed July 29, 2022).

Experiences of inscrutability and suspicions of ontological hybridity guide our analysis in this chapter, as we locate few-and-far-between biracial characters across Shakespeare's dramatic corpus, not simply to dwell on colonial anxieties about racial mixture, but more so to meditate on the affective lives of biracial people. What is peculiar about most of Shakespeare's mixed characters is that they are children: Aaron and Tamora's son in *Titus Andronicus*, the Indian Boy in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Cleopatra's bastard in *Antony and Cleopatra*, and the imagined offspring of miscegenation in such plays as *Othello* and *The Tempest*. The fact that they are children is telling: namely, that miscegenation, as a moral and social transgression in early modern England, not only fuels racialist anxieties in the plays, but also proves narratively generative—entertaining, even—both for Shakespeare and his audiences. In this context, the figure of the biracial child fails to emerge intact, hardly a fully realized human subject, and more of a plot device: a threat to social norms and established hierarchies. On the surface, they are stock characters, but they nonetheless manage to destabilize Shakespearean worlds from positions of silence and absence. The children never speak.

As we consider how best to teach biracial affect in the Shakespeare classroom, we argue that silence—what amounts to textual aphasia—is not simply a literary site of marginalization or deprivation. Rather, it is a densely affective experience, replete with not only uncertainty but also possibility. The affective capacities of silence signal the ambivalence of biracial feeling, especially as they hinge on experiences of partial inclusion, exclusion, and ongoing negotiations of selfhood. Often, Shakespeare's mixed children are regarded as objects, even as fetishes. For example, Anthony Guy Patricia says of the Indian Boy: "Titania holds onto the Indian prince, fetish-like, as a keepsake of his dead mother, pampering him in a precious, feminized world of flowers, sweets, and serenades."[24] This fetishistic objectivity, we contend, is suspect. What we are arguing for here is more akin to Fred Moten's articulation of the resistant art object. Moten analyzes the artist Adrian Piper's *Untitled Performance for Max's Kansas City* to understand the practice of "voluntary objectlike passivity" as a method of resistance and, thereby, recuperation of personhood in which, as Piper says, "My objecthood

[24] Anthony Guy Patricia, *Queering the Shakespeare Film: Gender Trouble, Gay Spectatorship, and Male Homoeroticism* (London: Bloomsbury Arden Shakespeare, 2017), 12.

became my subjecthood."[25] This deliberate passivity is an active and creative process undergirding "a lived critique of the assumed equivalence of personhood and subjectivity and, by extension, a force of resistance of objection that is always already in excess of the limits of subjection/subjectivity."[26] Silence may function similarly as an affective state of racialized feeling. How Shakespeare's mixed children emotionally inhabit their muteness is an open question. They could feel frustrated by their circumstances, resentful of their oppressors, exasperated by courtly politics, or forlorn in their isolation. Importantly, their reticence might be a choice rather than textual omission and a deliberate refusal to participate in emergent formations of race and racism on the early modern stage. The critical capacities of silence become more salient in performance than in text because theater artists have opportunities to mime quiet rebellions: giving the "silent treatment," so to speak. The children are not dumb; instead, they help us apprehend early modern racial mixture as relational, as Fielder argues of interracial kinship, and they reveal particular structures of feeling shaped by white anxiety but that do not belong to white people.

In the context of higher education, biracial silence serves multiple, critical functions, and as biracial scholars and teachers of Shakespeare ourselves, we understand these intimately. Sometimes silence is a mode of protection. As junior faculty at institutions where tenured faculty are predominantly white, becoming invisible in high-stakes situations safeguards our chances at promotion. Noncoincidentally, both of us were advised by senior colleagues not to "ruffle feathers" until granted tenure. That is not to mention the experience of constantly negotiating the status of our belonging or unbelonging in professional settings, determining whether we are "passing" in this moment or not. Sometimes silence is the practice of disengaging from the cramps and convulsions of the institution in the name of mental and emotional health. In these cases, withdrawal is more akin to self-care or meditation, a quiet respite at the margins of the institution. Sometimes silence is the consequence of abjection when humiliated by the avatars of the institution's colonial hierarchies, and sometimes silence is simply a symptom of exhaustion. Too often, faculty of color are called upon to helm institutional efforts at diversity, equity,

[25] Adrian Piper, *Out of Order, Out of Sight* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1996), 27, qtd. in Fred Moten, *In the Break: The Aesthetics of the Black Radical Tradition* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003), 240.
[26] Moten, *In the Break*, 242.

and inclusion, which seem more like reputation management—what Amrita Dhar, in her chapter in this book, accurately identifies as "public-image-curation"—than the interpersonal and community-based labors that this work truly requires.[27] For many faculty of color, the pressing question remains: How can universities become more hospitable when commitments to diversity are confined to a single office or day, the online module or workshop?

These feelings, even before they rise from limbic to frontal-cortical cognition, signal something terribly amiss. Following Moten, we contend that the multifarious affects of silence sustain a lived critique of higher education's failure to responsibly reckon with its complicity in settler colonialism and racism. Furthermore, the institution's compulsion to publicly regard the presence of BIPOC students and faculty as evidence of institutional commitments to diversity, while bypassing infrastructure, programming, and curricula to support them, exacerbates the grating simultaneity of belonging and unbelonging. As Sara Ahmed in her study and extended theorization of institutional commitments to "diversity" comments, "This is why the very promise of inclusion can be the concealment and thus extension of exclusion."[28]

Where, then, do we begin to address these frictions? University administrations are the obvious place; however, it seems simple—perhaps naive, even—to recommend that administrations amplify the voices of students and faculty of color through, say, multicultural centers or initiatives that advance biracial inclusion, because we have seen at our own institutions how such efforts offload the intellectual, emotional, and practical labor of such work onto students and faculty of color, often untenured, and in so doing, further ghettoize their work from the "real business" of the university. Too often, these initiatives are meant to do the work of diversity for the entire campus, rather than university leadership positioning diversity at the forefront of all institutional decision-making.[29] Ahmed observes that

> "diversity" has been identified as a management term. Diversity becomes something to be managed and valued as a human resource.

[27] Amrita Dhar, "On Shakespeare, Anticolonial Pedagogy, and Being Just," this volume, 34.

[28] Sara Ahmed, *On Being Included: Racism and Diversity in Institutional Life* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2012), 183.

[29] We do not mean to suggest that universities adopt "color blind" policies or programs; such posturing, amongst other ills, fosters the harmful fictitious narrative that all members of the university community experience the institution in equitable ways.

> Scholars have suggested that the managerial focus on diversity works to individuate differences and conceal the continuation of systematic inequalities within universities.[30]

At the risk of coming across as cynical, we are keenly aware that administrations are invested in the status quo and rarely imagine the university as anything other than what it has been. Ahmed further insinuates that the work of diversity might even be more insidious than previously thought: "Diversity could be understood as one of the techniques by which liberal multiculturalism manages differences by managing its more 'troublesome constituents.'"[31] Here, "troublesome" characterizes those who disrupt the presumed whiteness of the institution.

We recognize that our cynicism and doubt are caught up in "minor feelings" about the university as an institution and that these feelings are inevitably shaped by our own experiences of race in higher education. The affective experience of the university is not identical for all members of the university community, and for many, it is determined by structures of identity and categories of difference across race, gender, sexuality, class, age, and ability. We focus on biraciality not because we believe administrations necessarily ought to cater to biracial students with targeted diversity initiatives, but because an affective hermeneutics toward biraciality exposes the sutures of racial formation and recalls racial histories that might help us apprehend the racial politics of the university as a settler colonial institution. It is in the classroom and archive, therefore, where we insist this work begin.

As teachers, we can examine in our classes how the muffling of racial affect contributes to the maintenance of the institutional status quo, recognizing that pedagogy can be a step toward imagining how the institution might transform and what it could become. To that end, we ought to design courses attentive to the literary history of race in a period when more plastic concepts of geographic, religious, and ontological difference began to harden into what we now understand as modern racism. We can also attune our pedagogy to the affective experiences of racialization, acknowledging such processes not only in the texts we study but also in our academic disciplines. This entails recognizing silence as more than mere absence or deficit, especially in the classroom, and then intentionally creating space for it. Not every moment needs to be filled, when there is so much to be felt. Sometimes silence is the practice of giving attention, of more fully engaging.

[30] Ahmed, *On Being Included*, 53.
[31] Ahmed, *On Being Included*, 174.

We endorse a style of pedagogy that invites wonder into the silences. Because Shakespeare's biracial children never speak, we are left to wonder, to imagine, and to grow curious about their lives. Silence, therefore, is rife with interpretive possibilities for what biraciality means, not only in Shakespeare, but also in our institutional politics. Wonder, however, is not necessarily benign. Resulting largely from medieval and early modern travelers' fixation on foreign curiosities and their possession, the term is "associated increasingly with the manipulation of the colonized, the selling of the colony to backers back home, the exoticizing of whatever could be (or seem to be) subdued."[32] We recognize the challenge of dissociating "wonder"—both as inquiry and spectacle—from colonial projects of exploitation and marginalization, particularly in classroom conversations surrounding Shakespeare's silent and inscrutable mixed-race stock. The European market for natural histories, bestiaries, and travelogues reminds us that casting the nonwhite person as a wonder, as something to be wondered at, simultaneously feared and fetishized, was a matter of economic profit that rationalized colonial violence.[33] Concurrently, we also propose that wonder—that is, setting aside mastery and entering into the inquisitive mode—allows us to engage in what Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick refers to as "reparative reading."[34] In her study on the evolution of wonder, Mary Baine Campbell acknowledges the colonial underpinnings of wonder as a cognitive process of objectification, but also considers its reparative potential as practice for reading:

> Wonder might first be seen as a register opposed to that of 'paranoid reading'—one which embraces surprise, enjoys the excess and alteration which generate it, is constitutively open to the rewriting of the past as well as the future, the making of new worlds.[35]

What does it mean, then, to wonder in, with, and about silence? How do we imagine, more fully, the affective lives of characters for

[32] Mary Baine Campbell, *Wonder and Science: Imagining Worlds in Early Modern Europe* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1999), 3.

[33] Lorraine Datson and Katharine Park, *Wonders and the Order of Nature 1150–1750* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), 21–66.

[34] Sedgwick defines the reparative reading position as one that "undertakes a different range of affects, ambitions, and risks. What we can best learn from such practices are, perhaps, the many ways selves and communities succeed in extracting sustenance from the objects of culture—even of a culture whose avowed desire has often been not to sustain them." Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Touching Feeling: Affect, Pedagogy, Performativity* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003), 150–51.

[35] Campbell, *Wonder and Science*, 3.

whom silence is choice, protection, necessity, or script? How can we meet silence with an ethical practice of wonder? Put differently, how do we divorce wonder from "exoticist projection" and "return it to its place as a subjective experience, an invitation to relation"?[36] We, in part, seize on wonder for its ambiguity, speculation, and magical thinking rather than more rigid techniques of formalist inquiry to assert that the traditional tools of literary analysis sometimes fail. Close reading cannot fully account for the resounding force of silence; likewise, the archive cannot fully reanimate lives that exist, for early modern Europeans, on the margins.

Our proposed course, Shakespeare's Mixed Stock, positions wonder not as untutored contemplation, but as a critical and political tool with which students can illuminate the affective lives of Shakespeare's biracial characters. Our goal is to cultivate the affective and intellectual capacities of wonder—say, as opposed to a "hermeneutics of suspicion," postulated by the French philosopher Paul Ricoeur—in an effort to understand what it means to be inscrutable and how it feels to live on the margins of racial legibility.[37] As a method, cognitive emotion, and artifact, wonder offers entry points into conversations surrounding not only Shakespeare's plays and characters, but also the limitations of the early modern archive, the colonialist legacies of English studies, and the lived experiences of those deemed "inscrutable"—wonders, we might say—by the academy today. Throughout the term, students will read plays that feature hybrid or mixed-race characters, whose ontology is up for debate. While plays such as Shakespeare's *Titus Andronicus*, *Othello*, and *The Tempest* allow us to imagine the ways in which white Europeans responded to the prospect of mixed-race progeny, as do excerpts from contemporaneous travel narratives, to wonder with these discourses means to ask, for instance: How might a mixed-race child feel when alienated from familial networks? What dangers and forms of violence might a mixed-race child perceive and encounter? These texts do not offer easy answers; yet, in wondering with them, we establish a form of "relation" and engage in practices of worldmaking; that is, we can entertain the possibility that "the past . . . could have happened differently," that "the future may be

[36] Mary Blaine Campbell, "Wonder," in *Keywords for Travel Writing Studies: A Critical Glossary*, ed. Charles Forsdick, Zoë Kinsley, and Kathryn Walchester (New York: Anthem Press, 2019), 294.

[37] Paul Ricoeur, *Freud and Philosophy: An Essay on Interpretation*, trans. Denis Savage (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1970), 33.

different from the present."[38] By pairing Shakespeare's plays with archival texts, we ask students to engage in constitutive openness, through Campbell's framework of wonder, an affective posture we believe is vital to a reparative future.

The representation of biracial individuals in Shakespeare as both strange yet somehow common is mirrored in the early modern archive, specifically in discourses that address miscegenation and interracial marriage. Class conversations on the sheer frequency of interracial relationships in Shakespeare's works and those of his contemporaries allow instructors to ask: Why do these relationships appear so often in the period's dramatic corpus? Does their frequency suggest that the English were invested in accommodating mixed-race families? Or does their frequency, and audiences' presumed fascination with such pairings, suggest their illicit nature? Following this initial discussion, instructors might then show students scholarship documenting the presence of nonwhite populations in England and excerpts from travelogues, parish records, legal documents, and medical discourses. In his seminal work, *Black Lives in the English Archives*, Imtiaz Habib documents five interracial marriages that appeared in parish records during the 1570s; the 1586 baptism of a mixed-race child; and from the turn of the sixteenth century, the christening and death records of children who were most likely mixed race.[39] More recently, Miranda Kaufmann has cited additional archival records that prove the presence of "lawful interracial families" and "illegitimate [mixed-race] children" in England during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.[40] Pairing archival evidence and critical work by scholars such as Habib and Kaufmann demonstrates to students that although archival evidence of mixed-race

[38] Sedgwick, *Touching Feeling*, 146.

[39] Imtiaz Habib, *Black Lives in the English Archives, 1500–1677* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2008), 95–96, 99–101. Habib points out that while these children are often given their English father's last name while marked as "baseborn" or "a Black mores Child," their mothers are confined to anonymity. Habib writes, "Such births may or may not be the products of illicit English sexual predation, but they mark the helplessness of black women confined to a silent chattel existence bereft of the protective structures of a normal civic life" (100).

[40] Miranda Kaufmann, "'Making the Beast with two Backs'—Interracial Relationships in Early Modern England," *Literature Compass* 12, no. 1 (2015): 26–27. Kaufmann's article provides useful evidence of the presence of biracial individuals; however, we are troubled by many of her claims, specifically her suggestion that miscegenation was socially more accepted than scholars, such as Habib, have suggested; that black women were not necessarily exploited by white English masters; and that the experience of white English female servants was likely comparable to their black counterparts (27–28).

relationships and individuals is scant, such mixings were neither common, nor were they entirely unusual.

In examining these discourses, students can consider how early modern figurations of biraciality interact with questions surrounding embodiment, race, and affect. Some archival sources, for example, betray an interest in the skin color of children born to interracial couples. A frequently cited passage from George Best's *A True Discourse*, relating the marriage of "an Ethiopian as black as cole" to "a faire English woman," fixates primarily on the reasons behind their child's dark skin.[41] As scholars have argued, this instance was of interest to Best's audience not solely because of the couple's atypical relationship, but also because the child's dark appearance disproved early modern climatological theories of somatic color. Such theories purported that those born in colder northern climes would have lighter skin while populations closer to the equatorial line would have darker complexions, a result of the sun's heat.[42] Examples such as Best's reassured readers who may have considered traveling abroad that their humoral dispositions would not be fundamentally altered by their new environment.[43] Instead, the newborn's complexion would have supported early modern theories of parthenogenesis, the assumption that a child would exhibit the physical traits of their father. For Best, the example of a dark-skinned, mixed-race, and English-born child allows him to conclude: ". . . this blackness proceedeth of some natural infection of the first inhabitants of that Country [Ethiopia], and so all the whole progeny of them descended are still polluted with the same blot of infection."[44]

Other travelogues focus on the complexion of mixed-race children born abroad, revealing anxieties surrounding the ontological effects of both racial mixture and unfamiliar atmospheric conditions. In another frequently cited example, the Dutch voyager Jan Huyghen van Linschoten comments on children born in India to Portuguese colonizers and Indian women:

> The Portingales in India, are many of them marryed with the naturall borne women of the countrie, and the children procéeding of them are called Mesticos, that is, half countrimen. These Mesticos

[41] George Best, *A True Discourse of the Late Voyages of Discoverie* (London, 1578), 29.
[42] See, for example, Mary Floyd Wilson, *English Ethnicity and Race in Early Modern Drama* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 8–9; Kim F. Hall, *Things of Darkness: Economies of Race and Gender in the Early Modern World* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995), 11–12.
[43] Floyd-Wilson, *English Ethnicity*, 8; Hall, *Things of Darkness*, 12.
[44] Best, *A True Discourse*, 29.

> are commonlie of yelowish colour, notwithstanding there are manie women among them, that are faire and well formed. The children of the Portingales, both boyes and gyrls, which are borne in India, are called Castisos, and are in all things like vnto the Portingales, onely somewhat differing in colour, for they draw towards a yealow colour: the children of those Castisos are yealow, and altogether like the Mesticos, and the children of Mesticos are of colour and fashion like the naturall borne Countrimen or Decaniins of the countrie, so that the posteritie of the Portingales, both men and womē[n] being in the third degrée, doe séeme to be naturall Indians, both in colour & fashion.[45]

Although differing significantly from Best's conclusions, van Linschoten similarly describes the reproductive consequences of non-European contact. His concern with and extended meditation on the complexion of *mestiços*, mixed-race children born in India, demonstrates an impulse to account for the potentially uncertain, hybrid, and mysterious physiologies of biracial children. Though emergent constructions of racial difference during the period were far more fluid than fixed, van Linschoten seems to write for an audience invested in conceptualizing a racial hierarchy that includes not only the Portuguese, Indians, *castiços*, and *mestiços*, but also the children of *mestiços*, whom van Linschoten claims "are of colour and fashion like the naturall borne Countrumen or Decaniins of the country [India]." Noteworthy as well is that the "yelowish" complexion of Portuguese children born in India, *castiços*, resembles that of their mixed-race *mestiço* counterparts; like the children of *mestiços*, the children of *castiços*, despite being born to Portuguese parents, also resemble "naturall Indians, both in colour & fashion." As Ivo Kamps argues, van Linschoten's depiction of these various groups "fits the racist logic of the Portuguese, who themselves discriminated against their hybrid offspring . . . . What seems foremost at issue here for the Portuguese is a form of cultural contamination. Van Linschoten's account, however, collapses the arguments about miscegenation and cultural contamination into a single story of racial degradation, and, ultimately, of racial erasure."[46]

While Best's and van Linschoten's racial taxonomies reflect European anxieties surrounding kinship ties and foreign contact,

[45] Iohn Huighen van Linschoten, *His discours of voyages into ye Easte & West Indies* (London: 1598), 52.

[46] Ivo Kamps, "Colonizing the Colonizer: A Dutchman in Asia Portuguesa," in *Travel Knowledge: European "Discoveries" in the Early Modern Period*, ed. Kamps and Jyotsna Singh (New York: Palgrave, 2011), 169.

they also allow students to glimpse the treatment and affective experiences of children whose racial identities were not self-determined, but constituted at least in part by discourses that champion white skin and endogenous ancestry. Best erases the biracial child's ties to their "faire English" mother and the country of their birth, proposing instead that their complexion affirms their ties to "polluted" kin and the country in which this "natural infection" took hold. In class conversations, instructors might lead students in wondering about how biracial children in Best's London experienced representations of their physiology that distanced them from their white mothers and fathers, and by extension, cultural and economic power. While van Linschoten allows for slightly more ambiguity than Best, we are again left to question how discourses such as van Linschoten's shaped the material and affective lives of biracial children in European colonies and outposts.[47] Instructors might point out that van Linschoten's theorization of the appearance and customs of India's "mestico" population seems to anticipate legal systems of racial classification, such as the United States' "one-drop rule," which align mixed-race children with the parent whose racial background is most disadvantaged.

These foundational engagements with the archive provide students with the texts and tools to imagine more fully the lives and livelihoods of biracial populations in Europe, and by extension the affective experiences of Shakespeare's mixed stock. When teaching biraciality in Shakespearean drama, we begin with Shakespeare's earliest tragedy, *Titus Andronicus*, a play in which racial mixture has murderous consequences and arguably one of the most disturbing scenes in any of the plays. In *Titus Andronicus*, Aaron's and Tamora's mixed-race son is condemned to death immediately following his birth, a murder Tamora herself sanctions. The play's white Goths and Romans want little to do with the biracial infant, referring to him as "a devil" and "a joyless, dismal, black and sorrowful issue," while insisting that Aaron "christen it with [his] dagger's point" (4.2.66, 67, 72).[48] Chiron and Demetrius, Tamora's children and the infant's half brothers, curse their mother and the child: "Woe to her chance and damned her loathed choice, / Accursed

[47] Descriptions of the "fairness" of non-European and non-Christian women were not uncommon. Dramatic examples include Jessica, Shylock's daughter in *The Merchant of Venice*, Quisara, the Moluccan princess of John Fletcher's *The Island Princess*, and Donusa, a Turkish princess in Philip Massinger's *The Renegado*.

[48] William Shakespeare, *Titus Andronicus*, ed. Jonathan Bate (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2018). Text references are to act, scene, and line of this edition.

the offspring of so foul a fiend, / It shall not live" (4.2.80–82). They recognize the infant's mixed parentage only in terms of the shame the child may cast on their family. The newborn, as they suggest, is aligned biologically and culturally with his father, claims that distance the infant from his white kin and the proximity to power that their racialized position and royal status grant. Similarly, the nurse's view of the child as "joyless" and "sorrowful" is rhetorically linked to the dark complexion he inherits from Aaron. Not only do these comments define and therefore limit the child's racialized personhood, but they also, as David Sterling Brown underscores, deny the infant the "innocence of (white) childhood" and associate him instead with "culpable adulthood."[49] In class conversations on these violent, derogatory remarks, instructors might ask students to consider the child's potential future as a mixed-race orphan, already deemed guilty, in *Titus*'s Rome. Students might also discuss the play's portrayals of mixed-race community and how the child's own self-determination might be impacted by such racialist commentary.

In *Othello*, mixed-race children—the imagined, half-human progeny of the play's interracial couple—do not materialize in the flesh on stage, but as the offspring of miscegenation, threaten to infect, as Best suggests, and degrade whiteness. Seeking to rouse Brabantio's paternalistic anxiety, Iago theriomorphizes interracial sex through the black-white color binary: "Even now, now, very now, an old black ram is tupping your white ewe" (1.1.87–88), an image distilled to the infamous "beast with two backs" (1.1.117–18) and intimated by the name of the inn where such intercourse takes place, the Sagittary, the mythic hybrid of human and horse (1.1.160).[50] Iago indulges such racialist illogic by further extending the equine metaphor, gulling Brabantio into the mistaken assumption that bestiality necessarily yields beasts: "[Y]ou'll have your daughter covered with a Barbary horse; you'll have your nephews neigh to you; you'll have coursers for cousins and jennets for germans" (1.1.113–15). Instructors might then turn to Loomba, who reminds us of "the deployment of 'race' as lineage, which often shows up in the context of horses" and which circulated in such zoographic texts as Edward Topsell's *Historie of Four-Footed Beastes and Snakes*

[49] David Sterling Brown, "'Is Black so Base a Hue?': Black Life Matters in Shakespeare's *Titus Andronicus*," in *Early Modern Black Diaspora Studies: A Critical Anthology*, ed. Cassander L. Smith, Nicholas R. Jones, and Miles P. Grier (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), 137–55 [144].

[50] William Shakespeare, *Othello*, ed. E. A. J. Honigmann (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2016). Text references are to act, scene, and line of this edition.

(1607).[51] These metaphors converge with racist comparisons of African humans to simian nonhumans, an association made firm at least by the seventeenth century when Thomas Herbert wrote in his travelogue that they "have no better predecessors than monkeys."[52] In discussions of the play, students might consider why the degradation of mother and child is figured in explicitly zoological terms; how such depictions are conversant with van Linschoten's hyper-focus on complexion, customs, and dress; and the children's potential treatment and social position in the Venetian court, given in particular Brabantio's racialist insults, as well as those of the Duke.

In *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, the changeling "Indian" boy offers a particular illustration of racialized hybridity. Early moderns typically employed the term "changeling" to describe someone of indeterminate origin, physiology, and character. In English folklore, fairies were thought to abduct infants, leaving fairy children, known as "changelings," in their place who, by all estimations, appeared to be entirely human. We learn from Puck, an admittedly untrustworthy source, that the boy's father was an Indian king; his mother, Titania tells us, was a votaress in her order. As instructors, we remind students that our goal is not to discern whether the boy may have mixed-race parentage, or whether he is a human or supernatural being. Rather, we lead students in theorizing *Midsummer*'s fairyland as a liminal space that lies ambiguously between Athens and India, causing the boy to undergo what Margo Hendricks suggests is a "particularized form . . . [of] ethnic (or racial) change that involves the forcible removal of a person from one culture to another."[53] Hendricks argues that the child, as well as Bottom, embody the Spanish conceptual term *mestizaje*, which was used to describe racial mixedness, crossbreeding, or adulteration. Bottom famously becomes a crossbred, equine-human hybrid while the boy presents "the possibility of human and fairy mixedness (the mestizo)."[54] In class, we point out that Titania wishes to care for the child because

[51] Loomba, *Shakespeare, Race*, 23.

[52] Thomas Herbert, *A Relation Of Some Years Travaile, Begunne Anno 1626* (London, 1634), 17.

[53] Margo Hendricks, "'Obscured by dreams': Race, Empire, and Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 47, no. 1 (1996): 55. Hendricks argues that *Midsummer*, in bringing together older and emerging conceptions of race, presents a kind of conceptual borderland: "I believe a borderland also coalesces on an ideological level in the concept of race. This concept is neither wholly the older (and more feudal) idea based on class and lineage nor wholly the more modern idea based only on physical appearance (i.e. skin color, physiognomy)" (43).

[54] Hendricks, "'Obscured by dreams,'" 56.

of a promise made to his mother, and ask students to examine why exactly Oberon desires to possess the boy and make him a "henchman" or "Knight of his train" (2.1.124, 25).[55] These discussions often lead students to wonder whether the boy's perceived use is connected to his hybrid status, his being of the human and fairy worlds, of the "West" and the mercantile, "rich" "East" (2.1.139). Hendricks's article is particularly useful in guiding students through these questions; as she reminds us, "in another century or so Asian Indians would become the [English] household fashion."[56] Students might then question whether Titania plans to have the boy traverse the seas, as his mother once did, streamlining her access to exotic goods.[57] The boy's silence and, in some productions, absence on stage can lead to further questions surrounding the affective states he may have experienced as he observed two capricious faeries quarrel over his future. In teaching the play, we often ask our students: What may he have felt in knowing that his life was ultimately decided by a floral drug and an ass's head? Or, as Hendricks puts it, "What if he, rather than Puck, had been given the final word: what would the changeling child have said?"[58]

In Shakespeare's Mixed Stock, we hope that such wondering might also lead students to adaptation, what Adrienne Rich calls "re-vision": "the act of looking back, of seeing with fresh eyes, of entering an old text from a new critical direction . . . . Until we can understand the assumptions in which we are drenched we cannot know ourselves."[59] Our proposed course concludes with a final project that asks students to reimagine the life of one of Shakespeare's mixed-race characters, relocated to our current time and place, while taking into consideration more broadly representations of biraciality in the early modern archive. Having students adapt Shakespeare's narratives of racial mixture for performance in a new period and setting encourages them not only to apprehend the

[55] William Shakespeare, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, ed. Sukanta Chaudhuri (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2017). Text references are to act, scene, and line of this edition.

[56] Hendricks, "'Obscured by dreams,'" 54.

[57] In associating the boy's and the votaress's bodies with foreign merchandise, Titania suggests that, much like the exotic goods imported from abroad, Europeans can generate profit from humans rendered as commodities. This moment alludes to the very real fetishization and exhibition of Native Americans and Africans in London, abusive practices that often led to the death of these individuals.

[58] Hendricks, "'Obscured by dreams,'" 60.

[59] Adrienne Rich, "When We Dead Awaken: Writing as Revision," *College English* 34, no. 1 (1972): 18.

ambivalence and inscrutability of his mixed-race characters, but also to confront the inscrutable aspects of themselves, those parts that are in flux, under development, and not so easily legible to cultural norms of identity. This work, Rich promises, enables "a radical critique of literature . . . a clue to how we live, how we have been living, how we have been led to imagine ourselves, and how our language has trapped as well as liberated us."[60]

By addressing the silences of biracial peoples through Shakespearean pedagogy, we bring racial affect to the surface, not only in our classrooms and academic fields, but also more widely in our institutions. As biracial faculty who are often called upon to do the institution's diversity work in all the ways the readership of this collection would expect, our engagement with racial affect does not end when we leave our classrooms. In the various roles we have occupied, much of our non-teaching work at our respective institutions has involved illuminating racial affect. Our professional experiences have been fraught—in part because they remind us of the ways in which we, as biracial scholars, occupy positions of belonging and exclusion, but also because such work reminds us that these "supplementary" and "optional" initiatives conceal the institution's commitment to certain kinds of affect, from certain kinds of bodies. It is because such initiatives can feel so unsatisfactory, can feel like lip service to the college's promotional brochures, that we feel it necessary to account for and keep an account of the other forms of labor faculty of color perform, the labor that does not appear on our curriculum vita, the labor we do not record when applying for promotion. Though deeply isolating, the unrecorded and sometimes never vocalized affective labor that faculty of color experience, "behind the scenes," as it were, is no less social, often occurring in situations in which our inclusion/exclusion is addressed and publicized. In regard to such moments—that, for instance, of being the only faculty member of color in a room and the only faculty member addressed by her first name—Ahmed argues, "Diversity work can involve an experience of hesitation, of not knowing what to do in these situations [of institutional non-belonging]. There is labor in having to respond to a situation that others are protected from, a situation that does not come up for those whose residence is assumed."[61] The labor of racial affect, as we show our students, can manifest in silence and retreat. This is the work of diversity.

[60] Rich, "When We Dead," 18.
[61] Ahmed, *On Being Included*, 176–77.

What we model in Shakespeare's Mixed Stock are responses to inscrutability, to the affective labor that accompanies the very liminality we describe. What might occur if the university were to meet inscrutability with wonder? What policies might change, what language might shift, what spaces might become more inclusive if racial affect were not ignored, but met by white faculty and administrators with humility, with a commitment to care, with an ethos of wonder that resists fear and fetishization? While it might seem that institutions are apathetic or would prefer to blithely ignore racial affect, we see in Shakespeare's Mixed Stock that too much is at stake: bodies, lives, and communities. In urging students to pause, to imagine otherwise, we uncover the emotional textures of silence. Rather than retreating to silence out of necessity or apathy, we come to understand silence as a source of critique, a mode of resistance, a place for rest, a space to wonder, and an affective prelude to the university that could be.