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**Dedicated
To
The Mother**

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250/-

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EDITORIAL

I have lost the intensity with which I had begun the journal 20 years ago, a time when I had the fresh memory of teaching Shakespeare for over 16 years. Today, still very much into that vital world of strife and violence, hatred and rancour, remorse and despair, the moment I touch his lines I am flared up.

The inlook into Shakespeare came by Sri Aurobindo's grace and through his apophthegmatic sage-sayers, backed up by the echoing thoughts in the old ones of the trade, Bradley, Wilson Knight, Kenneth Muir, Frank Kermode, Charlton, Jyoti Bhattacharya and a few others. Memories of revelations come back to me--- Why the poetry of Richard II couldn't take off as it did 6 or 7 years later in identical contexts? Why Prince Henry refused to recognize Falstaff? What really went wrong with Timon? Why I thought Timon was a finished play, going against the accepted view? How the speeches had come long before the action came in *Antony and Cleopatra*? What was the psychological reason behind the desperateness Angelo? Then there was that effort to know the various planes of the 'mingled yarn', "the assortment of attitudes" and so many other flashes without the aid of K.D. Sethna or Srinivasa Iyengar, with whom I was in constant touch throughout the 80s and 90s.

All regrets have vanished today when I see my insignificant journal has helped materially and culturally generations of students and job-seekers. It has survived by the grace of Sri Aurobindo, the only Indian interpreter of the Bard, who has a whole body of aesthetics on Shakespeare, and that without footnotes, which are the hallmark of modern day scholarship. Fresh eyes do not require end-notes, which often contain more words than what is there in the main paper! I counted that once under a paper on John Webster.

I thank my contributors.

Goutam Ghosal
Sri Aurobindo Study Centre
Santiniketan
23 April, 2022

HAMLET AND THE LIE

Hamlet entered a hermitage
As his ghost - I mean his dad's -
Gave up crying foul as none believed
In his complaint or his injuries.
In fact, there are books now written
On how Claudius was a great lover
On whom his brother had played a trick.
In the game of Love, cheating meets gore,
As all the fairy tales do tell us from long ago.
Hamlet's girl now dressed in micro
& spaghetti
Goes about looking for Horatio
Who in fact had always warned her
Of Hamlet being too gullible and lost.
The poor sod now sits with Laertes
Talking of Nietzsche and Nicomachus,
Of futility and music numbered,
While Inshaw painted the River Bank
That fetshized Ophelia's death forever.
Did she not really run holding her red hat
In place with her hands, dressed in a gown?
The lawns are laughing dark with tulips
While Old man Polonius sits dragging
On a cigar bought at the Danish Pipe.
Claudius is dredging the stream for red locks
While Gertrude embroiders a tale of love,
As the evening stretches into goblets
Of weekend orgies and lying wooden tables.

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PROSPERO'S CLOVEN PINE: FRAMES IN *THE TEMPEST*

B. Hariharan

Abstract: This paper attempts to read the tangle of frames that make up *The Tempest*. It identifies the Virgilian impulses in the play and proceeds to locate this code as an essential frame to open up the discussion of the very many frames that evolve as the play progresses. I try to show how there are a number of story frames that enable the progression of the action in the play. In the process, the paper shows how Prospero embarks upon a narrative enterprise in which he will have to sustain his position as the one who has power to re-stage his story in his own way. The argument evolves to show how Caliban as the servile monster will be caught later in the historical frame of the native stereotype standing ahead in a long line of typecasting in the history of representation. It is also fascinating to see how narrative cannibalism is an interesting story Prospero tells unknowingly. In a sense, *The Tempest* is a tangle of frames that try to sustain one another, refusing to complete the story Prospero tries to finish.

Keywords: Frame – Cloven Pine – Narrative – Caliban – Prospero – Usurpation.

Hear a little further,
And then I'll bring thee to the present business
Which now's upon's; without the which this story
Were most impertinent.
(*The Tempest* Act I, Sc. ii 135 - 37)

Augustus Caesar had commissioned Virgil to write a poem that glorified Rome and himself. Virgil had asked on his deathbed to burn his *Aeneid*, the poem he wrote for the Caesar. Scholars study the epic in this pendulum swing to draw out the larger politics of inscribing Roman imperium. The imperial project does not have bounds. In the court poet's creative expression of antiquity, divine power authorizes Roman imperialism. Zeus says in Book I of the epic, "His ego nec metas rerum nec tempora pono; / imperium sine fine dedi." (*Aeneid* I. 276 -277) Stanley Lombardo's translation reads: "For these I set no limits / In time or space, and have given to them / Eternal empire, world without end" (*Aeneid* I. 333 – 335).

A discussion of imperial discourse, therefore, must acknowledge the power equations grafted onto the glorification of the Roman Empire. Anchises' shadow's address in the epic to his son Aeneas sets up this paradigm of imperial desires, which, of course, speaks more directly to Augustus himself: "Tu regere imperio populos, Romane,

memento;/Hae tibi erunt artes, pacisque imponere morem,/Parcere subiectis, et debellare superbos” (*Aeneid*VI, 851 – 854). Stanley Lombardo’s translates: “Your mission, Roman, is to rule the world. / These will be your arts: to establish peace, / To spare the humbled, and to conquer the proud” (*Aeneid* VI. 1016 – 1018). The crucial words in Latin here are ‘memento’ and ‘debellaesuperbos’; the Roman must remember that he holds the right to impose peace as he crushes all resistance with military force.

While endorsing military service to defend Rome, Virgil’s contemporary and friend Horace in the second poem of his third book of odes refers to the “Parthosferoces” who resist the moral/imperial framework of the sturdy Roman boys who harass them (*Horace Odes III 22 – 23*). This construction of the ferocious other in Horace’s poem about patriotism or Cleopatra’s Egypt (to conquer the proud) in the case of Virgil’s epic contribute towards the glory of the civilized Roman Empire. This history of deliberate misreading by the Mediterranean cultures consolidated as a powerful discourse that framed the matrix of European colonialism (as a response to the treachery of the natives) in its conflict with distant cultures. The necessary fallout of that experience grounded itself as the reading of the ‘other’ to facilitate Zeus’ eternal empire, world without end or the more familiar national expansionism or the politically safe national interests.

It was perhaps national interest, which made Columbus come out with his blundering nomenclature of the Carib people when he called them Indians. However, pride compounded with power tag on to national interest to establish the new narrative in place. Though Columbus may not have theorized about the narrative effect of the act of naming, this framing act certainly established a set of power relations. Naming accrues undeniable links that portend and signify multiple layers of meaning. To call names is an act that is definitive and defining as it casts a frame that ensnares the subject. Peter Hulme has explored in detail the etymology of the name given to the people of the Carib and the cultural and historical implications it has had in colonial discourse (*Colonial Encounters* 13 – 43) which is the larger frame that he builds to discuss classic instances of encounters between cultures.

I propose to read Shakespeare’s *The Tempest* acknowledging this Virgilian and Horatian history of the imperial narrative. In her reading of the play, Barbara Mowat draws attention to an “excessive Virgilian presence” (30). Jan Kott’s observation that “The Virgilian code becomes the theater of Prospero’s art” (440) compels an examination of the very many frames that constitute the fabric of *The Tempest*. In this play, the act of naming reiterates the Virgilian code of conquest. “What’s in a name?” Juliet asks in *Romeo and*

Juliet (Act II, Sc. ii 43). Yet, by the time we come to Shakespeare's last play that claims to profoundly champion the rarer action of forgiving, the burden of the question accrues a certain cultural significance, which has to be scrutinized in the light of Prospero's dominating discourse. As audience/readers, we are generally dazed by the effect of the tempest (not a hurricane, but as something more providential, redemptive like Zeus' blessings of empire) and moved by Prospero's story of his banishment from Milan that we scarce notice the way "Caliban my slave" (Act I Sc ii, 308.) is called to appear before him: "What ho! Slave! Caliban! / Thou earth, thou! Speak" and again "Thou poisonous slave, got by the devil himself / Upon the wicked dam, come forth!" (Act I Sc ii, 313 – 14, 319 – 20). The unfolding of the layers of story is such that Ariel first names Caliban when Prospero recalls "the son that she did litter here,/A freckled whelp hag-born, -- not honour'd with/A human shape" (Act I Sc ii, 282 – 84.). Sycorax had imprisoned Ariel in a cloven pine and it is possible that the name Caliban does not suggest of itself to Prospero's slave.

It can be certain that Sycorax could not have named her son Caliban for it is an etymologically loaded European mongrel nomenclature. The word Caliban is a sort of anagram of cannibal, which, as Peter Hulme explains, was "derived from the Latin *canis* (dog)" (101). Now to go back to Prospero's description of Caliban's birth about which he would have known only from Ariel, it echoes the Latin derivation. Prospero could not have heard the name from Ariel or from Caliban, for language is taught only later. The only possibility is to have it introduced on the island by Prospero, the guest, that suggests how important his learning and books are. When he makes Ariel utter Caliban's name first, Prospero validates the priority of the Mediterranean to frame the alien culture. For now, he has named his slave into existence, much the same way as Columbus the other Indians. The name then functions as the Mediterranean frame that contains the unfamiliar. The name closes off all possibilities of the human form, which has to be so for the blossoming of Miranda, the goddess of the island. The seeds of cultural exclusion planted in this frame ensure that the power to narrate has always to be outside, which now balances the release of Ariel from Sycorax's frame.

Other studies have also examined the kind of frames used in the play. John Kunat, argues for instance that the "play's framing narrative" (311) is "Claribel's marriage to the King of Tunis" (311). Kunat asserts that this "frame device has generally been ignored because it does not seem essential to the action but appears to establish a reason for Alonso's ship to sail near Prospero's island" (311). He proceeds to read the doubling of

situations, and actions in terms of this frame. But, as I propose to show, it is also true that a number of story frames enable the progression of the action in the play. Prospero's narrative, for instance, is such that this act of naming in the text is only a part of the construction of a series of frames that builds one upon the other.

To go back to that moment when Ariel names Caliban for the audience, as well as for the furtherance of Prospero's narrative, he does this as part of the larger narrative that is a kind of flashback of the events relating to imprisonment in the cloven pine. On his part, the former Duke of Milan co-opts Ariel into his Mediterranean story when this willing servant replies to his master's description of Caliban's birth, when he names Prospero's cultural other. To use the frame from which the new master releases him, Ariel is now wedged in the cloven pine that is the new frame of the story. Ariel, like Caliban, does not know from where the story is coming, and what the story is. Yet, Prospero reaffirms him as the servant who works as the willing assistant to put together his story frames.

To understand the immediacy and necessity of these story frames for Prospero, a closer look at the events that happened before the play opens helps. In a key passage that frames his daughter in the larger story he weaves, Prospero has to set up his brother as the first accused, wriggling out of some rather uncomfortable questions (Act I, Sc ii, 66 – 132.). After he frames his brother's perfidy, he smuggles in the thought that he cast the government upon his brother as he is "rapt in secret studies" (Line 77); now a stranger to his state, only to break away to distract Miranda's attention when he asks her if she is attentive! As "Prospero the prime duke," (Line 72) he "[neglects] worldly ends" (Line 89) to become "Me, poor man" (Line 109) the victim of a scheming brother, and gets out of another cloven pine that wedges him in as the failed ruler.

A closer look at Prospero's story told to Miranda also reveals three distinct frames that construct his identity. The dukedom is the larger frame that enables him to assume the title Duke. Still a part of this frame he is rapt in secret studies, framed by his prized books. But then, this second frame forces him to come out of his prime frame as Duke. He does this by giving the ducal responsibilities to his brother. Antonio, on his part, creates a counter frame of abdication for his brother and banishes him suitably out of the frame. Now that he is out of the frame, Prospero embarks upon a narrative enterprise in which he will have to sustain his position as the one who has power to re-stage his story in his own way. Interestingly, his powers do not help him when he is out of the frame in Milan but it certainly works in the frame of the new dukedom, the island.

Re-stage he does, when he sets up Caliban as the antagonist in the new cloven pine he prepares as the master of the island. Caliban is “doubly inscribed in Prospero’s play as both himself and a surrogate for Antonio, thereby putting into motion his double burden from the play’s title page, Atlantic and Mediterranean” (Peter Hulme 123). A redefinition of Caliban’s identity as the misshapen son of Sycorax helps to fit him into the contingencies of Prospero’s European sensibility. This frame casts Caliban in a sequence of roles as learner, rapist, revolting slave, and as usurper. However, as a sort of payment towards his education in Prospero’s cell, Caliban has to learn that his teacher has shifted him out of the frame of the host to that of the slave. Simultaneous to his learning language, Prospero’s Mediterranean narrative snares him; this frame checks his natural actions in unforeseen ways. And yet, when Caliban attempts to blend his instinct into the taught language (itself a manifestation of culture) in his relationship with Miranda, Prospero’s linguistic frame intervenes as cultural barrier.

Prospero’s Mediterranean intervention is borne out by the accusation that Caliban tried to violate the chastity of Miranda. Interestingly, what Prospero’s education had set out to do is to fit forcibly Caliban’s cultural specificity into his discourse, which is suggestive of appropriation. Prospero’s lesson plan is a composite of racist supremacy, and expansionist impulses that resort to the use of newer technologies (to be read here as his benevolent magic). This glosses over any need to recognize the possibility of Caliban ever having a history outside of the lesson plan. What might possibly have been an expression of human bonding, has to be properly dismissed for Caliban is “not honour’d with / A human shape.” Caught in the frame of the Mediterranean training, his action for the benevolent teacher/lord on the isle expresses nothing less than attempted rape. It might be even possible to suggest that the attempted rape is only an extended repetition in cultural terms, a mirror image of the cultural framing Prospero had done with Caliban. For, the “project of teaching Caliban 'language' potentially inducts him into the civilized order itself, and from there into a potential marital partnership with Miranda” (John Gillies 194).

In a language very different in tone from the other lines that Caliban utters in the play, we hear him speak of the event: “Oh ho! Oh ho! – would it had been done! / Thou didst’t prevent me; I had peopled else / This isle with Calibans” (Act 1 Sc ii, 349 – 51). Kunat argues that the “attempted rape...performs the function of a social contract, whereby man passes from the natural into the civil state” (322). The problem, however, with this position is that Kunat also argues that Caliban is “ungendered” and “nonperson” (321) echoing Prospero’s narrative intent. Kunat claims that this further reinstates

Prospero's narrative that confines Caliban "to the world of non-personhood attributed to the slave" (322) But it is even more compelling to see how "Miranda has to pass intact to her husband" (Patricia Seed 210) that will complete the Mediterranean picture in the frame.

What is for Prospero the prized jewel (Miranda's chastity) to reclaim his kingdom must remain unsullied and pure, for that will be the exchange value of his daughter as commodity. As Patricia Seed astutely observes, "this twist also leads straight to the gendered complexities of Caliban's and Prospero's respective claims to the island, for both men's rights turn out to operate through women" (206). This frame reveals the burden of the story of inheritance, authority, and the deeply percolated systems of power structures. Andrew C. Hess argues how "Caliban, the African, is firmly rejected as a suitor for Prospero's daughter; and the appropriate union is a love-match between Miranda and Ferdinand that links the ruling families of two Italian city-states" (128). Prospero's veiled threat to Ferdinand of the dire consequences if he "dost break her virgin knot"(Act IV, Sc I, 13 – 23) reveals the tenon and mortise that have to fit in to complete the European frame of the story. That is to say, "Prospero takes the father's right to defend his daughter against unwanted sexual advances into another realm altogether" (Patricia Seed 210).

The accusation of rape can only be a reaffirmation of his prerogative to frame Caliban now as rapist by virtue of the fact that he had performed the role of the parent when he named his erstwhile host. The anger in Prospero's words then would also turn on the cultural baggage, that cloven pine of European cultural history -- of incest that Prospero carries without the help of Gonzalo. Prospero doubly justifies himself in his accusation for he is the single parent, as it were, to both Caliban and Miranda. For what the narrative gives is only Prospero's language, which permeates the slant of the story.

Out of the Mediterranean frame, confined to a rock, Caliban now espouses a new use for a language without fetters. To cite the famous passage: "You taught me language; and my profit on't/Is, I know how to curse: the red plague rid you,/For learning me your language" (Act I Sc ii, 363 – 65), this despite the realization that he will be punished for such blasphemy. While Caliban will experience the chastisements as an expression of Prospero's displeasure, this provides yet another frame that confirms the son's savagery. Notwithstanding such confirmation that is essential for the success of Prospero's story, the very device of imprisoning Caliban in his narrative, in turn, exposes a revealing gap in the frame. When Caliban confronts Prospero with his right over the island by birth, he avoids the issue and recasts his sole subject into yet another frame of the revolting slave that

denies Caliban's story. Silence almost breaks through Prospero's narrative when it frames his usurpation as the guest who decides to stay permanently.

However, the narrative hold of Prospero's story, and the revelation of Caliban's slavish attitude to the two clowns Stephano and Trinculo works towards the creation of another frame which almost succeeds. Prospero uses the relationship among the three, though developed on its own to further his narrative. Ariel's responsibility is to remain hidden and watch Caliban allowed to *be* himself with the two clowns. The question, however, is whether the Caliban whom we see plotting against his master is the product of the European discourse that constituted his education. If Caliban seen here is the product of that conditioning, it will serve to create an uneasy frame around Prospero's (and with that European) mode of teaching, notwithstanding the master's indictment of his student on whose "nature nurture can never stick" (Act IV, Sc i, 188 – 89). For his narrative without explicitly saying so, casts Caliban here as a servile monster who will be caught later in the historical frame of the native stereotype standing ahead in a long line of typecasting in the history of representation.

Since Prospero casts Caliban in his narrative to play out the story to the desired end of redemption and forgiveness, he, in turn, has to stage again the old story of usurpation not knowing, of course, what story he is staging. George Lamming has this to say about Caliban in the play, emphasizing his exclusion and exploitation: "Caliban is the excluded, that which is eternally below possibility, and always beyond reach. He is seen as an occasion, a state of existence which can be appropriated and exploited for the purposes of another's own development' (107). Only, Caliban does not know Prospero's story; he is taught what to do by his master when divested of his freedom on the island. It then becomes possible to read Caliban's revolt as a repetition for Prospero of what Antonio had done and as his own attempt to use the knowledge gained from his teacher. In a double sense, Prospero's mission of educating his host is the cloven pine that frames Caliban in the repeated Mediterranean narrative to recast the old wrong to make it right. The movement of Prospero's narrative is such that it uses the life of another to further a narrative fantasy that tries to win back mentally at least, the affection the people have for the Duke of Milan. Narrative cannibalism, then, is an interesting story Prospero tells unknowingly.

Try as Prospero might, Caliban manages to be outside the frames made for him. Two very specific instances bear this out where Prospero's narrative intent does not

achieve his desired end. While he prepares to forgive all his enemies, he sets hounds after Caliban and the two clowns that echo the hunting of the American Indians by mastiffs. Peter Hulme writes, “The final chastisement of the conspirators is out of all proportion to their powerlessness: they may have plotted murder but their chance of success has been nil from the start” (133). Hulme does not fully explore the possibility that this scene holds out in the staging of the event. This is a scene where Prospero does not allow his anger to surface; essentially sublimated in the victory over his enemies, his story line insists upon the “comic mode” (133) and the fun of an ironic animal chase. Even in that final moment where Prospero forgives everyone, he reserves choice epithets that suggest an inanimate object in acknowledging Caliban’s presence: “...this thing of darkness I/Acknowledge mine” (Act V, Sc I, 275).

The second instance where Prospero’s narrative intent fails is when he tries to lure Caliban and his companions with gaudy clothes before they approach his cell. As European representatives, Stephano and Trinculo fall easily to Prospero’s bait. Caliban, however, refuses the borrowed clothes and with that this magical sartorial frame. Peter Hulme concludes,

Caliban is allowed to make desperate efforts to avoid the comic mode: almost all his words in this scene are warnings to his companions not to be diverted from their purpose, and he alone refuses the tempting finery on the lime-tree, thereby possibly foiling the very last piece in Prospero’s jigsaw since he will not *dress* as Antonio – in Milanese clothes – for the culminating moment of the repeated coup....Caliban, though defeated, is allowed to retain his dignity in spite of Prospero’s best efforts to degrade him (134).

Though Peter Hulme is right in his interpretation of Caliban’s resistance, the scene requires further attention. It is significant that in the final act there is much importance attached to clothes. As in other Shakespeare plays, here also clothes are as important as the characters that wear them. The sartorial discourse in the play offers an equally intricate series of frames that culminate in Caliban’s assertive refusal. In Act I, Sc ii Prospero proceeds to tell his story to Miranda after asking her to “pluck my magic garment from me” (Line 24). The stage direction refers to his mantle, which is also his “art” (Line 25). Prospero’s sartorial gesture in this scene is indicative of his narrative power that has cast the ship’s crew in confusion, scattered them on the isle.

While Marshall McLuhan argued in the twentieth century, “clothes are an extension of the skin” (*The Medium is the Massage* np), in terms of the references in the play they insist on the frames of identity they create.

And so, Ariel tells Prospero that no harm befell the ship’s crew, and their clothes are fresher than before without any blemish. Much the same is said by Gonzalo four times to Alonso in that interesting discussion of Tunis and Carthage: “That our garments, being, as they were, drenched in the sea, hold notwithstanding their freshness and glosses; being rather new-dyed than stain’d with salt water” (Act II, Sc i, 65 – 68). When read together, Prospero’s narrative to Miranda where he refers to Gonzalo’s help does point to a kind of an emerging pattern of signification: “Out of his charity, -- who being then appointed/Master of this design, -- did give us; with/Rich garments, linens, stuff and necessaries” (Act I, Sc ii, 162 – 64). The clothes have to be fresh for Prospero’s purposes as he is the producer and director of this Jacobean play, which has royal personages. The enactment cannot be short of the spectacular and the splendid. Soon Antonio remarks to Sebastian about his own ducal assumptions that reveals much about Prospero as it does of Antonio: “True:/And look how well my garments sit upon me;/Much feater than before; my brother’s servants/Were then my fellows; now they are my men” (Act II, Sc i, 280 – 82). Garments are cultural signifiers that have their own frames of reference. Antonio’s remarks that are dismissive of conscience, suggest also that the ducal robes fit him better than his brother.

Prospero’s sartorial discourse had started in Milan itself when he lived a different identity than that of the duke. In this sense, clothes seem to be magical in this play. Dress as a signifying frame structures the power of magic, for instance, in the scene where Prospero asks his daughter to pluck his magic garment. The dress is the frame that identifies him to Caliban as the master. The dress is the frame that charms the dispersed crew to stand spellbound in front of him in the last act. Before he brings to a close his play, Prospero has to assume his role as the Duke of Milan for which he needs to wear his ducal costume. What he had to discard under coercion in Milan in praxis now is essential to bring his narration to his desired conclusion: “Not one of them/That yet looks on me, or would know me. – Ariel, / Fetch me the hat and rapier in my cell: --/I will discease me, and myself present,/As I was sometime Milan” (Act V, Sc i, 84 – 86). He will forgive the “three men of sin” (Act IV, Sc iii, 53) only as rightful Duke of Milan ultimately framing “the rarer action” (Act V, Sc I, 27) of forgiving also

in his scheme of narration. The rarer action of forgiving gets framed in his essential display of power with the marriage of his daughter to Ferdinand that forecloses Antonio's chances to consolidate his position as duke, which is also the frame he puts around his brother.

Here Caliban's refusal to dress *as* Antonio and be co-opted into Prospero's last piece of the jigsaw assumes significance. The refusal seems to imply that Prospero's spell does not charm Caliban. It is a magical narration, which affects only the mind of the shipwrecked guests on the island. The narrative hold that Prospero has on Caliban is the magic of silencing through an expression of authority, a magic that fails access to his mind. Even the instant response to the music when he walks with Stephano and Trinculo towards the dirty pond is an expression of spontaneity beyond anything Prospero has taught (Act III, Sc iii, 147 – 54). The final trap for Caliban is the double frame in Milanese dress that he rejects. The irony of the rejection is on Prospero who can only come up with an acknowledgement that refuses to see Caliban for what he is worth. In his haste to give a happy-ending, and to signal the success of his plot, Prospero becomes part of the play. He can now reveal his hands to the guests, framed in ducal robes, forgiving the three men of sin and get out of the frame of the island story as he speaks the epilogue making sure of the audience's rarer action: "Let your indulgence set me free" (Act V, Sc i, 20).

But Caliban still does not know the entire story and remains outside the frame. The forgiveness granted to the rest of the crew is not for him. Unlike Antonio, Sebastian, or Alonso who are forgiven within the Jacobean framework of the play Prospero has produced, by the fact that he is still "disproportion'd in his manners/ As in his shape" (Act V, Sc i, 290 – 91) Caliban has to earn his pardon "handsomely" (Line 293). Caliban's response to his master's construction is elevating when it resists that final attempt to degrade him: "Ay, that I will; and I'll be wise hereafter/And seek for grace" (Lines 293 – 94). Quite clearly, Caliban does not "take on the role of the missionary's target" (Marina Warner 99) which "will perhaps save him" (100).

Alternatively, as Peter Hulme argues, Caliban is "a slave who can only allege his usurpation, or a conspirator whose failure confirms his treachery; leaving [him] little option but to 'seek for grace' in an attempt to minimize his suffering, whatever the justice of his claims may have been" (132). As Roland Green argues, "Prospero manage[s] the reintegration of the European characters, obviously excluding Caliban,

into an inflected version of the world they started from” (“Island Logic” 145). Caliban is in a unique position in the play, forced as he is to shift to different roles for the fulfillment of a narrative that had started in the Mediterranean about which he has no knowledge.

This is probably yet another frame to trap him even when he is educated to seek for grace. In a sense, *The Tempest* is a tangle of frames that try to sustain one another, refusing to complete the story Prospero tries to finish. It continues to be a tangle, for the centre is elsewhere; the royal entourage may depart for Naples/Milan. Would Caliban see off his erstwhile master? The text then points to the aporia that has decided to a great deal the course of cultural and racial interventions in history.

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THE JOURNEY OF WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE IN WORLD LITERATURE AND THE TREASURY OF VERSATILITY IN ELIZABETHAN ERA

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Abstract: This paper is meticulously drafted about the scintillating journey of William Shakespeare in world literature and the treasury of versatility in Elizabethan Era. It also examines very thoroughly about the various aspects of writings and how it gets significance and influence the other writers during the time of Elizabethan era. The zeitgeist of Elizabethan's age is umpteen because of William Shakespeare. The golden age and diamond people of Elizabethan age is remarkable in British history as well as in world literature. Even the Queen Elizabeth was a fan of William Shakespeare. There are different entertainments were encouraged in Elizabethan England which includes drinking, dancing, fencing and bear-baiting. Erudite scholars, literary personalities, writers, actors, playwrights, diplomats are encouraged and appreciated in this period. All the classes of people seem to be delighted because of these events. The paper tries to delineate the umpteen and multifarious notions of William Shakespeare and the delight of people and the treasure of versatility in creativity of writers during the time of Elizabethan Era. The zeitgeist of Elizabethan era is still scintillating in the world.

Key Words: William Shakespeare:- Meticulous Notions, Multifarious Views, Magnanimous Treasure, Dogberry's Malapropism, Intertwined of Criticism and Observation, Flourishment of Sonnets, Pastoral Perfection and Shakespeare Snippets.

William Shakespeare is a renowned English poet, playwright and actor. He is widely regarded as the greatest writer in the English language and the world's greatest dramatist. He is often called England's national poet and the 'Bard of Avon'. He was born on 26th April 1564 in Stratford-upon-Avon, a town in England. His father was a local businessman and his mother was the daughter of a land-owner. He married a woman named Anne Hathaway at the age of 18. They had three children. After his marriage, information about his life is considered a mystery. Scholars generally call this period as *The Lost Years*. But it is believed that he spent most of his life in London writing and performing in his plays. He wrote about 38 plays, 154 sonnets, two long narrative poems and a few other verses. His plays have been translated into every major language and are performed more often than any other playwright. He produced most of his work between 1589 to 1613. His early plays were mainly comedies and histories. Some of his finest works are Hamlet, Othello, King Lear, Macbeth, Julius Caesar and Romeo and Juliet. In 1597, Shakespeare bought the largest house in Stratford, called *New Place*. In 1599, Richard Burbage, who is a famous actor and his brother Cuthbert set a new playhouse on the Bank side, called the Globe. He died on 23rd April 1616, at the age of 52. He died within

a month of signing his will. In his will, Shakespeare left the bulk of his property for his elder daughter.

Ben Jonson clearly delineates that Shakespeare had multitudinous spirit in language learning as well as worldly learning, even though he educated in grammar school, and he further states that Shakespeare had “small Latin and less Greek” which means he has versatile ebullient spirit in other language learning apart from the indigenous language, English. Moreover, the phrase indicates that William Shakespeare often compared to Aeschylus, Euripides and Sophocles. William Shakespeare is one of the greatest literary men in the world. His wisdom is myriad. There are variety and versatility in his works. Ben Jonson states Shakespeare, “Thou art alive still while thy Booke doth live, and we have wits to read, and praise to give”. Shakespeare’s plays are popular at present time as well and his work is constantly being studied and performed throughout the world. But only the two photographs of William Shakespeare are still available and there is a monument of Shakespeare in Stratford today. John Dryden, “He was the man who of all modern, and perhaps ancient poets, had the largest and most comprehensive soul. But Shakespeare’s magic could not copied be; within that circle none durst walk but he. He was naturally learned; he needed not the spectacles of books to read nature. He looked inwards, and found her there”.

The erudite scholars of literature cannot dodge from the learning of treasury of wisdom of one of the most celebrated authors of all time, legendary wordsmith William Shakespeare. “The eyes are the window to your soul”, the famous line of Shakespeare’s sonnet indicates it lucidly. There is something strangely point by him that is not merely a window or the casement of body, but the state of mind which produce the good traits in celestial as well as worldly life. At the very outset scholars of William Shakespeare should note that he belonged to the age of Elizabethan era and he was to a very great extent to create the product of multifarious versatility in the Elizabethan age which include the limitless knowledge in worldly life, unfathomable passions to produce literary works, devices and words, the embodiment of supreme power in characters and the significant branches of love, life and other aspects in his plays and sonnets. The sonnet 116 delineates, “Love is not love which alters when it alteration finds, or bends with the remover to remove: O no! It is an ever-fixed mark. That looks on tempests and is never shaken”. The lines of William Shakespeare are aptly applicable in every circumstances of human’s life. The character Macbeth said to his wife, Lady Macbeth while she murders herself, “This life, which had been the tomb of his virtue and of his hour upon the stage, and then is heard no more: it is a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing”. Shakespeare quote summarizes how individual should obey the honor and virtues

for at least to their heart and mind. The work *Hamlet* points out vividly that, “There is nothing either good or bad, but thinking makes it so”.

The explorations of human duties and the nature of justice are the merely elements in the schemes of Shakespeare’s works. The play *Henry VIII*, demonstrates, “Good company, good wine, good welcome can make good people” and the play *Richard III*, indicates, “The world is grown so bad, that wrens make prey where eagles dare not perch”. The plays of Shakespeare portray both optimistic as well as pessimistic side of life. Ben Jonson rightly said about his friend, “Sweet Swan of Avon! ‘My Shakespeare, rise! I will not lodge thee by Chaucer or Spencer, or bid Beaumont lie, A little further to make the room”. Further he states, “A quibble is to Shakespeare what luminous vapors are to the traveler: he follows it at all adventures; it is sure to lead him out of his way and sure to engulf him in the mire”. Moreover, he states about him, “He was not of an age, but for all time! Thou hadst small Latin and Greek”. Shakespeare possessed much ability in his composition of plays and sonnets, because the ancient literary men produce either comedy or tragedy and Roman literary authors give importance to both the genres, but only Shakespeare had multifarious genres in his writings which include historical perspectives, romantic spirits, comical compositions and tragic turning spirits of human life. Thomas Carlyle, “If I say that Shakespeare is the greatest of intellects, I have said all concerning him. But there is more in Shakespeare’s intellect than we have yet seen. It is what I call an unconscious intellect; there is more virtue in it that he himself is aware of”.

Characters much noteworthy are: Shylock, Julius Caesar, Romeo and Juliet, Antony and Cleopatra, Hamlet, Othello, Macbeth, Lady Macbeth and so on. The most particular epitome tragic characters of William Shakespeare are: Othello, Macbeth, Hamlet and King Lear. The tragic protagonists who generally they have certain traits in their attributes which include external and internal conflicts, the tragic downfall, virtuous, sympathetic, trickery, cunning, and other tragic human disastrous elements. His tragedies are nexuses with lot of suicides. There are 13 times suicide occurs in Shakespeare’s plays which include Ophelia, Lady Macbeth, Juliet, Desdemona, Claudius, Laertes, Romeo, Gertrude, Polonius, Goneril, Cordelia, Ghost of Hamlet’s father, Mercutio. Apart from these, Brutus and Cassius both kill themselves in *Julius Caesar*. The play *Antony and Cleopatra* ends with five suicides, including the deaths of both Antony and Cleopatra. William Shakespeare himself acted in two plays, *Hamlet* and *As you Like it*. In the former play, he acted as the roles of Ghost and in the latter play, he acted as Old servant Adam. His plays have treasury of knowledge and wisdom of human traits and life. He is human genius. William Hazlitt points out, “If we wish to know the

force of human genius we should read Shakespeare. If we wish to see the insignificance of human learning we may study his commentators”.

There are different perceptions about Shakespeare in different countries. The views and perspectives are considered as observation of survival of readers of William Shakespeare in world literature. The perceptions and observations in world literature about William Shakespeare are umpteen encyclopedic views because even the modern readers as well as techno based learners are give significance to gather the knowledge of William Shakespeare’s plays and sonnets. Robert Graves, “The remarkable thing about Shakespeare is that he is really very good – in spite of all the people who say he is very good”. Further, William Wordsworth gives the notion of Shakespeare’s sonnets, “Scorn not the sonnet; critic, you have frowned, mindless of its just honors; with this key Shakespeare unlocked his heart”. The history depicts how that William Shakespeare and his knowledge disseminate throughout India during the time of Queen Elizabeth. In 1600, Queen Elizabeth I gave a charter to the East India company to do business with the Indian Shahs, Emperors, and Maratha princes who had subjugated the subcontinent for the preceding century. Over the sesquicentennial, that followed, the East India Company conversed from being merchant traders into a kind of quasi-government. After Indians protested in 1857, Queen Victoria clogged down the East India Company and lined India directly as a British colony.

Shakespeare first entered India as theatrical entertainment for British officers during colonialism. The work of Parsi thespians and literary figures like Harivanshrai Bachchan have paved the way for adaptations in regional languages and traditional performce arts, like Kathakali. Vishal Bharadwaj’s trilogy is the evidence to pride about Shakespeare in India. His trilogy of hindi films are Maqbool (2003), Omkara (2006) and Haider (2014) are the three significant aspects of Macbeth, Othello, Hamlet. Bharadwaj films embedded with contemporary political flashpoints of the society and it is an imitation of William Shakespeare’s narration. K.S. Srinivasa Iyengar points out “Shakespeare has indeed become a part of humane education and of popular culture everywhere, defying the many national ‘curtains’—iron, silken, bamboo—of our time”. In India, Kalidasa is considered as Shakespeare of India because his plays and poetry are also versatile in themes and it is widely concomitance with myriad spirits of “*worldly-epic-divine-vedas-virtues-wise*”. Actually the comparison gave by Sir William Jones in 1789. So the knowledge of Shakespeare gets advanced in India. Moreover, there are several Indian literary erudite scholars such as Rupin Desai, and Harish Trivedi give prominence to the learning of William Shakespeare, because of his admiration of myriad knowledge about worldly subjects. Lawrence Olivier praises

about Shakespeare that he has, “The nearest thing in incarnation to the eye of god” and Thomas More compares him to the planets because that he has unfathomable wisdom, “And one wild Shakespeare, following nature’s lights, is worth whole planets, filled with stagy rites”.

William Shakespeare is a myriad minded genius. There are three most noteworthy aspects in his plays are minimal usage of female characters, comical usage of fool characters, and essential usage of best pairs. The female characters are much noteworthy in William Shakespeare’s plays. They are: Gertrude and Ophelia in *Hamlet*, Ariel in *The Tempest*, Emilia and Desdemona in *Othello*, Hermia, Helena and Hippolyta in *A Midsummer Nights Dream*, Princess of France in *Love’s Labour’s Lost*, Celia in *As You Like It*, Bianca in *Taming of the Shrew*, Imogen in *Cymbeline*, Beatrice and Hero in *Much Ado About Nothing*, Lavinia in *Titus Andronicus*, Paulina and Hermione in *The Winter’s Tale*, Portia appears in two plays, *Merchant of Venice* and *Julius Caesar*, and Diana in *All’s Well That Ends Well*. The fool characters in Shakespeare’s plays are tremendously delineated that Feste is the fool for Countess Olivia and he said “I wear not motley in my brain” in *Twelfth Night*, Touchstone is Duke Fredericks court jester in *As You Like It*, Puck is also known as Robin Goodfellow or sometimes he is considered as Hobgoblin in *A Midsummer Nights Dream*, The Fool in *King Lear*, Trinculo is Alonso’s servant, he said, “I shall laugh myself to death at his puppy headed monster” in *The Tempest*, Nick Bottom famous words are really inquisitive for Shakespearean readers, that are: “This is to make an ass of me, to fright me, if they could”, and he is famous for having his head transformed into that of ass. Moreover, he is a *member of mechanicals* who are rehearsing a play “Pyramus and Thisbe”. Famous Shakespearean couples, Benedick and Beatrice in *Much Ado About Nothing*, Orlando and Rosalind in *As You Like It*, Duke Orsino and Viola in *Twelfth Night*, The Duke and Isabella in *Measure for Measure*, Bassanio and Portia in *Merchant of Venice*, Oberon and Titania in *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, Proteus and Julia in *Two Gentleman of Verona*, Leontes and Hermone in *Winter’s Tale*, Petrucio and Catherine in *Taming of Shrew*.

There are different types of perspectives in Shakespeare’s plays. His ideas are meticulously schemed and well drafted. His character sketches are well drawn. Some of the characters are portrayed in comic sense and some of the characters are manipulated with tragic flaws. Moreover, there are different types of notions are encompassed such as pretending, suicide, love, army life (military generals), hamartia or fatal flaw and so on. In *Winter’s Tale*, Hermione is an important character in one of the last plays of Shakespeare, who pretends to be a statue. In *Hamlet*, Ophelia heroine is committed suicide. Lady Macbeth is prone to sleepwalking. Macbet, Julius Caesar and Othello are three military generals who appear as

Shakespeare's heroes. Romeo and Juliet are the "star-crossed lovers" of Shakespeare. In *Hamlet*, the character Hamlet's hamartia is procrastination or indecisiveness. The word "Hamartia" is simply considered as tragic flaw. In other words, it is considered as fatal flaw that leads the downfall of a tragic hero. For example, the tragic flaw of King Lear is arrogance, foolishness, self delusion, flattery and misjudgments. The tragic flaw of Othello is jealousy. The tragic flaw of Macbeth is over or excessive ambition. The tragic flaw of Coriolanus is pride. The tragic flaw of Romeo and Juliet is rashness of action before thinking.

Shakespeare's characters are well manipulated according to the circumstances. Valentine and Proteus are the two gentleman of Verona. Caliban is the barbarian child of nature in *The Tempest*. The fool in *King Lear* can be called a choral character. Prospero is considered as Shakespeare because the line of Prospero "Now my charms are all overthrown" which indicates similar to William Shakespeare. Sheridan's character Mrs. Malaprop is taken from Shakespearean's character, Dogberry in *Much Ado about Nothing*. Actually the term "Malapropism" is incorrect usage of words accidentally in place of another word with a similar sound. So, he is the pioneer usage of the word Malapropism before Sheridan. Oberon and Titania are the king and queen of fairies who appear in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Prospero is the superman in *The Tempest*. Horatio is the loyal friend of Hamlet, the only one in whom Hamlet will confide. Mercutio is Romeo's friend who is killed by Tybalt. Rosalind is the heroine who disguises herself as a boy in *As You Like It*. Banquo is the ghost character who often haunts Macbeth at a banquet. Shylock is the moneylender in *The Merchant of Venice*. Sir John Falstaff is a fat friend of Prince Hal who appears two plays, in *The Merry Wives of Windsor* and *Henry IV, Part-I and II*. Sir Toby Belch is the name of Olivia's uncle in *Twelfth Night*.

William Shakespeare's sonnets were published in 1609. He wrote 154 sonnets. It was published by Thomas Thorpe. *Venus and Adonis* is the first published work of William Shakespeare. It includes five long narrative poems. It was written in 1593 and dedicated to Henry Wriothesley. *The Rape of Lucrece* (1594) is also dedicated to Henry Wriothesley. The two poetical works, *Venus and Adonis* and *The Rape of Lucrece* are dedicated to the same person, Henry Wriothesley. *The Passionate Pilgrim* is an anthology of twenty poems, which published in 1599 by William Jaggard. *The Phoenix and Turtle* (1601) is the first metaphysical collection of the great, William Shakespeare and *A Lover's Complaint* (1609) is a narrative poem which was published by Thomas Thorpe. It is the best epitome of the female-voiced complaint, which is often appended to sonnet sequences. Shakespearean's sonnets are meticulously delineated about the various elements of life. D.H. Lawrence, "When I read

Shakespeare I am stuck with wonder that such trivial people should muse and thunder in such lovely language”. There are 154 sonnets which probably lead humans’ mind to attain the skepticism because it is very difficult to find whether the speaker of the sonnets is Shakespeare himself or some imagined figures. Sometimes it is widely assumed that it is fairly person. William Wordsworth once thoroughly nuanced the Shakespearean’s sonnets, and he states about him in his sonnet work, “*Scorn not the Sonnet*”- “with this key Shakespeare unlocked his heart” and at the same time, Robert Browning immitates the words of Wordsworth and alters and add some phrases in his last stanzas of poetical work, *House*- “with this same key Shakespeare unlocked his heart once more! Did Shakespeare! If so, the less Shakespeare he!”. There is lot of information about humans’ life which is wrapped up in Shakespearean sonnets. T.S. Eliot remarks him, “We can say of Shakespeare that never has a man turned so little knowledge to such great account”.

Even though Shakespeare did not invent the sonnet, still he is very famous practitioner in the writings of sonnet form. The feature of his sonnets form is consisting of fourteen lines. The fourteen lines are stratified into four groups. The first three groups are considered as ‘quatrains’. The sonnet then concludes with a two-line subgroup. There are typically ten syllables per lines, which are termed in iambic pentameter. In Shakespearean’s sonnets, it is very common to see that the second and fourth lines of each group containing rhyming words. The final two lines of each sonnet is rhyming with each other. It is simply considered as ‘coda’. The form of sonnets has history. It was begin in Italy. The Italian sonnets were phrased as Petrarchan sonnets, named for Franceso Petrarch, a poet who belonged to fourteenth century in Italy. Even though he did not invent the sonnet form, he is considered as the perfecter of the sonnet form. Actually the entire credits go to the thirteenth century Giacomo da Lentini, who composed poetry in the literary Sicilian dialect. In English culture, the Italian sonnet form was introduced by Sir Thomas Wyatt and Henry Howard, (Earl of Surrey) in early sixteenth century. It was sprouting with great fame in among Elizabethans. The most noteworthy history about sonnets are really admirable and adorable. Shakespeare’s sonnets are blatant imitation of Petrarch’s sonnet form. The rhyming pattern of Shakespeare can be compared to Petrarch.

The first folio of Shakespeare’s plays was published in the year 1623. It was titled as *Mr. William Shakespeare- Comedies, Histories and Tragedies* which included Ben Jonson’s *Eulogy to Shakespeare* that contains the most famous work “To the Memory of My Beloved, Mr. William Shakespeare and What He Hath Left Us”. First Folio was dedicated to William Herbert, 3rd Earl of Pembroke and Philip Herbert, 4th Earl of Pembroke. There are several important lines about Shakespeare appears in this work which given by Ben Jonson, the only

friend of William Shakespeare- “Soul of the age; The Applause! Delight! The wonder of our Stage!”, “Sweet Swan of Avon”, “Small Latin and Less Greek”. This includes 36 plays in first folio. The editors of the first folio of Shakespeare’s plays is ‘Condell and Heming’. Out of thirty seven plays, thirty six plays were published in first folio. *Pericles* was excluded from first folio. The years of folios and its stratification is much indispensable. They are: First Folio in 1623, Second Folio in 1632, Third Folio in 1663, and Fourth Folio in 1685. Two significant journals devoted for the study of Shakespeare is *Shakespeare Survey* and *Shakespeare Quarterly*. These two journals are much prominent to show all the aspects of William Shakespeare. Shakespeare acted in Ben Jonson’s play, *Every Man in his Humor* (1598). Emily Bronte, the famous Victorian lady novelist, whose pseudonym or nom de plume is Ellis Bell, who often says that she is to have been influenced by Shakespeare.

There are different opinions given by world experts about William Shakespeare in world literature. Elizabeth Barrett Browning was an English poet of the Victorian era states that, “There Shakespeare, on whose forehead climb, the crowns O’ the world; oh, eyes sublime with tears and laughter for all time”. K.R. Srinivasa Iyengar demonstrates about William Shakespeare that he has versatile attributes in his work, *Shakespeare, His World and His Art* (1964). Horace Walpole, “One of the greatest geniuses that ever existed, Shakespeare, undoubtedly wanted taste”. Brendan Behan, “Shakespeare said pretty well everything and what he left out, James Joyce, with the judge from myself, put in”. Even though he did not follow the three unities, he was really appreciated by everyone in this world. In those days, the Elizabethan and Jacobean playwrights were not given significance to the three unities. This was the custom practiced by them. Some of the drawbacks are much remarkable because his works are more appreciated, and simultaneously, his works are dishonored because his authentic and unauthentic views. Sometimes he borrowed the ideas directly and it was considered as ‘imitation’ in literature. Robert Greene, one of the university wits, wrote about Shakespeare in his pamphlet work, *A Groats-Worth of Writ*, “an upstart crow, beautified with our feathers, that with his Tiger’s heart wrap in a player’s hide.” But Dame Alice Ellen Terry, who is an actress and gives an appreciation, notes about Shakespeare that he is, “Wonderful women! Have you ever thought how much we all, and women especially, owe to Shakespeare for his vindication of women in these fearless, high-spirited, resolute and intelligent heroines????”. There are different views and perspectives have given by the world thinkers and experts of William Shakespeare.

Shakespeare conveys didactic nature through the pastoral elements. John Milton’s portrays about William Shakespeare’s pastoral spirit in his work, *L’Allegro*, “Or sweetest

Shakespeare, Fancy's child, warble his native wood-notes wild". The pastoral elements of William Shakespeare are umpteen. *As You Like It*, "Under the greenwood tree who loves to lie with me, And turn his merry note Unto the sweet bird's throat, come hither, come hither, come hither: Here shall he see no enemy, but winter and rough weather". *Antony and Cleopatra*, "O excellent! I love long life better than figs". (Act-1, Scene-2). There is another famous quote in *Antony and Cleopatra*, "My salad days, when I was green in judgment". All the meticulous ideas of humans and manifesting nature of his lines about how to live are well constructed in his plays and sonnets. Cole Porter, the famous American Song writer and music composer, once quotes, "Brush up your Shakespeare". So, William Shakespeare is such a genius to demonstrate anything and everything clearly about the deep introvert and extrovert nature of humans. S.T. Coleridge points out, "Our myriad minded Shakespeare". His pastoral ideas are well constructed in *As You Like it*, because this work is the most epitome in world literature and it also nexuses with romance, brother relationship meticulously portrayed by William Shakespeare. All the scene are intertwined with woods or forest. So it is absolutely connected with pastoral comedy. Especially the line "Under the greenwood tree" in Act II, Scene 5, *As You Like It*, Amiens, a lord who follows Duke Senior, sings the song with Jacques, which can be considered as a celebration of the Edenic pastoral setting for the play and it encourages the readers to leave the bustling world of the court to come and enjoy heaven. Later, the line, "Under the Greenwood Tree", is taken by the English writer Thomas Hardy for his novel, *Under the Greenwood Tree: A Rural Painting of the Dutch School* but published anonymously in 1872.

Some of the indispensable information is entangled in William Shakespeare's plays. The readers of Shakespeare should focus that these very minute details are much significant. The minute information are crafted through **Shakespeare Snippets**: There are only two plays of Shakespeare that omitted the love scenarios: one is *Julius Caesar* and secondly, *Macbeth*; *The Comedy of Errors* is the shortest play; *Macbeth* is the shortest tragedy; *Hamlet* is the longest play; *The Two Noble Kinsmen* is the last play; *Richard II* and *King John* are entirely written in verse forms; *Hamlet* and *Titus Andronicus* are the revenge plays. *All's Well that Ends Well*, *Troilus and Cressida II*, and *Measure for Measure* are the problem plays; *Tempest*, *Cymbeline*- King of Britain, *Winter's Tale* and *Pericles*-Prince of Tyre are considered as tragicomedies and romances; *The Comedy of Errors* and *The Tempest* are the plays followed the technique, "Aristotelian unity of time"; *Hamlet – The Tragedy of Hamlet: The Prince of Denmark*, *Othello- The Tragedy of Othello: Moor of Venice*, *King Lear*, and *Macbeth* are considered as great tragedies. *Much Ado about Nothing*, *Twelfth Night or What you Will*, *The*

Merchant of Venice, and *As You Like It* are mature comedies; His collaborative works are very interesting. They are: *Timon of Athens* with Thomas Middleton, *Pericles* with George Wilkins and *The Two Noble Kinsmen* with John Fletcher. His historical plays are mostly imitated and most of the sources taken from Raphael Holinshed's *Holinshed's Chronicles* (1577); Roman Plays such as *Julius Caesar*, *Antony and Cleopatra*, *Coriolanus* and *Titus Andronicus* (Collaborative work with George Peele) are based on the sources of North Plutarch. *The Taming of Shrew* is connected with induction technique framing device- explanatory scene; John Gower introduces each act with a prologue in *Pericles*. The tripartite minute details are enclosed with - the longest scene, the longest speech and the longest single word, 'Honorificabilitudinitatibus' which are used in *Love's Labour Lost*. Shakespeare acted in his four plays. He acted as King Duncan in *Macbeth*, King Henry in *Henry IV*, Adam in *As You like It*, Ghost in *Hamlet*. The forest settings are used in some plays such as Birnam wood in *Macbeth*, Forest of Arden in *As You like It*, Windsor Forest in *Merry Wives of Windsor*, and Capulet's Orchard in *Romeo and Juliet*.

Elizabethan Age is considered as 'Golden age'. It is also known as the age of Shakespeare. Some of the predecessors of drama before Shakespeare are mystery plays, miracle plays, morality plays and the interludes. It is very important to note that English dramatic tradition which begins to emerge from the Middle English period to Elizabethan period. During middle English period, there is no influence of ancient classical drama such as Greek and Roman. The rebirth of drama after the classical tradition of Greek and Roman plays can be sprouted from church premises. Mystery plays teaches bible to illiterate commoners during 11th and 12th centuries. Actually the bible was written and popularize in Latin. The language was not clear to the commoners. So, the clergy taught them in an innovative way to reach bible ideas to the commoners by enacting plays and narrating stories from the bible through the historical and biblical aspects. In 13th century, the miracle plays were sprouted and reached widely in England. It is also widely deal with bible and narrating the story of saints and also how common incidents which is related to the bible. It is little more secular to compare the mystery plays. It is continuous to be religious and ritualistic but the practical application of bible is the noteworthy information of miracle plays. These plays were enacted during the time of medieval period of England. There were four major companies which promoted the miracle plays. It is also used to run this play in cycle format. The cycle in the sense, the story line is related to circle, that means the beginning which is related to creation and the ending which is related to the fall of humans and the consequences which is related to topsy-turvy like sufferings, crucifixion, and so on. Morality plays sprouted from Mystery and

Miracle plays. It is absolutely connect with theatrical point of view. These plays were considered as allegorical dramas that personified didacticism. It simply connect with people by teaching the masses on Christianity. After the arrival of William Shakespeare, the forms of sonnets, prose and dramas get transformed into new forms.

Elizabethan literature is the worldwide famous literature. Literature would not complete, if without omitting of Elizabethan age and literature. The reign of Elizabeth I in England (1558–1603), probably the most splendid age in the history of English literature and still it is considered as scintillating age. In other words, it can be said as the golden age or the age of Shakespeare. During this period, there were world's most famous writers are still admirable which includes William Shakespeare, Christopher Marlowe, Edmund Spenser, Philip Sidney, Roger Ascham, Richard Hooker. They were flourished not only in Elizabethan age or in English literature. But they are devoted as literary eminent or jack of arts in world literature. There are different prominent varieties of genres flowering in this age. They are: sonnets, prose and plays. The sonnets are presented in poetical form; the prose is presented in the form of historical chronicles, pamphlets, and the versions of the Holy Scriptures; and the plays are enacted as drama. William Shakespeare is the best erudite expert in sonnet writings as well as play writings. His dialogue forms are manifesting the world lucidly. For example, the play *As You Like It* shows the traits of world and its people: "All the world's a stage, and all the men and women merely players. They have their exits and their entrances; and one man in his time plays many parts".

The aim of the paper is to examine the through aspects of William Shakespeare in world literature and how his plays and sonnets are still scintillating to the world. Shakespeare is the most quoted person next to the Bible and his works have been translated in all the languages with diverse variety of modification. His characters are epitome either for morality or immorality; and 'to be or not to be'. His way of expressions are imbued with meticulous notions of didacticism of virtues and vices, skepticism of love and life, agnosticism of to be and not to be, and classism of Greek and Latin. John Dryden in his *Essay of Dramatic Poesy* clearly states it, "He was the man who of all modern, perhaps ancient poets had the largest and most comprehensive soul". His mind is full of philosophical ideas and it is intertwined with world. John Milton points out vividly, "Dear son of memory, great heir of fame". Finally this paper concludes with the famous statement of William Shakespeare's *All's well that Ends well*, (Act-4, Scene-3), "The web of our life is of mingled yarn, good and ill together. Without Shakespeare, there is no golden age of Elizabeth epoch. The stratification of different forms

of views about love and life is meticulous and the theme of artifice clearly shows the ambience of good as well as bad nature of humans.

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SHAKESPEARE AFTER BLOOM: AGENDA AND CHOICES

Jaydeep Chakrabarty

The aura of universality and omniscience attached to Shakespeare and his words ever since his eminent contemporary Ben Jonson's canonisation of the bard as belonging to all ages has come under severe strain after the advent of "theory." Though the enthusiasm attached to the theoretical turn that started in the sixties of the last century has faded away a great deal, it cannot be denied that it is impossible to go back to an aesthetic and universal Shakespeare after theory. Nonetheless, Harold Bloom—originally one of the high priests of the theoretical turn in the Anglo-American world—refashioned himself as a defender of the liberal humanist canon of Western literatures towards the later part of his life, and incessantly attempted to restore Shakespeare to the position that theory had taken away from him in the first place. This paper seeks to explore the genealogy of the foundational formations of Bloom's rereading of Shakespeare, primarily in the context of the poetics of his re-canonization of Shakespeare as "the centre of the canon."

As is well known, *canon* in the context of any given literature implies "standard," "great," "classic," a book or an author is considered to be *canonical* when he or she is thought to represent very high standards of aesthetic excellence and/or universal humanist concerns. The canon, thus, is construed to be different from what is merely *popular*—e.g. Shakespeare belongs to the English canon, rather he is the centre of the canon, as Bloom argues in his *The Western Canon*; but Arthur Conan Doyle or Sidney Sheldon does not. But the critics and their critiques of the canon have been vociferously arguing for quite some time now that literary canons are always-already implicated in the politics of exclusion and are not mere aesthetic domains. Their definition of the canon is something akin to the statement that canons, ecclesiastical, aesthetic or otherwise—universalizes recurring archetypes in specified topoi. It is often seen that the defenders of a particular canon seek to universalize the values it represents. Interestingly, however, the defenders and upholders of specific canons do not admit, canonical or otherwise, that all texts are the products of specific political and cultural contexts. Any attempt to canonize a particular set of texts as representative of timeless aesthetic or human values are, more often than not, masks for hiding political interests.

In response to all these arguments pointing out various political and ideological complicities of the canon, the supporters of the western canon have chosen to strengthen the canon by a vigorous reassertion of the claims of aestheticism and universality. However, the central paradox of this *return to the canon* is the absence of definitions of the attributes as any definition would naturally demystify them. This facet of the call for the return to the canon will be discussed in greater details in the following paragraphs. Published in 1994, Harold Bloom's *The Western Canon* is arguably the most influential and most comprehensive attempt to re-integrate the "loose canons" into the western canon, which may well be treated as a manifesto of the defenders of the traditional canon. In this book which can very well be called a vindication of the English or European great Bloom shows no sympathy for political readings, and advocates for a rigid distinction between *literary criticism* and *cultural criticism*. As he sees it, cultural criticism here refers to the study of literature as ideology which he denigrates, rejects and brushes aside with the title "school of resentment." However, the very fact that Bloom invokes a strongly provocative idiom in his assessment of the canon that may appear even offensive to the supporters of political correctness signifies that the centrality of the western canon is already in danger. Bloom finds the very idea of an exclusive Afro-American or feminist or postcolonial canon, for that matter, absolutely unacceptable because he sees these as "unhealthy" responses to the western canon. It becomes, therefore, very obvious that by asserting the secondary nature of non-European or non-canonical literatures, he is making a case for the continuation of the western canon as a cultural as well as a curricular category. His staunch refusal to accept any oppositional criticism of the western canon is suggestive of a counter-offensive, which can arise only out of insecurity:

Thus, feminist cheerleaders proclaim that women writers lovingly cooperate with one another as quilt makers, while African-American and Chicano literary activists go even further in asserting their freedom from any anguish of contamination whatsoever: each of them is Adam early in the morning. They know no time when they were not as they are now; self-created, self-begot, their puissance is their own.(7)

In fact, Harold Bloom's selection of only twenty six authors from the entire western tradition as canonical is symptomatic of his desire to preserve what the critics of the canon call the dead male white European Christian authors. The fact that his list

includes figures like Chaucer, Cervantes, Montaigne, Milton, Johnson, Wordsworth, Jane Austen, and Proust should indicate the paradigms of selection. The authors are chosen, it seems, because they are great, and are aesthetically rewarding. But the paradox that lies at the heart of this selection is that aestheticism, as Bloom sees it, cannot be explained to those who do not have a feel for it, and need not be explained to those who have. Bloom's paradoxical statement on aestheticism encapsulates the central paradox of canonicity itself, which, in a way, highlights the dilemma of the liberal humanist tradition of great texts and concomitant reading practices: "*Pragmatically, aesthetic value can be recognized or experienced, but it cannot be conveyed to those who are incapable of grasping its sensation and perception*" (17, emphasis added).

However, no canon is independent of specific yardsticks, as the very word implies judgement, measurement. In *The Western Canon*, Harold Bloom puts Shakespeare at the very centre of the canon, a position which the latter shares with Dante. (However, it must be remembered that in terms of priority, even Dante is secondary to Shakespeare in Bloom's scheme of things.) A closer scrutiny within the framework of English critical history, however, is bound to reveal that Bloom's veneration of Shakespeare is not different in spirit from that of Dr Samuel Johnson or Matthew Arnold. Moving backward from Bloom to explore this critical genealogy, it is imperative to remember here Arnold's proclamation of Shakespeare as the ultimate reservoir of knowledge and wisdom in his fairly well-known sonnet "Shakespeare":

Others abide our question. Thou art free.
We ask and ask—Thou smilest and art still,
Out-topping knowledge.

It is being argued here that Bloom's essay elaborating on the centrality of Shakespeare in the western canon can be best seen as a commentary and elaboration of Arnold's canonization of the bard at one level, while at another level it is a reiteration and reassertion of the Johnsonian reading of the bard. Bloom, it can be said, completes the project of Dr. Samuel Johnson and Arnold by showing Shakespeare as superior to those authors whom Johnson or Arnold did not have the chance to compare with Shakespeare. Further, his use of Shakespeare as a measure for achieving entry into the western canon is a replication of Arnold's so called "touchstone" method. Bloom conveniently assumes that both defenders and critics of the canon draw on Shakespeare's greatness to establish the case for, and against, the canon:

And the openers-up of the Canon and the secularists do not disagree much on where the supremacy is to be found: in Shakespeare. Shakespeare *is* the secular canon, or even the secular scripture; forerunners and legatees alike are defined by him alone for canonical purposes.(24)

It is evident that given such an edifice, Bloom's canon will only extend the values of the Johnsonian-Arnoldian and finally, the Leavisite great tradition. This tradition cannot compromise with the greatness of figures and texts already defined as great—evidently a paradox of the highest order. The dismissal of the Saidian and other materialist readings of literature as “secularist,” an obvious reductionist take on Edward Said's “secular criticism,” (see *The World, the Text and the Critic* pp 1-30) is never fully substantiated by Bloom. Evidently, defenders of the canon like Bloom do not seem to accept the need for a changed perspective on the canon, and often focuses on issues like literary language and aestheticism. Some of Bloom's postulations in the context of the culture-canon debate seem continue or reinforce the study of literature as an insular domain, informed by aesthetic mandate and a certain kind of elitism. While choosing Shakespeare as the centre of the canon, Bloom, for instance, says:

There is a substance in Shakespeare's work that prevails and that has proved multicultural, so universally apprehended in all languages as to have established a pragmatic multiculturalism around the globe, one that already far surpasses our politicized fumbblings toward such an ideal. Shakespeare is the centre of the embryo of a world canon, not Western or Eastern and less and less Eurocentric. (*Western* 63)

However, Bloom's re-canonization of Shakespeare in the face of challenges from anti-canonical positions—he terms these variously as “school of resentment” (7) or “flight from the aesthetic” (17)—seems to be more *thetic* than *rational*. In fact, he sees every phenomenon of the world, including “multiculturalism” to be already there in Shakespeare, who “already far surpasses our politicized fumbblings.” Further, the way Bloom assumes Shakespeare to have been “universally apprehended in all languages” is indicative of a very strong Eurocentric or colonial bias inherent in his critical apparatus. Interestingly, however, Bloom does not actually address how Shakespeare surpasses politics, nor does he deal with the issues raised in books like Jonathan Dollimore and Alan Sinfield's *Political Shakespeare* or Ania Loomba and Martin Orkin's *Postcolonial Shakespeare*. More than Shakespeare's centrality or greatness, Bloom's comments show his resistance to any possible resistance to the western canon.

It is interesting to note the criteria he identifies as markers of greatness in his attempts at positioning Shakespeare and Dante as the “centre” of the canon:

Shakespeare and Dante are the centre of the Canon because they excel all other Western writers in cognitive acuity, linguistic energy and power of invention. It may be that all three endowments fuse in an ontological passion that is a capacity for joy, or what Blake meant by his Proverb of Hell: “Exuberance is beauty.” (46)

Again, “Shakespeare’s greatest originality is in representation of character...” (47)

While in the first quote Bloom evidently revokes the three main qualities of Shakespeare as given by Samuel Johnson in his “Preface to Shakespeare,” the second quote entails the same Johnsonian praise of Shakespeare filtered through A C Bradley’s character-centric approach. The following statements from Johnson’s “Preface to Shakespeare” signal towards the “cognitive acuity,” “power of invention” and “linguistic energy” that Bloom sees as three most important signifiers of Shakespeare’s greatness:

Shakespeare approximates the remote, and familiarizes the wonderful; *the event which he represents will not happen, but if it were possible, its effects would be probably such as he has assigned*; and it may be said, that he has not only shewn human nature as it acts in real exigencies, but as it would be found in trials, to which it cannot be exposed. This therefore is the praise of Shakespeare, that his drama is the mirror of life; ; that he who has mazed his imagination, in following the phantoms which other writers raise up before him, may here be cured of his delirious extasies, by reading human sentiments in human language....(135)

In fact Johnson has elaborated on each one of the points that Bloom stakes as evidences of Shakespeare’s greatness much earlier, including the “greatest originality in representation of character” (Bloom 47). Johnson had been rather ahead of Bloom in this point, as he categorically stated that while other writers presents heroes (read characters,) Shakespeare gives us real men (and women, at hindsight we may deduce):

Shakespeare has no heroes; his scenes are occupied only by men, who act and speak as the reader thinks that he should himself have spoken or acted on the same occasion: Even where the agency is supernatural the dialogue is level with life. (Johnson 135)

In the above quote, the linguistic felicity of Shakespeare has also been clearly indicated by Johnson, which is the third criterion of Shakespeare’s greatness in Bloom. Johnson

has gone further to announce Shakespeare's language to be—what we can term in hindsight—the “national language”:

If there be, what I believe there is, in every nation, a stile which never becomes obsolete, a certain mode of phraseology so consonant and congenial to the analogy and principles of its respective language as to remain settled and unaltered; this stile is probably to be sought in the common intercourse of life, among those who speak only to be understood, without ambition of elegance. The polite are always catching modish innovations, and the learned depart from established forms of speech, in hope of finding or making better; those who wish for distinction forsake the vulgar, when the vulgar is right; but there is a conversation above grossness and below refinement, where propriety resides, and where this poet seems to have gathered his comick dialogue. He is therefore more agreeable to the ears of the present age than any other authour equally remote, and among his other excellencies deserves to be studied as one of the original masters of our language. (Johnson 139-40).

In fact, there is nothing new in Bloom's re-canonization of Shakespeare in *The Western Canon* in terms of critical arguments, but only a headstrong, almost instinctual rejection of all political and oppositional readings of Shakespeare.

In chapter 8 of *The Western Canon*, “Dr. Johnson, the Canonical Critic,” Bloom puts his allegiance to Johnson on record by categorically declaring that Johnson is the greatest critic of all times, all nation. He is “the canonical critique proper, Dr. Johnson, unmatched by any critic in any nation before or after him” (183) This confirms Bloom's uncritical allegiance to the tenets of the Johnsonian canon, his orthodox conviction about the greatness of the West, while at the same time squarely placing his emphatic re-canonization of Shakespeare in the fag end of the Twentieth Century as an updated version of Johnson's “Preface to Shakespeare” only. In doing so, however, he showed the other side of theoretical readings which has emphasized reading for absences so much that we lost the sense of the presences.

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SONNET 130: HOW SHAKESPEARE DIFFERS FROM PETRARCH?

Debjani Chakraborty

Abstract: The concept of beauty was not same across time and space. The spirit of Renaissance which affected Italy, also pervaded in England during the sixteenth century. Like in all the spheres of art and culture, the concept of beauty was also tinted with the spirit of Renaissance. The sixteenth century artists in fact tried to model their paintings of women according to their idea of an ideal beautiful woman. The sonneteers of the sixteenth century England were also influenced by the works of art which served as ideal models for the beauty standards for women. The present paper seeks to trace the element of intertextuality as evident in Sonnet 90 by Petrarch and Sonnet 130 by Shakespeare. Unlike Petrarch who describes Laura drawing divine analogies, Shakespeare describes his beloved in ordinary and realistic terms.

Key words : Renaissance, Women, Beauty, Petrarch, Sonnet, Paintings

The concept of beauty is not fixed across all ages. It varies with the civilizational difference. Women have been seen as a repository of beauty since ages. The beauty of a woman has been defined through the male eyes since time immemorial. In *Metaphysics*, Aristotle says, “The chief forms of beauty are order and symmetry and definiteness, which the mathematical sciences demonstrate in special degree.” The ancient Greeks perceived a woman's beauty in terms of perfect proportion and symmetry.

However during sixteenth century when England was influenced by the spirit of Renaissance, the rendition of beauty was very prominent in all forms of art. Depiction of woman's beauty was also standardized by the Renaissance ideals. Renaissance art became a medium through which the artist mirrored the socio-cultural ideas which gradually became the norms of the day. The male artists thus were able to depict women in their paintings, which were shaped according to the male gaze. Thus the portraits of women during Renaissance were actually idealized images which helped to propagate the social ideals which dictated the parameters for women to be regarded as beautiful. We find that a major portion of their work revolved around the theme of depicting the physical beauty of women. These works gradually became the yardstick of beauty standard for women in the sixteenth century English society.

Flora by Tiziano Vecellio is a rendition of Flora, who is the Greek goddess of flowers and plants. She is depicted as a goddess with golden hair, fair skin, thin eye brows, beautiful eyes, red lips, and a plump body, with her left breast being partially exposed. The image of Flora holding flowers and leaves in her right hand and the partially exposed left breast create a unique amalgamation of femininity and sensuality. This is very much at par with the Renaissance ideal of beauty. Thus Flora is a reflection of the ideal beautiful woman, as perceived during the Renaissance.

Petrarch who was a major influence behind the sonneteers of sixteenth century England, worshipped his beloved, Laura. She is stationed on a high pedestal and is worshipped with utmost devotion. Petrarchan sonnets are divided into octave and sestet. The octave consists of eight lines where a problem or question is raised and the sestet consists of six lines where the problem is resolved. It was the unrequited love of Petrarch for his beloved which is celebrated in these sonnets. One such sonnet is Sonnet 90 where he describes his beloved as a celestial being.

She let her gold hair scatter in the breeze
that twined it in a thousand sweet knots,
and wavering light, beyond measure, would burn
in those beautiful eyes, which are now so dim:
and it seemed to me her face wore the colour
of pity, I do not know whether false or true:
I who had the lure of love in my breast,
what wonder if I suddenly caught fire?
Her way of moving was no mortal thing,
but of angelic form: and her speech
rang higher than a mere human voice.
A celestial spirit, a living sun
was what I saw: and if she is not such now,
the wound's not healed, although the bow is slack.

(Translated by A.S Klein)

In this sonnet Petrarch describes the beauty of his beloved Laura by drawing divine analogies. Her golden hair, beautiful eyes and the way she walks, make her seem to be a goddess. Her way of moving makes it appear as if she is an angel and not a mortal being. Her voice is so remarkably divine which can be distinguished from

ordinary human voice. She is depicted as a celestial spirit. In this sonnet Petrarch says that even though her eyes, which were once as bright as sun, are dim now, he still finds her to be beautiful. Although she is aging, her beauty is not fading. Her beauty is compared to the divine light, which goes beyond her physical beauty. He clearly says that his love for her will never fade away with time, even when she is aging. This sheds light on the nature of his love. This is not merely a carnal desire for his beloved but is a spiritual love. It is a higher form of love which Petrarch harbors for Laura. The metaphor of light is symbolical of the divine light in Christian theology. This metaphor of light when juxtaposed with Laura as a 'living sun', paves a link to help us understand the poet's movement towards a higher form of love.

In contrast to this, Shakespeare's treatment of the beauty of his beloved is depicted in human terms. In doing so he goes against the tradition of comparing a mortal woman's beauty to that of beautiful objects. The typical similes which are questioned in this sonnet, provides a foundation for the sonneteers as part of the courtly conventions. In Sonnet 130, he projects a realistic treatment of the beauty of his beloved and the nature of his love.

My mistress' eyes are nothing like the sun;
Coral is far more red than her lips' red;
If snow be white, why then her breasts are dun;
If hairs be wires, black wires grow on her head.
I have seen roses damasked, red and white,
But no such roses see I in her cheeks;
And in some perfumes is there more delight
Than in the breath that from my mistress reeks.
I love to hear her speak, yet well I know
That music hath a far more pleasing sound;
I grant I never saw a goddess go;
My mistress, when she walks, treads on the ground.
And yet, by heaven, I think my love as rare
As any she belied with false compare.

Shakespeare gives us an impression that he does not believe in the courtly tradition of making false comparison of the beauty of his beloved by drawing divine and beautiful analogies. He thus clearly goes against the courtly tradition of expressing

the beauty of a woman in divine terms and worshipping her from a distance. The poem begins with the comparison of the various parts of his beloved's body to beautiful objects in nature. In every case, he finds the object to be more beautiful than his beloved. This is starkly different from Petrarch's description of his beloved who is hailed as an angelic form.

The poet begins by saying that his beloved's eyes are not bright as the sun, her lips are not red as coral, her cheeks lack the rose pink tint, her breasts are not white as the snow, her skin is greyish and her hair is like black wires. He also says that perfume smells better than her breath and music is better than her voice. Her movement is not like any goddess and is described as an ordinary woman walking on the ground. Initially it may seem that the poet is trying to debase his beloved's physical features when he praises the objects as more beautiful than his beloved. But towards the end it becomes very clear that he rejects the practice of making false comparisons. In the couplet he asserts that his love is as unique as the beauty of his beloved. He describes her in terms of all that she is not which makes it all the more interesting as to why he loves her if she is not that beautiful. In spite of not being a woman with golden hair, red lips, rosy cheeks and fair skin, she rules over the heart of the poet. He says that his love for her is of a unique kind. Shakespeare clearly rejects the tradition of describing a woman in terms of celestial beauty. His beloved is an ordinary woman and he knows very well that a mortal woman can never be perfectly beautiful as a goddess. She is bound to be flawed. She does not radiate any divine light unlike Laura. This suggests that she is no angel descending from heaven but is a mortal being. She is an ordinary woman who is loved by the poet. She might not be beautiful to the world but is beautiful to the poet. She becomes the world for the poet. The poet embraces her with all her flaws. He never complains about her flaws and loves her as she is. This makes his love for her so special and one of its kind. Thus it is the human love for a woman which is celebrated in this sonnet which makes Shakespeare so unique from Petrarch.

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THE RAKHKHAS-LORE AND ITS THRILLS IN *MANDAAR*

Debaditya Mukhopadhyay

Introduction

Tollywood's post-millennial trend of adapting thrillers instead of churning out rom-coms with generic plots (Mukhopadhyay 75) took a notable direction with Anirban Bhattacharya's web-eries *Mandaar*. Marking a departure from the still dominant trend of rebooting famous Bengali detectives, this web-series chose to reshape the tragedy of *Macbeth* into a thriller. Interestingly, the "thrill" factor of this narrative written by Bhattacharya, the director himself, is not derived from the usual elements like chasing sequence, red herrings, unexplainable deaths, etc. Instead, the suspense is built around a lore concerning a monster, referred as "Rakhhkhas" in the series. This paper will analyze how the addition of this lore transforms the familiar Shakespearean plot into a thriller, a genre marked by its ability to excite the audience (Palmer 57).

For the Bengali audience, the group primarily set as target-audience by the production house of *Mandaar* (SVF Entertainment), the plot of *Macbeth* is an overfamiliar one due to the numerous Bengali adaptations of *Macbeth* on stage. Besides, the critically acclaimed Bollywood adaptation of *Macbeth* by Vishal Bharadwaj has also played a significant role in familiarizing the Bard's plot to the Indian audience in general. Bharadwaj presented *Macbeth* as a gangster film, drawing upon conventions of "the Bollywood gangster film" and the Bollywood sub-genre known as "Muslim Socials" (Mendes 167) and Bhattacharya, taking a cue from Bharadwaj adopted a similar strategy—imbuing the Shakespearean plot with conventions from a genre of considerable amount of popularity. Yet, Bhattacharya's series, does not take a direct recourse to the conventions of gangster films due to the abundance of gangster narratives in OTT platforms. Instead, it uses the world of gangsters as a setting and focuses on the lore of the *Rakhhkhas* as well as its slaying.

From *Macbeth* to *Mandaar*

Bhattacharya relocates the Bard's tale of Scotland to the coastal area of East Midnapur district of West Bengal, naming it Geilpur. While the series refrains from exploring the history behind the name Geilpur, which sounds notably exotic, the narrative puts this setting to an interesting use by turning it befittingly into a land of supernatural lore. In the village of Geilpur the fishermen are controlled by a powerful businessman named Dablu Bhai (played by Debesh Roychowdhury), his ally Modon

Halder, a local politician, and their henchmen, namely Mandaar (played by Debasish Mondal), Bonka (representing Banquo), etc. Things take a different turn when Mandaar hears a prophecy about his chances to be the king of Geilpur from the eerie looking pair of Majnu Buri and her son Pedo (resembling the Witches) and Dablu Bhai depriving Mandaar from the in-charge's post of *Jora Bheri*. This premise effectively recreates the basic plotline of Shakespeare's *Macbeth* by aligning Mandaar and Dablu Bhai, with Macbeth and King Duncan, respectively. Just like Duncan, Dablu Bhai is hailed as a mighty ruler by the villagers of Geilpur, whose act of not giving due reward to the most powerful warrior under his rule, leads to disastrous consequences. It is, however, important to note that Bhattacharya does not simply make these events mimic the Shakespearean play, instead he uses *Macbeth*'s plot to explore a tale of conflict between familial values and monstrous tendencies that reject such values.

Unlike King Duncan, Dablu Bhai does not endow his son Moncha (based on Malcolm) with position of power. The charge of *Jora Bheri* (a dam essential for Dablu Bhai's fish business), an equivalent to the principedom of Cumberland from Shakespeare's play, is transferred not to Moncha but Fontus (based on Fleance), the son of Bonka. This deviation from the Shakespearean plot contributes significantly in opening up the relationship between the Duncan and Malcolm, and by extension, the fathers and sons of this series. While the relationship between Duncan and Malcolm remains mostly unexplored by Shakespeare's play as well as the Indian adaptations of *Macbeth*, Bhattacharya's series features multiple interactions between Dablu and Moncha where the emotional attachment between the two is portrayed with emphasis. Initially, Moncha keeps fighting Dablu Bhai's decisions, particularly after he makes Fontus the in-charge of *Jora Bheri* and Dablu Bhai treats him with the sternness of a typically strict Indian father but soon this tussle gives way to affection from both for each other.

On the night of Dablu Bhai's murder by Mandaar and his wife Lailee (played by Sohini Sengupta), Moncha and his father open themselves up to each other over the phone. While Moncha apologizes for his misbehavior, Dablu Bhai breaks down, promising Moncha that he would personally bring him back to home (Episode 2). On the other hand, the *Jora Bheri* episode opens up the feelings of Bonka for Fontus as well. Just like Duncan and his son, conversations between Banquo and Fleance too had been few and far between in Shakespeare's play but this series shows Bonka feeling proud and protective of Fontus after his son is given the new responsibility by Dablu Bhai.

When read together, both these depictions highlight the series' focus on familial values typical to Bengali culture.

Fathers and Sons in Mandaar

Evoking an oft-quoted line of Bharatchandra Raygunakar's poem "Annapurna o Ishwari Patoni," both Dablu Bhai and Bonka pine for the well-being of their sons. In an emotional moment Dablu Bhai mutters how he has decided to give Moncha everything before his passing. Likewise, Bonka goes on looking after Fontus at every stage and dies saving Fontus from Mandaar's henchman. It is very significant to note that the two people who play crucial role in separating these loving fathers from their beloved sons, namely Mandaar and Inspector Muqaddar Mukherjee, are both antithetical to such emotions. While Mandaar separates Dablu Bhai from Moncha by killing Dablu Bhai on the night of their reunion over the telephone, Muqaddar, along with Mandaar, brings about the death of Bonka. Mandaar and Muqaddar mirror each other by their inability to sustain a family and growing hunger, which connects both of them significantly to the lore of *Rakhkhas*, the key source of the series' suspense.

The Rakhkhas-Lore and its Function

As shown in the plot overview above, the series does not really sensationalize the murder by way of drawing upon the conventions of a "Whodunit," a "Whydunit," or even a "Howdunit". Rather, the events flow without any Red Herrings or puzzles. Seen in the light of Macbeth's overfamiliarity amongst the Bengali audience, this decision appears significant. The Shakespearean plot of Macbeth could indeed have little to offer in terms of suspense or excitement for the Bengali audience, well familiar with the numerous productions of the play on stage or *Maqbool*. Hence, Bhattacharya's script opts for building up suspense through the lore of *Rakhkhas* who lives in the sea and a prophecy regarding its imminent arrival from Pedo, the son of Majnu Buri.

The *Rakhkhas* of Geilpur is first mentioned by Dablu Bhai. In his stupor, immediately after his emotional conversation with Moncha, Dablu Bhai recollects how his father loved him to Lailee, whom he uses as his mistress, taking advantage of Mandaar's inability to satisfy her sexually. According to him, his father would always brave the sea and go fishing for the well-being of his son and one day the *Rakhkhas* ate him up (Episode 2). Subsequently, the *Rakhkhas* is mentioned by Pedo when Mandaar decides to visit Majnu and Pedo after ascending Dablu Bhai's position. To Mandaar's dismay, Pedo announces the imminent arrival of *Rakhkhas* and adds that even Mandaar will fail to slay the *Rakhkhas* (Episode 4). Coming after the fulfillment of Majnu and

Pedo's prophecies about Mandaar and Bonka, this new pronouncement generates curiosity and suspense to a significant extent. The series' treatment of this lore is given a new dimension when Majnu warns Pedo immediately after he tells Mandaar about *Rakhhkas*. Majnu advises Pedo to stop talking about the *Rakhhkas* and stay away from people, telling him: "Hunger! Hunger! It's all due to the hunger. Who knows when hunger will take over someone, turning him into a cannibal?" (Episode 4, translated by me).

Majnu's explanation implies the metaphorical nature of the *Rakhhkas* in this series. Unlike a "creature feature" Mandaar features embodiments of monstrous tendencies, not the monster itself. As explained by Majnu, anyone can become a *Rakhhkas*, when under the influence of hunger. In the series, both Mandaar and Muqaddar embody this obsessive hunger. In case of Mandaar, the hunger remains dormant but starts expressing itself overtly after Mandaar murders Dablu Bhai, while, Muquaddar, the apparently poised agent of law, a more covert embodiment of hunger is found in his relentless gorging and ogling. Both these men fail to understand the value of familial love and bond with women merely for lust. Though Mandaar shows signs of emotional attachment with Lailee prior to Dablu's murder, eventually he unhesitatingly forces Lailee to sleep with Muqaddar in exchange of information regarding Fontus.

Mandaar's transformation into a *Rakhhkas* is captured vividly in the murder scene of Dablu Bhai and the scenes depicting him brutally forcing himself on Lailee and Dablu Bhai's wife (Episode 4 and 5). In the murder scene the camera-angle inflates Mandaar's physique, depicting him as an inhumanly large figure. Similarly, the focus on Mandaar's lust driven eyes and his brutal handling of the women he fornicates how carnality has taken over him completely. Majnu finally declares Mandaar as *Rakhhkas* after she witnesses Mandaar hanging Pedo to death and it is ultimately Majnu who slays the *Rakhhkas* that Mandaar becomes, fulfilling Pedo's prophecy. However, it is significant to note that Muqaddar, the other *Rakhhkas* remains alive and the series ends suggesting a possible tussle between Moncha and Fontus in future, which reminds Majnu's ominous words:

"Who knows when hunger will take over someone, turning him into a cannibal?"

Conclusion

The lore of *Rakhhkas*, as explained above, contributes significantly in building up an element of suspense in Mandaar by way of adding a touch of enigma to the

overfamiliar plot of Macbeth. Additionally, the lore also represents the narrative's vilification of individuals with disrupted family life like Mandaar and Muqaddar. While family thrives on sharing selflessly, these men refuse to mend their ways for others, thereby becoming a *Rakkhas*.

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A NATIVE BENGALI AS SHAKESPEARE'S MOOR IN THE 1848 *OTHELLO* PRODUCTION: READING THE TENSIONS UNDER ASYMMETRICAL RELATIONS OF POWER

Jemima Nasrin

Abstract : The adaptations and performances of Shakespearean plays have often been central to debate and controversy, so was the 1848 production of *Othello* in Kolkata by the actors of Sans Souci theatre. All because for the first time a native Bengali actor Baishnavcharan Adhya played the role of the Shakespeare's Moor- Othello. The rest of the cast was European, as usual. Theatre was established in Kolkata before the Battle of Plassey, but until 1825 no native audience was allowed in the theatres. The newspapers did not know how to react to this situation of a native hero on stage, there was mixed reaction. A few commented favorably on the actor's diction and training and admiringly on his courage and confidence. On the contrary, a letter published in a contemporary edition of *Calcutta Star* shows a sense of how some members of English audiences may have perceived this event. The letter 'unflatteringly' calls the actor 'a real unpainted nigger Othello'. Singh notices that by focusing on the dark colour of the actor, the writer of the letter tries to show his anxiety "about the possible cultural and racial contamination of the English stage and society in Calcutta." But at the same time one cannot deny the fact that theatre played the role of instruments of British empire in the growing colonial metropolis of Kolkata. This paper aims to trace the connection of theatre and the newly English educated elite class in the backdrop of a first native performing on stage in a British theatre. The paper also aims to find out the socio political effects of this performance.

Keyword: *Othello*, Sans Souci theatre, Bengali elites, Newspaper reports.

According to Nandi Bhatia, "From the late nineteenth-century productions of Shakespearean plays by Bhartendu Harishchandra of Benaras and Girish Chandra Ghosh of Bengal, productions by Parsi Theater companies from the 1870s until the 1940s, and amateur college and private stage productions to post-independence political appropriations by playwrights such as Utpal Dutt and ongoing performances by the National School of drama, the Shakespeare industry in India continues to flourish." Shakespearean plays have delved into Bollywood movie adaptations as well. The adaptations and productions of Shakespearean plays have often been central to debate and controversy, so was the 1848 production of *Othello* in Kolkata by the actors of Sans Souci theatre. All because for the first time a native Bengali actor Baishnavcharan Adhya played the role of the Shakespeare's Moor- Othello. The rest of the cast was European, as usual.

Theatre was established in Kolkata before the Battle of Plassey, but there was no native audience at that time as the class of native elites who know English was not yet created. It seems like the British colonizers tried to keep this space separated from natives as the servants and watchmen appointed there were also British. In theatres of Kolkata from 1753 to 1813 there was no native audience present to watch the shows. With the establishment of Chourangi Theatre, a new era also came in the history of Kolkata theatres. Before the starting of Chourangi Theatre, the natives did not have the permission to enter the theatres. First in 1813 on November 25, the veil was lifted in Chourangi theatre.

As the native elites started going to watch theatre performances, their taste also changed. In Calcutta Monthly Journal, a letter was published by some native person living in Jorasanko in December, 1825. He there criticized the native dramas:

The 'Ackroy gown' as it is called, afford neither pleasure nor information. The people who represent them, are generally ignorant of true principals of the histrionic art, and their representation is as rude as their music; devoid of both instruction and amusement. The representation, songs and their musical performance, if all performed with ease and precision of the British drama, would not occupy a little-some length of time, but when each line is repeated a thousand times, it requires more than ordinary patience to submit to its tedium.

(qtd. in Maitra 179)

The writer of the letter kept himself anonymous and called himself "A Native of Calcutta-Zora Sanco". Most probably this gentleman is Dwarkanath Tagore, because he only had knowledge about both native and foreign drama and music. The editor of *Englishman* Mr. Stocqueller wrote about him in his *Memoirs of Stocqueller*:

Dwarkanath had the good taste to appreciate European music and theatricals, and so quickly became enamoured of Italian opera, when in his own country, that he engaged one of the travelling artists to give him lessons in singing. No wonder, therefore, that he yielded to the intoxication of similar delights or a large scale when he arrived in England (qtd. in Maitra 180)

Built primarily with funds collected from local Europeans, Sans Souci theatre was largely the brainchild of Mr. Stocqueler, editor of the *Englishman*. The Sans Souci was also boosted by a personal donation of Rs 1,000 from Governor-General Lord Auckland himself and a donation of Rs 1000 from Dwarkanath Tagore, and was opened on March 8, 1841 by famed actress Mrs Esther Leach, with a performance of James Sheridan Knowles' play, *The Wife*. Sans Souci theatre gradually earned fame for its Shakespeare

performances, but a major tragedy struck on November 2, 1843 when Mrs Leach sustained fatal injuries as her costume caught fire from an oil lamp, and she died 16 days later. By 1848, the year when Adhya achieved his feat, the Sans Souci had already gone into somewhat of a decline, being leased out to different companies to keep it going.

The interesting part is that Adhya's performance was almost cancelled as Chatterjee and Singh cites a letter published in *Calcutta Star* on August 12 that the scheduled show on August 10 got cancelled due to the involvement of military commander of the Dumdum Cantonment. The army people who were there to act the parts were asked not to perform by the commander. Though the real reason cannot be understood, mostly there was a threat of law and order problem. Though Chatterjee and Singh do not find any direct link between this incident and a native actor as the lead role, still this incident adheres to other socio-political issues.

In 1833, there was a controversy in the newspapers, and this controversy proves how racist most of the British colonisers were. There was the benefit night performance of Mrs. Francis. Some *Baboo* who had got tickets, could not attend the show, so he gave his two tickets to his *Sarkar*¹. Now the *Sarkar* went to the show along with his servant (*jamadar*²) in Chourangi theatre. Calcutta Courier newspaper was astonished at the daring act of any 'native' and criticized that the entry to the theatre should be controlled. Many were offended by this statement. The India Gazette published a statement against this:

We really wish our correspondent would revise his opinion, for they are completely out of date, and are as much opposed to good feeling as to sound policy. (qtd. in Maitra 180)

Calcutta Courier again criticized another incident when Dwarkanath Tagore reserved a few seats for him and his friends in Chourangi theatre. The newspaper rather highlighted the fact that "Young Hindoos got into the house so smartly." (qtd. in Maitra 181) The India Gazette again published a statement opposing this taunt – "However, thanks to the liberty of the gentlemen who then had the management of the theatre that his admission was secured by a majority of votes." (qtd. in Maitra 181)

A portion of British colonisers were against this kind of racism though. They started getting connected to the newly English educated young Bengalis. This native group did not only patronize Sans Souci theatre, but also were constant audience to the performances. Even, some were drama critic of these performances as well. In this Sans Souci theatre, first time a native actor Baishnavcharan Adhya played the role of Othello. The flyer of the performance says:

Under the patronages of Maharajah Radha Kaunt Bahadur; Maharajah Buddhinauth Roy; Maharajah Apurvokrishna Bahadur; Maharajah Jadhukrishna and Brothers; Maharajah Brogendranarain Roy; Maharajah Protub Chunder Singh and Brother; Baboos Prawnkrishna Mullick and Brothers; Baboos Greeschunder Dutt and Brothers; Baboo Hurrowunauth Mullick. Mr. Bary having obtained the above patronages and also the kind and gratuitous services of a Native Gentleman in conjunction with the valuable and of several English Gentlemen Amateurs, will present to his friends and the public a novel entertainment.

On Thursday Evening, August 10th, 1848, will be acted Shakespear's Tragedy of 'Othello'. Othello ...The Moor of Venice... By a Native Gentleman.- etc. etc.

(qtd. in Maitra 182)

The newspapers did not know how to react to this situation, but on the whole commented favorably on the actor's diction and training and admiringly on his courage and confidence. *Bengal Harkaru* on August 19, 1848 summed up rather melodramatically: "Shakespeare, exiled from the country he honors so much seeks an asylum on the Calcutta boards." As Sengupta observes, this newspaper also criticized Othello's soliloquy at the bed chamber in Act 5, Scene 2 as it was delivered by Baishnavcharan with his back turned towards the audience :

It is the cause, it is the cause, my soul: Let me not name it to you, you chaste stars.
It is the cause. Yet I'll not shed her blood, Nor scar that whiter skin of hers than snow
And smooth as monumental alabaster - Yet she must die, else she'll betray
more men. Put out the light, and then put out the light: If I quench thee, thou
flaming minister, I can again thy former light restore, Should I repent me; but once
put out thy light, Thou cunning'st pattern of excelling nature, I know not where is
that Promethean heat That can thy light relume. (qtd. in Sengupta)

In relation to the then circumstances, Singh argues, a letter published in a contemporary edition of *Calcutta Star* shows a sense of how some members of English audiences may have perceived this event. The letter 'unflatteringly' calls the actor 'a real unpainted nigger Othello'. Singh notices that by focusing on the dark colour of the actor, the writer of the letter tries to show his anxiety "about the possible cultural and racial contamination of the English stage and society in Calcutta." But at the same time one cannot deny the fact that theatre played the role of instruments of British empire in the growing colonial metropolis of Kolkata.

The connection between theatre and the new elite class of natives can be traced back to the establishment of Hindu College in 1817. In 1825, the college came under the supervision of Horace Hayman Wilson, a famous English Orientalist. He appointed a few teachers in the college. Incidentally, the native audience in Chourangi theatre also can be found from the year 1825. In the syllabus of Hindu College, plays were an integral part, and Shakespearean tragedies and comedies were the selected texts.

When Baishnavcharan Adhya played the role of Othello in 1848, the native audience was full in the theatre to cheer and celebrate the moment. The director Mr. Bary was requested by many to produce *Othello* again: “Having received intimations from a number of influential persons as well as solicitations from a large body of Native students for the repretation of the Tragedy of Othello!”

According to Jyotsna Singh, “The gradual access gained by aristocratic Indians to the Calcutta theatres loosely coincided with the official colonial policy of promoting English language and literature in India.” The British colonizers had the impulse to educate the natives as they found the need to rule by co-opting a native elite class as a 'conduit of Western thought and ideas'. Thus, the colonial administrators found an ally in the native elite class to support them in guise of liberal education. In the nineteenth century Kolkata, on the one hand the English theatres created an atmosphere for the emergence of Shakespearean performances being loved by the natives, on the other the foundation of Hindu College and the eminent Shakespearean scholars like Richardson teaching there paved the way for a literary taste for drama in the young elite students.

We may observe that the 1848 performance of *Othello* blurred the lines between the colonizer and the colonized. Adhya, the native Bengali stepped into the space only confined to the British till then. He seemingly was the 'Other' just like the character he played. This proved to pave way for the other localized performance of Shakespeare. In 1853, students at the David Hare Academy and the Oriental Academy in Kolkata put on their own productions of *The Merchant of Venice* and *Othello* respectively, before the British and wealthy Bengali audience. To conclude, Mukherjee observed rightly, “A Bengali youth in an English play in an English theatre catering to [largely] English audience in... the nineteenth century, is certainly a memorable event in the history of Calcutta’s theaters.” (qtd. in Singh)

Note

1. Sarkar is an administrative officer who handles the finance.
2. Jamadar is basically a servant or may also mean junior officer.

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SHAKESPEARE'S KALEIDOSCOPE: THE TROPE OF SHIFTING PERSPECTIVE IN *HAMLET* AND *MACBETH*

Manidip Chakraborty

Abstract: William Shakespeare's plays *Hamlet* and *Macbeth* exhibit an amazing experimentation with the trope of perspective. There are various thematic and structural devices that bind the two plays together, and simultaneously dissuade the audience from believing that Shakespeare was merely repeating himself. The author intentionally repeated the same plot-line perhaps to further explore the intricate issues such as the usurper king and the rightful owner of the (British?) throne. By shifting the perspective, Shakespeare has cleverly opened up the multiple possibilities of re-telling the same story from different angles. By letting the 'voiceless' of one play speak out in the other one, the playwright has thus challenged the traditional concept of heroism in drama, and also introduced the fluidity of narrative.

Key Words: Perspective, Voice, Theme & Structure, Narrative.

The Tragedy of Hamlet, the Prince of Denmark, written by William Shakespeare sometime between 1599 and 1601, might have drawn upon the 13th century legend of Amleth, as well as Thomas Kyd's play known as *Ur-Hamlet*. (*Hamlet*, 8) *The Tragedie of Macbeth*, first performed perhaps in 1606, on the other hand, drew its material from the semi-historical account of Scotland as presented in Holinshed's *Chronicles*. (*Macbeth*, 13) The differences between the two plays are too obvious and numerous to mention. Yet on a number of thematic and structural grounds, as this current paper purports to establish, these two plays seem to be connected, if only seen through a fluid kind of viewpoint. A close study might even lead one to consider *Hamlet* and *Macbeth* as the Bard of Avon's daring experimentation with the prospect of perspective; with a kaleidoscopic shifting of the viewpoint, a single event might be bifurcated into two apparently distinct plot-lines resulting in two of the greatest plays ever produced.

One important factor that binds both the plays *Macbeth* and *Hamlet* together, alongside adding to the visual and psychological charm of the plays, is the presence of some preternatural existence which apparently shapes the course of events that follows. Hamlet being coerced by the Ghost to resort to the path of revenge in a way sanctions his very actions that seriously challenge the Christian codes of conduct. The metaphysical soliciting in a choric way transmits information to the avenger which is beyond the knowledge of any mortal being; barring Claudius, the supposed murderer. After a certain point (Act III, scene-iii, lines 36-38, to be precise, as Claudius confesses his crime in a

soliloquy) it is proven before the audience that the Ghost did not lie indeed. (*Hamlet*, 183-4) The ‘supernatural soliciting’ that Macbeth receives, however, leaves a separate impact on Macbeth as well as on the events of the play. (*Macbeth*, 147) From Macbeth’s perspective, the Witches’ act of getting him a glimpse into ‘the seeds of time’ conflagrates his ‘vaulting ambition’ and eventually leads him to the act of regicide. (*Macbeth*, 167) There is no attempt on the part of the protagonist to refute the so-called ‘prophecies’ of the Witches, and he rather uses them as lame excuses to shield the unnatural deeds he has committed, and he continues to commit. If the act of murdering Duncan was something pre-designed by some metaphysical entities, then there should have been some justification for what Macbeth performs as an agent of Nemesis. But the Three Witches are not to be considered as having the final sway over events in a society which largely believed in Christian ethos. To put it in brief, then, Hamlet the avenger might be said to have a very strong and carefully established justification for the murder that he commits; but Macbeth is merely a murderer, whose act is non-sanctioned from all perspectives. In the larger Shakespearean scheme, therefore, one might even dare to say: Macbeth commits the crime, and Hamlet avenges it.

This last statement brings us to the daring hypothesis that the present paper purports to make: both *Macbeth* and *Hamlet* are presenting the same *mythos* to the audience, only from two different perspectives. The genius of William Shakespeare, one of the finest story tellers of all time, lies in the fact that the two plays, if considered as a combined project, convey all the subtle aspects of a crime-and-retribution story from two contradictory (or should one say ‘complementary’?) perspectives. If *Macbeth* is the detailed account of the hell-bound journey of a usurper king, it does not foreground much the events that happen in the life of Malcolm, the rightful owner of the Scottish throne. The latter’s story has been cleverly brought to the centre in the play *Hamlet*, which brings to the fore the alternate events which would have been overshadowed by the towering presence of a Macbeth-like character. Malcolm, an otherwise ineffectual character when placed alongside Macbeth, gets to voice out his moral, intellectual and spiritual dilemma through the character of Hamlet, who, unlike the primitive warrior Macbeth, appears as a thinker, an erudite scholar, and a great orator. The evolving European approach towards the definition of a tragic hero might be traced in this event of Hamlet/Malcolm receiving the spotlight, the ‘voice’.

The two plays stand poles apart from each other not only because of the characteristic traits of their respective protagonists, but also in respect of their inherent

thematic and structural designs. If *Macbeth* depicts the journey from order through chaos to order again, *Hamlet* on the other hand opens in chaos and ends in some promise for future order. From this consideration alone, *Macbeth* is full of so-called ‘dramatic’ events, whereas *Hamlet* is concerned with a much-delayed event (i.e. the killing of the murderer by the avenger) which has its root in some past crimes. *Hamlet* therefore begins *in medias res* and follows the protagonist’s attempts to reconstruct the past. In a simplified way, then, the events of *Macbeth* (which happens to be the shortest tragedy written by Shakespeare) rush forward toward an inevitable future, whereas *Hamlet* (one of the lengthiest European plays) in a way follows a retrograde trajectory in its attempt at exploring the past. The story of *Macbeth* is therefore better conforming to the so-called Aristotelian Unity of Action, as it presents the clearly defined beginning-middle-conclusion arc in its purest form. *Hamlet* therefore presents a more life-like experience of a partial narrative of an event. His experience is ‘partial’ because he (just like the audience) has not had the luxury of fore-knowledge of events, and he has to compensate his on-stage absence with his intelligence. That is why he often ends up becoming an ineffectual protagonist subject to the series of events around him.

Malcolm’s long absence in *Macbeth* accounts for the lack of any empathy whatsoever existing between him and the audience. Even when he does appear on the stage, his seemingly endless conversation with Macduff (Act-IV, sc-iii) forms one of the longest and surely for many the dullest segment in this otherwise eventful play. In his lack of activity and ceaseless pondering and speaking, Malcolm is therefore an obvious variant of Hamlet within the Macbeth-scape. Macbeth, on the other hand, has been present on the stage since the inception of the ‘events’ of the story; in fact that is the reason for which the audience feels some sort of empathy for Macbeth, whose on-stage absence in the Hamlet-story (in the form of Claudius) renders him the stature of a clear-cut villain. This absence-presence dichotomy is therefore crucial in determining the role a character plays in a play. If Macbeth’s presence all through the play gets him control over the events, it is the absence of Hamlet in the crucial scenes that justifies his struggle to get an upper hand over the events that take him over. This might lead one to muse over another possible hypothesis: the long absence of Lady Macbeth between Act III, sc-ii and Act V, sc-i must have been presented in the central stage of some other play that might (or, rather ‘should’) have been written by Shakespeare on the Lady!

Gertrude is no doubt different from Lady Macbeth, the latter being a truly active agent in the course of events in the life of the male protagonist. Yet, in the subsequent re-

reading of the Shakespearean texts, a connection might have been established. In the Indian film maker Vishal Bhardwaj's 2003 Hindi movie *Maqbool*, the daring Mumbai-based adaptation of *Macbeth*, Maqbool/Macbeth kills Abba ji/Duncan primarily with the motivation to get Nimmi, the mistress of Abba Ji. Hers is therefore a transformation from the role of Lady Duncan to Lady Macbeth, and the re-working of the Shakespearean genealogy only elevates the psychological intricacy of the story. Tabbu, the actor who plays Nimmi with all her inherent viciousness, zest for love and vulnerability, interestingly appears in the role of Ghajala/Gertrude in Bhardwaj's 2014 Hindi movie *Haider*, the adaptation of *Hamlet*. If taken as a continuation of the same character introduced in *Maqbool*, she is now given the 'voice' to present her account of the story, in which she has to end up becoming the mistress of the very person who kills her husband. It is therefore *Haider* which completes the arc of this lady's story which remained largely unstated in *Maqbool*. In the ever-changing global perception of the Shakespearean aesthetics, therefore, the two Hindi movie adaptations mentioned here therefore establish a far more interesting bridge between the two plays having their separate discourses in their own right.

The insignificance of Malcolm, the rightful owner of the Scottish throne after Duncan's murder, can somehow be further traced in Macduff, and not Malcolm, being the true avenger in the play, and Fleance being promised with eventual ascension to the throne. Macbeth's apparent machismo (following Duncan's senility and gullibility, and followed by the triviality of Malcolm-Macduff-Fleance) often leads the audience to believe that he indeed appears to be the most deserving candidate for the throne. Claudius, in the same vein, outruns Hamlet in that he seems to possess the mettle needed for running the machination of the 'state of Denmark'. Hamlet is jealous of his 'father-archetype' Claudius not only because of his possession over the throne and the queen, but also because of his propensity to work ruthlessly, without being slowed down by moral, intellectual and spiritual quagmires. (Luludova, 796) In fact, the introspecting, cynical, self-debating nature of Hamlet (which is more in tune with the Shakespearean fools) is sharply in contrast with the seriousness one encounters in the tragic characters like Macbeth, Othello and Lear. His inertia is also contrasted with the proactive nature of even minor young characters such as Fortinbras and Laertes. On another level of reading, the Hamlet-Malcolm archetype might also be Shakespeare's topical alluding to the Scottish King James VI who was all set to ascend the British throne following the impending death of Queen Elizabeth. The recurring theme of a rightful but undeserving candidate ascending

the throne transcends the Macbeth-Hamlet framework and embraces some other plays ranging from *King Lear* to *Measure for Measure*, all written during the last few days of Queen Elizabeth.

The two distinct worlds of *Macbeth* and *Hamlet* are therefore crucial in allowing the audience to indulge in her/his own judgement in choosing the better kind of ruler, if any. The moral dilemma generated here is entirely on the part of the audience, as they need to choose in effect the lesser evil between a ruthless despot and a perpetually vacillating intellectual. Considered together, therefore, the two plays present before us a political situation in its entirety. Existing as two separate plays, *Macbeth* and *Hamlet* no doubt embed two distinct stories complete within themselves. The very idea that a same story can be discussed and viewed from multiple perspectives seems an almost anachronistic nod to the poststructuralist obsession with free-play of interpretations and fluidity of narratives. Similar character-types and situations bind the two plays together, and yet the remarkable achievement of the Bard of Avon lies in never letting the audience suspect the repetition of the same storyline in perhaps two of the most over-watched and over-analysed plays in the history of mankind.

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**EXPLORING THE HETEROTOPIC SPACES IN SHAKESPEARE’S PLAYS:
CALIBAN AND PROSPERO’S ISLAND IN *THE TEMPEST***

Kyamalia Bairagya

Abstract: The world of Shakespeare’s *The Tempest* is a wonderful amalgamation of reality and fantasy complemented by magic, romance, adventure and mystery. The plot involves a chanced escape of Prospero, the Duke of Milan into an unknown ‘uninhabited island’ with his infant daughter Miranda in his attempt to survive a conspiracy hatched against him by his younger brother, Antonio, the usurping Duke of Milan. The island is conquered by Prospero from Caliban with his magic and it becomes his residing place with Miranda until he leaves the place for its aborigines. Prospero and Caliban’s island in *The Tempest* is often interpreted as a metaphorical representation of the colonial politics as manifested in the relationship between Prospero and other indigenous inhabitants of the island where the depiction of ‘otherness’ by the playwright also makes the possibility of interpreting the space of the island in terms of a Foucauldian heterotopia. This paper is going to explore the heterotopic space of the island as inhabited by Caliban and Prospero in Shakespeare’s *The Tempest* and establish the fictional landscape of Caliban and Prospero’s island as an exemplary of what Foucault would have called a ‘heterotopia’.

Keywords: Island, magic, otherness, heterotopias.

The idea of a heterotopia as given by Foucault in his “Of Other Spaces” and in his Preface to *The Order of Things* is that of a space which can be discursive and physical, either imaginary or real in its appearance, determined by the kind of relation it has with all other spaces existing in society. As Amanda Dennis rightly puts it in her essay on “Heterotopias”, both utopias and heterotopias “have the curious property of being in relation with all other sites, but in such a way as to suspect, neutralize, or invert the set of relations that they happen to designate, mirror and reflect” (170). For Foucault ‘Heterotopias’ are places

“which are something like counter-sites, a kind of effectively enacted utopia in which the real sites, all the other real sites that can be found within the culture, are simultaneously represented, contested, and inverted. Places of this kind are outside of all places, even though it may be possible to indicate their location in reality.”

He goes on to cite the example of a mirror as a space which is both ‘utopic’ and ‘heterotopic’ at the same time. Foucault writes, “The mirror functions as heterotopias in this respect: it makes this place that I occupy at the moment when I look at myself in the glass at once absolutely real, connected with all the space that surrounds it, and absolutely unreal...” Foucault moves on to give examples of several other places in the real world having different

imaginary purpose to fulfil in relation to all other spaces in society. The geographical space of an island however is not referred in Foucault's list of exemplary heterotopic spaces. Ian Kinane in his *Theorising Literary Islands* theorizes that the island is an,

“imaginatively transformative space, a space where the physical landscape symbolically replicates the mental topography of its occupant, as both geographical and imaginative spaces are mapped onto one another, juxtaposing the real and the imaginary” (66)

Kinane embraces Foucault's idea of a heterotopic space and extends it to his interpretation of the island and suggests that islands are “representative of an overlaying of both geophysical and imagined realities of space, informed and influenced by one another”. He further draws a parallel between the island as a physical and geographic space reshaped by its imaginary manifestations in the world of literature and culture. Drawing ideas from Foucault and critics like Dennis and Kinane, the island as represented in Shakespeare's *The Tempest* can be interpreted as a heterotopic space, reflecting the characteristics of Foucault's heterotopias along with that of other critical works developing Foucault's idea to a somewhat more elaborative framework of theories. Kinane also mentions about Deleuze according to whom the island is a “symbolic projection of our consciousness...” The fictional representation of a geographical space having symbolic, mythological and imaginary associations like the island in early modern Shakespearean drama will be explored in this paper as a heterotopic space or a heterotopia reflecting an entire culture and yet “absolutely different from all the sites that they reflect and speak about” (*Of Other Spaces*, 4).

It is interesting to note that *The Tempest* begins with a shipwreck which shifts the setting to Prospero and Caliban's island. The ship carrying Ferdinand, Alonso, Gonzalo and other characters is caught up in a thunderstorm raised by the power of Prospero's magic making the mariners get lost in the sea and reach Prospero's island in their attempt to escape the peril of the storm. A similar kind of incident had brought Prospero and Miranda to the same island which belonged to Caliban twelve years ago in a boat with few supplies. The ship or the boat which is the mode of connecting the regular world with the island in the play is under general principles characterized as an ideal heterotopia itself by Foucault. He writes,

“..the boat is a floating piece of space, a place without a place, that exists by itself, that is closed in on itself and at the same time is given over to the infinity of the sea and that, from port to port, from tack to tack, from brothel to brothel, it goes as far as the colonies...the boat has not only been for our civilization, from the sixteenth

century..the great instrument of economic development, but has been simultaneously the greatest reserve of the imagination.” (*Of Other Spaces* 9)

The heterotopic space of the island in Shakespeare’s play is connected with other spaces by another well defined heteropia which is either a boat or a ship reaching the island after shipwreck. Armela Panajoti speaks about how the shipwreck is used as a theatrical and narrative device in Shakespeare’s plays like *The Tempest* (*Shipwreck in Shakespeare’s Plays* 227). The shipwreck is placed in the plot of the story in such a way that the island becomes the theatrical focus for resolving the unsettled issues in the lives of the characters. The island becomes the site of conflict for Prospero and Caliban providing a glimpse of the colonial politics where Prospero’s uninvited intervention on Caliban’s island is seen as an attempt at colonising the ‘other’. The island with its native inhabitants like Ariel and Caliban is shown to be judged by its seeming difference) from the perspective of the intruders. Even Miranda is no ordinary being for Ferdinand in their first encounter. She is more like a Goddess of the island for him. The island seems to be a “desert - uninhabitable and almost inaccessible” for Adrian and for Gonzalo the island has “everything advantageous to life” with lush and lusty green grass and fresh air to breathe in it. Shakespeare contrasts Gonzalo’s utopian vision of the island with that of the dystopian views given by other younger characters. On being asked as to what Gonzalo would do if he was a king of this island he replies with his idea of establishing a paradise out of this same “uninhabited” space. He remarks,

Gonzalo: I’ th’ commonwealth I would by contraries
 Execute all things. For no kind of traffic
 Would I admit; no name of magistrate;
 Letters should not be known; riches, poverty,
 And use of service, none; contract, succession,..
 No use of metal, corn, or wine, or oil;
 No occupation, all men idle, all;
 And women too, but innocent and pure;
 No sovereignty— (2.1)

Gonzalo is laughed at by his companions on his vision of an idyllic space that he would like to create on the island. Prospero while narrating his past to Miranda recalls the way in which he was able to transform his supposed exile into a space for practising magic. In his attempt of survival, the island which was once the birthright of Caliban, becomes the kingdom of an exiled Duke. George Lamming in his essay ‘A Monster, A Child, A Slave’ after considering the politics of the Island claims that the island is a remarkable example of a State absolutely

run by one man named Prospero and he has Caliban working as his slave. Even Ariel, who although not a slave, is under Prospero's allegiance and works for him fulfilling his whimsies. Ariel and Caliban has to obey Prospero for twelve long years until Prospero, the banished Duke of Milan leaves the island in the end of the play. The lonely island gives Prospero the chance of utilizing the skill of magic to its fullest. He also gets the island as his realm to rule over. It makes Gonzalo imagine about a utopian idyllic space. Ferdinand and Miranda become aware of their mature selves when put to test by the circumstances in the same island. Alonso, Sebastian, Antonio are made to realize and reconsider about their conduct in the past regarding the foul deed of usurping Milan from Prospero. The island in *The Tempest* which is a separate topographical space appears to be like a counter site found within the same culture it represents, contests and invert in its functional relation to its inhabitants like a heterotopic space as described by Foucault in his essay on Heterotopias.

Prospero and Caliban's island in Shakespeare's *The Tempest* can be called a heterotopia owing to its certain characteristics which make it similar to that of the various principles that Foucault has called as principles in his essay. The enchanted and seemingly uninhabited island, although a separate isolated place is the space where all the characters reach to a point of crisis in their lives. Prospero is compelled to remain away from Milan and spend his middle age in the island to realize that it was his excessive involvement in the gathering of knowledge about Magic that he became a prey to his brother's conspiracy. His realization of the ways of the world only develops after his deprivation of his Dukedom and his past determines his activities of the present. Since he was a failure in maintaining his authority in Milan, he turns into an Absolute monarch of Caliban's island usurping Caliban's place in its true sense of the term. It is thus quite interesting to note that Prospero does quite the same thing with Caliban (although he is depicted as a devilish 'other') like that of what his brother had done with him. Here the island in the play becomes a heterotopic space representative of Prospero's dukedom, contesting and debating the agenda raised by its own existence within the same culture. For Caliban the island plays the role of a prison and liberation at the same time. Caliban chooses to become a wise individual and the play indicates that Caliban might take the place of Prospero in future. Prospero grants him his position in his inherited island in the last scene of the play. For Miranda the island is a space where she is made to face human society except her father for the first time in her life. The sudden encounter with Ferdinand and all other shipwrecked characters in the island by Miranda prepares her for the future ahead. The island is more like a space of transition in her life. For Gonzalo it is a time of reunion with his old Lord and for others it is a space where the reality of Prospero and

his heir, Miranda, being alive only deepens their conscience of the guilty minds when forgiven by Prospero himself. The island performs a variety of functions for different individuals. The same heterotopia is made to act in different ways for different people within the play which is another principle determining heterotopias in Foucault's essay.

Any discussion on heterotopic spaces in Shakespeare would perhaps be incomplete without mentioning the Forest of Arden in *As You Like It*. Like the enchanted island of *The Tempest* it can also be classified as a space having relation with all other spaces in the culture to which it belongs to while representing, contesting and inverting it at the same time. Both of these plays thrive on the idea of exile and ends by restoring the status quo to some extent by the end of the play. The imaginary manifestation of a geographically 'different space' only establishes the balance in the cultural scenario presented within the plays. Caliban and Prospero's island in Shakespeare's *The Tempest* becomes a 'heterotopia' which reunites and stabilizes the socio political and cultural scenario within the plot of the play.

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THE FATHER AS TRAGIC MUSE: SHAKESPEARE'S FATHERS, PART 1

Himadri Shekhar Dutta

Abstract: When one talks of the dramatic works of William Shakespeare, more specifically his tragedies and delves into the study of characters, the young heroes and heroines garner more interest and attention. The anti-heroes too enjoy much the same popularity. The charm is aroused by their familial positions as sons, daughters, lovers, wives and husbands of elevated social standards whose peace of mind and existence are threatened towards tragic turn of events. Amidst this array of social positions and responsibilities, one often overlooks the fathers of Shakespeare, that is to say the characters in the paternal role of fathers and father figures. Be it Lear or Prospero or even Shylock, they are bound by their sense and duties of fatherhood besides being heroic or villainous figures within the play which have an imprint on their actions and fate. Subsequently, the absence of a father or fatherhood for a character determines his fate to a considerable extent. This paper would look into the paternal positions of some important Shakespearean characters from his popular tragedies.

Keywords: Paternal Roles, Father-Figure, Alternative Climax, Structure of Feeling.

The world of Shakespeare was largely a man's world to speak in general and feminist terms. By the word 'world' it is being pointed to the actual timeline of the English Renaissance in London and around during the age when Queen Elizabeth was ruling and William Shakespeare had been writing. As far as the bard's own literary and dramatic world is concerned, women have been undoubtedly exalted to their deserving place, position and power to a high and respectable pedestal. This was the poet's personal sense of regard for the fair sex as well a synonymous phenomenon of the age where contemporary poets too posited the woman, more specifically the lover persona at a very high pedestal that was no less than divine in its stature and standard. Shakespeare himself is not be excluded in this regard concerning the dark lady of his sonnets. But, when it comes to the actual state of affairs in the age of Elizabeth, the position of women does not appear to be akin to their literary position and representation as far as records are to be followed and believed. Though the head of the nation was a female subject, the rest of the nation did not seem to promise something special or better for the rest of its female subjects when compared to the times begone. The general condition of women was more or less unchanged in a society that could be largely and fairly called 'male-dominated'. The aforementioned term

usually carries a pejorative connotation in the public structure of thought in present times and has valid reasons in its favour or rather disfavour of being designated and interpreted so. At the same time, this must not keep the good male subjects in dark alleys of criticism and prejudice unjustly. A generalised outlook towards either of the sexes does harm to each and therefore a better and rational way to look would be to look beyond the stereotypes of gender and gender roles. William Shakespeare is a master portrayer of the human nature and nothing could be better than to garner inspiration from his humanist approach and representations of men and women on the stage called world. Thus, when it comes to the study of man and the man's world, reading out the goodness could be a good alternative to pointing a generalised finger of accusation and condemnation to their lot. This does not for a moment justify the evils of menfolk both on men and women but rather attempts to pave way to look inside the good man's heart that is no less soft that a woman.

When it comes to the question of the study of Shakespeare's men, the immediate limelight falls by default on the great heroes, villains and lovers. Names such as Macbeth, Lear, Othello, Caesar and Shylock arise as household names for even novices of Shakespeare studies and English literature. Keeping aside their characteristic binaries of good and evil, an alternative analysis and insight into the male characters of Shakespeare could be based on their familial roles and positions which would offer interesting standpoints regarding them. In other words, one read the characters of Macbeth and Othello as husbands, Lear and Shylock as fathers, Hamlet and Romeo as sons and so on. These familial ties and associations add a human dimension to the characters thereby presenting them away from their positions of royalty, knighthood and merchant-hood for a moment as men of flesh and bones like anyone else. Among the various instances the husband figure is perhaps the most widely prevalent throughout the Shakespearean canon, that is to say, most men are husbands or on their way to becoming one. All the comedies and romances culminate in marriages quite by law where heroes become husbands to live happily ever after. Their friends and associates seem to share their master's joy by following suit and settle into matrimony leading the play to its final grand curtain with several knots being tied together. The Merchant of Venice could be put forth an ideal example of this phenomenon. The same text posits a problem for the critical spectator regarding the fate of Shylock though in a different role, that of a father. His own daughter is one among the many in the category of newly and happily married within the narrative. The question that tickles

the reader is related to what happens and would happen of Shylock the father thereafter whose great misfortune of losing the case and property subsequently is doubled by the loss of his only child and daughter. It is a loss not because the girl married off a man from the side of her father's antagonists but because of the human condition of one's estrangement from one's only beloved daughter. In spite of all the hatred garnered for Shylock which could be justified with the claim for the pound of flesh, a tiny corner somewhere in the heart of a sensitive reader would ache for this man who would be spending the rest of his life in misery bereft of his child. The position of Shylock as a father figure gives vent to some pity for the otherwise villainous man in the eyes of the audience. Some other popular fathers of Shakespeare would be Lear, Hamlet the elder, Prospero, Duncan and Banquo whereas it is assumed that Macbeth would have been a little less bloody had he been a father himself. It is time when we could delve a bit more into this paternal zone and look at some of the most discussed characters created by the great playwright.

Hamlet's father popularly known by the name of 'the Elder Hamlet' or 'The Ghost' is probably the most popular father figure within the Shakespearean canon whose non-existential existence and influence throughout the text seals the fate of many. From the perspectives of critical reception via literary and cultural theories, this character has acquired for itself quite a significant place in popular discourse much akin to the weird sisters of *Macbeth* whose role as a potential catalyst in the tragedy is yet to be firmly established. Sigmund Freud seems to be visibly infatuated by this text though his psychoanalytical eyes are more intent upon Hamlet the son. This is the case with most of the *Hamlet* readers across the globe as Hamlet is regarded as the tragic hero and the story revolves around his life and actions. Nevertheless, his father's position in absentia cannot be overlooked. In an alternative situation for imagination's sake, if the father had been alive in the first place or merely banished by his brother in the style of some of the other notable comedies by the same playwright, the son might have gallantly recovered his father's throne married Ophelia towards a happy closure to the text. Even in the situation laid down by Shakespeare in the play, had not the ghost appeared to counsel or seek for help, the story could have potentially ended in peace with the marriage of Hamlet and Ophelia in succession to Claudius' marriage with Gertrude as a precursory event of joy. One might argue that Hamlet had been living in constant anguish and suspense since his father's death heightened further by his mother's hasty remarriage where the latter feeling was turned to firm belief by the

ghostly father figure. At the same time, it is very likely that his unease resulting from the whole affair might have weakened into oblivion with the passage of time had not the ghost appeared. There could be a second argument in the line of *Macbeth* that it is Hamlet's hamartia rather than the supernatural forces of evil that sow the seeds of the tragedy. Yet, one cannot simply ignore the prophetic presence of the ghost in *Hamlet* as one cannot leave out the weird sisters in the other one. Two other paternal figures namely Claudius and Polonius are equally significant for Hamlet's journey towards his fate. The point therefore is to suggest at this juncture that the men in the ranks of fathers within this drama emerge as major forces and their significance cannot be overlooked. The particular emphasis on their state of fatherliness is all the more significant in an ironical sense as they do not seem to conform to their expected familial and social role. Whereas Claudius' hasty marriage to his brother's wife is quite unbecoming of him, Polonius' act of spying in Gertrude's room too compromises with his position of seniority and respectability. As for Hamlet's father, he should have rested in peace and let his son carve out his own way of restoring peace.

Lear is another classic example of the Shakespearean father whose mishandling of paternal position and responsibilities is his biggest hamartia resulting in the tragic turn of events. His duties of fatherhood transcend beyond familial ties of being just a father of three daughters as he is also the father of the nation in his position of kingship. When thus is his position where one wrong move could put the entire nation at stake, his decision regarding the transfer of power being motivated by personal and paternal sentiments is highly questionable. He loses credibility both as father and king, the latter position being a relative complimentary synonym of the former. And yet, he is the protagonist of the play. As far as his age, appearance and actions are concerned, he does not have the likes of a hero and that too of one among the four great Shakespearean tragedies. Nevertheless, he is the centre of action and attraction till the end and as the tragic hero decides the course of the tragedy. One might add that Shakespeare's tragic heroes are conventionally different from the epic heroes of Greece in terms of public expectations.

In *The Tempest*, we come across yet another narrative driven by the magnanimous presence and absence of father figures. The story revolves around the fate and powers of Prospero consecrating him to the position of protagonist. It is his position as the learned magic man presiding over an alternative kingdom that attains major light within the play and also leads him towards regaining his due status. But it

is also to be noted at the same time that it is his image of the solitary and single father figure in charge of a tiny motherless daughter and the life of a princess that he ensures for her even in the dire circumstances of the monster-ridden island which makes him such a hero in the eyes of the audience. There is a special empathy for him that excels in intensity when compared to the emotions bestowed upon figures like Lear or Othello. One could in most likelihood compare this pity and respect for Prospero with that for Macduff and this is a strong reason behind both of these characters becoming the bearers of poetic justice in these tragic plays. In a nutshell, Prospero is a good father and it won't be wrong to say that his staging of the illusionary tempest is motivated by his parental responsibility of seeing his daughter well settled in life. The other side of the coin has two important figures namely Ferdinand and Caliban bereft of a paternal umbrella, the former temporarily and the latter quite permanently unless it is taken into consideration that Prospero is a probable father or an occasional fatherly figure for the savage. Their situation and fate in the play is largely helpless as well as powerless and rely solely upon the ultimate father of the island Prospero in the Freudian sense who is also the master of the fairy world. This exercise of power should not be taken in a wholly negative light as we can see his benevolence showering on all at the climax making it a happy one in general for all.

The fate and actions of the two protagonists from two of the darkest out of the four major canonical tragedies of Shakespeare could be read in this light. Macbeth and Othello both are childless in the narratives. In other words, they do not enjoy and experience the joys and duties of fatherhood. A line of thought could be formed on this ground leading to the argument that it is a probability that they might not have acted in the ruthless, rash and bloody way had they been entwined into the bonds of parenthood. On one hand, it can be assumed that the state of fatherhood would have shaped them towards being more compassionate and kinder. On the other hand, it is quite probable that they would have given a serious thought about their children and families before jumping into actions motivated by unholy ambition and jealousy. It is important to consider the presence of children in this case as the elements of influence since their wives do not seem to be of much importance to them before their powerful sentiments. In other words, Macbeth would be compelled to think twice before killing Duncan or Banquo or the poor family of Macduff had he been a father himself. Similarly, Othello would have been more considerate and patient in a state of fatherhood.

The fathers, both in their state of absence and presence, acquire very important positions in the Shakespearean canon and play major roles in shaping the fate of the protagonists and persons of the play. They are much akin to their creator in this sense whom we universally regard as the father of many a thing in the history of English literature and culture.

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THE TRACE OF HUMAN ASPIRATION IN SHAKESPEARE'S 'GREAT TRAGEDIES' AND SRI AUROBINDO'S *THE LIFE DIVINE*: A JOURNEY FROM TRAGIC DECLINE TO SPIRITUAL ELEVATION

Monisha Mukherjee

Abstract : Aspiration is inherent to every human 'self' as only human being has the quality to feel the 'universal force'. Man is the only mortal being who is not satisfied by attaining mere mortal things. He craves for knowing the unknown, the mystic bigger 'Self'. And the most significant feature of aspiration is that it, at the same time, can be the cause of a man's lift or fall. Thus the journey to have what we don't have, to achieve what is unachievable may lead to both *Ananda* or arrogance. In Shakespeare's great tragedies 'Julius Caesar', 'Macbeth', 'Hamlet', 'King Lear' we see the great gallant heroes meet tragic *catastrophe* due to their arrogance but we feel empathetic towards them. Thus *catharsis* makes readers realize what caused those tragic heroes damage, could be the most effective direction to divinity for them. Sri Aurobindo, in his *sui generis* 'The Life Divine' shows us that way of aspiration which leads to the ultimate satisfaction of human soul. Hence the treaty ('The Life Divine') stands at the counterpart of the tragic fall that has emerged from the same suffering which the tragic Shakespearean heroes have gone through. It is as if Sri Aurobindo holds hand of the defeated, dislocated soul from where tragic flaw left him and then leading them towards the direction of light or truth. This duality (*dwaita*) of the 'self' works as the bridge between the philosophy of Shakespeare and Sri Aurobindo.

Keywords : Spirituality, Tragedy, Renaissance Humanism, truth, fall, binary, duality.

"And still there is beyond." Sri Aurobindo ('The Life Divine')

All the tragic heroes of Shakespeare have learnt the lesson of humbleness in different ages and strikingly at the brutal end of their life. Whereas King Lear, the king of Britain comes to this realisation in an old age, Hamlet, the Prince of Denmark realizes it in a very young age of life. All the heroes have one thing in common --- *hamartia*¹ or in common translation --- 'tragic flaw'. This tragic flaw in their ego or *atman*² led all of their spiritual destruction.

King Lear had the flaw of *hubris*³ or excessive pride out of which he became myopic about love and its expression. He melted with the filthy flattery of two of his wily daughters Goneril and Regan. But he couldn't made out the depth of love of his youngest daughter Cordelia as she remarked, "Unhappy that I am, I cannot heave / My heart into my mouth. I love your majesty / According to my bond; no more nor less."

The audience and readers even could sense the dramatic irony of the blindness of King Lear but the king went with the evil force and as a result suffered to its infinitude. The

interpretation of that remark (by Cordelia) which could have been a boon to a sensible father, out of arrogance became the bane of his majesty's fate. Soon after treating like a beast by the evil daughters, the old and experienced king gets to the vision of life in its real form. He then takes off all his arrogance and detests mortality. He remarks in pangs, "Let me wipe it first, /it smells of mortality." In this way the King rejects formal reverence only for which he used to live and rule throughout his lifetime. Lear comes to the realisation of the integrity and truth in Cordelia's character after both of their life are shattered by the evil forces. Cordelia meets her death when Lear mourns for life.

In *Julius Caesar* we see Caesar and Brutus, both the dominant characters have tragic flaw. Caesar has thrust for power and individual control in the Roman Republic whereas Brutus has the *hamartia* of nobility. The mutual trust and friendship between the two culminates into conspirer and victim because of the lack of clarity in their perception of self and other and egotistic tendencies. There is a famous insightful quotation in act 1, scene 3 in the drama that goes, "The fault, dear Brutus, is not in our stars, but in ourselves." The hidden desire of both Brutus and Caesar to be benevolent to the Roman citizens drive both of them in wrong directions. Caesar's extremist attitude of rule and control and Brutus's ambition of being morally supreme play as blindfold, but if they wouldn't make their strongest quality their cheapest blindness, both of them would definitely achieve their aspiration. Nevertheless, we see that individualist Caesar is stabbed by a collective of murderers and Brutus's honour is ironically turned over on the open street by Mark Antony ("Brutus is an honourable man").

In *Macbeth* the structure of the plot is slightly different. We see Macbeth and his wife Lady Macbeth conspiring to murder the king Duncan. From act 1 Macbeth is seen to be split between fair and foul. As his support system his wife also, not essentially is, but tries hard to become evil and so suggest her husband to 'look like an innocent flower but be the serpent under it'. The couple try hard to attach brutality upon their sensitive selves. As a result we see Lady Macbeth cannot stab the old king as his sleeping face reminds her of her own old father. Macbeth, though succeeds in stabbing the sleeping king brutally, his insecurity turns himself a secret murderer and his sensibility into insanity. Lady Macbeth, on the other hand suffers from somnambulism who once would attract supernatural forces to patch brutality on her self! Henceforth the audience and readers regret upon the fall of beauty of the soul in the dual characters. Their misfortune is nothing but the misdeeds and wrong way of aspiring greater things in life. At the act V, scene V the vulnerable king Macbeth most philosophically remarks, "... To-morrow, and to-morrow, and to-morrow, / Creeps in this petty pace from day to day,

/ To the last syllable of recorded time; / And all our yesterdays have lighted fools / The way to dusty death.”

Hamlet, the youngest of the tragic heroes had the *hamartia* of indecisiveness. He thinks so much and does so less and whenever he acts, that act leads to a disaster. Besides his wisdom he criticises himself as well. His morality and wit challenges Claudius, his treacherous uncle. But the oscillation in his egotistic self to do or not to do dominates all the time upon his consciousness. Thus whenever he takes an action after a topsy-turvy of thinking, it proves to be wrong. His intellectual, which could have been the sharpest weapon against his dilemma, which could have elevate his soul and Denmark's fate to the top, culminates in madness, split-personality disorder! If we closely observe the plot construction of Shakespeare for tragedies, we witness that 'Hamlet' stands as a unique one because no other tragedy has as much soliloquies as this one has. No other tragedy heroes have so much of reflective thoughts and dilemmas as Hamlet has. The Prince of wisdom, Hamlet once exclaimed in one of his soliloquies, "What a piece of work is a man! How noble in reason, how infinite in faculties, in form and moving how express and admirable, in action how like an angel, in apprehension how like a god!"

Hamlet is reflecting at first admiringly and then despairingly on human condition. His personal despair connects human despair in general.

Shri Aurobindo's 'The Life Divine', on the contrary, stands as the torch in the hand of a fallen soul. The masterpiece begins with the declaration, "The earliest formula of Wisdom promises to be its last, ----- God, Light, Freedom, Immortality."

The treaty deals with the rising of divinity in deceased souls. The Chapter I 'The Human Aspiration' begins with a *shloka* from the 'Rig Veda' where Usha or the goddess of dawn is evoked to be awakening the sleeping soul from darkness towards light. Usha or dawn emerges from the darkest hours of night and imbues light and energy to the world. The quotation goes:

She follows to the goal of those that are passing on beyond, she is the first in the eternal succession of the dawns that are coming, --- Usha widens bringing out that which lives, awakening someone who was dead What is her scope when she harmonises with the dawns that shone out before and those that now must shine? She desires the ancient mornings and fulfils their light; projecting forwards her illumination she enters into communion with the rest that are to come. – *Kutsa Angirasa* --- *Rig Veda*.

This way the treaty begins by igniting the decayed soul through the soothing rays of the dawn of realization. Gradually the idea of elevation proceeds from one chapter to another and finally on Book II, Chapter XXVIII the belief that one can transcend one's self and recreate a divine

life out of its mundaneness is established. Shri Aurobindo takes several quotations from the *Rig Veda* in the ultimate part as well. One of these is : “ Let one accept thy will when thou art born a living god from the dry tree, that they may attain to divinity and reach by the speed of thy movements to possession of the Truth and the Immortality.”

According to Rishi Aurobindo the human aspiration begins from understanding at its foremost form that one’s mind, at the preliminary stage, is the mind where ‘ego’ manifests itself as the centre. But the individual will gradually transcend the self from mind to overmind, then from overmind towards the supermind. That is to say, one soul will take the journey from the lowest to the topmost and there he will find his ultimate freedom or *Sacchidananda*⁵. There the playing of duality by Maya will end and redemption will be attained. Thus the mortal life will reach its immortality from duality towards the oneness or *Brahman*⁶.

Here we see that a hierarchical structure is consciously created and maintained by Shri Aurobindo throughout the text. The chapter division and categorisation of themes also carry the same suggestion which creates an almost vivid similarity with the Great Chain of Being, the Renaissance Philosophy of being. Here, the philosophical inspiration of both Shakespeare and Shri Aurobindo resonates at a deeper level. As a playwright of the post-Renaissance period, naturally there was a strong influence of Renaissance philosophy on Shakespeare. While writing especially the tragedies Shakespeare took inspiration from Marlowe’s ‘Doctor Faustus’. Christopher Marlowe had strong influence of Renaissance Humanism which reflected in a radical way in ‘Doctor Faustus’. There is the famous scene where Doctor Faustus, in order to gain unlimited knowledge, sells his soul to the devil. He wanted to become as powerful as God through the means of evil energy and spirit. But at the end, Doctor Faustus receives a pathetic death.

Faustus’s character has similarity with almost every tragic hero of Shakespeare. Macbeth for example, in order to get more and more power, transforms the beauty of his self to bestiality. In ‘Doctor Faustus’ many a times the good angels come and alert him about his viciousness , but Faustus reciprocates towards the good negatively and attracts the bad . In ‘Macbeth’ as well King Macbeth again and again takes the meaning of the apparitions of the witches in wrong ways which leads towards his destitute. He never listens to the good ideas of his kinsmen. King Lear, also doesn’t understand the true love of Cordelia and time and again believes the evil souls Goneril and Rigan. The fool of Lear also stands as a positivity enhancer in Lear’s life but his blindfold gets apart only before his death! In Julius Caesar and Hamlet there are the same positive situations and characters whom the tragic heroes do not give importance and always attract negativity and justification of their bad deeds.

So the binary and duality play great role in both Shakespeare's and Shri Aurobindo's vision. Shri Aurobindo was a profound scholar of both Western and Indian Philosophy. Therefore as the influence of *Veda* and the *Upanishads* are there, similarly he was influenced by Renaissance Humanism as well. This seminal text is a classic example of the merging of both the philosophy (Indian and Western).

One of the lacunas of the Renaissance Humanists is that they often, out of *hubris* wanted themselves to seat at the centre of the universe. The character of Doctor Faustus had this tendency and the tragic heroes had it as well and this is the loophole where their tragic fate began. As a sensible dramatist, Shakespeare hinted at those vulnerable points of the heroes which are not to be followed as ideals rather to abide by the positive vibes and that is why he introduces several positive characters and incidents which could elevate or at least tear apart the blindfold of the arrogant heroes.

Shri Aurobindo also time and again hinted at the manifestation of 'ego', the play of *Prakriti*, the power of the Maya which lead as hindrance for elevation of the self and cause fall from the Renaissance Ladder.

Thus it is noteworthy that the binary of the self and the other of the Western philosophy has lesser influence on the duo and the consciousness of the duality is more on both of them. None of them accept the possibility of falling again and again of man but the beauty of their vision lies there that none of them deny the fact that there is always a second chance for man to rise again and again as long as he survives. The dual existence of both good and evil are there within a human soul. The responsibility is on that particular man whom he will reciprocate or whom he will not. The hierarchical ladder is open-ended. Therefore the repetition of rise and fall also may occur. But to aspire the ultimate, man should, at one point believe upon his soul's strength and at the other point admit that the universe is the ultimate and best destination and as destination can only be reached and can never be passed through, man can reach it but can never overturn the ultimate. As science says, light cannot be defined, it is the absence of darkness. Similarly, knowledge cannot be defined, it is the absence of ignorance. Unlimited cannot be defined, it is the absence of the limit. The ultimate chapter of Shri Aurobindo's treaty ends with the note, "It must lead inevitably towards an evolution in the Knowledge, a self-finding and self-unfolding of the Spirit, a self-revelation of the Divinity in things in that true power of itself in Nature which is to us still a Supernature."

This is how the bridge between tragedy and wisdom is built.

Notes

1. Tragic flaw
2. A person's self
3. (In Greek) excessive arrogance leading to tragic fall
4. A couplet of Sanskrit verse
5. It represents "existence, consciousness, and bliss" or "truth, consciousness, bliss".
6. The ultimate reality or the universe
7. In the Samkhya system, it means material nature in its germinal state

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HIGH SCHOOL, SHAKESPEARE AND TEENAGERS: THE RISE AND FALL OF SHAKESPEAREAN TEEN FILMS

Nivedita Karmakar

Abstract: The association of popular media (like radio, television and even video games and comics) with Shakespeare is nothing new. In fact, most of the Shakespearean plays have been adapted into films across the globe, many of which are critically acclaimed. However, we often tend to look down upon the Shakespearean adaptations into the genre of teen films which are quite popular among the Millennials and to some extent, among the Gen Z population. Although these films are not highly acclaimed, their popularity cannot be overlooked. Hence in this paper, I am trying to look into the trend of Shakespearean teen films which reached its peak during the 1990s and in the early 2000s. What were the reasons behind these adaptations and how did this genre gain such popularity— these are the areas I'm trying to focus on, in association with four iconic teen film adaptations of that time. Further, towards the end of this essay I will try to find out the reasons behind the gradual decline of this trend as well.

Keywords: Shakespeare, American teen films, High school drama, adaptations, popular culture.

Marie A. Plasse, a Shakespearean scholar and a rock and roll enthusiast, talks about her trouble of bringing together these two aspects when she was asked to present a paper on “Shakespeare and the Culture of Rock and Roll” for the Shakespeare Association of America (SAA) in 1998:

As a young graduate student just beginning to get involved in professional conferences in the mid-1980s, for example, I felt fine about my participation in the SAA, but always a bit sheepish and secretive about my work for the PCA, the Popular Culture Association of America. How could I be a “real” Shakespearean, I wondered, if I was routinely going off to give papers on topics like old rock n’ roll musical films from the 1950s or the artist then known as Prince?... I worried a lot about the potential effects of my regular runs across the boundary between Shakespearean high culture and American popular culture. (13)

Her dilemma is not unfamiliar to us, as many critics over the years have presented thousands of arguments and counter arguments on the high brow status of the Shakespearean plays and their associations with popular culture. However, it cannot be denied that even after four hundred years Shakespeare is inextricably associated with our everyday life and culture. His works are not only limited to the stage or the film adaptations in the twenty-first century, rather the plays and the iconic characters are being adapted in

video games, comics, manga and even on the television advertisements and in memes which are highly popular on the internet nowadays. Thus the assimilation of Shakespeare into popular culture has gradually become accepted and appreciated among the scholars, as Diana E. Henderson writes, “Although it is undeniable that Shakespeare has become the Bard of high culture, he has never been exclusively or stably held aloft” (6).

Among the unaccountable number of film adaptations of Shakespearean plays, there are some iconic ones which have gained tremendous critical acclaim. Starting from Laurence Olivier, Akira Kurosawa, Roman Polanski, Franco Zeffirelli to Vishal Bhardwaj— each of them have left a great impression on their audiences. However, while talking about the film adaptations, we cannot overlook the trend of adapting Shakespeare into the teen film genre in Hollywood which was really popular from the late 1990s to the early 2000s. In fact, an experiment went on during this time that involved the adaptations of various literary classics. As a result, we have got some highly popular, if not critically acclaimed, teen films which are still talked about. *Clueless* (1995, an adaptation of Jane Austen’s *Emma*), *10 Things I Hate About You* (1999, an adaptation of Shakespeare’s *The Taming of the Shrew*), *Easy A* (2010, loosely based on Nathaniel Hawthorne’s *The Scarlet Letter*) are some of the examples. Further, characters from these films like Cher from *Clueless*, or Kat and Patrick from *10 Things I Hate About You* are as popular as some other iconic characters of popular teen films like Regina George from *Mean Girls* (2004). Hence, in this essay, we will be looking into some of the popular teen films in order to explore this trend of adapting Shakespeare, which was in high demand during the last two decades. Does this popular genre in a way dumb down the Bard’s works, or does it help in keeping Shakespeare relevant among the youths? We will further try to find out why this trend gradually declined and what can be the probable reasons behind that.

The genre of teen films is for and about teenagers and young adults. The plots of these films are usually set in high school or occasionally in college, and it talks about the interests of this particular age group. This type of films usually portrays a coming-of-age story, with the idea of first love, teen angst, teen rebellion, attempts to fit in, peer pressure, bullying and sometimes more serious issues like substance abuse and so on. Although 1980s onwards this genre started gaining more and more popularity, it actually emerged back in the 1950s in America. Hence, the 1950s, 1980s and later the 1990s along with the early 2000s can be regarded as “prolific periods of teen filmmaking” (Nelson 126). According to Elissa H. Nelson, it was Hollywood’s strategy to rely on teen films because it saw a greater market as the teenagers with disposable income were likely to spend more

on leisure activities like going to watch a film. Interestingly, these three decades also mark the point when the film industry was threatened by the emergence of other popular media and entertainment technologies like the television in the 1950s, VHS and cable in the 1980s and digital media (DVDs and the Internet) in the 1990s onwards. Hence they hoped that “by making films with young actors in lead roles and by telling their coming-of-age stories, two essential elements that are hallmarks of the teen film genre, the films will appeal to the most reliable audience segment: the youth demographic” (Nelson 126).

Although the teen adaptations of Shakespeare did not splurge before the 1990s, according to Michael D. Friedman, it was Franco Zeffirelli who directed *Romeo and Juliet* (1968) with real teenagers (Leonard Whiting and Olivia Hussey) starred as Romeo and Juliet. It resulted in thousands of teenagers going to the movie theatres who had earlier encountered this play unwillingly in the classrooms. However, it was not a typical teen film rather it was presented as a period drama. Therefore Friedman observes: “While Zeffirelli's film, which employed Shakespeare's language almost entirely, quickly achieved canonical status, other movies produced during the intervening years that made use of Shakespeare's storylines and characters (but not the poetry) attracted little critical attention” (1). Afterwards, Baz Luhrmann's 2006 adaptation *Romeo + Juliet* created the same level of sensation among the youths. Set in Verona Beach, this film has cast Leonardo DiCaprio and Claire Danes, with the use of hip hop as its background music. It offered a fresh approach towards the play “if not in the classroom at least in whatever hip collective psyche that prevailed among youth culture in 1996” (York 57).

In order to understand and assess the trend of Shakespearean teen films Laurie E. Osborne alludes to Thomas Doherty's readings of the 1980s “teenpic”:

[F]ilms aimed at teenagers are not only more carefully marketed and more calculating [sic] created, they also function more explicitly on two levels. *Fast Times at Ridgemont High* (1982) and *Risky Business* (1983) are teenpic-like in their target audience and content, but their consciousness is emphatically adult, the artistry of their double vision unmistakable. (Doherty 236)

From this observation, Osborne comes to the conclusion that:

The pressure of increasing numbers teen-directed movies has accelerated the evolution of the genre, perhaps provoking nostalgia for the stable canon that some of these productions enact. The inclusion of Shakespeare, for example, intensifies the combination of adult and teen contexts that Doherty describes. (12)

Moreover, we also have to keep in mind that the name “Shakespeare” sells everything. Hence, with the help of a good marketing strategy a teen film, based on a Shakespearean play which is often read in the classrooms, automatically brings more crowds into the movie theatres. Further, it is not that difficult to fit the plot of a Shakespearean comedy into a generic teen drama which usually ends in a happy note. Thus, the assimilation of the Bard gradually took place into the popular genre of teen films in the 1990s and early 2000s. Here, we will be discussing four of such films to understand this trend.

10 Things I Hate About You (1999), directed by Gil Junger, is an iconic teen film loved by the Millennials worldwide. A modernised adaptation of *The Taming of the Shrew*, this film uses an American high school setting to tell the story of Kat (played by Julia Stiles) and Patrick (played by Heath Ledger). Bianca is allowed to date boys only when her sister Kat does. Hence Cameron, the new guy in school, who is in love with Bianca, tries to convince Patrick to date Kat, so that he can have his chance at dating Bianca. Although Kat at first is not convinced, Patrick gradually succeeds in his attempts of wooing the “shrew” Kat. However, Kat eventually gets to know about all the deceptions and lies. One thing leads to another, and at the end we get to see Kat reconciling with Patrick after she reads her poem titled “10 Things I Hate About You”, where she actually confesses her love for Patrick. This film has almost all the generic characters from a high school drama— the school diva (Bianca), the nerd/rebel (Kat), the jock (Joey), the new boy (Cameron) and the bad boy (Patrick), with the Shakespearean plot been infused in it. However, choosing a play like *The Taming of the Shrew* could have become problematic because of its misogynist approach, which is a subject of critical controversy for ages. However, the filmmakers have tried to deal with it by presenting Kat as an intelligent, strong-headed young girl who reads feminist literature. She is not a “shrew” like the Shakespeare's version, however, she is regarded as shrewish because of her differences in attitude from other girls of her age. On the other hand, Patrick, unlike Petruchio, does not try to “tame” her by tormenting her physically and psychologically, rather he is portrayed as a nice person under his “bad boy” image, who tries to understand Kat and eventually falls in love with her. Further, Katherina’s speech of obeying the husbands is also replaced with Kat’s heart-warming poem towards the end of this film, which fits appropriately with the happy ending of a teen romance.

Get Over It (2001) is another example of this genre. Directed by Tommy O’Haver, this film is loosely based on *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. However, instead of portraying

all the characters of the play, this film only focuses on the four Athenian lovers and the confusions that are created around them. As it has been developed as a teen comedy, the aspect of magic realism also gets eliminated from the film. It is the story of Berke, who tries to win back his ex-girlfriend Allison. Additionally, Berke, Allison, Striker (Allison's new boyfriend) and Kelly (who likes Berke) are also playing the roles of the four lovers in a modern rendition of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* called *A Midsummer Night's Rockin' Eve* in their school. Thus the metatheatrical aspect of the original play has been alluded to in this adaptation. Overall, compared to the worldwide popularity of this play, the film adaptation seems to be quite trivial, with most of the confusions and chaos created by Puck in the play being missed. However, movie critic Mick LaSalle says that, “*Get Over It* breaks the formula for teen romances. There's no prom, no nerd who becomes worthy, no cool person who condescends to love a dork. It doesn't seem stretched, either. This one packs a ton into 90 minutes” (LaSalle).

Although adapting a comedy into a teen film is quite easier, a Shakespearean tragedy is not often chosen by the director or producer for a teen drama. Nevertheless, the 2001 film *O* directed by Tim Blake Nelson is such an example. It is a modern adaptation of *Othello*, one of the most renowned tragedies by Shakespeare. Here Odin (played by Mekhi Phifer) is a high school basketball player, who is dating Desi (played by Julia Stiles). Unlike the other usual teen dramas, this one takes a dark turn as under Hugo's manipulation Odin starts taking drugs, and later murders Desi. Just like *Othello*, Odin finally realises that he was under the manipulation of Hugo and dies by suicide when the police arrive. It focuses on several serious issues like race and racial comments, teenage violence and substance abuse, which often remain unspoken in the sphere of the teen films.

Comparatively latest to this genre is *She's the Man* (2006) directed by Andy Fickman, which claims to be an adaptation of *Twelfth Night*. Not only does this film deal with the primary plot of this comedy, but it also uses the character names straight from the play. It is the story of Viola, who enters Sebastian's (her twin brother) new school Illyria Prep in his place and pretends to be a boy in order to get a place in their soccer team. Duke Orsino is the captain of the soccer team whereas Olivia is the popular girl in school who falls for “Sebastian” (disguised Viola). Although this adaptation does not show the subplot regarding Malvolio and Feste, which brings the tragi-comic aspect of this play, it quite faithfully revolves around the main plot of disguise, deception and confusion among the two sets of lovers that ultimately ends in happy union. There are two other teen adaptations

of the same play: *Just One of the Guys* (dir. Lisa Gottlieb, 1985) and Disney TV's *Motocrossed* (dir. Steve Boyum, 2001). All three adaptations present a girl trying to enter the so-called territories of men, hence taking a disguise to achieve her goal. Laurie Osborne focuses on the fact that unlike the other two adaptations, *She's the Man* promotes itself heavily as a Shakespearean adaptation and thus gains more popularity among these three films. Further, Friedman concludes from his reading of Osborne's essay:

[C]oncentration on a full network of Shakespeare teenpics can illuminate the social demands placed on sexuality and gender in a variety of cultural contexts. *Just One of the Guys*, *Motocrossed*, and *She's the Man* together can tell us as much about *Twelfth Night* as *Twelfth Night* can tell us about the evolving cinematic genre of teen comedy and the ways in which it enacts contemporary ideological battles. (5)

He further argues that the study of Shakespearean teen films is therefore a two-way street. A film like *Romeo + Juliet* "re-cognizes" the familiar Shakespeare as the audience can actually view Shakespeare behind the contemporary setting. On the Other hand, there are films like *10 Things I Hate About You* or *She's the Man*, which use Shakespeare in order to address the contemporary concerns of the youth. Hence, "Far from "dumbing down" Shakespeare, teen adaptations of his plays can offer new and important ways to perceive the significance of his dramatic efforts and their implications for modern times" (Friedman 5).

Although most of these teen adaptations were highly popular and showed a good profit margin, towards the end of the early 2000s, the trend of Shakespearean teen films gradually started to decline. One of the reasons behind that can be the 2008 recession. Shakespearean adaptations took a backfoot and only three films of this teen genre became blockbusters in the following years: *Juno* (2007), *Superbad* (2007) and *The Fault in Our Stars* (2015). Instead these small-scale genre films were replaced by the large-scale fantasy series like the *Harry Potter* franchise (2001-2011) or adaptations of bestselling young adult novels like the *Twilight* series (2008-2012) or the *Hunger Games* series (2012-2015).

These high-concept, big-budget films feature teen protagonists, but, because of their scale and prominence, it's as though Hollywood has abandoned the familiar teen film format. In doing so, the coming-of-age tales of personal growth are merging with epic heroic journeys, expanding traditional understandings of the genre. (Nelson 127)

Apart from that, with the growth of digitalisation and the ever growing usage of the internet, the entire scenario of teen drama is changing gradually. Various streaming platforms like Netflix, Amazon prime, HBO and Hulu are producing teen dramas which are way ahead of the generic teen films. These new shows try to portray the real-life problems, desires and aspirations of the young adults of recent times. Teen dramas like *13 Reasons Why* (2017), *Atypical* (2017), *On My Block* (2018), *Sex Education* (2019) and *Euphoria* (2019) are more acceptable and popular among the young audiences nowadays because these shows are subverting the glossy yet stereotypical and trivialised way of portraying the teenage life. However, the appeal of Shakespeare probably never ceases. Therefore we are surprised to see a musical based on *Romeo and Juliet* in the final episode of *Sex Education*, season 2, which reminds us of the usual high school Shakespearean performances that we have all experienced. However, it subverts that idea by being extremely provocative and shocking in terms of its performance. Lastly, the association between Shakespeare and popular culture never ceases. Hence, there is always a chance of the resurgence of the Shakespearean teen films in a different manner in the near future.

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MAQBOOL: A TRAGEDY OF PURE DESIRE

Prabal Bhowmik

Abstract: Vishal Bharadwaj's adaptation of Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, *Maqbool* (2003) gains its Oedipal undertones by altering the theme of regicide to patricide by making Abba-Ji (King Duncan) the foster father of Maqbool (Macbeth). While the transgressive love affair between Maqbool and Nimmi (Lady Macbeth) is what brings about the downfall of Maqbool's empire and destruction of all of his symbolic ties with the underworld. According to Lacan, Antigone, in her desire to defy Creon's law of the state, seeks death. This choice cannot be understood in terms of simple rationality. Tragedy is the function of pure desire, and this can be understood in conjunction with a crisis when desire crosses over into the domain of the Real governed by unbridled *jouissance*, and death drive that threatens pleasure principle. This is the world that Maqbool also chooses by killing Abba-Ji and marrying Nimmi.

Keywords: Pure Desire, Real, *jouissance*, Imaginary rivalry, Tragedy.

The readings of *Maqbool*, Vishal Bharadwaj's adaptation of *Macbeth*, attempted by critics like Amrita Sen, Suddhaseel Sen, Poonam Trivedi, David Mason, and Rosa M. García-Periago et al range from the transcultural negotiation of adaptation and appropriation, transnationalism, postcoloniality, ambiguities of Bollywood conventions against the backdrop of Mumbai's underworld, to the broader feminist concerns of marginalization of female leads in Bollywood thrillers, and indigenization of *Macbeth* at the level of setting, plot, and language. Ferleman analyses the affair between Maqbool and Nimmi as the predominant transgression in the film in his psychoanalytic reading of *Maqbool* from a Freudian perspective. However, the curious absence of critical engagement with the film from the Lacanian psychoanalytic coordinates has prompted me to attempt one where this paper explores the intermingling relationship between tragedy, desire, and death using the Lacanian notions of *jouissance*, Real, and imaginary relationships.

Bhardwaj in his adaptation of *Macbeth* cleverly alters the theme of regicide to introduce the theme of patricide, and from this subversion of the essential action in the play, the film gains its Oedipal undertones which are also pointed out by Moinak Biswas in his reading of the film- "Mourning and Blood-ties: Macbeth in Mumbai." It is repeatedly emphasized that Abba-ji is a foster father of Maqbool who rescued him as a child from a marginal position and gave him shelter in his family where he was brought up. Thus, Abba-ji becomes the father figure in the life of Maqbool as his name implies. This is also why we see Maqbool hesitate so many times to make up his mind to kill him. Maqbool follows his pure

desire, like Antigone to the end. Lacan's seminars delivered between 1959 and 1960, collected in *Seminar Book VII*, titled *The Ethics of Psychoanalysis*, critique the notion of ethical discourse found in the works of the philosophers like Aristotle, Kant, Hegel, Sade, and others. He explores the relationship between desire, beauty, ethics and their relationship with the essence of tragedy. Lacan argues that Antigone's desire is pure because it rejects the Other's claims to dictate its objects or form. In her rejection of the law of the state and her choice to give a proper burial to her deceased brother, make her a model embodying the ethics of creation which lies in opposition to conformity. Antigone, in her desire to defy Creon's law of the state, seeks death. This choice cannot be understood in terms of simple rationality. Tragedy is the function of desire, and this, according to Lacan, can be understood in conjunction with a crisis when desire crosses over into another dimension about which Lacan says: "What is this pleasure to which one returns after a crisis that occurs in another dimension, a crisis that sometimes threatens pleasure" (*Seminar 7* 246). To follow one's purest desire to the end is to embrace the domain of the Real, the universe governed by unbridled *jouissance*, and death drive which according to Freud is beyond the pleasure principle. This is the world that Antigone chooses as well as Maqbool. Maqbool learns from the corrupt policemen, Pandit and Purohit that Abba-ji in all probability had killed his mentor to become the head of the gang. He is very well aware of the vicious cycle of killing inside the gang. Still, he chooses to kill Abba-ji inside his house knowing well that others will have a clear idea about who the murderer is. Thus, Maqbool seals his fate of death by choosing to kill Abba-ji with whom he shared a filial bond previously.

As soon as Maqbool becomes the head of the gang, the conspiracy to remove him begins parallelly as the other gang members regroup to overthrow his hegemony. This repetitive cycle of violence unbound by the laws of civilization indicates Maqbool's living on the verge of the Real. Here repetition is to be taken as a manifestation of the Real as it involves death drive that routinely underscores the desire for destruction but avoidance of self-destruction by way of destruction of the other. It is important to note that Freud described death drive, which is related to the Lacanian notion of the Real as involving the destruction of the subject as well as the destruction of the other. In one of his letters to Albert Einstein, Freud had explained these two dimensions of 'death drive' as in the following:

The death instinct becomes an impulse to destruction when, with the aid of certain organs, it directs its action outward, against external objects. The living being, that is to say, defends its own existence by destroying foreign bodies. But, in one of its activities, the death instinct is operative within the living being and we have sought to

trace back a number of normal and pathological phenomena to this introversion of the destructive instinct. We have even committed the heresy of explaining the origin of human conscience by some such “turning inward” of the aggressive impulse. Obviously when this internal tendency operates on too large a scale, it is no trivial matter; rather, a positively morbid state of things; whereas the diversion of the destructive impulse toward the external world must have beneficial effects (Einstein 198).

In *Maqbool*, however, it is the destruction of the imaginary other: Abba-ji that seems to be dominant, even though such desires involve the possibility of punishment by society and hence leading to self-destruction. In *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan Book II: The Ego in Freud's Theory and in the Technique of Psychoanalysis, 1954–55*, Lacan argues that the primary tendency of the death drive is to produce repetition in the symbolic order. The death drive is the subject's desire to transgress the pleasure principle to attain a certain excess *jouissance* which is the path towards death. Nimmi is married neither to Abba-ji nor to Maqbool. This is the biggest change that Bharadwaj makes while adapting the play. Nimmi resists the conventional social institution of marriage consciously even after Abba-ji is killed. It is solely because of her status as the young mistress of Abba-ji, Nimmi and Maqbool's illicit, amorous affair becomes a source of forbidden, transgressive pleasure, *jouissance*. The pleasure principle is a symbolic law, a commandment that functions as a limit to enjoyment for the subject while the subject always tries to transgress the limits imposed upon his enjoyment; he wants to go beyond the pleasure principle. However, this transgression in the case of *Maqbool* results not in pleasure, but in pain, as there is a limit to the subject's capacity of bearing pleasure, beyond which, pleasure becomes pain and this ‘painful pleasure’ is what Lacan calls *jouissance*, which is suffering. *Jouissance* is, therefore, defined as a “paradoxical satisfaction that the subject derives from his symptom” (Evans 93). *Jouissance* is also defined as an excessive amount of excitation that can disrupt and traumatize the domain of homeostasis safeguarded by pleasure principle verging on the side of the symbolic. Maqbool's transgressive enjoyment indeed is disruptive and destructive for his political and social ties that are symbolically constructed. This also brings his downfall at the end.

As much as he is propelled by the thought of killing Abba-ji, the father figure, Maqbool is equally driven by his desire to fully possess the body of Nimmi realizing that this would not be possible until Abba-ji is dead. After Nimmi and Maqbool have sex, Nimmi is seen praying on the floor in the morning. When Maqbool asks her “Kya manga duaamein?” (“What did you ask for?”; *Maqbool* 58:29), she replies “Ki har din issraatsabitey.” (“That every day should be

like this night.”; *Maqbool* 58:36) Then comes the most crucial utterance of Maqbool when he says “Abba-ji kejiteji ye nahihoshakta.” (“It is not possible while Abba-ji lives.”; *Maqbool* 58:42) Nimmi replies “Aur Abbajikebaad?” (“And after Abba-ji’s death?”; *Maqbool* 58:51) Maqbool frowns intensely while he is being pushed towards considering the possibility to kill him after all. Nimmi becomes the object-cause of desire for Maqbool, or the *objet petit a*, in Lacanian terms. In the Seminar of 1960-1, *Le Séminaire, Livre VIII: Le transfert*, Lacan posits the term, *objet petit a* with the term *agalma* (a Greek term from Plato’s *Symposium*) that means an ornament, an offering to the gods. Like *agalma*, the *objet petit a* is also the object of desire that we seek in the other *a* denotes the object which is the cause of desire and which can never be attained. Therefore, Lacan calls it ‘the object-cause’ of desire. It is only the partial objects of our partner (gaze, voice, specific body parts etc.) that serve as the cause of desire, as Lacan says in *Seminar Book XX: Encore*, “The object is a failure (*un raté*). The essence of the object is failure”(58). Nimmi is called multiple times a “whore” by the male characters: Maqbool, one of his associates, and Guddu, as well as a “witch” by Sameera. The objectification of Nimmi is thus, repeatedly emphasized throughout the film. This also explains why the inner world of Maqbool, after his killing of Abba-ji and becoming the head of the gang, becomes so confined and obsessed with and around the space of the household of his lover. If someone enjoys by reducing one’s partner to object *a*, one can be characterized by masculine structure, regardless of one’s sex, and regardless of one’s partner’s sexual identity. Even after killing Abba-ji and possessing the hotly desired body of Nimmi, there is always something more to his desire which keeps him home. That is why the reversal of fortune occurs as Maqbool leaves all his political acquaintances, and activities to solely devote himself to his object-cause of his desire, Nimmi.

Maqbool’s relationship with and his killing of Abba-ji can be understood in conjunction with the notion of imaginary rivalry that Lacan expounds in the fourth graph of desire in “The Subversion of the Subject and the Dialectic of Desire in the Freudian Unconscious” in *Ecrits*.

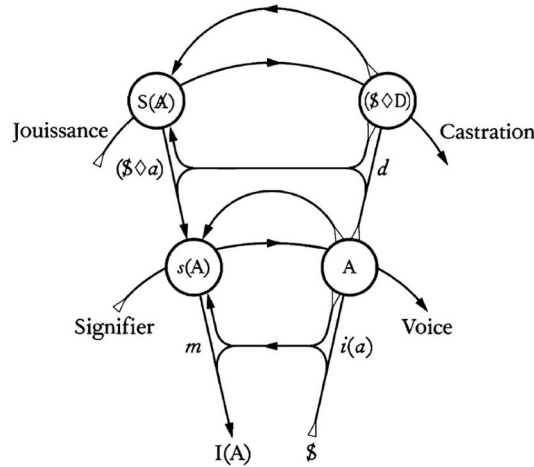


Fig. 1. Graph of Desire from: Lacan, Jacques. *Écrits: The First Complete Edition in English*. Trans. Bruce Fink, Heloise Fink, and Russell Grigg. New York: W. W. Norton, 1996. Print.

In the lower section of the graph, the journey that goes from the barred subject ($\$$) to the ideal-ego [$i(a)$] to the ego (m) to the ego-ideal [$I(A)$] needs to be discussed. $i(a)$ is the image of the other or the image as other in the imaginary register. There is no other way to get to the ego except via the image of the other. For Lacan, the rivalry inherent in this imaginary dual relation has a dark side. The ego is thus, a function of mastery, but it is at the same time, a game of constituted rivalry which casts a shade of hostility on to the other that can rapidly boil over into an intense violent outburst:

what the subject finds in this altered image of his body is the paradigm of all the forms of resemblance that will cast a shade of hostility onto the world of objects, by projecting onto them the avatar of his narcissistic image, which, from the jubilation derived from encountering it in the mirror, becomes—in confronting his semblables—the outlet for his most intimate aggressiveness (*Écrits* 685).

Lacan's early work is about how this alienation in the image produces aggressive outbursts and so many of the clinical cases that interested him exhibit this feature. His commentary on the infamous case of the Papin sisters and his doctoral thesis on Aimee's self-punitive paranoia in which the subject stabbed a well-known actress of the day, serves to show how seriously Lacan took this. A paranoid delusion fixes on the image of an ideal and there follows an abrupt and violent outburst that leads to this destruction of that image. Abba-ji in this case becomes the imaginary other or the ideal-ego to Maqbool's ego. There is a rivalry inherent in this dual relationship. Anytime it is not mediated by a symbolic operator whether that symbolic operator is inefficient or simply not present, it becomes murderously violent and Maqbool shoots the sleeping Abba-ji in his bed. To destroy this image of the other is also to

destroy the ego. Thus, after killing him, Maqbool too undertakes a journey towards his own death in the hands of the other gang members. This dimension of their relationship in the film is also referred to by Ferlemon, who says that “Maqbool murders himself when he agrees to “fall” in love with Nimmi” (179).

In the uppermost section of the graph of desire, the arc that runs from *jouissance* on the left to castration and desire (d) on the right, we can see the central dilemma of the neurotic: to get over this curve towards castration, one has to reject *jouissance*, full enjoyment and accept the fact that the best satisfaction one can get is the one that desire offers, despite its infinite metonymy, its perpetual dissatisfaction with an object. Lacan also ends his paper with this argument: “Castration means that *jouissance* has to be refused in order to be attained on the inverse scale of the Law of desire” (*Ecrits* 700). As a neurotic he should have given up his transgressive, amorous affair with Nimmi, to be mediated by the symbolic order which is a compensation for his *jouissance*. But he refuses to do so and goes in the opposite direction of this horizontal arc in the graph of desire. He enjoys his *jouissance*, kills his imaginary other or ideal-ego (Abba-ji) only to embrace death in the end.

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**DELIBERATIONS ON *MACBETH*: AN INVERTED TREATMENT OF
SRI AUROBINDO'S SATCHITANANDA**

Roshan Johri

Abstract: Sri Aurobindo in his canon of philosophical musings defines the antithetical paradox of involution. A sort of divine manifestation of matter which allows the material to access the divine itself. His idea conceives the physical world as a mere effect of a sort of universal cause which seems to be omnipresent in the crevices of human understanding, but it is so that it remains curtained to the naked (un-intellectual) eye. To go so further, Aurobindo holds an opinion of Shakespeare of such manner that he delineates Shakespeare from not having the ability to reflect a similar philosophy as himself, for his characters are nothing but the creation of pure Dionysian spirit. Aurobindo highlights and explicates his musings as of perfecting a sort of heightened intellect which forms the basis of a deeper, more stratified understanding of the material world. He seeks to explain the experience of matter in an inverted manner which allows one to access and attain what he calls super consciousness. This heightened spiritual awareness is what Aurobindo is unable to identify in the dramatic renditions of Shakespeare and it's this that I will try to reconceptualize and explore as a sort of Aurobindonian palinode in *Macbeth*. In this paper, I will attempt to apply Aurobindo's concept of Evolution and Satchitananda to *Macbeth*. I will also try to identify the inverted treatment of Satchitananda and prove, that Shakespeare, in his dramatic creations after all, wasn't as removed from philosophy as worded by Sri Aurobindo.

Keywords: Shakespeare, *Macbeth*, Sri Aurobindo, Satchitananda, Evolution, Involution.

William Shakespeare's *Macbeth* is one among his most famous tragedies. Not only does this play depict the prowess of language embodied by Shakespeare, it is also very often considered to be his magnum opus. The Hamartia in *Macbeth* is most often considered to be his insatiability and an unending lust for power, and this tragic flaw is popularly believed to be brought about by the ebbing of his ambitious wife, Lady Macbeth. Even though this theory holds true, there are several implicit and explicit factors that ultimately determine and motivate Macbeth's decisions and his character arc. The tragedy is a carefully crafted fabric weaved from the threads of psychology, fantasy, the supernatural, sublime and nature. In a very obfuscating manner, the play begins with the occurrence of the three witches who seemingly make an inevitable prophecy which sows the seed of the tragedy. This metaphysical element is then manifested in Macbeth's Freudian slips, as he fails to place himself in this struggle between continuing to live a noble life and achieving ultimate power and glory.

Before we step into the fine lines of the tragedy, I must first discuss the theories of Sri Aurobindo that I seek to apply and re-define in *Macbeth*. Sri Aurobindo in his understanding

of matter and the sublime, draws a relationship as to how an individual reaches a state of knowledge (this he defines as being intellectual). He draws a contrast between evolution and involution and differentiates the point of access to attain knowledge. In the popular understanding of evolution, an individual has first access to matter. Any change to the seemingly static matter, brings forth a question in the mind of the observer & these questions lead to other profounder questions which progressively lead to the conceptualization of the abstract. When the abstract is known then one seemingly associates a change in the matter to an effect brought about by the absolute/abstract. This state of mind he defines as the super mind or the super consciousness. Involution on the other hand is the actual order of occurrence, a sort of divine chain of events which has ultimately led to the existence and mutability of matter. The chain of events considering an evolutionary progression begins from matter, which is embodied in life, which then seeps into the psyche, further developing into the mind and finally leading to the super mind. Evolution however is not possible without the three stages of widening, heightening and integration. Upon complete evolution one conceives absolute knowledge which is understood as a state of Sat-Chit-Ananda or a state of truth, consciousness and bliss. Shakespeare's *Macbeth* presents a sort of humanized Satchitananda wherein at least one element of the trinity is always faded or blurry. It also removes the positive or divine connotation from the entity and instead applies a supernatural or metaphysical and negative connotation to the concept.

““The world is preparing for a big change. Will you help?” According to Sri Aurobindo's vision, this change refers to the advance of human and cosmic evolution” (Aurobindo 5). What do we mean by this evolution? It refers to a sort of spiritual awakening, a type of insight into the intricacies of life that the explicit conditionals can't seem to affect or negate. This in turn draws a blurred line over one's understanding or grasp of life. This idea is something which Shakespeare very often visits in his dramas, specially the tragedy of *Macbeth*. I don't think it would be appropriate to label it as a tragedy in this sense as it's nothing short of a transcendentalist paradox of escaping the physical world by means of manifesting a material prophecy.

Before we understand the new presentation of Satchitananda in *Macbeth*, we must first ascertain if *Macbeth* did completely evolve or not. The very first stage necessary for evolution is that of widening. Widening is nothing but the expansion of one's horizon of learning and understanding of matter in order to undergo a qualitative change. In the very beginning of the play, we are introduced to the existence of the three witches, the seemingly supernatural

outcastes who never seem to present themselves in broad daylight or in the hustle and bustle of the kingdom, but instead obscure themselves in the fog and mist of the shadows.

“What are these,
So withered and so wild in their attire,
That look not like th’ inhabitants o’th’ earth,
And yet are on ‘t?
Live you, or are you aught
That man may question?” (Shakespeare 1.3.35)

These very lines spoken by Banquo, an ally of Macbeth, conceive the beginnings of evolution, that many, but mostly Macbeth undergoes in the tragedy. There is an honest acceptance that these witches do not belong to Earth, that they are other-worldly creatures who don’t harbor a human disposition, yet they occupy and wander the corners of this mortal land. Thus, there is a widening of the understanding which now doesn’t limit itself to the material world but instead delves on a metaphysical realm. This widening of reality leads into heightening which is nothing but the manifestation of a lower principle (like matter) into a higher principle like(psyche). This manifestation often leads to a flurry of questions, following which an individual undergoes a qualitative change.

Upon receiving the prophecy, Macbeth and his friend, Banquo are left bewildered as they might be enticed to believe the luring predictions yet there isn’t an absolute explanation, so they look for answers and clues in every corner. When Ross and Angus bring news, colored in prophetic allegiance, Macbeth seems to question everything, stuck at the crossroads of coincidence and augury.

“Two truths are told,
As happy prologues to the swelling act
Of the imperial theme.—I thank you, gentlemen.
This supernatural soliciting
Cannot be ill, cannot be good: if ill,
Why hath it given me earnest of success,
Commencing in a truth? I am thane of Cawdor:
If good, why do I yield to that suggestion
Whose horrid image doth unfix my hair
And make my seated heart knock at my ribs,
Against the use of nature? Present fears
Are less than horrible imaginings:

My thought, whose murder yet is but fantastical,
Shakes so my single state of man that function
Is smother'd in surmise, and nothing is
But what is not." (Shakespeare 1.3.117)

With these questions on the morality and implications of the deeming, Macbeth heightens himself from his lower focus on only the material and the matter i.e. whatever he is to gain from this prophecy in the physical world, to the higher focus of the psyche and the mind where he deliberates the consequences of following through with the murder and the call outs of his own morality principle. In his deliberation, he takes on a more analytical point of view as he now struggles to identify himself as the same man, who once was a beacon of nobility and faithfully devoted to Duncan, his cousin, the King. He, however, is unable to reach to a conclusion all by himself, as each question progressively leads to another, so he finds himself seeking the shelter of his wife's, Lady Macbeth's judgement.

Lastly, there is the process of integration, which is key in achieving complete evolution. This process however seems to lose focus very often as its lines of delineation seem very blurred. The juxtaposition of lower principles and higher principles do not appear to take place at one instance but instead keep happening throughout the length of the tragedy. It appears as early as the appearance of the witches and then runs across the length of the play, first in the bloody knife scene and then soon to the banquet scene, and towards the end in the hallucinations of Lady Macbeth where supernatural elements seemingly take precedence over the immediate physical world and the lines between what is material and metaphysical become blurred. This constant fading in and fading out calls to attention that the focus now has shifted from the gains and losses to be reaped on Earth, to the more profound repercussions to be lashed upon the conscience and being.

"All hail Macbeth, that shalt be king hereafter" (Shakespeare 1.3.57). This is where the integration of the super mind into matter begins. The fantastic trinity of the oracles present a reality-removed prophecy which is now integrated into the material world by means of evolution. This however now shifts into a paradigm of back and forth where the involute collapses into the evolute and each aids the other. This prophecy gifts Macbeth with an elevated intellect which allows him to progress to a state of supreme consciousness, which in his situation loses its positive connotation. Despite having learnt of a metaphysical truth, Macbeth allows his consciousness to fall into the transience of the material world, thus allowing a sort of chain-reaction of falling in and falling out of a vortex of Satchitananda.

“The sleep-state ascends to a higher power of being, beyond thought into pure consciousness, beyond emotion into pure bliss, beyond will into pure mastery; it is the gate of union with the supreme state of Sachchidananda out of which all the activities of the world are born” (Aurobindo 525).

Now, the treatment of Satchitananda in Macbeth is particularly unique owing to its inability to exist as a single unit in the tragedy. There is always, at least, one in the triumvirate that fails to materialize and remains veiled to the protagonist i.e. Macbeth. The very first instance of the encounter with this metaphysical state of being is during the very 1st Act of the play, where the prophecy is made and Macbeth is thrown into a pool of questions, deliberating the either fruitful or punishing outcome of the augury. Here, the entities of consciousness and bliss do exist, because at this moment, Macbeth truly doesn't concede to the idea of killing the King. Instead, he's aware of the blasphemous nature of the action this prophecy demands. Even though he acknowledges the doubled edged nature of this deeming, he finds a nook for himself to bliss and rejoice the fruitful outcome of ruling the kingdom and benefitting from the power of the throne. Although, unlike the bliss he rejoices in, his consciousness pertains to a sort of ambivalence because he can't identify himself in a single strain of thought and instead oscillates between the consequences of the decision he is to make. The actual truth, however, remains unknown to him. He might be aware that Banquo's children will ultimately become successors to the throne, but he doesn't realize the truth: He holds no power to alter this outcome through his actions in the physical world.

In this next instance, we travel to that exact moment where he kills Duncan and confesses to Lady Macbeth, “this is a sorry sight” (Shakespeare 2.2.20). His consciousness here attains a sort of absolute-ness and murders the bliss instead of inducing it. This absolute-ness is characterized by inevitability and finality. Now his consciousness doesn't swing between what ought to be and ought not to be done. Moving forth, the truth continues to be blurred from the sight of Macbeth as he torments in a state of constant guilt, anxiety and regret. In fact, in this very situation, it's Lady Macbeth who maintains a calm composure and attempts to lasso in his insecurities. He grows increasingly nihilistic and is unable to face the graveness of his actions. “To know my deed, 'twere best not know myself” (2.2.67). He starts fearing his doings and finds himself entrapped in supernatural misgivings and hears voices cry “Sleep no more” (2.2.47). Despite Macbeth's state of anguish, he doesn't fail to clear up his trails as he eventually murders the entranced guards to prevent himself from being caught. This in turn shows that despite being reticent and regretful, Macbeth still eyes the prize of the throne and

wants to leave no stones unturned to reach that end goal, even if reaching there would cost him his conscience.

Although Macbeth's 'chit' seems to have attained a more stable grounding, the 'sat' continues to remain dimmed and hidden. This truth however is presented in a malicious manner to Macbeth, who is, from the very start, made to believe that the absolute truth is transparent to him, and that he holds the power to temper its destiny. It almost feels like a false truth that Macbeth hastily chases until the absolute end, when his 'chit' and 'anand' have been irrevocably changed and he has no way back. This deceitful truth continues to pull Macbeth into its grooves, as he tries to further solidify his destiny. His unhinged greed makes him murder Banquo because he believes that he holds the mane to his fate. He also orders the assassins to murder Banquo's son, Fleance to make sure that there is no one to contest the seat to his prophesied throne. Fleance, however manages to escape the fatal attack which then sends Macbeth into a spiral, who now begins to sense a sort of duality in the nature of the truth made available to him. This brings him to summon the company of the witches whom he bombards with questions and his insecurities. It is to be noted, that his insecurities here do not stem from the instability of his 'chit', but from that of the 'sat'. He, at this very instant, is aware of his actions and his desires. He doesn't wish to alter the deeds of the past, but instead tries to find an alternative to realize his prophecy.

In the final section of the play, Macbeth truly discerns the reality of his falsified truth when his messenger observes- "I looked toward Birnam, and anon methought The wood began to move" (Shakespeare 5.5.47). It's at this juncture that the 'sat' is truly manifested and finally unravels upon Macbeth, who now identifies this equivocation as an entity "that lies like truth" (5.5.47). Despite his truth and consciousness materializing towards the end of the drama, it's his tragedy which prevents the 'ananda' to situate itself in the super-mind of Macbeth. In the end, Macbeth is slain and the 'sat' prevails. This truly happens so because the Satchitananda fails to exist as a single unit throughout this journey of Macbeth and hence fails to materialize its true purpose: Involution.

The treatment of this Satchitananda in Macbeth is what draws my attention and calls for a specific observation: Shakespeare makes a humanized treatment of Satchitananda. It's to be noted that by humanized, I refer not to any intrinsic familiarizing attributes but to the inability to achieve perfection. Just like man, this unit fails to achieve perfection and exist as a triumvirate which ultimately inverts the role it intends to play in an individual's life. "Sweet Mother, it is the separation of Sat, Chit and Ananda which has brought about ignorance, suffering" (Aurobindo 234). Throughout the tragedy, at least one of the three fails to present

itself in clear discernability or if not so, happens to exist in a falsity or duality. Owing to its constant disproportion, the Satchitananda ends up developing a diabolic nature. Instead, of allowing Macbeth, to look beyond matter (lower principle) and access knowledge and consciousness beyond the physical world (higher principle), it disillusion him to recreate a falsified reality which ultimately brings about his downfall. Despite undergoing evolution, Macbeth's super-mind develops an ominous undertone which characterizes his greed, apathy and ruthlessness. It draws out the nobility and reverence in Macbeth and fosters a seat for his innate negativities. It leads him to chase "the sense of a secret immortality" (Aurobindo 3). This also seems to present the idea, that the ability to undergo evolution and develop a super-mind, isn't something one can readily bring about but that it manifests only in the rarest of cases. Satchitananda is understood as this rare state of consciousness, which roots itself in the transience of matter and a manifestation of the sublime withing the matter itself. "Sri Aurobindo describes this consciousness as the Supermind-a unitary consciousness that is the nature of Sat Chit Ananda" (Macfarlane)

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**RELIGIOUS INTERPRETATION OF SHAKESPEARE IN THE ACADEMY :
AMAL BHATTACHARJEE ON SHAKESPEARE**

Samik Sen

Abstract: Professor Amal Bhattacharjee in his essay on *Macbeth*, instead of treating individual works of literature as isolated artistic achievements adopts a method of reading which aspires to find out the larger underlying pattern or order of myths and symbols that belong to the Christian culture of Europe. He claims that it is this grand order of moral values and norms, religious concepts and sentiments that seems to have become part of the collective unconscious of Europe and contain the meaning and significance of the individual works or units of the great system of literature. Bhattacharjee's religious interpretation of *Macbeth* embodies the Modernist aspiration to liberate literary criticism from the subjective impressionism of Romantic aesthetic and to render it systematic and scientific.

Keywords: Religious Interpretation, Christianity, Modernism, Historicism, Myth, Archetypal Criticism.

Amal Bhattacharjee, an almost legendary Indian Shakespearean scholar and pedagogue in his essay on *Macbeth*, included in his *Four Essays on Tragedy*, offered a religious interpretation of the Shakespearean play. Instead of moving from an examination of the play to its logical conclusion, this critic at the very outset enunciates the conclusion that '*Macbeth* presents the religious view of man's existence and destiny' (Bhattacharjee71). It is after stating the conclusion in the inaugural sentence of his essay that the critic proceeds to a selective examination of those parts of the play which can be used to substantiate his conclusion. What strikes the reader from the beginning of the essay is the tone of certainty with which the critic asserts his ideas as if the validity of the religious framework and its applicability to the interpretation of Shakespearean play is self-evident. '[The] religious, Christian view', Bhattacharjee writes, 'is intensely there to determine the nature of imagery and the significance of the characters and of the *muthos*; to provide, in short, the basic theme of the great Shakespearean tragedies, chiefly that of *Macbeth*'(Bhattacharjee 71). The assumption that is implicit in such an identification of the religious, Christian view as the underlying principle that determines the nature of imagery and significance of characters is that the play is thematically and structurally a unified and coherent whole and it is by the critic's recognition of the central idea that this thematic unity and coherence of the play is established. Richard Levin in his analysis of post-war criticism of English Renaissance drama identifies as the most influential

movement what he defines as ‘thematic criticism’, that which finds in the plays underlying homogeneity, deep structures and organic unity; all of which serve as the formal articulation of a predictable content: profound and universal truths about man. Bhattacharjee’s critical essay on *Macbeth* falls into the category of such thematic criticism and according to the critic it is the Christian view that provides the play its central theme.

Bhattacharjee initially seems to have subscribed to the Romantic glorification of the genius and individuality of the author when he asserts that, though the Christian view that Shakespeare’s play embodies, is that of his age and of his people, what belongs to Shakespeare is ‘the power, range and integrity of the poetic realization of the idea’ (Bhattacharjee71). Bhattacharjee’s meditations on *Macbeth* on closer reading appear to embody certain anti-romantic tendencies of modernist aesthetics. Bhattacharjee observes that Shakespeare does not merely passively receive and record the idea, but ‘achieves a genuine cognition of it through arduous intellectual and emotional effort’ (Bhattacharjee71). Here the emphasis on ‘cognition’ and reference to the arduous intellectual and emotional effort that such cognition of a particular idea on the part of the author involves can be viewed as the Modernist reaction against the Romantic conception of the transcendental genius of the bard and the Romantic idea of the spontaneity of literary creation. Instead of treating the play under study as the expression of the playwright’s private emotions the critic stresses on the cognition of an idea by the playwright through ‘arduous intellectual and emotional effort’. The shift of focus from expression to cognition and the combination of emotional and intellectual effort in the dramatic creation reveals the critic’s allegiance to the Modernist aesthetics and his disapproval of the obsessive preoccupation of the Romantics with the subjectivity of the artist. The influence of Eliot’s ideas of impersonality and unified sensibility is discernible here. Eliot in ‘Tradition and Individual Talent’ proposed that the artist must continually surrender himself to something which is more valuable than himself, i.e. literary tradition and must allow his creative sensibility to be shaped and modified by the tradition and should labour to acquire a sense of tradition assiduously and diligently. The religious idea that in Bhattacharjee’s analysis, is claimed to underlay the structure and pattern of imagery in *Macbeth*, belongs to the religious tradition of Europe and by getting expressed through art and literature had become assimilated into the cultural tradition of Europe too. Shakespeare’s cognition of this idea involves effort on his part to acquire a sense of tradition. On the other hand, such cognition, according to Bhattacharjee, requires combination of intellectual and emotional effort and this echoes Eliot’s insistence on the fusion of thought and feeling in his essay

‘The Metaphysical Poets’. Instead of treating individual works of literature as isolated artistic achievements, the method of reading that the critic adopts, seeks the larger underlying pattern or order of myths and symbols, and motifs that belong to the Christian culture of Europe and it is this grand order of moral values and norms, religious concepts and sentiments that seems to have become part of the collective unconscious of European culture’s psyche that seems to contain the meaning and significance of individual units or works of the great system of literature. We perceive here an influence of the modernist critical propensity for the formation of literary systems, cultural and symbolic and mythical order which is formulated into a full-fledged theory of archetypal criticism by Northrop Frye. While the Romantics advocated particular response to individual works of literature and expressed suspicion about constructing abstract theories of totality or general system of values, the modernists in order to combat the all pervasive sense of chaos, disintegration and anarchy, resorted to the construction of mythical and symbolic order of values and pleaded for a proto-structuralist approach to literature, incorporating the great works of literature in the system of myths or order of symbols. Bhattacharjee observes that ‘*Macbeth* explores the meaning of human life in those terms which art uses in order to project our deepest thoughts and feelings; in broad, popular religious symbols and myths, whose meaning is as profound as it is easily recognized.’(Bhattacharjee 72). Now, two assumptions are implicit in Bhattacharjee’s critical pronouncement. One that there is already a system of symbols and myths, archetypes if we like to call it, for the expression of man’s deepest thoughts and feelings and another that the task of criticism is to grasp this archetypal system in order to understand the meaning of a particular work of literature. Both these assumptions are found in the form of theoretical formulation in Northrop Frye’s *Anatomy of Criticism* which was published in 1957, nine years before the publication of Bhattacharjee’s present essay in Shakespeare Commemoration Volume edited by Taraknath Sen. Frye in *Anatomy of Criticism*, in his aspiration to render study of literature systematic and scientific, argues that it is imperative for literary criticism to ‘recognize the fact that there is a centre of the order of words’ and Frye finds this centre in the study of the myths and archetypes which according to Frye is ‘the study of literary symbols as parts of a whole’(Frye117-118). Frye further proposes that the totality of literary works constitute a ‘self-contained literary universe’ (Frye 118) which has been created by human imagination by incorporating the alien world of nature into certain enduring archetypal forms that embody elemental human desires and perennial needs. Literature, thus, in Frye’s opinion, constructs an alternative verbal discourse and the meaning of a particular

literary work is contained by this great system of literature that is autonomous and self-contained. Individual works of literature, in Frye's view, play variations upon a number of archetypes—conventional types and patterns that literature shares with social rituals, religion, theology, history. In Bhattacharjee's interpretation of the relation of the witches to the protagonist of Shakespeare in *Macbeth*, the influence of Frye's archetypal criticism can be recognized. Bhattacharjee interprets the witches' negotiations with Macbeth in terms of the archetypal battle between God and Satan. He writes:

We have here a re-enactment of the Jewish-Christian battle between God and Satan, which is a re-echo, with a new moral significance, of one of mankind's oldest myths. The battle for the human soul is perpetually lost and renewed by Satan. *Macbeth*, telling the story of his battle, takes its place among the major achievements of European Christian culture, as does Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus* (Bhattacharjee75).

Macbeth, according to Bhattacharjee not only reiterates one of mankind's oldest myths, but by telling the story of the battle between God and Satan, 'takes its place among the major achievements of European Christian culture'. Thus Macbeth plays variation on the archetype of battle between good and evil and by doing so becomes part of the self-contained literary universe constituted by the major achievements of European Christian culture. Bhattacharjee seems to have assimilated well the theory and practical methodology of Frye's archetypal criticism.

Again in the sixth section of his essay Bhattacharjee contends that the contemporary significance of Macbeth or Faustus should be understood against the backdrop of the prototypes like Cain, Lucifer and Judas. He writes:

It is against the background of these prototypes that we should understand Faustus' or Macbeth's contemporary significance. The uncontrollable passion for self-aggrandizement and self-glorification from which their pride and ambition spring is anarchic, egocentric and centrifugal; and by challenging the theocentric order based on degree and order, these heroes represent for us the deepest significance of the movement we call the Renaissance and the Reformation, and represent, further, by their fortune, an unqualified criticism of the decisive aspects of this movement (Bhattacharjee 87-88).

Here too the particular literary creations of the Renaissance are viewed against the archetypal mythical figures and the entire Renaissance and Reformation world-view,

religious paradigm is taken into consideration for understanding the achievements of Shakespeare and his contemporaries. Thus it is assumed that the meaning of individual works of art can be properly understood only if they are viewed as parts of a tradition, placed against an order created by myths, symbols and their expression through cultural artefacts.

While Bhattacharjee's application of the method of mythical or archetypal criticism to the study of an individual play of Shakespeare, his insistence on reading an individual work of literature as part of a tradition or on incorporating a particular work into the general system of literature reflects one aspect of his resistance to Romantic aesthetics, another aspect of his essentially anti-Romantic theoretical assumptions and critical practice is found in his pleading for a reading of Macbeth not as a sympathetic figure as presented by the Romantic tradition but as a devil incarnate as a Christian point of view projects him to be. Comparing Macbeth with some other characters of European Literature, like Dante's Farinata or Milton's Satan, Bhattacharjee repudiates the Romantic conclusion that their creators were in devil's party without knowing it. He writes:

Macbeth, Farinata, Milton's Satan are indeed sublime but none of their creators belongs to the Devil's party without knowing it. An identification between the poet and his creation because of its sublimity is too readily assumed by us, probably because of the Romantic tradition... We realize the hero's significance no longer in his isolated grandeur but against the Christian background of the sacrifice of Jesus and of man's history as a whole (Bhattacharjee99).

Here the critic insists on considering the great tragic protagonists not as individual characters but as types and this along with his resentment at the Romantic identification of the poet with his creations testify to his anti-romantic stance. Bhattacharjee thus proceeds to revise the Romantic view of Macbeth, in spite of acknowledging the sublime effect that Shakespeare's character evokes. Religious or mythical view of life like all other ideological conceptions of human life invariably valorizes the typical and views the individual as representative of some abstract qualities or principles. Northrop Frye in his *Anatomy of Criticism* has traced the tendency to think of individual as ideally prior to his society to the Romantic paradigm and opposes this view to an alternative conception of human life which reverses this hierarchy. Frye writes:

The view opposed to this, that the new baby is conditioned by a hereditary and environmental kinship to a society which already exists, has, whatever

doctrines may be inferred from it, the initial advantage of being closer to the facts it deals with. The literary consequence of the second view is that the new poem, like the new baby, is born into an already existing order of words, and is typical of the structure of poetry to which it is attached (Frye97).

What is indicated in Frye's observations is a proto-structuralist view of literature which instead of considering a particular work of art individually or in isolation from all other works, places the work in the larger literary tradition or system of literature and seeks out the typical qualities in the individual work which suggest its relation to the tradition. In Bhattacharjee's religious interpretation of *Macbeth* such subordination of individual to the system is reflected by the way in which characters in literary work are subordinated to an overall scheme, which they are seen as validating or illustrating. Brian Vickers complains that Christian interpretation of Shakespeare ignores theatrical experience, dramatic structure, and aesthetic properties of the plays in order to demonstrate the validity and applicability of its own paradigm. Vickers further argues:

The characters are not regarded as parts functioning in a complex whole having its own rationale...But...take the abstracting process to its extreme, regarding characters not in gender-roles, nor even as clinical types, but as mere representatives. They 'stand for' something else in an external allegory, to be read outside and independent of the play, having its own narrative pattern, and a quite different conclusion (Vickers373).

While S.C.Sengupta and Taraknath Sen subscribed to the Romantic aesthetic by considering the experience of literature as essentially aesthetic and subordinating all other considerations to the appreciation and analysis of a particular play which according to them was the main objective of literary criticism, Amal Bhattacharjee shows his ideological affiliation with the aesthetics of modernism, by insisting on incorporating a particular play into the cultural tradition or literary system of myths and symbols, or more precisely on interpreting the part with reference to the whole. Bhattacharjee's criticism therefore marks an advance on the academic criticism of Shakespeare for it liberated the reading of Shakespeare from exclusive attention to the aesthetic qualities of the plays and located Shakespeare's creations in the larger context of the cultural tradition of Europe constituted by the enduring myths and symbols expressive of man's deepest desires and needs. By referring to the cultural and intellectual paradigm of the Renaissance and Reformation in his study of Shakespeare's play, Bhattacharjee anticipates the old

historicist critical practice. It is this tradition of historicism that Sukanta Chaudhuri carries on, modifies and enriches in his *Infirm Glory*, where he attempts to situate Shakespeare and his creations in the philosophical tradition of western scepticism.

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**AN ECOCRITICAL READING OF *THE TEMPEST*: REFLECTING ON
RABINDRANATH TAGORE'S COMPARATIVE STUDY OF KALIDASA'S
SHAKUNTALA AND SHAKESPEARE'S *THE TEMPEST***

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Abstract: Ecocriticism is the critical study of the various levels of the relationship between literature and the environment. This interest and theoretical framework to understand the relation between human beings and the natural world in literature has initiated attempts to read William Shakespeare's works from the perspective of ecocriticism. *The Tempest* is one such text which calls for attention of the ecocritics. But much before the theory of ecocriticism formally came into the academic world, Rabindranath Tagore critically examined this text from what, if now, would have been called the ecocritical perspective in his comparative study of Kalidasa's *Shakuntala* and Shakespeare's *The Tempest* in his 1902 essay called "Shakuntala". Investigating the role nature plays in both the texts and locating them in the realms of Indian eco-philosophy and western worldviews, Tagore underlined the principle of harmony which was and is still now the key to sustainability, central to ecological discussions. Reflecting on Tagore's analysis of these two texts, this paper is an attempt to read *The Tempest* from the perspective of ecocriticism.

Keywords: ecocriticism, nature, human beings, harmony, *maitre*

Ecocriticism as an essential field of critical studies was officially heralded by the publication of two seminal works—*The Ecocriticism Reader* edited by Cheryl Glotfelty and Harold Fromm, and *The Environmental Imagination* by Lawrence Buell in the 1990s (Mambrol). To put it simply, ecocriticism is the critical study of the various levels of the relationship between literature and the environment (Bandyopadhyay ix). It deals with how environmental issues, cultural issues concerning the environment and attitudes towards nature are presented and analysed in literature (Mambrol). This interest and theoretical framework to understand the relation between human beings and the natural world in literature has initiated attempts to read William Shakespeare's works from the perspective of ecocriticism. *The Tempest* is one such text which calls for attention of the ecocritics. Set in the backdrop of a fierce storm that is man-made, and an isolated island where people come from outside and start to dominate, the representation of nature in *The Tempest* explores the complex relationship human beings and nature share. But much before the theory of ecocriticism formally came into the academic world, Rabindranath Tagore critically examined this text from what, if now, would have been called the ecocritical perspective in his comparative study of Kalidasa's *Shakuntala* and Shakespeare's *The Tempest* in his 1902 essay called "Shakuntala". Investigating the role

nature plays in both the texts and locating them in the realms of Indian eco-philosophy and western worldviews, Tagore underlined the principle of harmony which was and is still now the key to sustainability, central to ecological discussions. Reflecting on Tagore's analysis of these two texts, this paper is an attempt to read *The Tempest* from the perspective of ecocriticism.

Before delving into Tagore's ecocritical study of *The Tempest*, a brief discussion on the ecocritical intervention into this text so far would be significant. David Gray points out in his essay "'Command these elements to silence': Ecocriticism and *The Tempest*" that ecocritical studies have engaged with certain definite areas of this text. The storm scene with which the play opens has been seen as an analogy for psychological and political change. The setting of the play on the island has been seen as hinging on the pastoral genre whereby a contrast can be highlighted between the country-space and the city-space. The text has also been analysed as a reflection of early-modern understanding of culture and science, climate and natural world. Gray himself explores the historical documents and a risk modelling report relating to an extreme weather event in England in 1607 due to its relevance to the ongoing debate on the ecocritical analysis of the play in this essay. Gray also mentions how the play has been seen by critics like Glen A. Love as anticipating future developments in the field of natural sciences, notably Charles Darwin's theory of evolution by natural selection. Gray refers to Gabriel Egan who cites several instances in the text from where deforestation can be inferred. Gray mentions Jonathan Bate too who challenges postcolonial readings of *The Tempest* that mostly centre round the relationship between Prospero and Caliban from the perspective of a culture against nature debate and asserts the need for studying Caliban's closeness to nature, thus endorsing a key feature of negritude and promoting a culture against nature debate.

The concern for nature, and the relationship nature and people share have always been an integral part of Tagore's works. Tagore did not draw up an ecocritical theory, but as Bandyopadhyay argues that "he lived and wrote, throughout his life, a story of ecological sustenance" (123). A short discussion on Tagore's views on nature, and his understanding of the Indian and western worldviews in regard to nature would provide us with a point of entry into the discussion of Tagore's comparative study of *The Tempest* and *Shakuntala* from the perspective of ecocriticism. From a boy growing up in an emerging city space whose only access to nature was through the window to the man assigned the role of a zamindar which involved looking after land and people, Tagore's earlier appreciation of the beauty of nature was tempered with practical consideration and the realisation of the

complex dynamic human beings and nature share. Living and writing in the heydays of colonialism, many of his writings including letters, lectures, essays, novels, short stories and plays express his criticism of the European anthropocentric worldview which in the name of progress exploited people and nature and disrupted the ecological balance. He acknowledged the western world for its scientific knowledge, but resented the mechanisation that followed, and the discord and disharmony it created within the human world, and between the human world and the world of nature. He hoped that “the East will change the aspects of modern civilisation, infusing life in it where it is a machine” (*Nationalism* 7). Following his readings of the Upanishads and ancient Indian texts, he “felt that the worldview in India is non-aggressive or non-violent in the most comprehensive sense as it suggests peace not only between nations and races but also in the relationships working across species and encompassing all existence. It harmonizes the living and the non-living, the human and the nonhuman” (Bandyopadhyay 48).

This understanding forms the premises on which Tagore’s ecocritical study of *The Tempest* is based on. In Kalidasa’s *Shakuntala* he finds the image of a harmonious ecological relationship between the human world and the natural world, whereas *The Tempest*, according to him, is “in content as it is in name: a conflict between nature and humankind” (“Shakuntala” 244). Tagore posited these two texts side by side to discuss “[t]heir external resemblances and inner disparities” (237). Moving beyond the external similarities between Miranda and Shakuntala like their love for Ferdinand and Dushyanta respectively, and the locales such as “sea-grit island” and “forest retreat” (237), Tagore examines the differences between the two texts. According to him, by upholding nature as an integral part of human existence, *Shakuntala* has charted out its difference from *The Tempest*. He explores this relationship of human beings with nature by commenting on the relationship that the female protagonists of these texts share with their surroundings. He also analyses the role that these surroundings play in the texts themselves.

Apart from pointing out how *Shakuntala* is much more “comprehensively presented” (“Shakuntala” 241) than Miranda whom we see primarily through “her amour with Ferdinand” and in her “distressed pity in her anxiety for the shipwrecked mariners” (241), Tagore underlines their relationship with their surroundings which helps us appreciate them in different ways. Tagore shows us that though we find Miranda growing up amid “a wave-lashed, desolate, mountainous island”, she has “no intimate relationship with nature on that island” (240). The role of the picturesque setting has been restricted only to being a requisite for the plot, presented through “the poet’s description or in course

of events” (240). The setting does not become “essential” to the character as it becomes in *Shakuntala*. In *Shakuntala*, the setting does not only contribute to the dramatic action of the play, but also without it “Shakuntala herself would remain incomplete”, as she is “one with the forest retreat” (240). Unlike Miranda who is isolated due to the external circumstances, Shakuntala is integrally linked in spirit to her surroundings. By presenting several instances from *Shakuntala* of Shakuntala protecting, nurturing and tending animals, birds, plants of the forest retreat, Tagore explains how “her intimate kinship [is] with all things, conscious and unconscious: such the tie of affection and beneficence”, and how she has “the same natural relationship with the forest retreat that the flower has with the creeper” (243). This is why, according to Tagore, Shakuntala’s leaving the hermitage shows us “how grievous and heart-rending the parting between a human being and a forest can be” (241), whereas, if Miranda were “to be plucked from that maternal soil where she has lived since infancy, it would not cause any wrench to her being” (240).

In Tagore’s observation, this “union of nature with humankind” (241) as presented in *Shakuntala* and reflected in the being of Shakuntala herself has made the natural setting of the forest retreat not just an external existence but a character in the text. Positing it against the representation of nature in the west, Tagore writes that “[n]owhere except in Sanskrit literature, I believe, has mute nature been given such a central and essential place in a drama” (244). He mentions allegorical plays where nature can be personified to speak, but what Kalidasa did in this play cannot be seen “anywhere else”, because he kept “nature natural, yet made it so living, so immediate, so pervasive, so intimate, to make it perform so many dramatic functions” (244). On the contrary, as Tagore points out that in *The Tempest* “external nature takes on human shape in the figure of Ariel, but keeps away from any kinship with man” (241). Besides, the relationship Ariel shares with humankind is that of an “unwilling servant” (241) who is “bound and oppressed by human force” (241), who seeks freedom. So, instead of the essential ties of love and respect with nature, *The Tempest* brings forth “a conflict between nature and humankind, between one human being and another—and, at the root of that conflict, [is] the struggle for power” (244). In the world of *The Tempest*, man, instead of “extending himself into the universe beneficently in a tie of love” (244), has been overwhelmed with the “conflict and strife to dominate” (244). Thus, this text not only shows a lack of loving, harmonious relation between human beings and nature, but also reflects on the dominant western worldview which highlights the human greed and hunger for power, the constant need for human beings to dominate

nature and be in control. And this for Tagore sets the two texts apart, as Sisir Kumar Das contends:

His [Tagore's] reading of Kalidas was influenced by his deep involvement with ancient Indian ideals...Rabindranath is not as euphoric over Shakespeare as are many of his compatriots, including Bankimchandra...Rabindranath's differing view is not due to parochialism of taste and certainly not only cultural chauvinism. It is chiefly because of his understanding of the relation between humankind and nature and the place of violence and peace, power and contentment in human society and cosmic order. (8-9)

In "The Religion of the Forest" Tagore, by citing some other plays of Shakespeare like *Timon of Athens*, *Cymbeline*, *As You Like It*, *The Winter's Tale* etc. one by one, shows how though sometimes a complaint against the artificial life of the king's court is registered, the presence of nature still does not bring "peace" in these texts, human beings still share no essential ties of love with nature. He also explains that his observations about these texts are not to "minimize Shakespeare's great power as a dramatic poet", but rather to show that "the gulf between Nature and human nature" in his works is "owing to the tradition of his race and time" (61), a reflection of how the tradition of his race and time perceives the world around them. Thus, to conclude it can be said that Tagore's worldview, shaped by his readings and understandings of the Upanishads and the Vedas, centres round the principle of peace and harmony, "the ideal of *maitri*"—"maitri with men and *maitre* with Nature" (*Nationalism* 18) and this is what he finds missing in *The Tempest* and this is what makes Kalidasa's text very valuable to him.

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**RE-READING MANDAAR: AN ADAPTATION OF SHAKESPEARE'S
MACBETH THROUGH THE LENS OF ECOFEMINISM**

Sneha Das

Abstract: Ecofeminism draws a fine line of relationship between women and environment and at the same time addresses the oppressions meted out to both of them. This paper attempts to critically analyze and re-read *Mandaar*, an adaptation of Shakespeare's *Macbeth* through the lens of Ecofeminism and also aims to trace how the aspect of parallelism between the subordination of women and nature is drawn through its overwhelming colloquial flavor. Though the central theme remains the same as 'Macbeth', the director Anirban Bhattacharya in this thriller crime television series *Mandaar* has infused an enticing storyline. The frequent occurrence of the sublime sea-shore and the intricacies of the fish trading business and the insatiable thirst of the business men to make the most out of it shows how a human life is intricately woven with the elements of nature. On one hand the play upholds the exploitation of female characters like Laili by the lustful patriarchal society and on other hand it vividly showcases the dependence of powerful men on spiritual activities and prophecies done by a female witch, both of which make us to comprehend the Ecofeminist turn in the play. This paper also explores how the stereotypical notion is subverted by making women and nature to be psychologically more stable which in turn is something that every ecofeminist revolutionist tries to achieve through their agenda of gender equality and sustainable development of environment.

Key Words: Ecofeminism, Exploitation, Female, Nature, Spiritualism.

Gender issues have been dominating the society since the time immemorial and many quests have been made by many theorists and revolutionists to bring about a change in the society by establishing the concept of gender. Among these one of the most modern quests towards achievement of gender equality, keeping in mind the suffering of women and nature is Ecofeminism. Before we probe deeper into the adaptation, *Mandaar* and analyse it through lens of Ecofeminism to show how it establishes the empowerment of its women characters and upholds the importance of nature, we must at first get acquainted with the term 'Ecofeminism' which was first coined by French feminist Francoise d'Eaubonne in the year 1974. Ecofeminists encouraged the association between women and environment. They enforced that woman has a deep connection and relation with nature based on their domestic roles as a family nurturer and provider or maker of food. This very concept of cultural feminism

resulted in the greater sanctity for environment among the soft women heart which they believed will lead to the liberation of both women and nature. To quote from the introduction to “*Feminism and Ecology*” by Mary Mellor “Ecofeminism is a movement that sees a connection between the exploitation and degradation of the natural world and the subordination and the oppression of the women.... It takes from the green movement the concern about the impact of human activities on the non-human world and from feminism the view of humanity as gendered in ways that subordinate, exploit and oppress women.” (1)

The above-mentioned situation of women and nature was brought into limelight more by the works of the literature and creative arts. The adaptation *Mandaar* by Anirban Bhattacharya could be considered as such an example that has succeeded in sending goosebumps to stir up the senses of its audiences and has made them to re-think about the gender dynamics that is prevalent in our society. If reviewed through the lens of Ecofeminism this television series could open up an interesting and important arena of discussion among its viewers.

The story of *Mandaar* though based on Shakespeare’s hard-hitting tragedy *Macbeth*, has made a lot of significant divergence in the story making the theme all the more contemporary in nature which is well-crafted with a perfect combination of elements of greed, lust, prophecies, nature and feminism. On close observation, the adaptation reveals that the desire for power and dominance remains the same no matter whether man is situated in a castle at Shakespearean era or is situated in a hut of Geilpur of 21st century. The setting of *Mandaar* has been kept away from feverish stir of the city life and the presence of natural elements are felt throughout the web series in every scene and episode where we can very well witness a typical village lifestyle across a sea-shore. The opening scene with a vehicle full of fishes exposes how the daily economic life of the villagers was commonly based on the fishing trade. This dependence of the villagers of Geilpur on fishing exposes how the people were dependent on nature for earning their daily bread. The mass union and the strike of the fishers against the owner of the fishery market i.e., Dablu, is well evident of the fact that exploitation is prevalent at every corner of the society and how nature is intentionally made the means of such an exploitation. The hunger of men is satisfied only through extraction of elements from nature. This sense of hunger and lustful desire to rob the most out of nature is shown in the adaptation through the cruel murder scene where Dablu, the rich owner, hires the character Mandaar to kill the leading figure who

initiated the uprising amongst the common fishermen. These common agitating fishermen stand as the embodiment of nature and on the other hand the exploitive figures like Dablu and Mandaar highlight the greedy human mind that knows nothing but oppression. Such an oppressive behavior by taming the common men of soil and using nature as the weapon very well upholds the Ecocritical turn of the story where the relationship of nature and man is focused upon. Men are seen to obtain pleasure by exploiting nature because throughout the history nature has been anthropomorphized as female expounding the patriarchal psychological thinking in which “like wild chaotic nature, women needed to be subdued and kept in their place.” (132) The masculine figures in the story are shown to thrive for more and more power through their corrupt business practices which is related to nature and in turn results in forced the misuse of natural resources. Hence, it can be said that the very storyline of *Mandaar* is set upon the foundation of themes including nature, men and exploitation which in turn makes us aware of the Ecocritical and Ecofeminist approach of the story in itself.

The women characters of Laili, the wife of Dablu and the female witch Monju Buri stand as the testimony of the sufferings meted out to women of our society by the greedy and desirous men. To deal with the arresting character of Laili who stands as the embodiment of Lady Macbeth in the adaptation, one can very well sense the presence of an innocent motherly image in her where she seems to have been caught up within the spiderweb of restrictions of a patriarchal society. Her desire to lead a normal life like any other mother is vividly exposed through her emotional expressions but anyone hardly pays attention to what she desires. Laili’s husband seems to be reluctant towards her wish of becoming a mother. Even after her continuous nagging he doesn’t go for any medication for his impotency which in turn exposes the subordination of women of our society where hardly her wishes and desires are paid any heed by the patriarchal society. Not only this but also Madaar’s assertion to allow his wife, Laila, to have an intimate relationship with Dablu in order to bear them a child shows how women are always being objectified by men. Even Dablu despite of having a wife and a son smoothly carries on with his illegitimate relationship with Laili which in turn exposes the lustful desires of men where they hardly cared for the emotions and affections of their women and dealt with them as if they are like the mere trucks full of fishes who are only meant to be owned in terms of business deals and wish fulfillment. Thus, both nature and women are seen to be exploited in the

adaptation. The crumbling desire of Laili to be a nurturer or child bearer parallels her with the exploited nature around where men play the role of the ruler who dominates and decides the life of both women and nature, which in turn, represents the ecofeminist facet of the adaptation. This context reminds us of the following words of Karen Warren where she says, “The Ecological feminists claim that there are important connections between the unjustified dominations of women...and the unjustified domination of nature.”(1) Not only the subordination that is reflected in the story parallels both nature and women but also the association of women with spirituality, witch crafting and prophecy make them as the representators as well as the curators of nature.

The character of Mojnu Buri, the witch is selected as the female character which shows how women are always kept in alliance with the spiritual activities and nature in opposition to men and culture reflecting how this adaptation rightly adheres to the Ecomystical and Ecofeminist elements in the story. In each and every scene of *Mandaar* we see that the witch stays always at the lap of nature beside the seashore. There are some important images that are to be noted like in one scene, Mojnu is found embracing the immature Pedo on her lap and in another scene, she is seen to hug a tree while sitting at the top most branch, both of which intricately emphasize on the idea of Ecofeminism and put stress on the relationship between a woman and her surrounding nature where it tries to convey the idea that it is only a woman who can understand the emotions attached to its offspring as well as the nature around. When the ambitious men of Geilpur were fighting to achieve power, the subtle spiritual art of Mojnu made her the most superior character who could view the ultimate truth of everyone’s life. Keeping aside the paranormal behavior and superstitious thought, this incorporation of the ‘Witch’ as a female character amidst the lap of nature could be comprehended differently if re-read through the lens of Ecofeminism. It would reveal the notion that no matter how much we may consider women and nature as ‘Other’ to men and culture; it is only through a reunion between women and nature that can lead to the production of a powerful society and would be responsible for the continuation of the human life ahead. Once women and nature get merged together it becomes inseparable as one is always interdependent on the other. Hence, if we pay respect to one the other would automatically be liberated from the long-built shackles of patriarchal dominations. As a result of such a realization in terms of Ecofeminism, both the play *Macbeth* and its adaptation *Mandaar* accentuate the superiority of the female witches and give them the

control over the entire plot and psyche of the characters of the story. The reliance of Mandaar (Macbeth) and Bonka (Banquo) on the prophecies made by Mojnu serves as the example to show how men ultimately tend to depend on the nature, women and spirituality for making proper decisions and progressing ahead in their life. But often the greedy and exploitative self of men make them to wrongly utilize the natural elements available to them leading them to tragic consequences. We find the character of Mandaar to be so greedy that he ended up killing the witch's son Pedo which stand as a symbol of act of killing of the son of nature by the abusiveness of the men of our society and thus, it can be understood that ecological destruction has been focused many a times in the adaptation through various minute symbolic actions.

Towards the middle of the adaptation, we find the female characters to gain psychological superiority and they decide to avenge the injustices meted out to them. Their revolting activities emphasize on the sudden subversion of stereotypical gender dynamics by giving both women and nature the power over men which in turn ultimately showcases the goal of all ecofeminist revolutionary discourses. The ecofeminist activists always want women to voice for their needs and this is perfectly portrayed through the changed character of Laili who overturns the power play and takes things in control by molding the psychology of Mandaar and encouraging him to kill the oppressive Dablu so that Mandaar and she could be the next heir to the throne of Dablu. Hence, the prophecy of the witch and the cunning inspiration of Laili succeeds in controlling the masculine power of Mandaar who seems to be the mere puppet at the hands of wife Laili. She no more cries to have a baby rather power is all that she desires to grasp by murdering Dablu, the owner of the fishing trade in Geilpur. In such a scenario we cannot blame the ruthless character of Laili as it is something which the society makes her to inscribe within her to fight against all the odds around her. The words of critic Cristina Leon Alfar reminds us, "Lady Macbeth's (Laili's) 'evil' is...an ideologically inscribed notion that is often linked in our literary tradition to strong female characters who seek power, who reject filial loyalty as prior to self-loyalty and who pursue desire in all its forms-romantic, adulterate, authoritarian, and even violent." (112)

Mandaar works both according to the plans set by Laili and the prophecy done by Mojnu and Pedo. Not only Laili takes revenge on Dablu but Mojnu too avenges for killing Pedo and the final move is made by her to kill Mandaar. This ultimate strike that exposes the eventual action of killing the male protagonist Mandaar by the female

witch for disturbing the natural balance (which is done by Mandaar by killing her son like Pedo) provides the final touch up of Ecofeminist essence to the storyline of 'Mandaar'.

Under the light of the above discussion, it can be very well noted that throughout the story at each and every episode, *Mandaar* teems with Ecofeminist elements. Starting from the vicious scenes of subordination of women by the gruesome activities of powerful males to the scenes where these very men are found thriving for more power by depending on activities of women, nature and spirituality to the subversion of the gender and power dynamics, the entire adaptation could be vividly re-read through the lens of ecofeminism, giving it altogether an interesting outlook.

The analysis of the concept of Ecofeminism in the above adaptation has also helped to spread the awareness among the common mass regarding the necessity to preserve both women and nature for the continuation of habitation on Earth making the readers to deal with various issues and at the same to time to understand the intricate complexities of this relationship between literature, gender, nature and religion. The creative writers especially through their women characters in their writings or television productions rightly try to communicate that:

“This earth is our home and our creator.... The mountains, the seas, the endless prairie, the grasslands, the wetlands, the deserts and rain forests are all infinitely precious, both manifesting and partially constituting a proper object of religious concern...” (Hettinger, 94)

Hence, the director Anirban Bhattacharya used his creative faculty as his sword to revolt against the domestic life and the self-isolation of women, nature and spirituality with his carefully chosen places, script and characters. His tantalising web series *Mandaar* rightly made this piece of art as the great contributor to the modern concept of ecofeminist theory.

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TRANSPORTING SHAKESPEARE TO KASHMIR: AN ANALYSIS OF VISHAL BHARADWAJ'S *HAIDER*

Somrita Misra

Abstract: India emerged as an independent nation in 1947 but with its own legacy of problems, bequeathed by centuries of British rule. One of the most complex inheritance of British colonization would be the state of Kashmir, its territory becoming the cause of conflict between India and Pakistan, leading to numerous hardships for the State. Given the conflict ridden zone that Kashmir has become, popular Hindi films or Bollywood has done very little justice to it in its depictions of the State. Kashmir, very often, stays a scenic backdrop in Bollywood films. The present paper wishes to explore Vishal Bharadwaj's *Haider* as a film that problematizes the character of Shakespeare's Hamlet by transporting him or recreating him as Haider, a young man in Srinagar, looking for answers to where his father is. *Haider* is the first really popular film to tackle the question of conflict in Kashmir in its own unique way and has been analyzed by many a scholar and critic. The intention of the present paper is to explore and analyze the character of Haider in relation to Shakespeare's original Hamlet and show how Haider's dilemma, in departure from Hamlet's dilemma, is externally influenced; Haider's internal turbulences are the direct result of the State he lives in, a State full of violence and chaos. Kashmir, in the film, emerges as a character on its own; a character ravaged and beautiful at the same time, and Haider's fate becomes linked with Kashmir's in the film.

Keywords: Haider, Hamlet, Kashmir, Conflict, Violence.

Haider is set in 1995 Kashmir; a time of deepest turbulence for the state with militants wreaking havoc across it. *Haider* is the third film in the Shakespeare series of Bharadwaj, and a large number of people turned up in theaters to view it; in this sense, *Haider* truly becomes the first popular film in Bollywood to represent the problematic discourse of Kashmir. Haider is a student in Aligarh who returns to Srinagar, after his father goes missing, to find everything familiar about the city changed. The Srinagar he left was peaceful, serene, content in its beauty; the Srinagar Haider returns to seethes with simmering violence, bomb blasts and death. Haider has to navigate the violent terrain of Srinagar to search for his father; very soon he realizes that not just the city but his own mother has also changed; she stays, after the destruction of their house, with his uncle and, in Haider's eyes, she is not too sad at his father's disappearance. From here on, it is a lonely journey for Haider as he goes across the city trying to find some trace of his father.

In his interviews on *Haider*, Vishal Bharadwaj has spoken of how he chose to set his adaptation of Hamlet in Kashmir: Bharadwaj has talked of how his wife drew his

attention to Bashrat Peer's book, *Curfewed Night*, while he was working on the screenplay for the Hamlet adaptation. Bharadwaj was inspired to turn his Hamlet into Haider, a dissatisfied man living in Srinagar in the turbulent 1990s. Bharadwaj has famously remarked: "I like to fire the shots from Shakespeare's shoulders . . . that gives me a lot of license . . . In my film, in a way, Kashmir becomes Hamlet" (*The Indian Express*, 5th October, 2014, accessed on 02/03/2022). *Haider* indulges in blatant Kashmiri motifs: the river Jhelum becomes a metaphor for the keening cries of the families of the disappeared and the dead, and the strains of '*Jhelum, Jhelum dhunde kinara*' accompany us as we journey with Haider across Srinagar in his hunt for his father. The famous Kashmiri folk song, *Gulon me Rang Bhare*, is used sometimes as background score and at others becomes a poignant recital by Haider's father.

The eternal themes of *Hamlet*, betrayal, dilemma, death, filial loyalty, are woven seamlessly into *Haider*. Haider is a tortured man, from the very beginning of the film. His eyes convey the confusion he feels every time he sees his uncle and mother laughing and singing while his own heart is breaking for his father; his clenched hands express the layers of anger hidden in him at what is being done to his city by the militants, with their own agendas of Islamist supremacy. Haider's rage is seen in his interaction with the security forces when he deliberately says he comes from Islamabad (Anantnag is also known as Islamabad). It is a slap on the face for the police officers who detest any reference to Pakistan. The boiling pot of emotions that Kashmir instigates is reflected beautifully in the film, with each "side" being portrayed sympathetically: we feel for the residents of the valley, who, like Haider, are coping with loss and ravages; we feel for the ousted Pandits whose story goes unheard amid the gunshots of the militants; and we feel for the Security Forces personnel who have to negotiate a hostile terrain to maintain peace and who become constant victims of conflict zone violence.

The film opens with Haider's father, a doctor with a big heart, treating an injured militant in his home while his wife, Gazala, worries that the illegal hiding of a militant in their home will lead to trouble for the family. The next morning, the doctor is imprisoned by the army during a crackdown on charges of treason. In the vortex of complications of Kashmir, a doctor's duty forces him to commit an act of betrayal towards his country and the duty of a police officer forces him to abandon his humanity. We meet Haider after the film has progressed somewhat; it is even later that we learn why he was sent away: Prince Hamlet was sent away for his education but Haider is sent to Aligarh to protect him from the lure of militancy. The absurdity of young men seeing guns as masochistic and romantic

is brilliantly conveyed by Bharadwaj. The moments in the film all convey the ironies of living in a conflict zone: the dilemma of a mother as she wonders whether to send her child away for his own welfare so he can breathe the free air of non-curfewed states, the turmoil within a teenager as he witnesses militants hailed as heroes, the anger of an Indian Army officer as he fires on his own countrymen to stop its territories being taken over by an enemy nation.

Haider, in true Shakespearean style, diverges into multiple characters: while there is the central character of Haider, there are also other characters and other stories with their own perspective of the conflict. We meet the beautiful Gazala, Haider's mother, for whom being the wife of a 'disappeared' man means the awful reality of becoming a "half-widow", a woman who is neither married nor widowed. Terms like "half-widow" are unique to states like Kashmir where the uncertain political violence leads to many people simply disappearing. We go on to meet Khuram, a man deviously trying to strengthen his own position by selling his loved ones to the authorities. In a conflict zone, being disloyal to one's family can imply loyalty to one's country. For people like Khurram, the raging conflict is simply a chance to seize power; Khurram feels no qualms in 'siding' with Indian Security Forces. Ghazala becomes an unwilling pawn in his game, drawn into the mire of informers network through no agency of her own. We also meet Haider's father, refusing to 'side' at all, choosing to save lives as a doctor.

Kashmir, especially Srinagar, emerges as a character in the film, with the problematics of Haider's dilemma tied in to the dilemma of the State. The Srinagar that emerges in *Haider*, like Haider himself, is a ravaged city; it is a city that can erupt into violence any moment, killing and maiming innocent lives. It is a city where a parent can go missing while buying presents for his child, where a brother can vanish without a trace, where a loving father and doctor can be dragged into detention without any lawful procedure, where a cherished home can be blasted into smithereens. In a haunting irony, Bharadwaj's cinematography also captures Kashmir's beauty: we see the serenely flowing Jhelum, the snow filled Valley like a postcard, and there is even a love song shot between Haider and his girlfriend, Arshia. However, the beauty is deceptive and fleeting; we are never sure when the snow may get stained red with blood, or bodies will float down the Jhelum river. Bharadwaj uses the serene landscape of the Valley as a depiction of its hidden turbulence; its chaotic destructions which are as abrupt as the falling snow.

In one of the most brilliant scenes of the film, Haider stages a street play where he passionately expresses the tragic plight of the Kashmiri people: "*Hum hain ki hum nahi* .

. . . *Chutzpa ho gayahamare sath . . . jiska law hai uska order, India Pakistan ne milke khelahumare sath border border . . . na ab chore hume Hindustan, na ab chore hume Pakistan. Par koi to hum se bhipoonche ki hum kyachahte . . .*” (Do we exist or do we not? Lawmakers uphold their own order. We are made to suffer through ‘Chutzpa’. India wants us, so does Pakistan. But does anybody care for what we want?). The stakes in the Kashmir conflict are too high; there is no resolution that can be easy or unanimous. The wizened grandfather of Haider, Hussain Meer, is, perhaps, prophetic when he says: “*Bada kadimmarzhai . . . Sadio purana. Kitninasle hazmkargayyahai hamari . . . jab tak hum apne is intekam se azad nahihonge, koi azadi hume azad nahikarsakti . . . Intekam se sirf intekam paida hota hai*” (It is a grave problem which has led to the destruction of our generations. The desire for revenge simply leads to more revenge. Till we are free of our thirst for revenge, true freedom will never be ours. Revenge breeds revenge).

Basharat Peer has passionately written about Kashmir: “When pain makes it difficult to articulate coherently, quiet remembrance helps. Like many other Kashmiris, I have been in silence, committing to memory the deed, the date. The faces of the murdered boys, the color of their shirts, their grieving fathers . . . Kashmir remembers what is done in your name, in the name of your democracy, whether its full import ever reaches your drawing rooms or offices or not” (*Until My Freedom Comes*, 44). A Kashmiri Pandit writer, K. N. Pandita, in an echo of Peer’s anger, says: “It is futile to waste our time in running after the political class for the amelioration of our condition . . . We are nobody’s vote bank because we are numerically insignificant . . . The saffronites exploit us, the khadites despise us and the reds club us with the bourgeoisie. We ask for homeland . . . Does it mean anything to those holding the reins of power?” (*From Home to House: Writings of Kashmiri Pandits in Exile*, 119-120). For both the Muslim resident of the Valley and the exiled Pandit, national pride will be tinged with ambiguity because they have been deliberately marginalized.

One of the most disturbing consequences of the Kashmir dispute is the religious polarization of victims of violence. For both the displaced Pandit and the imprisoned Valley resident, their trauma and suffering becomes a community experience, leading them to hate the “Other” community. Bharadwaj illustrates how dangerous this can be in *Haider*: Haider denotes every Kashmiri man in the film, his pain is the pain of all Kashmiris, going beyond religious identities. When one makes artistic attempts on sensitive issues like Kashmir, the gravest threat is of a creation of binaries. Bharadwaj’s film avoids that trap by tapping into timeless Shakespeare: Haider is the quintessential

Hamlet; while his dilemmas are externally tied with his State, his tussle over his moral choices are purely internal and Hamelitian. One of the greatest questions in *Hamlet* is the question of the validity of retributive justice: Will not Hamlet become like Claudius by committing the same act of murder that Claudius commits? Haider faces the same question and his hesitation to become like Khurram holds him back till the end when he refuses to ‘bow’ down, refuses to spare the man who snatched his parent away from him. In the end, the ultimate decision will cost Haider his conscience, his mother’s life and his sanity.

In the final analysis, *Haider* problematizes the key questions raised by *Hamlet* by setting its story in a conflict zone; Bharadwaj depicts the suffering of Kashmir as a state. What emerges is the universality of grief, dissociating it from communities or religions. *Haider* acknowledges that violence, whether perpetrated by a militant, an army official, or a terrorist outfit, is the act of that deranged individual; no religion sanctions it and no institution or country allows it. The poems of the famous Kashmiri poet, Aga Shahid Ali, interweave within themselves, a hope that the pristine waters of the Dal Lake will not reek of death; that is the hope that fuels every artist and scholar who have studied the Kashmir conflict. In the words of Aga Shahid Ali: “We shall meet again in Srinagar/By the gates of the Villa of Peace . . . We’ll go past our ancestors/Holding their wills against our hearts” (“A Pastoral”, lines 1-5, 50-51).

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ADAPTATIONS OF SHAKESPEARE'S COMEDIES IN REDEFINING URBAN FOLK THEATRE IN BENGAL: THE VENTURES OF UTPAL DUTT AND ASIT BANDYOPADHYAY

Suddhasattwa Banerjee

Abstract: Traditional Bengali professional theatre adopted Shakespeare primarily through Girish Chandra Ghosh's translation of *Macbeth* as early as in 1893 and it was not at all an event without any legacy which did not only remain restricted within the limits of proscenium theatre but also ventured into the arena of traditional Bengali 'Jatra' which though initially remained restricted around myths and epics gradually started projecting different social as well as political nuances under the leadership of Mukunda Das since the beginning of the 20th Century. The huge number of audiences of this genre made several talented authors interested in the adoption of various great European authors including Shakespeare. Both Utpal Dutt and Asit Bandyopadhyay were extremely successful in their attempts to adopt Shakespeare's comedies in traditional Bengali 'Jatra' and to develop a kind of urban folk theatre with the help of those adaptations in Bengal in the 70s and 80s. In this paper I would like to focus on Utpal Dutt's adoption of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and Asit Bandyopadhyay's adoption of *The Merchant of Venice* and I would like to discuss how these adaptations helped in expanding the horizon of Bengali 'Jatra' and forming a kind of urban folk theatre in Bengal.

Key Words: Shakespeare, Utpal Dutt, Asit Bandyopadhyay, Urban Folk Theatre, Jatra.

At the very beginning of the paper I feel like explaining is my choice of productions of the adaptations of Shakespeare's works instead of the original texts. In this context I would like to quote Salman Rushdie, 'It is normally supposed that something always gets lost in translation. I cling obstinately to the notion that something can be gained too.' (Majumdar, 2005) Despite Rushdie's proposal, not all commentators and spectators admire substantial Shakespearean amendments and some worry that when his text is aggressively transformed into a new language and a radically unfamiliar performative mode, something essential in Shakespeare disappears. A more disturbing worry is the idea that there is something essentially 'Shakespearean' in Shakespeare: putting aside the tautology, what do we mean when we cite his name? Do we refer to the man, the actor, the theatre manager, the writer, the cultural entrepreneur, the financial speculator, the country landowner? Or to the printed text and its reproduction in history? Or to a nationalist application, an imperial product, an ensign of high culture? Or the live performance, film, TV, the internet, popular usages, and commercial appropriations? An academic enterprise, an industrious

system of interpretation, an object of study, examination, and certification? A touristic and saleable commodity? These potential meanings combine to make a signifier that is greater than their sum: when we call on Shakespeare to do us service we speak of a phenomenon rather than a man and his works, and almost necessarily allude to an icon, even an idol. Are the meanings the same across the globe? Does Shakespeare on stage, on film, in a book, in a lecture, or in an advertisement invoke the same referent everywhere?

Obviously not. Nowhere is the difference more apparent than in live shows, where local cultural and social conditions extensively affect the nature of representation. The condition of the bodies of actors, the styles of costuming, the pre-existence of indigenous forms, the habits and social circumstances of the audience, the cost of attending a presentation, the position of theatre in the larger culture

“... all of these variants play a large part in how we define and understand Shakespeare, and they are remarkably changed by place.” (Dutt, 1971) According to Ania Loomba, 'it is merely another of colonial India's many ironies'. (Loomba, 1989) Intriguingly a kind of colonial Shakespeare continued well after independence, most famously with the 'Shakespeare wallah', Geoffrey Kendal, who performed Shakespeare with British actors all over South Asia and across all classes until the early 1960s; (Panja, 2008) and then with various instances of Indian productions in a neocolonial mold, some of which survive today.

In this context I would like to mention the politically appropriative method of Utpal Dutt, who began with Kendal in 1947 but soon rejected his own western education. The fact that he could recite Virgil and Shakespeare dismayed him, so starting in 1951 Utpal Dutt created a revolutionary popular theatre both for urban working-class and common rural audiences, relying upon the lively Bengali folk theatre called 'Jatra', adapting Shakespeare to the mythic life of villagers who had never seen themselves as part of the colonial world. If the variety of approaches to Shakespeare in India resists a clear-cut summary, it shows at the same time the double-edged nature of imperial practice: hybridization causes changes in both directions: the conqueror is equally enslaved by the native. Whatever may have been in the minds of those early English colonists who first brought Shakespeare to the subcontinent, it certainly would have been Utpal Dutt's radical amendments that sought, albeit idealistically, reconnect to the pre-colonial state.

He realized that English theater was totally disconnected from tremendous social changes affecting the newly formed country. Felt theater catered the minority still bound legacy the Raj and failed to connect the masses. In 1950, Utpal joined the Bengal branch

Indian People's Theater Association (IPTA), which was the cultural front of the Communist Party India. Soon disillusioned with the political theater that IPTA was creating. Although the group included noted directors, musicians, and actors, Utpal Dutt that IPTA not producing he considered revolutionary theater. points the bourgeois impulses that continued to pervade IPTA's work, explaining that the proletarian hero of the IPTA's productions seemed like "a superhuman Captain Marvel without blemish character, advocating for peace according to the current party-line And one comes to conclusion: this man even subject sexual desires cough cold. He therefore, walking tribute the bourgeois society which has produced perfections". (Panja, 2008) Utpal Dutt's fundamental belief that political theater provides entertainment, which Bertolt Brecht (1898-1956) "business which gives [theater] particular dignity". (Bharucha, 1983) The motive was to gauge public response, turn public opinion, and ultimately incite revolution against the bourgeois ruling class.

Like Brecht, Dutt wanted his audience to reflect their social situations. realized, however, that would have adapted Brechtian techniques in order to sway local audiences. writes, "Brechtian style interferes with our people's responses because they use another kind of theater, and all forms must come from people's understanding. ... As I understand it, epic structure advances the action to a certain point and then halts, cuts it entirely and proceeds with another episode, with the same episode in a different light. This directly contradicts our people's expectations. They're accustomed to the dramatic atmosphere getting thicker and thicker, until it becomes almost unbearable." (Dutt, 1971)

Utpal Dutt was a key figure in the re-birth of Shakespeare in post-colonial India. Dutt began his encounter with Shakespeare at St. Xavier's College (Calcutta) there he performed several Shakespearean plays. He joined the Shakespearean Company (with Geoffrey, Laura, Jennifer and Felicity Kendall, amongst others) touring India and Pakistan in 1947-48 and 1953-54. (Bhatia, 2004) He later founded the Amateur Shakespeareans, which was later renamed Little Theatre Group. They produced many Shakespearean plays in English, namely *Hamlet*, *Othello*, *Richard III*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Twelfth Night* and *The Merry Wives of Windsor*. Yet, Utpal Dutt is mostly remembered for his significant contribution to the re-emergence of Shakespeare in post-colonial India with his Bengali productions of Shakespeare's plays (*Julius Caesar*, *Romeo and Juliet* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*) and his performances in Indian theatrical forms such as 'jatra' for instance in the 1970s he produced both *Romeo and Juliet* and *Macbeth*. (Minami, 2011)

‘Jatra’ means ‘traveling’, an allusion to the itinerant performers who traditionally traveled through the countryside performing as many as three shows per day. The political possibilities of ‘jatra’ had already been explored by Mukunda Das (1878-1934). Das was the first playwright from Bengal to adopt ‘jatra’ as a modern theatrical form, realizing that dramatic narratives did not have to borrow from the epics or the ‘Puranas’. Das perceived that the structure of the ‘jatra’ was flexible enough to incorporate modern subject matter and a contemporary idiom. Bharucha observes:

“Topical political figures and situations gradually crept into the mythological framework of the ‘jatra’. ‘Jatra’ continues had to struggle to thrive in rural areas even six decades after Indian independence and Utpal Dutta could foresee it and intimately understood the mechanics of the art form.” (Bharucha, 1983) Jatra appealed to his fascination with the conventions of the Elizabethan stage, which was devoid of unnecessary props and technical devices, and invited the actor-performer to display his art in its essence. At the same time, UtpalDutt did away with some of the more traditional jatra conventions like the use of female impersonators instead of female actresses. (Chatterjee, 1995)

‘Jatra’ performances were traditionally overnight events encompassing as many as twenty-five songs. Since most of his audience were workers who had to report for morning shifts in factories, Utpal Dutt was forced to shorten the performances from their customary length of twelve hours. This reduced the prominence of the ‘vivek’, a moralizing character who functions as the conscience of the play. Reflecting on the action and raising appropriate questions. Utpal Dutt nonetheless attached great importance to the deemphasized ‘vivek’ as well as to the jury, a chorus that sits beside the stage and bursts into song following certain cues. The songs comment on the action and pronounce the fate of the characters. For example, the jury might sing a song that warns the villain of inevitable punishment for the injustices he has perpetrated against the hero. The ‘vivek’ and jury function as primitive Brechtian alienation devices, but they had been deemphasized in the modern because they impede the flow of the narrative. By reviving these roles, albeit in a limited manner, Dutt tried to reinforce the mock-trial aspect of ‘jatra’, with the ‘vivek’ and jury acting as judges and the audience functioning as jury. (Mukherjee, 1982) It is impossible to remain an isolated individual at a ‘jatra’ performance.

The atmosphere is rife with excitement as events unfold on stage and twenty-thousand people react in unison. It helps that the form is so deeply rooted in traditional folklore and speaks to the people in such a familiar voice.

In him we find dialectical oppositions between the colonial and postcolonial, the Mediterranean exotic and the local and recognizable, the urban and the rural appeal. By taking the Mediterranean into the open air setting of backward Indian villages Utpal Dutt was not only dislocating the locale but also disclaiming the proscenium stage and Victorian realistic presentation which he so disapproved. He thereby harked back to the Elizabethan temper of staging and the work done by William Powel earlier in the century. (Clive, 1972) This kind of open staging also linked him with the work of the mid-century travelling companies (of which his mentor Geoffrey Kendal's was one) which performed in pubs and halls and barns, meadows and trucks.

Utpal Dutt's productions amalgamated the past and present. mingled the east and west, western style and Indian taste and tradition. Dialectical oppositions crystallized into a common man's Shakespeare, for Dutt found Shakespeare ideally suited the tastes of Indian masses be it the Bengali middle-class of Calcutta or the village crowd. They were used to plays full of episodes, music, murders, dramatic happenings, poetic soliloquies, melodrama and fun. Such was the stuff of the traditional jatra. These Shakespearean plays moved the crowd to tears and laughter. Utpal Dutt had trained into Shakespeare production through the hassles of a travelling company during his years with Geoffrey Kendal and could put up shows with only the most basic props, in almost Elizabethan surroundings, keeping his theory of theatrical dialectics in mind.

Utpal Dutt attempted a faithful translation, his own, of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, a play in which he saw immense audience appeal. The free verse he substitutes for Shakespeare's blank verse is stiff but racy if spoken with accents in the right places. Athens represents the Establishment, the utilitarian world that seeks to regulate emotions through rules and norms. Even the 'rude mechanicals' cannot find a proper place in Athens to rehearse their play. Only by escaping into the forest can identity be established but there too magic and the irrational forces take over: Puck creates havoc. The wood becomes the symbol of the human subconscious where the fears of childhood take the shape of strange creatures and human beings are threatened with metamorphosis. Utpal Dutt comments in his 'Director's Note' to *Chaitali Rater Swapno*, played in Kolkata in 1989, "While Bottom literally turns into a donkey in the forest the long process of men turning into donkeys has been continuing in the minds of men for a long time. Bottom's appearance as half donkey

and half man is the ultimate image of the social alienation of man. Bottom was the model for Ionesco's man turning into rhinoceros. Reviewers faulted Utpal Dutt's stage setting because the fairies danced behind a jungle of polythene. (Das, 2005) But wasn't this the visual equivalent of the subconscious world behind a translucent veil? Utpal Dutt once produced it in one-wall jatra style to a 'mofussil' audience in 'Bongaon' to hilarious effect. It seemed as though no other play had made them so jolly. He was not a rigid propagandist in spite of his ideology. In his opinion, drama should be entertainment. "Those who believe in an elitist theatre are actually cutting themselves off from the most important aspect of theatrical dialectics, from their only link with society." (Dasgupta, 1944) Through entertainment Shakespeare became accessible to the masses. Shakespeare himself had appropriated the Mediterranean world into the magic circle of Warwickshire goblins, gnomes and fairies, Utpal Dutt, without changing Shakespeare's world or the Greek world (references to Sparta for instance remains unchanged), drags and drops the English/Athenian woodland into Bengal's meadows, alive with the song of the cuckoo, doel and shyama.

If we take up Asit Bandyopadhyay's venture into the world of Jatra with a comedy of Shakespeare, *The Merchant of Venice* 'pala', which was called *Manush Pishaach* comes up at first. It was a grand success in 1987-1988 season. After getting detached from 'Nandikar' it was the most prominent success, which he had after *Kolkatar Hamlet*. Although it was quite favourably reviewed by the critics, it failed to bring much financial comfort to him. But *Manush Pishaach* brought him sufficient monetary favour along with popularity among the rural masses of Bengal. He has admitted it over and over again that the Pala provided him oxygen enough to venture into the domain of his theatrical experimentations, which he failed to engage in while working in Nandikar. Although 'Nandikar' was his brain-child, he had come out of it as he failed to motivate his friends to conform to his innovations. In spite of putting his enormous effort to bring back Nandikar to its freshly gained status in 1966 after 12 of its prominent members including Bibhas Chakraborty, Ashok Mukhopadhyay, Satyen Mitra and Keya Chakraborty had departed, Asit Bandyopadhyay remained quite unrecognized and his contribution in revolutionizing Bengali stagecraft and transforming plays from being mere entertainers to powerful thought-provoking performances that left indelible impressions on the minds of the audience. (Eden, 1999) His plan to go for one-act plays like *Sher Afgan* to come to a position to resume the productions of *Jokhon Eka* or *Manjari Amer Manjari*, which gave 'Nandikar' an identity of its own, also remained in oblivion. His contribution in the later

productions like *Tin Paisar Pala*, *Hey Somoy*, *Hey Utal Somoy* and *Bitangsha*, which came in quick succession to lead Nandikar back on track was also left quite unrecognized. Agitesh Bandyopadhyay became skeptical about the probability of this return to success and it was again Asit Bandyopadhyay, who convinced him and the result was his rise as the new star on Bengali stage since *Sher Afgan*. (Dutt, 1971)

Asit Bandyopadhyay was however not quite comfortable with the fact that Jatra is a very feudal system. There is a hierarchy amidst the artists and the crews. Even the seats during rehearsals are according to this hierarchy. The first seat belongs to the artist whose name sells the most tickets. Only Utpal Dutt went into the world of jatra and tried to undo this. Asit Bandyopadhyay could not really do away with this feudal setup. But he was always ready to admit the fact that Jatra became the most important part of his creative paradigm as success does evidently matter. These Jatras were not open in all directions. Rather they were walled on one side. Personally, I felt that after a point these jatras are an auditory medium. People who sit at the very back can barely make out the actors in the front. They only hear the lines to make sense of what is happening. In the old tradition of jatra, when it happened the whole night long, people would go to hear the jatra as there would be a lot of songs in the 'palas'. Then, it became four hour long and Utpal Dutta had a prominent contribution in this regard. In the 80s, it turned into about two and a half hours long. Asit Bandyopadhyay started remaining involved in around ten palas in a year either as writer or as director or as both. The world of 'jatras' is even more professional than, say, the film world. If the call time was at 8, then irrespective of any natural calamity, everyone had to be there. It attracted Asit Bandyopadhyay quite a lot and referred to lack of discipline in Group Theatre on quite a number of occasions.

Manush Pishaach was a 'pala', centred around Shylock. Shibdas Mukherjee played the role of Shylock, whose character was adapted to Sheikh Shylock Mohammad, a Muslim trader. After this, Antonino became Anantadeb, Bassanio Basantasen, and Portia became Purnima. But since Shibdas Mukherjee would be playing Shylock and he was the most senior actor, he would have to be the hero of the play. But then, how would Shylock lose at the famous trial? Asit Bandyopadhyay devised it in such a way that Shylock himself, on his wife's insistence, goes to Purnima in disguise and says this is how one can win the argument in court. Venice was called 'Bilashghar' and Shylock was given a wife, since he becomes the protagonist in the play and thus needs a female lead. So there was this scene where his wife is giving him her ornaments to sell and finance his business. And he is upset, so he promises to bring it back one day and promises to exact his vengeance

on Antonio and Bassanio. According to Anjan Biswas, Assistant Director of Asit Bandyopadhyay, when the team was preparing for performance, Asit Bandyopadhyay had held on to Shibdas Mukherjee's hands to show him how to do the scenes He normally did this in theatre, so he had done it there as well. But this was not commonly done, especially to senior artists in 'jstras'. Shibdas Mukherjee was very serious, and he calmly told Asit Bandyopadhyay to tell him if he did not like what he was doing instead of showing it to him. Of course, later they had quite an excellent understanding and this 'pala' became a huge hit. The audience used to explode in applause when Shylock delivered his long speeches. It is seen that if a jatra gets success with the 'Nayeks' (people who come to book a jatra) in 'Medinipur', then it becomes a hit all over Bengal. The production of *Manush Pishaach* in 'Mecheda' was a grand success and the audience was found in frenzied appreciation of Shylock's dialogues. It was basically a one man show. (Das, 2005) The other actors were not less qualified, but they were not as famous. Shibdas Mukherjee never sang in the jatra, so songs were mostly sung by the female lead. There was a romantic angle in the Bassanio-Portia story, and they sang songs while holding hands.

The costume was a very important part of the production. It was not particularly historically accurate. But it had to be larger than life, like the character that Shibdas Mukherjee portrayed. Antonio and Bassanio were from the business class, so they were given bright clothes. Shylock was given something like a long coat which was black in colour. The play ends with Antonio surviving, but only because Shylock himself has told Portia how to defeat Shylock. This happens in the court scene. In the very end, there is a scene where Shylock and his wife are talking and Shylock is telling her that he has kept his word to her. The wife had said he must not become like Antonio. There was a line which went something like 'Tumitoheitaicheyechhile'. (This is what you had wanted.) (Panja, 2008). The loss suffered by his business was the centre of his story. The source of the 'pala' was there in the pamphlets. Asit Bandyopadhyay wanted people to see the similarities. For one season because the actors could join a different jatra in the next season. It followed the Bengali calendar and went on for one year, during which it travelled around Bengal. Even after such a success of this 'pala' Asit Bandyopadhyay did hardly take up Shakespeare for any of his future productions. There is also a political reason for this. The political climate of the 70s is partly responsible for this. After the Naxalite movement waned, ex-Naxalites went on to do plays. I think they liked the thrill associated with this profession. They started organizing cultural competitions, which were slightly left-oriented. Around this time, these new plays came up which were a little aggressive

and one of the kinds of approaches to Shakespeare was that he wrote bourgeois plays. So Shakespeare did neither come to group theatre nor to Jatra all that much either. The plays at that time were preoccupied with contemporary issues. For example, Nandikar is always interested in doing foreign playwrights, but they never performed Shakespeare before Utpal Dutt started doing so quite regularly. Later on they started doing more of Shakespeare. But in between, the trend never caught up. In this context a production of *Romeo and Juliet* by Utpal Dutt in the Indian jatra tradition, called *Bhuli Nai Priya* can be mentioned. As Utpal Dutt aimed to reach the masses, he 'Indianized' the names and locations, and also added postcolonial contemporizations, but he had never taken a liberty like Asit Bandyopadhyay to bring such a major shift like turning the antagonist as the protagonist. But both Utpal Dutt and Asit Bandyopadhyay were extremely successful in their attempts to adopt Shakespeare's comedies in traditional Bengali 'Jatra' and to develop a kind of urban folk theatre with the help of those adaptations in Bengal in the 70s and 80s.

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**“INFINITE INVENTION” OR “HALFNESS AND IMPERFECTION”:
RE-READING R.W. EMERSON’S STANCE ON SHAKESPEARE**

Suprabhat Chatterjee

Abstract: This paper is an attempt to re-examine Emerson’s remark on ‘halfness of humanity’ in Shakespeare vis-à-vis Emerson’s philosophical scheme of transitionality of the hu(man). The remark, as this paper attempts to show, is not Emerson’s condemnation of Shakespeare (as the common critical consensus argues) but an understanding of the transitional nature of man that Shakespeare’s poetry attempts to transcend. The paper also shows how in a discussion on Shakespeare, Emerson’s transitional philosophy came closer to the philosophy of Sri Aurobindo, one of the greatest critics of Shakespeare. Finally, the paper attempts to show the tripartite significance of the remark in its scope of asserting the greatness of Shakespeare through an American/dialectic mode of literary criticism.

Keywords: dialectic, halfness, poetry, transitional, universality.

Much like the 1919 essay of T.S. Eliot on *Hamlet* that disturbingly remarked the play as a dramatic failure, R.W. Emerson’s “Shakespeare, or the Poet” (1850) from *Representative Men* brought another disturbing conclusion, or rather, a condemnation where the master dramatist has been regarded as a “master of revels to mankind” who shared “the halfness and imperfection of humanity” (“Shakespeare” 897, 866). This has obviously disturbed students of Emerson and prompted the critical view, as shared by critics like W.C. Brownwell, O.W. Firkins or John Burroughs, of the high leaning of Emerson on the spiritual plane than the plane of literary criticism. By spiritual, the critics meant (on the part of Emerson) an inherited religious/puritanical distrust for the playhouse and thus saw his criticism as “predominantly priestly rather than poetic” and “as a rejection of art in favour of religion” (Foerster 109). However, if Emerson inherited a strong religiosity and a strong sense of optimism in the face of the pessimism of tragic drama, we would have found a consistent antipathy, on his part, for the Elizabethan stage, and not the contrary. Naturally, his singular condemnation of Shakespeare weighs too light in the face of his high and frequent praise of him in the *Works* and the *Journals*, and if there remains a tinge of derogation, it requires a repositioning and re-examining of the final comment of “Shakespeare” to understand its situatedness within the Emersonian philosophy of Transcendental evolution and his conception of Shakespeare as “the first poet of the world” (*Complete Works* 2887).

The Emersonian philosophy even when inducing strains of scepticism, always directs scepticism to escape from it. Multiple such moments of doubt can be found in Emerson's considerable engagement with his theory of emanation from the supreme, and an evolution towards the supreme. He might have doubted the vector of the movement as upward or downward but, interestingly, notes the *transitionality* or incompleteness of human existence in either of the pattern: “[c]ulminate we do *not*; but that point of imperfection which we occupy — is it on the way up or down” (*Journals*,6:435; emphasis added). Emerson is confident about the incompleteness of human existence and in this stance of his philosophy, he unconsciously anticipated and has come closer to Sri Aurobindo's explanation of the position of (hu)man in the evolutionary spectrum:

[m]an is a transitional being; he is not final. As it did not begin with him, neither does it end with him. He is not its evident crown, not its highest issue, not the last clear sum of Nature. Nature has not brought out in man her highest possibilities; she has not reached in him the supreme heights of consciousness and being; as there was before him the infrahuman, the insect and animal, so there shall be after him the superhuman, the superman. (265)

It is, therefore, the Emersonian scheme of looking at the incompleteness of mankind within which the disturbing remark came. The imperfection and halfness lay at an association with the position of the human within the spectrum of evolution/emanation, and Shakespeare, the “first poet of the world” (2888) has to necessarily reflect the limitation of entire humanity. Another thing that should be kept in mind is Emerson's use of the dialectic method where he, many times, raises the opposite/ negative to come back to the affirmative. In “The Poet” (1844), Emerson argued “familiarity with the mundane spectacle” as a necessary requisite of a true poet whose “habit of living would be set on a key so low that the common influences should delight him” and Robert Falk added to this that his “universality implied a real democracy, an equality with other men” (543;542). The dialectic binarisation, as already seen in the use of scepticism to escape from it, has been a typical Emersonian method to set a new/American way of argument or criticism and it emphasised a leap into the affirmative very much like a leap into faith from scepticism through scepticism. The remark on Shakespeare, thereby, would come within this dialectic framework with a tripartite signification, primarily, of a universal presence and reflection of a limitation to be transcended, secondly, a dialectic binarisation affirming the positive through the negative as a new critical mode of thinking (within the scope of the essay), and lastly, a negative against a greater body of multiple positive praises of

Shakespeare in the Emersonian oeuvre promoting the later/praise with the former/abuse remaining as a faint/forgotten comment.

The poet, being the universal man, has to necessarily reflect/share the universal limitation, of the transitional nature of the (hu)man but he deeply remains engaged in his task of finding the unity between man and the Oversoul and Emerson's Shakespeare has been no exception: "[h]e was not Shakespeare, but universal man...and if ever poet had universality it was this modern Proteus" (Foerster 77). In the transcendental scheme, the poet ought to interpret nature to look into the symbolic communion and Emerson has argued the same in Shakespeare as he through the "essential gift of imagination" mythologised "every fact of the common life, as snow or moonlight" to look into the universal essence within the common(universal) and everyday. In *Journal III*, Emerson has praised this ability of Shakespeare to the extent that he commented how in a Shakespearean play "Nature is put under contribution to give analogies and semblances that she has never yielded before" (290). The praises looked on Shakespeare as the "greatest metaphorsist" who could find the appropriate word to translate the natural into the universal/ideal and who could create the necessary form in the art to express the universal. As the importance of form remains largely present in Emerson making him very much a literary critic and not a priest moralising literature, one could find the importance of Shakespeare the poet and transcendentalist thoroughly dominating Emersonian criticism. The derogatory fluctuation in the essay of 1850 could be seen as an extension of the otherwise conflict between Fact and Ideal in Emersonian criticism. The evolutionary fact of *transition* or *halfness* made the poet represent the limitation of humanity but the poet is more than such limitation in his search and dispersal of harmony between hu(man) and the Oversoul. In the Emersonian conflict of Fact and Ideal, we can see the transcendental triumph of the Ideal, however, not by bypassing the Fact but by transcending the material. Apropos of this method of criticism one can find the triumph of Shakespeare as the greatest transcendental poet mentioned within Emersonian criticism.

This essay by the American Scholar has also been charged of a *halfness* and *imperfection*; charged of looking less on a rational analysis of the dramatic and embracing "little more than the poetry and the wisdom" (Firkins 147). However, Emerson's position can be found in his own clarification in this essay:

Some able and appreciative critics think no criticism of Shakespeare valuable, that does not rest purely on the dramatic merit; that he is falsely judged a poet and

philosopher. I think as highly as these critics of his dramatic merit, but still think it secondary. (862)

The speculation that can be derived from this juxtaposition bears a double structure. On the one hand, the grounds of critiquing Emerson stand redundant, and on the other, it emphasises the presence of Emerson's theory of philosophical evolution/emanation while he is commenting on the greatness of Shakespeare the poet and philosopher. The imperfection of humanity has not been shared as a fault of Shakespeare the poet or the philosopher in his work of art and subtle interpretation of life through it, but as the absence in the hu(man) that the evolutionary/emanatory paradigm yet needs to transcend. Thereby, Shakespeare the poet as the representative man represents traces of the halfness. However, for Emerson, the important focus has been the attempt and ability of Shakespeare, the poet, to transcend in poetry the limitations that otherwise man still need to transcend. The only fault that Emerson lodges against Shakespeare has not been an imperfection or halfness but the fact that he has: “educated [us] with his painted world, and this real one seem[s] a huckster’s shop” (*Journals*, 7:140). Emerson’s new mode of criticism in its making of a distinct American variant had sometimes used strong opposites while appreciating the greatness of Shakespeare but this new mode of literary criticism functioned more within a philosophic discourse/realisation that actually looked on the limitation of the material and how Shakespeare’s poetry has been able to transcend it.

It is the power of invention or creation of Shakespeare the poet, as Emerson argued in his 1864 writings, that enabled him to perceive deeper truths making him the father and knower of humanity. It is the invention of Shakespeare that made him the *king of men* with the ability to construct thoughts to their full magnitude: “[every] word is a poem... [all] his thoughts are little men and women, complete to the hair (Wynkoop 114.). The ‘halfness’ and wholeness are rather seen as not contradiction but as an inner coexistence where Shakespeare the man sees the one half, and the philosopher the other to finally unite them through his “infinite invention[s]”, better known as his poetry (*Complete Works* 860).

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**RE-INTERPRETING MATERNAL BODY IN *MACBETH* AND *MANDAAR*:
A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS**

Surabhi Jha

Abstract: Woman, as Simone de Beauvoir believes, is a ‘womb’, echoes the problem of motherhood and mothering in the society. This article aims to analyse various possibilities of mothers by transcending her mere reproductive value. A comparative study between *Macbeth* and *Mandaar* digs out the gendered experiences of mothers who belong to the margins. Lady Macbeth, Lady Macduff from *Macbeth*, and Laili, Dablu Bhai’s wife from *Mandaar*, reveal different psychological explorations related to the theme of mother and mothering. The present paper attempts to resist the toxic glorification of motherhood to claim a dignified existence of mothers in the midst of perennial authority.

Keywords: Motherhood, male chauvinism, atypical mother, female masculinity, ethics of care.

“Few myths have been more advantageous to the ruling caste [sic] than the myth of woman; it justifies all privileges and even authorizes their abuse” (Bagchi 33).

Motherhood and mothering is one of the few myths that legitimizes the politics of gender. The woman earns the denomination of ‘mother’ by virtue of delivering, raising and nurturing a child. But there is more than one identity of a woman. The social, cultural and religious discourses confine the existence of a woman to a subordinate status. A married woman has the right to turn aside the pregnancy or she can even be an ‘unusual’ mother who is a misfit in the rules and regulations of patriarchy.

The existence of a mother is tabooed by the traditionalists, and thus she becomes the subject of manipulation and surveillance. Motherhood is the constrained agency of the society that identifies women with the sphere of reproduction. William Shakespeare’s *Macbeth* (1623) and Anirban Bhattacharya’s web series *Mandaar* (2021) deal with the questions of motherhood. Lady Macbeth and Lady Macduff in *Macbeth* shows the contradiction between power and powerlessness, whereas Laili (Lady Macbeth) in *Mandaar* brings out the victimization of women under the desire of a maternal body.

Macbeth focuses on plethora of issues: power, regicide, revenge, myth of evil women embodied in three witches and Lady Macbeth, the problems of motherhood, self-fragmentation, the desperation to wipe out the evidences of demonic acts, the irony of destiny and different psychoanalytic approaches. In the Act 1, Scene VII, Lady Macbeth asserts that she “dashed the brains out” (Shakespeare 43) of an infant to support her husband’s political ambition. After knowing the prophecy of three witches, she invokes

the demonic forces, “Come you spirits/ That tend on mortal thoughts, unsex me here,/ and fill me from the crown to the toe top- full/ Of direct cruelty” (*ibid*37). Lady Macbeth deconstructs the culturally constructed dichotomy of femininity and masculinity. She urges for an alternative identity of a mother saying, “Come to my woman’s breasts/ And take my milk for gall, you murdering ministers.” (*ibid*38) Lady Macbeth stays childless with Macbeth as per the text manifests. She wants to kill a child (whether in imagination or in reality) for the sake of another assassination to become a queen, to create her regime.

Female masculinity is a paradoxical concept that flips the gender roles and shows a possible lifestyle for women. Female masculinity does not necessarily come out from what Sigmund Freud calls ‘penis envy’, wherein a woman feels herself inferior due to the lack of male genitals. Judith Halberstam in her book *Female Masculinity* (1998) claims that she is “writing about women who feel themselves to be more masculine than feminine” (Gardiner 607). Halberstam sees the possibility of a woman to achieve the phallic force, whereas Lady Macbeth shows the ultimate consequence of conducting that phallic force. She argues that female masculinity “offers an alternative mode of masculinity that clearly detaches misogyny from maleness and social power from masculinity” (Gardiner 609). Lady Macbeth, an atypical woman, is died of being traumatized and Macbeth’s response to this incident is utterly shocking, “She should have died hereafter; There would have been a time for such a word” (Shakespeare 110). Female masculinity is the androgynous power that a woman can obtain. But the way Lady Macbeth has been portrayed, is indicative of how a woman can be powerful while she exercises her own power.

Lady Macduff on the other hand is depicted as a virtuous tragic heroine according to the expectations of the society. She believes in the patriarchal power of a family and for this reason she tries to prepare her son to live without a father. She wonders “Sirrah, your father’s dead: And what will you do now? How will you live?” (Shakespeare 87-88). Lady Macbeth and Lady Macduff oscillates between experience and innocence, respectively. Nancy Chodorow in her *The Reproduction of Mothering* (1978) shares the fact that the maternal body is only responsible for the nurturance of her children. Chodorow argues that the mothers consciously force their sons towards separation. The masculinity and heteronormativity grow within the son out of this separation from his mother. Macduff leaves her family for his voluntary entanglement in the battlefield. He is assured about the safety of his child because Lady Macduff, his wife, provides him the safe shelter. She cannot escape from the child for her personal affairs, she is not even supposed to have any

personal affairs. One can clearly understand how the gender operates within our ethics of care and practices. In *The Second Sex*, Beauvoir, who raises the question “What is a woman?” (3) is answered by Beauvoir herself. She says, “she is a womb” (*ibid*3). Beauvoir argues,

“the male sees her essentially as a sexed being; for him she is sex, so she is it in the absolute. She determines and differentiates herself in relation to man, and he does not in relation to her; she is the inessential in front of the essential. He is the Subject; he is the Absolute. She is the Other” (*ibid*7).

Anirban Bhattacharya’s directorial debut, *Mandaar* (2022) is an adaptation of *Macbeth*. Sohini Sarkar plays the character of Laili who is out and out obsessed to be a mother. Throughout the web series, there is an uncomfortable feeling which emerges out of revenge, greed, power, sexual discontentment and Laili’s longing to be a mother. She urges to Mandaar, her husband (our Macbeth), “Aamarbachcha chai Mandaar, Tor theke chai” (“I want child, Mandaar. I want it from you”). Like Lady Macbeth, Laili also is described nothing but an insane vulture who will pause at nowhere to become a mother. But she commits suicide at the end of the web series. She sleeps with Dablu Bhai, the owner of a fish trading business, and demands a child from him. This scene in *Mandaar* contaminates the chaste relationship between Duncan and Lady Macbeth overt in *Macbeth*. The craving to be a mother, to foster a child is an integral part of feminine psychology. Beauvoir in *The Second Sex* rightly points out that the women “are haunted by the feeling of their own femininity” (Beauvoir 5). Freud is certain about the fact that a woman wants a child as a substitute for the ‘phallic’ power she lacks. In the world of male sovereignty, Laili asks for a child in order to have her subjective visibility. Freud assumes that a boy loves his mother, but abandons her due to the castration anxiety. A girl loves her mother at her early age, but she starts hating her mother realizing her castration and blaming her mother for this. She considers her father to be her new love to get access to the phallic power. Thus, the suppression of the mother and the repressed love of the child for the mother continues for the sake of obtaining the phallic power.

Laili’s desire to be a mother brings Dablu’s silent wife to Laili’s home who threatens her. The conspicuous silence of Dablu Bhai’s wife regarding her husband’s extramarital affair is quite strange; it reinforces the paternal structure of the society in which a woman is a passive recipient. She reacts only when it comes to the matter of her only son. She only talks to her husband to discuss about her son. She is exploited by marrying Dablu, but his son seems to be her only remedy. She is raped by Mandaar himself

and this time her son gets ready to murder Mandaar. She is a submissive wife, if understood from the lense of feminism, who cannot raise her voice. From the point of motherhood in her case, her son discontinues the oppressive policy of his father on her mother only. She can be portrayed as a successful mother where her son seems to be the little ray of hope in her world of despair.

In Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, Juno endeavours to defend her marriage with Jupiter by executing her will to power. Juno takes revenge on her rivals by metamorphosing them into animals or by conspiring against them. All of her activities come out as a protest against the authority of her husband. Dablu Bhai's wife resembles Juno who has not the adequate power to counterbalance the power of her husband, she executes her power on their female rival, the weaker part. Dablu Bhai's wife threatens Laili and even wants to murder her. Laili is threatened and humiliated, but Dablu Bhai remains unharmed by her wife like Jupiter in *Metamorphoses*. Laili's silence regarding Macbeth's betrayal is a different tale of subjugation. She feels jealous observing another who remains opposite to her home. Laili's ringtone of a baby's giggle sounds like fortune's implacable laughter on her. In this web series, motherhood along with the ownership of Geilpur become the troubling factor. Mandaar's sexual impotency haunts him in such a way that it drives him to rape Dablu Bhai's wife who comes to murder Laili. Laili's death is the death of women's choice and desire. Her Death reveals the fact that a woman cannot sustain in this heteronormative world without being a stereotypical woman.

Adrienne Rich in *Of Woman Born* demands, "women have not been makers and sayers of patriarchal culture. Woman's status as childbearer has been made into a major fact of her life. Terms like "barren" or "childless" have been used to negate any further identity" (Rich, 11). Rich argues that "motherhood is earned" (*ibid* 12), through psychological and physical pains and the woman has been shaped by her nurturing characteristics. Laili's desperation to bear a child has changed her fate. She has actually been colonized under the hegemonic power and her willingness to be oppressed just in the name of getting a child turned her identity into a whore. Signe Hammer proclaims,

"Not all women become mothers, but all, obviously are daughters, and daughters become mothers. Even daughters who never become mothers must confront the issues of motherhood, because the possibility and even the probability of motherhood remains" (Hammer 43).

Patriarchal institution has fixed motherhood to women culturally and psychologically. The mother is usually compared to a saint or Virgin Mary, who devotes her life to her child.

Re-interpreting motherhood opens up a new vista which amplifies so many issues such as- what is motherhood, what is proper motherhood and what is beyond a proper motherhood. Lady Macduff and dablhu Bhai's wife fit into the proper motherhood, Laili unfolds the aftermath of psychological mothering and Lady Macbeth emerges as an unusual and infanticidal mother. Motherhood and mothering isa strategic juncture of patriarchy. And the multi-dimensional psychic crises of mothers have been presented through a comparative study between *Macbeth* and *Mandaar*.

The social and cultural discourses have structured the maternal body in such a way that each female body experiences the motherhood as felt or lived through the body. Simone de Beauvoir declares woman as trapped identity in their reproductive roles. In *The Dialectic of Sex* (1970), Shulamith Firestone argues that the woman can be free after getting relieved from their reproductive roles and corporeal entrapment. History reveals the disadvantageous condition of mothers in the society. They attain a little sphere and we are least bothered about their wish fulfilment. William Shakespeare, the greatest dramatist, represents two different shades of maternal body in *Macbeth*. Delving deep into the character of Lady Macbeth, one can observe how the female desire for power is portrayed as unnatural. In *Mandaar*, one can feel how the feminine desire for sexuality is presented as an unforgivable sin. The society and culture never tryto de-feminize the feelings such as, power, desire, sexuality, or care. The common human traits have also been gendered.

One of the remarkable quotes of *Macbeth* is located in Act V, Scene V, "Life's but a walking shadow...It is a tale/Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, / Signifying nothing" (Shakespeare 110). The life of a mother is a constructed tale of sacrifice, told by the male chauvinists and her life is full of sound and fury that meansa toxic glorification of her devotional activities. Butunfortunately, it signifies nothing. The sacrificial performance of the mother turns her identity into nothingness and valueless.

It is hard to remember the time when our mothers want something for herself. The mother prioritizes our requirements each and every time. Our culture always glorifies the devotional nature of a mother and to obliterate the fact that she is a human being first. What if a mother prioritizes her wishes? What if she is no longer the epitome of sacrifice? A woman is a human, and becoming a mother should not change her existence anyway. We need more examples of atypical or unusual mothers to understand the fluidity of motherhood.

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**THE TRIAL SCENE (ACT IV, SCENE I) OF *THE MERCHANT OF VENICE*:
A PRAGMATIC STUDY**

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Linguistics, as we know, involves the scientific study of the constituents of language. Language manifests in the form of writing and speech or utterance for communicating messages. For the purpose of analyzing the speeches produced during the (in-)formal conversation syntax and semantics are used to meaning based on structure in isolation but the speeches in contexts generate different meaning and different shades of meaning, traced by J. L. Austin (1962), J. R. Searle (1969), H. P. Grice (1957, 1975) and G. N. Leech (1983) and others. Such study of the utterances in context from the perspective of speaker, listener and the related matters has given birth to pragmatics. The fundamental claim that the meaning of an expression or utterance should be equated with its use and its desire to transcend traditional philosophical perplexities did not figure in the linguistic study before Austin's minute observation and analysis. No doubt, the Speech Act Theory which is the offshoot of pragmatics was first introduced by Austin (1962) in his book *How To Do Things With Words*. Austin has classified speeches/utterances into two broad categories: *Constatives* and *Performatives*. According to Austin, constative utterances are statements which describe events, process and state of affairs and these can be either true or false. On the other hand, performative utterances are those which are used for doing something by means of language. Looking into the limitation of such divisions of speeches and thereby their evaluation on the basis of truth-falsehood Austin and others have focused on the use of language in social situations. Later Searle has given a shape to the speech act theory according to which "all utterances are performatives. In issuing an utterance a speaker can perform three acts simultaneously:

1. locutionary act: the act of using words to form sentences, those wordings making sense in a language with correct grammar and pronunciation.
2. an illocutionary act: the intended action by the speaker, the force or intention behind the words, within the framework of certain conventions.
3. perlocutionary act: the effect that an utterance has on the thoughts, feelings, attitudes, or actions of the hearer. (Degand 2006, p. 675)

Searle (1969) goes on to clarify this idea of speech act:

...the semantic structure of a language may be regarded as a conventional realization of a series of sets of underlying constitutive rules, and ...speech acts are

acts characteristically performed by uttering sentences in accordance with these sets of constitutive rules. (1969, p. 37)

There are, as Searle opines, only five illocutionary points that speakers can achieve on propositions in an utterance, namely: the assertive, commissive, directive, declaratory and expressive illocutionary points leading to the foregrounding of the illocutionary force (to refer to a dimension of communicative acts) as the ultimate outcome of any speech/utterance in a discourse. In this context Barron (2003) argues:

In speech act theory, the hearer is seen as playing a passive role. The illocutionary force of a particular utterance is determined with regard to the linguistic form of the utterance and also introspection as to whether the necessary *felicityconditions*—not least in relation to the speaker's beliefs and feelings—are fulfilled. Interactional aspects are, thus, neglected.

However, [a] conversation is not just a mere chain of independent illocutionary forces—rather, speech acts are related to other speech acts with a wider discourse context. Speech act theory, in that it does not consider the function played by utterances in driving conversation is, therefore, insufficient in accounting for what actually happens in conversation (Barron 2003).

Searle and Vanderveken (1985) have attempted on to deal with illocutionary force in terms of seven features, namely:

1. Illocutionary point,
2. Degree of strength of the illocutionary point,
3. Mode of achievement,
4. Content conditions,
5. Preparatory conditions,
6. Sincerity conditions, and
7. Degree of strength of the sincerity conditions

Searle and Vanderveken (1985) suggest that each of these seven characteristics is integrally linked with illocutionary force defined as a septuple of values and that two illocutionary forces F_1 and F_2 are identical just in case they correspond to the same septuple. Grice (1957) holds that for speaker meaning to occur, *intention* (or *reflexive communicative intention*) plays an important role in order to make communication more effective and sound.

Grice's works have built one of the foundations of the modern study of pragmatics. He developed the notion of *conversational maxims* (the implicit rules that the speaker follows) which are also called *cooperative principles*. These maxims are:

1. Maxim of Quantity: information
2. Maxim of Quality: truth
3. Maxim of Relevance: relevance
4. Maxim of Manner: clarity

The speaker is expected to follow these maxims or cooperative principles and we tend to look for the other meanings implicated by the sentence leading to *conversational implicature*. Another two terms closely related with pragmatics are *presupposition* and *entailment*. A presupposition is something assumed by the speaker to be the case before making an utterance. There are six types of presupposition as listed here: Existential Presupposition, Factive Presupposition, Lexical Presupposition, Structural Presupposition, Non-Factive Presupposition and Counterfactual Presupposition. On the other hand, an entailment is something that logically follows from what is asserted in the utterance. For further study readers are advised to consult the Austin (1962), Searle (1968, 1969, 1979, 1983, 1986a & b, 1992, 1999), Leech (1983), Bradford (1997), Vanderveken and Kubo (2001), Thomas (1995), Barron (2003), etc.

In the present analytical study, as its title reflects, we will attempt to make a critical study of the Trial Scene (Act IV, Scene i) of *The Merchant of Venice* (1596/7), one of the famous comedies of William Shakespeare. It was written mainly on the basis of the story of the fourth day of *Il Pecorone*, Giovanni Fiorentino's collection of novelle, Munday's *Zelauto* and the *Gesta Romanorum*. The plot of the drama revolves round the money lending, its repayment bond and the exposure of the beastliness of the Jewish money lender Shylock. Bassanio asks his friend Antonio for a loan in order to enable him to be matching suitor of Portia, a rich heiress of the Belmont city. In spite of his own inability to make the loan himself as he has already invested his own money in a number of trade ships Antonio helps Bassanio secure the loan from the notorious moneylender Shylock who cherishes grudge against the former for making has made a habit of berating Shylock and other Jews for their usury (the practice of loaning money at exorbitant rates of interest) and undermining their business by offering interest-free loans. At Antonio's approach for loan, Shylock agrees to lend Bassanio three thousand ducats with no interest. But Shylock adds in bond that if the loan goes unpaid, Shylock will be entitled to a pound

of Antonio's flesh from his chest. Despite Bassanio's warnings, Antonio agrees and takes the loan amount.

In Belmont, Portia expresses sadness over the terms of her father's will, which stipulates that she must marry the man who correctly chooses one of three caskets. None of Portia's current suitors are her choice, and she and her lady-in-waiting, Nerissa, fondly remember their sweet interaction with Bassanio. Shylock's daughter Jessica dressed like a page elopes with Antonio's friend Lorenzo, a Christian. Bassanio accompanied by his friend Gratiano leaves for Belmont, to win Portia's hand. While other suitors fail to choose the right casket, Bassanio succeeds in choosing the right casket made of lead and wins Portia. Gratiano expresses love for Portia's confidante Nerissa. The couples decide on a double wedding celebration. Portia offers Bassanio a ring as a token of love, and makes him swear that under no circumstances will he part with it. Unexpectedly, Lorenzo and Jessica join them at Belmont. The celebration, however, is cut short by the news that Antonio has indeed lost his ships, and that he has forfeited his bond to Shylock. Bassanio and Gratiano immediately leave for Venice to try and save Antonio's life. After their husbands' departure, Portia and Nerissa go to Venice disguised as men.

In Venice, Shylock is shocked at the news of his daughter's elopement with a Christian but cruelly rejoices in the fact that Antonio's ships are reported to have been wrecked and it leads to the breaking of the terms of the bond to pay the debt within the time mentioned in it. Shylock ignores all the pleas to spare Antonio's life and in the Venetian Duke's court a trial is called to decide the matter. Portia disguised as a young male doctor of law named Balthasar asks Shylock to show mercy, but he mercilessly insists on taking the pound of flesh. Bassanio offers Shylock twice the money to him, but Shylock sticks to the bond. Examining the contract and finding it legally binding, Portia declares that Shylock is entitled to the merchant's flesh. Shylock ecstatically praises her wisdom, but as he is on the verge of collecting his due, Portia reminds him that he must do so without causing Antonio to bleed, as the contract does not entitle him to even a drop of blood. Trapped by this logic, Shylock agrees to accept Bassanio's money instead, but Portia states that he is guilty of conspiring against the life of a Venetian citizen and it means that he must turn over half of his property to the state and the other half to Antonio. The Duke spares Shylock's life. Antonio also forgoes his half of Shylock's wealth on two conditions: first, Shylock must convert to Christianity, and second, he must will his estate to Lorenzo and Jessica upon his death. Shylock agrees to do accordingly.

Getting relieved Bassanio praises the young lawyer (Portia) and eventually agrees to give her the ring with which he promised never to part. Gratiano gives Nerissa, disguised as Portia's clerk, his ring. The two women return to Belmont and Bassanio and Gratiano arrive the next day. Their wives accuse them of faithlessly offering their rings to other women. Before the suspense goes too far, Portia reveals their disguises. She and Nerissa happily reconcile with their husbands. Lorenzo and Jessica feel happy to know of their inheritance from Shylock, and the good news of the safe return of Antonio's ships arrives. All settle in joyful mood.

Let us now proceed to analyse the speeches or dialogues of the trial scene from the perspective of the pragmatics and show how the *dramatis personae* follow or violate the speech act norms in order to achieve and lose their desired goals. Throughout the scene the Duke of Venice presides the judgement as supreme authority and evidently is supposed to be impartial as per the rule of law. But he explicitly shows his soft inclination toward Antonio who is known as a kind hearted and honest businessman in the city and disfavour towards Shylock, a cruel Jewish money-lender, as shown below:

I am sorry for thee; thou art come to answer

A stony adversary, an inhuman wretch

Uncapable of pity, void and empty

From any dram of mercy. (ll. 3-6)

From the very beginning Duke is convinced that mercy cannot be expected from 'an inhuman wretch' like Shylock and inform Antonio this blatant truth. The above speech sets the tone that the idea of mercy will dominate the future discourse for the purpose of becoming and making others happy. This experience-born speech evidently carries the factive presupposition and illocutionary force achieved by the speaker's mode and degree of strength of sincerity and commitment to provide justice to all. And so the moment Shylock enters the court, the Duke asks him to relinquish the revengeful cruel attitude and be merciful to Antonio as it is expected by one and all present. Following the maxims of cooperative principles the Duke makes it clear about the expectation of the common people i.e., the repayment of the loan amount followed by mercy. But the Jew who is devoid of emotion and feelings of kindness has been indirectly identified by the Duke's illocutionary speech act with uncultured "Turks and Tartars never trained/To offices of tender courtesy." (ll 32-33) in response Shylock makes a long verbose speech consisting of 28 (twenty eight) lines beginning with the issues of the rule of law but turning to his heart's desire to kill his opponent Antonio by resorting to this inhuman bond. The initial

part of this speech directly states that he wants to have full penalty as written in the bond. But the more he proceeds to argue in favour of this, he ignoring, rather flouting the Gricean maxims digresses and uses several comparisons or references which indicates his narrowness, meanness, cruelty i.e., inhumanity in contrast with others' love and friendship. Though Bassanio and Antonio offer to repay him his money at the court, "A weight of carrion flesh" is more important "to receive three thousand ducats". The "carrion flesh" as a symbol indicates Shylock's brutality that though Antonio's flesh is not edible, he needs it. Again, "carrion" is used not to indicate Antonio's body only, but to describe the whole Christians as rotten. To mention here, he is trying to demean the high power of Christians and uses religious words, or oaths (holy Sabbath). It is an effort by Shylock to establish his own identity and ideology before the Duke and the Christian attendants in the court by swearing and using Jewish oaths in a Christian court. Moreover, Shylock mocks at the Christians and he draws references to subhuman creatures such as pig, cat and rat exposing his hatred not only to Antonio but also to all Christians as expressed in the following lines:

So can I give no reason, nor I will not,
More than a lodg'd hate and a certain loathing
I bear Antonio, that I follow thus
A losing suit against him. Are you answer'd? (ll. 57-62)

Shylock who appears to be emboldened by the bond is preoccupied with factive presupposition that the bond can be implemented literally and so ignores the counterfactual presupposition based on morality and humanity. This heinous mentality always dominates Shylock's mind as evidenced by his use of constative locutionary speech act. Shylock violates the maxims of quantity and manner by repeatedly conveying his hatred towards Antonio with the help of similar types of expressions. The lopsided statements here show the Shylock's lack of reasoning power and mannerism in verbal communication as conveyed by Bassanio in his sharp reaction,

This is no answer, thou unfeeling man,
To excuse the current of thy cruelty.(ll. 63-64)

Shylock's arrogance-induced response to this: 'I am not bound to please thee with my answers.' (l. 65) indicates his gross violation of the maxims of relevance and manner and substantiates his cruelty-filled self. Though Shylock, a money-hunger, is offered twice the sum, but he refuses and replies without courtesy and conscience:

If every ducat in six thousand ducats,

Were in six parts, and every part a ducat,

I would not draw them. I would have my bond. (ll, 85-87).

The cut-and-dry speeches of Shylock which, as we find, are not in conformity with the cooperative principles are set against other character's reason-based and ethically sound statements born out of their strict adherence to those principles. This contrast deepens the dramatic effect conveying the value of mercy, love and friendship upheld throughout the present dramatic discourse.

Among the characters other than Shylock, Portia's speeches made at this crisis moment are clearly marked by the constant interplay of both locution and illocution and sound reasoning, sincere adherence to the court rule, and the brilliant selection of words and word order loaded with suggestions *ordhvani* in terms of the Sanskrit poetics. Being well-aware of the details of the bond Portia persuade Shylock to be merciful to Antonio and makes a very sensational emotion-charged and at the same time well-argued speech beginning with "The quality of mercy is not strain'd, - -" to uphold the values of mercy to both the recipient and giver and 'To 'mitigate the justice of the plea.' (l. 199) she uses rhetorical devices like simile, metaphor, metonymy, etc., in order to illustrate the very gravity and effect of mercy in human lives including that of a king. She argues that mercy being 'Tis mightiest in the mightiest' (l. 184) empowers even a king with a strength of meting out divinity-induced justice. Hence, Portia poetically but pragmatically claims,

But mercy is above this sceptred sway,

It is enthroned in the hearts of kings,

It is an attribute to God himself; (ll. 189-191)

Portia's brilliant living speech endowed with pictorial and poetic qualities is so heightened one that its illocutionary force or impacted message appeals one and all except Shylock. The court-atmosphere and the legal interaction reach a newer height after this and even Shylock's stubbornness to be revengeful starts weakening and shackling. And his subsequent reasoning (in favour of the binding power of the bond) which exposes his hatred-and-revenge attitude to Antonio cannot stand before such an elevated speech. But Shylock uses commoratio (dwelling on or returning to one's strongest argument) with the use of his characteristic figures of repetition. His repetition reaches at its extreme level when he takes resort to 'epimone: a figure which aptly expresses his greedy approval of Portia's willingness to award a pound of Antonio's flesh.' (Freeman 2002, p. 166) On the exchange of dialogues between Portia and Shylock Freeman (2002, pp. 166-167) interestingly comments:

Portia frequently urges Shylock to consider the merits of mercy, and in doing so she, like Shylock, uses commoratio. She also adopts his characteristic form of utterance when she uses figures of repetition to emphasize the binding power of his bond; in response to Bassanio's plea to "Wrest once the law to your authority," she uses epistrophe, saying, "It must not be. . . . It cannot be" (4.1.212–9). A little later she wins Shylock's approval as she presents, through antimetabole, her balanced judgement on the cutting of Antonio's flesh: "The court awards it, and the lawdoth give it The lawallows it, and the court awards it" (4.1.297–300). When it becomes apparent that Shylock will not be swayed, she beats him at his own game by using concessio (a figure whereby the speaker grants a point which hurts the adversary to whom it is granted). One can hardly imagine a more potent example of concessio than Portia's granting of Shylock's bond. He rigidly insists on having his bond, and she more rigidly insists on giving it to him. She alludes to her coming use of concessio when she states: ". . . as thou urgest justice, be assured, /Thou shalt have justice, more than thou desir'st" (4.1.312–13).

In this way Shylock's edifice of argument built on the very malign intention ultimately collapses before Portia's stand point based on the ethical and moral values and critical thinking resulting in his relinquishing his demand for flesh and praying for forgiveness. Notice that in course of the interaction Shylock praises her as a wise and upright judge like mythical Daniel when she apparently approves his claim. Though the audience or reader may get puzzled at this point, later her brilliant technique of augmenting the villain's fire of anger or brutality as symbolically represented by his effort of sharpening the sword is revealed. His extreme joy at this moment of his advancing to cut off the pound of flesh from Antonio's breast leads to his frustrating hopelessness as Portia takes sharp turn by beautifully stating with 'Tarry a little - - -' the following crucial conditions to be followed for his doing so:

Tarry a little;—there is something else.—
 This bond doth give thee here no jot of blood;
 The words expressly are, a pound of flesh:
 Take then thy bond, take thou thy pound of flesh;
 But, in the cutting it, if thou dost shed
 One drop of Christian blood, thy lands and goods
 Are, by the laws of Venice, confiscate
 Unto the state of Venice. (ll. 301-308)

Even Graziano imitates Shylock to mock him with the repeated refrain: “O upright judge!/Mark, Jew. O learned judge!” (ll. 309-310). The semantic-pragmatic value of speeches of Portia have been foregrounded in the background of those of others for the purpose of sustaining the curiosity, thrill, suspense and amusement in the dramatic but lively interaction till the revelation or resolution of the problem leading to a happy and pleasant ending in place tragic one. As a result, the dialogues are very lively and natural, not mechanical and artificial. Duke’s verdict as reflected in the following speech is a glaring instance of perlocutionary speech act and conversational implicature based on the others’ previous dialogues representing two speech acts: locutionary and illocutionary.

That thou shalt see the difference of our spirits,
I pardon thee thy life before thou ask it:
For half thy wealth, it is Antonio's;
The other half comes to the general state,
Which humbleness may drive unto a fine. (ll. 364-3368)

Here lies the uniqueness of Shakespearean dramatic discourse dominated and artistically heightened by illocutionary force organically and consequentially born out of the explicit and implicit speech acts, speech events and their structures and modes of manifestation.

To conclude, the pragmatic study of the dialogues as attempted above reveals that the dramatic discourse becomes artistically rich and brisling because of the (un) conscious use of speeches or utterance in compliance with or violation of the several established norms and practices of our day-to-day communication and pragmatic devices, as mentioned above. The very complicated matters such as judgement here have been handled by the dramatis in such manner that with the help of dialogues the entire event has been projected as living, real, moving and also suggestive. It is the context-sensitive language use as illustrated by the above mentioned linguists that makes this possible. The present study attests the fact that the fundamental principles of pragmatics governing the real life speech acts and events have been followed and utilized by Shakespeare while intuitively and insightfully developing dialogues in a drama which remain living in the minds of the audience.

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LOVE AS AN ETERNAL ENTITY : A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF SELECTED SONNETS AND POEMS OF SHAKESPEARE AND TAGORE

Unmesha Garain

Abstract: William Shakespeare and Rabindranath Tagore, writing from two different literary ages and cultural spaces, seem to sound similar when they attempt to sing the paean of the all- pervasive, pure and perennial love triumphant over all ages in their poetry. On the one hand, Shakespearean sonnets reveal lover Shakespeare's avid endeavour to achieve the summit of timeless love and immortalize the beloved through his versatile pen. Tagore, on the other hand, draws inspiration from his enriched Overmind and registers his "cosmic consciousness" in most of his love poems and thus subscribes to Sri Aurobindo's theory of poetry as mantra.

Keywords: Kavi, cosmic consciousness Jiban Debata, overmind.

Shakespearean plays depict a wise, sapient, prudent, sensible, judicious, experienced and greatly learned Shakespeare whereas we can identify "Our myriad-minded Shakespeare"¹ as an ardently eternal lover in many of his sonnets, Sonnets 18, 116 and 130 being the most conspicuous ones to reflect the true Shakespearean ideals of romantic love among all the 154 sonnets.

"Let me not to the marriage of true minds

Admit impediments"----- Shakespeare, like a devoted worshipper of perpetual love, proclaims his deep rooted faith in the permanence of love in his Sonnet No. 116. At the very beginning, he proceeds to the extent to compare love with the metaphor of "the marriage of true minds". Shakespearean poetic prowess, reflected through such usage of literary devices, may have inspired the later day Metaphysical poets like John Donne who, in his poem *The Good Morrow*, has compared two passionate lovers as two hemispheres whose combination into one perfect harmonious whole would signify the ultimate success of their lives- "Where can we find two better hemispheres". He puts forward the ideal of love defying all the tempests and still remaining like a constant guiding star in the sky of man's existence. Most significantly, the third quatrain boasts of the triumph of love over time. Although the physical beauty fades away along with the passage of time, the actual spirit of true love never gets affected by time, or more specifically, by death. Rather, love possesses the tremendous potential to surpass the narrowness of death:

Love is not Time's fool, though rosy lips and cheeks

Within his bending sickle's compass come;
Love alters not with his brief hours and weeks
But bears it out even to the edge of doom.

Relevantly, in this context, the thoughts of Andrew Marvell as stressed in his poem "To His Coy Mistress", if taken along with the above quoted lines of Shakespeare, indubitably bring out the sharp contrast between the two separate domains of love- love on a mere bodily level and love on the celestial level:

Time's winged chariot hurrying near;
And yonder all before us lie
Deserts of vast eternity.

The grave's a fine and private place,
But none, I think, do there embrace.

Here Shakespeare, a non believer in the evanescence of love, constantly nullifies the burning flames of desire as the core of love and in this way, perhaps alerts his successor not to be guided by lust over love. And while doing so, Shakespeare also broadens the horizon of love as a heavenly feeling that is not at all controlled by "Time's winged chariot" and thus sounds more conscientious and trustworthy as a lover than his successor poet. Finally, the couplet reinforces Shakespeare's steadfastness in this unique, irreversible kind of love, as he pledges his whole writing career for his eternal amorous ideas not to be proven erroneous.

The passionate lover-speaker in Shakespeare occurs in his Sonnet No.18 and Sonnet No.130 as well. Sonnet No. 18 immortalizes his beloved over the decaying effects of time through the enduring power of love. Whereas a summer's day may often be hampered by various natural factors, (s)he is vulnerable neither to nature nor to the advancement of time:

But thy eternal summer shall not fade

So long as men can breathe or eyes can see,
So long lives this, and this gives life to thee.

Interestingly, Rabindranath Tagore, writing from a completely different socio-cultural perspective, echoes similar kind of amorous passion devoid of any temporospatial barrier. Tagore, in most of his songs and poems dealing with the theme of love, seems so ardent and devoted a lover that often we cannot differentiate his lines dedicated to the

Almighty and those addressed to the beloved, and thus Tagore indeed elevates the idea of human love to the pedestal of divine. Like Shakespeare, Rabindranath too registers his faith in love that knows no boundary of life and death as he utters in the 3rd poem of *Gitanjali* :

Jibone morone nikhil vubone
Jokhoni jekhane lobe,
Chirojonomer porichito ohe,
Tumi e chinabe sobe.

(“Through birth and death, in this world or in others, wherever thou leadest me it is thou, the same, the one companion of my endless life whoever linkest my heart with bonds of joy to the unfamiliar.)²

Whether be it an ardor to Tagore’s “Jiban Debata” (Life-God) or to his beloved of flesh and blood, the poet longs for “the one companion of my endless life” and the fervour is steeped in a plea of eternity. Again, Tagore’s gleeful lines in the 42nd poem of *Gitanjali* clearly resembles with Shakespeare’s heartfelt love that has a ubiquitous influence on the holistic existence of the lover:

Aajike ei akashtole
Jole sthole fule fole
Kamon kore manohoron
Chhorale mon mor

(“Below the sky now/In the water, land, flowers, fruits/ You spread me, my love.)³

Although Shakespeare’s ways to represent the beloved get inverted in his Sonnet No.130, the idea of love as a warm, persistent, invariable and perpetual entity remains a constant. In his Sonnet No. 130, in a mocking tone, Shakespeare satirizes the Petrarchan style of idealizing and idolizing the physical features of the beloved. However, Shakespeare also idealizes the essential spirit of true love, but he refuses to idolize it through a flawless, heavenly representation. On the contrary, Shakespeare is keen on receiving his beloved as an imperfect human image who is more in touch with the ground. And here lies, he believes, the intensity of a lover in accepting all the bodily imperfections of his beloved and yet offering unconditional perpetual love to the mistress. Judging from the perspective of the fundamental essence of romantic love, we can safely comment that Shakespeare’s Sonnet No. 18, 116 and 130 are tuned in the same harmonious note of the intensity and eternity of love. Thus, the mighty playwright Shakespeare is no less successful as a sonneteer and thus, Sri Aurobindo, one of the greatest philosophers of the

world, had justly ranked Shakespeare in the first row of the supreme singers along with Valmiki and Homer.

For both the warm lovers Tagore and Shakespeare, love knows no bound of time and space, only the feeling of love and that of being loved creates a celestial aura that remains constant and consistent for ever. In the poem *Ananta Prem (Unending Love)* of his poetry collection *Manasi* (1890), the ardent lover in Tagore firmly establishes love as an eternal and spontaneous flow between two lovers: “Tomarei jano valobasiyachhi/ Shatarupe Shatabar/Jonome jonome juge juge anibaar” (“I seem to have loved you in numberless forms, numberless times.../In life after life, in age after age, forever”)⁴. Here Tagore’s emphasis on “In life after life, in age after age, forever” by using the line twice in the poem reiterates the poet-lover’s timeless love for the beloved as the bosom of a love relationship. In another poem entitled *Dhyan* (“Meditation”) of the same book, the poet idealizes his beloved and presents their love as a noble entity amidst the nature. In this poem, he says, “Tumi aachho mor jibon moron/Horon kori” (Your overwhelming love has taken away my life and death) which harks back to the similar concern about the permanence of love as we find in the Shakespearean sonnets as well. Moreover, Tagore, in the present poem, says, “Joto dur heri dik digonte tumi ami akakaar” (So far as I can see upto the horizon/ You and me have become the one). In this context, we can surely be reminded of Shakespeare’s comparison of love as a “marriage of true minds” in his Sonnet No. 116. Love has such a tremendous potential that the lover and the beloved behold each other ignoring all other hindrances created by time and space.

In Vedic Sanskrit, the word “kavi” had a special meaning concerning a person who could only see and record. However, this is not a simple watch, the elemental necessity of a kavi is his vision which Sri Aurobindo considers as the keyword in his theory of mantric poetry. It is this vision that rules over the intellect in the context of writing enriched poetry. Judging from this perspective, the two inspired poets, Shakespeare and Tagore, have possessed this poetic vision through their respective arduous attempts and with the help of that illuminating vision, both have carved out a unique design of love that is primarily established on the idea of perpetuity. Thus, in the ultimate analysis, for both Shakespeare and Tagore, it is this eternity of love through which the lovers can access the divine to surrender their mortal selves to the Almighty and yet retain the sacred feeling for each other without any barriers elating to time and space.

Notes

1. S.T. Coleridge, *Biographia Literaria*, Rama Brothers India PVT. LTD., New Delhi, 1977, p. 91
2. *Gitanjali*, The Macmillan Company, New York, 1914, p. 58-59
3. <http://gitabitan-en.blogspot.com/2020/05/euphoria-in-my-body.html?m=1>
4. <https://enrouteindianhistory.medium.com/i-seem-to-have-loved-you-in-numberless-forms-numberless-times-d4c3e38135c1> (Translation by William Radice)

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“VISIBILITY IS A TRAP”: EXPLORING DISCIPLINE, SURVEILLANCE AND BIOPOLITICS IN SHAKESPEARE’S *MEASURE FOR MEASURE*

Chandana Rajbanshi

Abstract: The paper aims to interpret William Shakespeare’s *Measure for Measure* (1604) that represents the social situation, political condition, and judicial or penal system of the disciplinary society of Vienna. The play deals with the binary themes of love and lust, repressive sexuality and liberal sexuality, disguise or appearance and reality, justice and liberty. Apart from that, the play revolves around the issues of crime, discipline, punishment or judgment, and imprisonment in a disciplined society where each individual is always under surveillance, observation, and examination. Foucault’s theory of panoptic surveillance helps to understand the politics of the State, its power relation, biopolitics, and how the State formulates and controls the sexualization of everyday life of the citizen, legalization of sexual relation, and criminalization of illegal sexual affairs. The paper attempts to explore the mechanism of the sovereign Vienna and its disciplinary framework through surveillance and the superimposition of the punishment.

Keywords: Disciplinary society, Repressive sexuality, Punishment, Surveillance.

William Shakespeare (1564-1616) is the best pioneering poet, writer, and dramatist of all time. He does not only belong to the Elizabethan age but rather, he writes for all ages. He influences his readers and audiences through the perfect representation of the characters, their psychosexuality, sense and sensibility, and a variety of social, political, familial matters. He enters into the threshold of the mind of the people in order to describe the mind accurately. While praising Shakespeare, Dr. Samuel Johnson in his *Preface to Shakespeare* (1765) says that- “Shakespeare is, above all writers, at least above all modern writers, the poet of nature, the poet that holds up to his readers a faithful mirror of manners and of life” (Johnson 4). Shakespeare’s *Measure for Measure* centers around the intrigue of the Duke of Vienna who entraps Deputy Angelo in his own revived laws, and the fate of Claudio who impregnates Juliet out of marriage, is now arrested and sentenced to death. Through the character portrayal of the Duke and his Deputy Angelo, Shakespeare parallelly presents two different religious, political, legislative, and judicial systems. The Duke represents Elizabethan negotiation or compromise of religious beliefs and sexual intimacy. But Angelo on the other hand represents the puritan rigidity, inflexibility, and autocracy. The Duke as a man of mercy is a foil to Angelo, the man of justice and punishment. Shakespearean elements of disguise and intrigue incite the climax and

conflict of the play. M.H. Abrams and Geoffrey Galt Harpham clearly point out that- “As a plot evolves it (intrigue) arouses expectations in the audience or reader about the future course of events and actions and how characters respond to them” (Abrams and Harpham 294).

Michel Foucault in his *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (1975) describes the formation of the disciplinary society that is based on the economic, judicio-political, and scientific processes. While describing the judicial penal system, he conceptualizes the concept of panoptic surveillance. Though he takes this idea of panopticon from Jeremy Bentham and then reconceptualizes it as a system of social control and mechanism of power- “The panopticon is a machine for dissociating the see/being seen dyad: in the peripheric ring, one is totally seen, without ever seeing; in the central tower, one sees everything without ever being seen” (Foucault 201-202). He also considers our society as a part or instrument of the panopticon “Our society is one not of spectacle, but of surveillance” (Foucault 217). He elucidates further the function of the panoptic surveillance is to instruct, control or confine and to reform the condemned. It is formed due to its multiple applications in almost every field- “It is a type of location of bodies in space, of distribution of individuals in relation to one another, of hierarchical organization, of disposition of centres and channels of power, of definition of the instruments and modes of intervention of power, which can be implemented in hospitals, workshops, schools, prisons” (Foucault 205). Foucault’s theory of panoptic surveillance problematizes the judicial system of the disciplined institution called prison. Surveillance refers to the constant and conscious visibility where actions, movements, and natures of the people are examined and observed. It assures the automatic functioning of power of the authority and exposes how the power relation is exercised from the Duke to his Deputy and then to the citizen in a systematic or disciplined way. While defining the institutionalized disciplinary society, Foucault says that “...in which the individuals are inserted in a fixed place, in which the slightest movements are supervised, in which all events are recorded... in which each individual is constantly located, examined and distributed among the living beings, the sick and the dead- all constitutes a compact model of disciplinary mechanism” (Foucault 197).

Shakespeare’s *Measure for Measure* begins with the appearance of the Duke Vincentio of Vienna with his attendant lord Escalus discussing the political affairs of the State, its laws, legislative and judicial systems. The play discloses how familial and

social relations are governed or controlled by the government. The State always keeps eyes on the sexual life of the citizen, their social relations, even each individual's action and offense. It is clear through the Duke's statement, how the governmentality of the government and disciplined society are formed on the basis of discipline, judgment, punishment in a State institution prison. From the very beginning of the play, the Duke decides to hand over his control to his deputy Angelo in order to enforce the liberal or inactive law of the judicial system-

Hold therefore Angelo:

In our remove be thou at full yourself.

Mortality and Mercy in Vienna (Shakespeare 91).

But later in front of Friar Thomas, the Duke discloses the conspiracy, intrigue, or mechanism of the monarchy to serve the role of surveillance to keep an eye on every individual of Vienna and to investigate the nature of the State and its citizens.

The Duke's manifestation of power is exercised and perpetuated through the authority of Angelo. The State power functions in two ways- consent and coercion. According to Foucault, there are three models of power- sovereign, disciplinary, and biopower. Here in this play, Shakespeare displays the State power structure through the disciplinary institution of prison to execute biopower politics on the living and the dead. After taking the charge of the Duke, Angelo revives and enforces laws, and intimidates to annihilate prostitution or brothels. He arrests Claudio for impregnating Juliet and is sentenced to death. The State has the power to decide who will live and who will die. In this context, Achille Mbembe in his *Necropolitics* (2011) defines the State power that "the ultimate expression of sovereignty resides, to a large degree, in the power and the capacity to dictate who may live and who must die" (Mbembe 11-12). He elucidates further that "to exercise sovereignty is to exercise control over mortality" (Mbembe 18). As per the penal system, a person with unlawful activity should be put forth in prison for punishment to reform his behaviour. The State's power is exercised through social control where individual body and sexuality are under surveillance for examination, investigation. While considering Foucault's concept of biopower, Michael Loadenthal in an article asserts that "Biopolitics is therefore a particularly individualized framework to understand collective social

control through individualized bodies and their envelopments with judicial-caerceral State-power” (Loadenthal 125). Claudio’s friend Lucio is sent to deliver the message of execution of Claudio to his sister Isabella who is supposed to be a nun. But Lucio’s approach to Isabella for saving her brother’s life problematizes the judicial system that considers women as an instrument of political mechanism.

As the play proceeds, the function of disciplinary political surveillance gets more visible and prominent. The surveillance not merely observes, but examines and investigates the unlawful or illegal activities of the citizens. Even the police as a part of the disciplinary surveillance of the State works as an institution. Foucault remarks in this context that “the police as an institution were certainly organized in the form of a State apparatus, and although this was certainly linked directly to the centre of political sovereignty, the type of power that it exercises, the mechanisms it operates and the elements to which it applies them are specific” (Foucault 213). As the new Duke orders to demolish all the brothels in Vienna, constable Elbow and Escalus start to investigate all the sexual affairs or offenses of the people. Through police inquiry, the monarchy exercises the mechanism of power through the modes of coercion, consent, and counsel. Escalus counsels Pompey, a tapster who also works for the prostitute Mistress Overdone. As Pompey wonders to see the State’s restriction on sexuality, and then he asks to Escalus -

Pompey: Does your worship mean to geld and splay all the
youth of the city?

Escalus: No, Pompey

...There is pretty orders beginning, I can tell you: it
is but heading and hanging (Shakespeare 116).

Besides that, Isabella approaches Angelo for begging the life of her condemned brother Claudio. She tries to convince Angelo with her witty speech and moral counsel. Isabella interrogates the unjust, unfair law of Vienna that restrains human sexuality-

Isabella: ...Who is it that hath died for this offence?

There’s many have committed it (Shakespeare 121-122).

But Angelo defends his revived law because he is determined to enforce it. He shows the transformation of the law from freedom or liberty to restriction -

Angelo: The law hath not been dead, though it hath slept.
Those many had not dared to do that evil
If the first that did th'edict infringe
Had answered for his deed. Now 'tis awake,...
But here they live to end (Shakespeare 122).

Isabella's witty speech and beautiful complexion enchant Angelo and lead him to commit the same sin or crime for which Claudio is sentenced to death. That is why Escalus once ironically states that "Some rise by sin and some by virtue fall" (110). Angelo gives Isabella an alternative way to save the life of her brother. Here lies Angelo's mechanism, the role of State ideology and apparatus, while he approaches for taking the consent of Isabella to get her body. But when Isabella wants to unmask Angelo's true nature in front of the world, Angelo reveals his hierarchical power and position-

Angelo: ...Fit thy consent to my sharp appetite,
Lay by all nicety and prolixious blushes
That banish what they sue for, redeem thy brother
By yielding up thy body to my will, (Shakespeare 135-136).

This is the strategy of the disciplinary and sovereign monarchy to open a door for biopower that is derived from Biopolitics. While defining biopower in his book *Security, Territory, Population* (1978), Foucault remarks that biopower is "the set of mechanisms through which the basic biological features of the human species became the object of a political strategy, of a general strategy of power" (Foucault 1).

In the next scene, we can see that Isabella comes to tell Claudio about the substitute or alternate way of his salvation or release in the reign of Angelo-

Isabella: ... If I would yield him my virginity
Thou might'st be free (Shakespeare 141).

Isabella criticizes the law of Angelo and the faulty judgment systems of Vienna "There is a devilish mercy in the judge" (139). Shakespeare exposes the unjust, unfair, and unequal judicial system that declares to take the life of Claudio and imposes governmental ideology, rules, and restrictions on the sexuality of the citizens of Vienna. As a result, Pompey and Mistress Overdone are under imprisonment for correction of behaviour. This paper attempts to show how the disguised Duke works

as sovereign surveillance to examine and to interfere with everybody's personal to political matters. The Duke overhears the conversation of Isabella and Claudio from a hiding place in order to investigate the nature of the crime, and the justice system or revived law of Angelo that brings disaster to the life of Claudio. Once the Friar Duke discloses his mechanism of power in front of Provost-

Duke: Bound by my charity and my blessed order
I come to visit the afflicted spirits
Here in the prison. Do me the common right
To let me see them and to make me know
The nature of their crimes, that I may minister
To them accordingly (Shakespeare 126-127).

The Duke exposes Angelo's true nature and how he breaks the heart of Mariana by refusing to marry her due to her brother's shipwrecked at the sea with the dowry of Mariana. Angelo and Mariana's contract of marriage breaks off due to that dowry. So apart from the judicial system, Shakespeare reveals the prevailing dowry and institutionalized marriage system and contends those social hierarchical structures that practice and perpetuate masculine mechanisms and inferiority of women. Later the Duke gives them a solution to all the problems and assures them to bring justice to Claudio, Mariana, and Isabella. The Duke makes a plan or plot in order to scale and measure the corrupt deputy Angelo. As per Angelo's proposal, Mariana will go to Angelo's bed to gratify his sexual desire instead of Isabella. On the other hand, the Duke orders the Provost to execute another prisoner's head instead of Claudio.

Though the Duke pretends to be Friar Lodowick, he has the remote control in his hands to govern the personal, political, and judicial systems of Vienna. Each individual is under his observation, from prisoners Claudio to Barnardine, from Isabella to Marianna, from Pompey to Mistress Overdone, and from Deputy Angelo to Escalus. Not even anyone can understand and see the Duke's motives, but he examines and records people's actions, behaviours, and movements like surveillance. Though the Duke always reveals the strategy and mechanism of the monarchy through his speeches-

Duke: ...my business in this state
Made me a looker-on here in Vienna,

Where I have seen corruption boil and bubble
Till it o'errun the stew; laws for all faults,
But faults so countenanced that the strong statutes
Stand like the forfeits in a barber's shop,
As much in mock as mark (Shakespeare 193).

After executing all the plans of the Duke, there remains one exception, because Angelo does not pardon Claudio. Then the Duke let him believe that Angelo's orders are followed by sending him a head of a dead pirate by claiming it to be Claudio. On the other hand, Isabella is asked to believe that Claudio is dead, then she comes to complain to the Duke against the immoral activity of Angelo. But the Duke acquaints her about his power and purpose, whether he is in the form of a friar or the Duke, but his power remains the same-

Duke: ...you may marvel why I obscured myself,
Labouring to save his life, and would not rather
Make rash remonstrance of my hidden power (Shakespeare
195).

After unmasking himself, the Duke reveals how he saves the life of Claudio and how he entraps Angelo to marry Mariana. It indicates that even deputy Angelo has no choice of selecting a partner but rather he has to marry the one whom the Duke wants him to marry. Then the Duke asks Isabella's hands for marriage, but she remains silent because she has no power to deny the Duke's proposal in the disciplined State. The paper sheds the light on the formation of the disciplinary society that is based on the hierarchical power structure, power relations, institutionalized forms or practices, dominant State ideology, and mechanism of the State. The paper tries to show how the State's power is exercised through its agents within social, political, and personal spheres where each and every individual is under surveillance, examination, and observation of the State. Foucauldian reading of the play leads us to interrogate the existing institutionalized power structures and to change our perspectives for the reformation and reconstruction of the society.

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**GENDER POLITICS AND QUEER IDENTITY IN WILLIAM
SHAKESPEARE'S *TWELFTH NIGHT***

Nilanjan Chakraborty

Lord of my love, to whom in vassalage
Thy merit hath my duty strongly knit,
To thee I send this written embassy,
To witness duty, not to show my wit. (Shakespeare: 22, 1998)

The sonnet sequence of Shakespeare reflects the dynamic nature of sexual performance that negotiated in the social circles of 16th and 17th century Elizabethan and Jacobean England. Shakespeare's Romantic comedy *Twelfth Night*, arguably staged in the Globe in 1602, is a text of fluid gender performance and homosexual love. At the level performance, one must remember that no female casting was available in the Renaissance theatre. However, in *Twelfth Night*, the gender performance moves beyond the obvious theatrical irony that a male actor is acting in the role of a woman's character. Talking about this aspect of gender as performance, Bruce R Smith observes that gender "is more like a suit of clothes that can be put on and taken off at will than a matter of biological destiny. However temporary such cross-dressing may be, it serves to remind audiences that masculinity is a matter of appearances." (Smith, 3) The question of gender as performance works at the performative level in this play as Viola has to disguise herself as a man in Illyria to not to expose herself an exiled woman is a constrictive patriarchal society. The Viola/Cesario dynamics creates a narrative of dual performative agenda in the play as Cesario has to negotiate with the overtures of Orsino and Viola is helplessly torn towards her passion for Orsino. What problematises the narrative of gender performance in this play is this dialectics of appearance and reality. Viola's love towards Orsino is clearly heterosexual, but Orsino is pulled towards the page boy Cesario with the full conviction that Cesario is male. The "love sick" Duke, who is embellished in a self-contained world of narcissistic self-adulation and artificial notions of love, seems to have been drawn out of this self-flagellating alienation by taking a step forward towards Cesario. Valentine reports.

If the Duke continue these favours towards you, Cesario, you are like to be much advanced: he hath known you but three days, and already you are no stranger. (Shakespeare: 2003, 19)

It is quite clear therefore that the Duke persists with the performance of gender fluid experience with Cesario, in spite of his claim that he is in love with the Countess Olivia.

Orsino says to Cesario:

Cesario,

Thou know'st no less but all: I have unclasp'd

To thee the book even of my secret soul. (*ibid*)

The words of Orsino is a clear indication, going by the Platonic platitudes of the 16th century that he has taken a serious note of Cesario's presence and is ready to explore a homosexual attraction for the boy, despite his public image of being a heterosexual Duke. The late 16th century pamphleteer Philip Stubbes observes, "our apparell was given as a sign distinctive, to discern betwixt sexe and sexe, and therefore one to wear the apparell of an other sex, is to participate with the same and to adulterate the veritie of his own kind" (Stubbes, 38). The contemporary commentary gives a peep into the tensions surrounding the issue of gender and performance and this is where Orsino's attraction towards the 'fair youth' becomes even more problematic.

The central issue surrounding Orsino's attraction towards Cesario is that Orsino is aware that Cesario is a 'male'. There is a dramatic irony in place because the audience is aware of the inverted prism through which the gender identity of Viola/Cesario works. But Orsino is unaware of the presence of Viola and hence his poetic appreciation of Cesario's beauty raises the important question of Orsino's sexual ethics. In many ways, the comic complication of Olivia's attraction towards Cesario is an inversion of the more serious complication of Orsino's attraction towards Cesario because in the former, the heteronormative matrix is preserved, but in the latter, the undertones of homosexual bond becomes layered in discourse because Orsino puts the public image of his on the normative structures of heterosexual Petrarchan love. One must keep in mind however, that the way a 21st century audience would receive homosexuality or the Queer as ethical parameters of resistance to heteronormativity, the 17th century British audience would not have received them as separate entities of categorization. Mario DiGangi observes that labels like the homosexual and the heterosexual "did not exist as conceptual categories." (DiGangi, 39) Yet, the underlying tension is apparent in the way Orsino seeks to transfer his attention to Cesario from his world of Petrarchan bowers. The initial image of Orsino is that of a Duke immersed in self-love and it is Cesario's presence that makes the "love-sick Duke" aware of the realities around him. Orsino says:

Dear lad, believe it;
For they shall yet belie thy happy years,
That say thou art a man; Diana's lip
Is not more smooth and rubious: thy small pipe
Is as the maiden's organ, shrill and sound,
And all is semblative a woman's part. (Shakespeare: 2003, 20)

This speech is replete with a lot of dramatic irony. The speech shows that Orsino is exercising a certain substitutive behaviour. Orsino is aware that Cesario is his own sex and yet substitutes his beauty to liken him to a woman. Beyond the obvious truth in Orsino's observation, there is a dialectics of gender queer behaviour at work. Orsino's melancholic state may be read as his anxiety of having to perform the role of a heterosexual man when his actual desire may be towards men. Hence, substituting Cesario as a 'woman' would take care of his real desires and create a language of heterosexual love. Judith Butler notes, "There is no gender identity behind the expressions of gender. Identity is performatively constituted by the very 'expressions' that are said to be its results." (Butler, 29) In Shakespeare, as in every author, language is a political tool through which discourse formation takes place. Orsino's language constructs the gender queer behaviour that tends towards the homosexual identity of the character. It is important to note that Olivia shares no physical proximity with Orsino and hence Orsino's love for Olivia is only a public performance. It is with Cesario that Orsino shares close physical proximity and hence there is a tension in Orsino between heterosexual conformity and homosexual anxiety.

In one of the sonnets, Shakespeare had urged his fair youth not to indulge in masturbatory practices (do not "spend/ Upon thyself") and yet the explicitness of the image undercovers the poet's deep desire for the youth. Stephen Greenblatt observes, "The vision of reproduction Shakespeare is offering his young man is not absolutely female-free, but, within the limits of the flesh, it reduces the role of the woman to the barest minimum: a piece of untilled ground that has not yet brought forth ripe ears of corn." (Greenblatt, 231) The homoerotic voice in Orsino is a significant pointer to the way gender politics work in this romantic comedy. Orsino's alienation can be a result of his anxiety to locate his sexuality in a heteronormative world where love is structured around the Petrarchan game of the lover chasing the beloved, who is often imaged as the far removed divine goddess. To Cesario, Orsino says that women "lack retention" in love, but, "mine is all as hungry as the sea,/ And can digest as much." (Shakespeare: 2003, 61). The metaphor of appetite shows Orsino's sexual anxiety as the metaphor is a standard Elizabethan practice to

delineate sexual love. In an overtly heterosexual Petrarchan simulation of love of the 16th century, Shakespeare's delineation of homoerotic voices is seen as major disruption to that dominant field. Valery Traub observes, "Even when Viola/Cesario's gender is fixed as indeterminate, this is not the only feature of either Olivia or Orsino's interest in them, for there are questions of sexual desire which are not reducible to gender." (Traub, 206) Gender performance, on stage, at the Globe Theatre would be simply changeable through the simple mechanism of changing dresses, but at the level of character development, anxiety of desire is present quite significantly. Viola's gender anxiety is emblematic of the tension of performance that lies at the praxis of heteronormativity. Viola's words – "I am all the daughters of my father's house/ And all the brothers too" (Shakespeare: 2003, 62) is not only representative of her grief for losing her brother Sebastian (she is unaware of his presence in Illyria), but it also shows the trapped condition of Viola of having to exist as a man. However, this is a parallel to the trapped condition of Orsino as well because his anxiety to feel attracted towards Cesario problematises the Petrarchan heteronormative matrix within which he must play the 'game of love'. Jonathan Dollimore's contention of the "terrifying mutability of desire" (Dollimore, 56) finds expression in Orsino's constant dialectics of having to negotiate with the non-presence of homoerotic voice in the heteronormative environment around him. The queer presence of a female in a cross-dressed entity forces the audience construct the homoerotic voice as 'outside' the constructs of Petrarchan conventions for which Orsino must express his love in restrained language. Stefan Brecht said, "Its sense of tragedy, though perhaps arising from self pity, is a touching inconsistency, its devotion to truth, though perhaps an expression of anger, an arbitrary admirable choice; its love of beauty, though perhaps rooted in despairing vanity, a heroic paradox. This inconsistency, choice and paradox make it queer." (Brecht, 9) Feste's constant contestation that Orsino's mind is inconstant is perhaps a reminder to the deep anxiety that he faces while negotiating with his queer performance as a homosexual man.

The theme of homosexuality pervades the sub-plot as well. The Antonio Sebastian relationship is fraught with deep undertones of homoerotic tension and attraction. The question of space becomes relevant in this relationship because the two men find themselves in an exiled condition in Illyria, and therefore, free from the social gaze, they do express their underlying homoerotic voices, although sedately. The following exchange of words between the two suggests that their relationship goes beyond the Elizabethan idea of 'homosocial' bond:

Seb.: I would not by my will have troubled you,
But since you make your pleasure of your pains,
I will no further chide you.

Ant.: I could not stay behind you: my desire,
More sharp than filed steel, did spur me forth:
And not all love to see you... My willing love,
The rather by these arguments of fear,
Set forth in your pursuit. (Shakespeare: 2003, 89)

The language used by Antonio and Sebastian is a part of a long standing tradition in Western art and culture, depicting the mutual admiration of two men for each other. From Aeschylus' extant play *The Myrmidons* to Plato's *Symposium* and Homer's *Iliad*, Western classical literature has thrived on representations of homoerotic affiliations. However, in *Twelfth Night*, the voices of homoerotic tension are supplemented by the gender queer experience due to cross-dressing as a motive. The Antonio Sebastian relationship is overtly homosexual, though the compensation comes at the end when Sebastian marries Olivia and includes himself in the conformist heteronormative matrix. Pais, one of the contemporary directors of Shakespeare's plays, observes that, "The sexuality of this allegorical Adriatic world is tired, and well-illustrated by the weary stoicism and less than happy intelligence of the Fool. The only character in whom desire circulates furiously is Antonio, in his homoerotic passion for Sebastian." (Pais, 11) The stage kinetics can be used in various manners to exhibit the physical proximity between the two male characters, but in Shakespeare's Folio text, verbal ingenuities are enough to suggest a strong sensual bond between the two men. This acts as a parallel to the more subtle homoerotic tension in Orsino who has to negotiate with his public image to move out of the heterosexist world. In both the cases of Orsino and Sebastian, they move into the more conventional heteronormative world by marrying women, leaving the tantalising significance of the subtitle of the play, 'What you will' intact. Sedgwick notes that the homosexual content in Shakespeare's drama "radically disrupted" (Sedgwick, 2) the patriarchal structure and perhaps that is the politics of aesthetics that Shakespeare wanted to achieve through cooption of dramatic disjuncture.

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SHAKESPEARE WEARS THE SORTING HAT: EXAMINING THE INFLUENCE OF *MACBETH* IN THE *HARRY POTTER* SERIES

Khusi Pattanayak

Abstract: While William Shakespeare has been enlightening and entertaining the readers and audience since the sixteenth century, *Harry Potter* is a millennial, born at the fag-end of twentieth century. Penned by J.K. Rowling, the *Potter* series reinforces the communicative powers of written material and enjoys the ubiquitous distinction of being the poster child of success in a post-capitalist world. The *Potter* series reformed the publishing industry and changed the taste of reading mass – both young and adults. With her series, Rowling not only positioned herself as a great writer who knew how to cast a spell on her readers but also showcased her prowess as an ardent reader of world literature including Shakespeare. Even though, both Shakespeare and Rowling have evolved from their different contexts and have been epitomised into complex, universal and erudite brands in themselves; one, needless to say, is influenced by the other. In her numerous interactions Rowling has been very candid about her love for Shakespeare and how her septology carries an imprint of Shakespearean ideas. In this paper, I will discuss about this impact of Shakespeare, but more specifically about the influence of *Macbeth* in the *Potter*-narrative.

Keywords: Macbeth, William Shakespeare, J.K. Rowling, Harry Potter.

Back in 26 June 1997 when Bloomsbury Publishing (UK) released *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*¹ little did anyone anticipate the paradigm shifting impact the book will have on the socio-cultural landscape of consumption and consumership. Since then, *Harry Potter* books have sold more than 500 million copies worldwide. Of course this number is no match to Shakespeare's contribution to publishing sales strictly in terms of numbers, yet the hepatology is singlehandedly credited for bringing people back to the reading habit and making millennials the largest consumer of books than any other generation! It goes without saying that, from being a literary phenomenon to courting controversies to sneaking into the academic discourses to reshaping tourism and merchandising industry *Harry Potter* has made its omnipresence felt like never before. And almost as if mirroring the success story of her creative offering, the author Joanne Kathleen Rowling (1965 -), broke all the stereotypes and went on to become one of the richest writers in the history of mankind and flaunted of a fortune that made her richer than the Queen of England herself! This is remarkable not because writers usually don't boast of great bank balance but because Rowling was someone who once survived on state welfare!!

Given the magnitude of Pottermore – theme parks, books related to the wizarding world by Rowling², fan-fictions, cafes, books by other authors³, works by independent illustrators⁴, video-games, music bands, productions by libraries and organisations⁵, various transmedia adaptations, pop-culture assimilations – I will restrict this discussion to the influence *Macbeth* in the Potter –world that is designed by Rowling herself.

As a self-professed fan of *Macbeth*, Rowling claims that among all the Shakespearean plays that she has come across *Macbeth* holds a special place in her life; and probably that is why *Macbeth* surfaces every now and then in Rowling’s literary universe. For example, few years ago during one of her public interactions⁶, when J. K. Rowling had announced her desire to put together a *Harry Potter Encyclopaedia* (a guidebook by the author herself) on various locations, characters, concepts that are part of the *Harry Potter* universe, she had identified her prospective work as, "The Scottish Book". This curious expression immediately gave birth to numerous speculations and conspiracy theories. To put an end to the chaos, Rowling in her website explained she had used the phrase as “a joke, though evidently not a very good one...”⁷ She went on to explain how in theatre circle a certain superstition prevailed where the actors believed it was unlucky to utter the name Macbeth and hence they referred the work as ‘the Scottish Play’. She added, “Given the contentiousness that has sprung up around the Encyclopaedia lately, I simply thought we might start showing it similar respect!”⁸

It comes as little surprise when Rowling (or for that matter any artist) professes her love for Shakespeare because even in the twenty first century William Shakespeare (1564-1616) is the quintessential representative of all things mass and class. Over the centuries Shakespeare has been successfully reintegrated into the popular culture through various rhetorically and semiotically constructed and reconstructed individual perceptions⁹ and cultural tastes¹⁰ that have successfully disintegrated the complex ideas to over simplified consumable descriptions giving birth to Shakespop¹¹. In *Harry Potter* this resonates in the prophecy episode. Rowling has herself acknowledged it to be ‘the “Macbeth” idea’¹². According to Rowling the prophecy per se was not the reason for Macbeth’s downfall. Macbeth met his tragedy because he placed his faith in the words of the witches and made things happen. She insists that Macbeth already was destined for certain things, but then he decided to go ahead and change it by altering the course of action. Needless to say, the prophecy that changed the course of Harry’s life is Rowling’s reinterpretation of Macbeth’s conduct. And why just Rowling, Macbeth’s choice has been subjected to numerous debates and his actions have appeared prominently in case studies that focuses

on the dubious role of fate and freewill. Thus, Harry as a post-Macbeth child when confronted with a mystifying prophecy is made to realise the significance of taking judicious decisions at crucial junctures and not falling prey to fate. As Dumbledore tells Harry in *The Chamber of Secrets* (2002): It is our choices, Harry, that show what we truly are, far more than our abilities.

In *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix* we are told that Lord Voldemort is desperately looking for the prophecy that holds the path to his future. But despite his best efforts he could not gain access to it, as the ball containing the prophecy gets destroyed. The frantic actions undertaken by He-Who-Must-Not-Be-Named¹³ were a result of his desire to get the complete prophecy which might have helped him get back his lost glory and power. Until book five, he only knew part of the prophecy¹⁴ and years ago had acted hastily based on what he interpreted of that incomplete cryptic message. As Dumbledore clarifies in *The Order of the Phoenix*, Voldemort was only aware of that segment which described the birth of a boy in July, born to parents “who had thrice defied Voldemort.” This resulted in the Dark Lord attacking Harry and his parents. Though this attack killed Harry’s parents, Harry himself survived, turned into horocrux¹⁵ and unintentionally received some powers from Lord Voldemort. As the Dark Lord’s attempts to kill the child backfired, he immediately realised his mistake and resolved to know the full contents of the prophecy.

Rowling says, Prof. Trelawney’s prophecy was more like the witches prophecy that one comes across in *Macbeth*. This solitary incident acted as catalyst for future events to unfold that might have never taken place if the words were not uttered. But this also brings us back to Rowling’s interpretation of the prophecy - that an individual’s action is solely responsible for his/her future and that might have nothing to do with destiny or divination as such. Prof. Trelawney’s prediction stated:

The one with the power to vanquish the Dark Lord approaches... born to those who have thrice defied him, born as the seventh month dies... and the Dark Lord will mark him as his equal, but he will have power the Dark Lord knows not... and either must die at the hand of the other for neither can live while the other survives... the one with the power to vanquish the Dark Lord will be born as the seventh month dies....

Acting upon the prediction (or so he thought), Lord Voldemort figured out there were two new-borns who could pose threat to him – Harry Potter and Neville Longbottom¹⁶. But the Dark Lord chose to identify Harry as his equal as he was also half-blood¹⁷ like him and

not pure blood¹⁸ like Neville. As a result of Voldemort's arbitrary decision Harry became the 'chosen one' and an unintended carrier of a part of Dark Lord's soul. The *Potter* prophecy takes the same route as *Macbeth* prophecy – the mysterious message wrapped in fog of obscurity leaves scope for numerous interpretation; turns the recipient obsessive about materialising the prediction leading him to take matters into his own hands and exposing his surroundings to unprecedented turmoil. The prophecies heard by Macbeth and Voldemort did not instruct them to carry out a set of actions to reach the intended goal; yet Macbeth killed Duncan with the desire to take over the throne as soon possible and Voldemort decided to kill an infant so that he does not have a nemesis. Rowling's inclination towards the potentiality of human free will finds a voice in Prof. Dumbledore's wise words:

You see, the prophecy does not mean you have to do anything! But the prophecy caused Lord Voldemort to mark you as his equal. ... In other words, you are free to choose your way, quite free to turn your back on the prophecy!¹⁹

The *Macbeth* influence can be seen in the cinematic adaptation of *Potter* movies too. Some might feel that discussing cinema is not within the scope of this paper as it transcends in to the larger world of *Potter* universe. But it is no secret that Rowling played a crucial role during the filming of the series and had a first-hand involvement in the process, thus, making the movies a natural extension of her creative space. It must be mentioned here that the studios or production houses are ill famous for procuring the copyrights of a bestseller and limiting the author(s) presence only to the credit titles. But Rowling being someone who never played by the rulebook, actually managed to position herself as a crucial intermediary between the books and the movies²⁰.

In the third instalment of the film franchise, *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban*, the song "Something Wicked This Way Comes" or "Double Trouble" was performed by the choir during the welcome feast at Hogwarts. As the third movie was darker in essence than the previous two, the song conveyed a feel of danger looming close as the magic turned more sombre. Professor Flitwick directed this specific choir where each singer-member was seen holding a toad or a raven during the performance. John Williams had composed the music for *Prisoner of Azkaban* and he got his inspiration for this particular piece from *Macbeth*. In Act IV, Scene I of Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, the Second Witch sings the following lines: By the pricking of my thumbs / Something wicked this way comes. In the play, the lines were addressed to Macbeth himself, because right after the announcement, Macbeth is shown to be knocking at the door. In the context of

the movie, the song manages to extend the leitmotif of evil approaching Hogwarts, and informs the audience and the students to expect a grimmer year ahead.

“Double Trouble” brings us to the next interesting inclusion, The Weird Sisters. In the wizarding world The Weird Sisters operated a very popular music band. Their songs were regularly featured in WWN²¹ and they performed at Yule Ball²² too. But what is more curious is that despite being an all-male group (yes, all the eight members were men), they decided to name their troupe as The Weird Sisters. It is obvious that the rock band members, just like Rowling, were fans of *Macbeth* and borrowed their band name from the play itself, where the prophetic sisters were identified as Weird Sisters.

Incidentally, a close reading of *Harry Potter* will draw ones attention towards other Shakespearean influences which are not just limited to *Macbeth* alone; case in point, Hermione Granger. Rowling borrows the name Hermione from Shakespeare’s *A Winter’s Tale*. Having watched the play as a teenager, Rowling had liked the way Hermione was shaped - courageous and intelligent. In her series, Rowling too introduces a female character, Hermione, who plays a crucial role in the progress of the story and the fight between good and evil. And not just Hermione, Potter scholars have established a quintessential *Hamlet* connection as well. According to them, the bard’s Hamlet and Rowling’s Harry study in educational establishments that are far away from their homes; both Hamlet and Harry hate their respective uncles and both come across the ghost of their dead parent(s) – Hamlet sees his dead father and Harry sees both his dead parents. They both intend to avenge the wrong that has been done to their respective families and display the potentiality to grow beyond their means –become the greatest king the country has seen and transform into the greatest wizard of all times. Then there are others who have found Voldemort’s cursed existence similar to the ill-fated end met by King Lear.

Influences and interpretations aside, Rowling’s love for Shakespeare and other writers²³ does not make her any less of an original creator. She is a respectable and significant presence in the landscape of crossover and young-adult fantasy literature. Her literary influences are merely inspiration; her world is starkly different from her predecessors. Both Rowling and Shakespeare share an intricate correlation with their respective audience. They have inspired erudite minds and have made appearances in slogans of mass produced T-shirts²⁴. Both the writers have reinvented themselves in each multiplatform storytelling while successfully democratising the reading experience; and Shakespeare’s successful apparition in the corridors of Hogwarts is only a gentle reminder that the bard is here to stay defying all the evolutionary cacophony.

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2. *Quidditch Through the Ages*, *Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them*, and *The Tales of Beedle the Bard* etc.
3. *Crafting Wizardry* by Jody Revenson, *Honeydukes: A Scratch and Sniff Adventure* by Daphne Pendergrass etc.
4. *Harry Potter: Exploring Diagon*, *Harry Potter: Exploring Hogwarts: An Illustrated Guide* by Jody Revenson
5. ¹ *Harry Potter: A History of Magic* by the British Library , *The Unofficial Ultimate Harry Potter Spellbook* by Media Lab Books
6. Leaky's podcast
7. J.K.Rowling Official Site. http://web.archive.org/web/20110806212040/http://www.jkrowling.com/textonly/en/faq_view.cfm?id=123
8. ibid
9. Numerous adaptations of Shakespeare in theatre, cinema, television and other artistic space.
10. Commodification of Shakespeare in form of t-shirts, coffee mugs, bags, advertising, memes etc.
11. Term introduced by Douglas Lanier. Lanier, Douglas (Ed.). "Introduction". *Shakespeare and Modern Popular Culture*. Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2002.
12. "Interview with JK Rowling After HBP – Part 3". TheLeaky-Cauldron.Org, Jul 28, 2007, www.the-leaky-cauldron.org/2007/07/28/jkrhbp3/
13. Another name for Lord Voldemort.
14. Severus Snape had heard the first part of the prophecy while eavesdropping into Sybill Trelawney's and Prof. Dumbledore's meeting at Hogs Head. As a follower of the Dark Lord back then, Snape had rushed to inform him of his future.
15. An object in which one conceals a part of his soul; in wizarding world, dark witches and wizards seeking immortality spilt their souls into various pieces and preserve them in different objects.
16. Only child of Frank and Alice Longbottom. The Longbottom's were respected Aurors; were members of the original Order of the Phoenix.

17. A family lineage where marriage of pure blood and muggle has taken place. Muggle means non-magical people.
18. A family whose ancestry has no recorded relationship with muggles. As per Rowling, only ten percent of wizarding world consists of pure-blood.
19. Rowling, J.K. *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince*. United Kingdom, Bloomsbury (UK), 2005, p-512.
20. Rowling had a massive creative control over the filming process – from finalising all British cast to being executive producer to constantly supporting directors with script development and execution of abstract ideas, Rowling was much in control of her work than any other writer could have ever imagined.
21. Wizarding Wireless Network
22. *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire*. Directed by Mike Newell , Warner Bros. Pictures , 2005
23. Jane Austen, E. Nesbit, Kenneth Grahame, C. S. Lewis et al.
24. Captions like “I solemnly swear that I am up to no good” or “Stop making drama you're not Shakespeare”

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PORTRAYAL OF SOCIALLY MARGINALISED CHARACTERS IN SELECT PLAYS OF SHAKESPEARE

Amrita Chattopadhyay

Abstract: William Shakespeare (1564-1616) is a renowned English playwright who has created such characters in his plays, which are etched in people's hearts forever. His plays are so popular that these have been adapted in almost all standardized languages across cultures around the world. He is well known for his portrayal of people from almost all the sections of the societies in his plays. 16th century English society was known to be highly prejudiced against certain sections of people based on their gender, religion and race. Surprisingly, Shakespeare has portrayed these socially marginalised character with personalities of their own instead of just creating caricatures of them that would have been expected from him being a member of the 16th CE England. These marginalised characters are given a voice and perspective by the playwright. In this paper we will see how these socially marginalised characters are portrayed in select plays of Shakespeare. For this purpose I have selected plays like *The Merchant of Venice* (1600), *The Tempest* (1611), and *Macbeth* (1623).

Keywords: Shakespeare, Plays, Marginalised characters, Gender, Religion, Race.

Introduction:

Several groups of people within a society face a number of discriminations based on several markers of their identity like gender, race, religious beliefs, and sexual orientation etcetera. These people are known as marginalised group of people in a society. England in the 17th CE was occupied by heterogeneous population. Not every one of them were treated with equal respect. Many of them were marginalised communities about whom the larger society were prejudiced against. According to Bolaffi, et.al. (2003), marginalisation is the process of treating a person or a group (social, racial and ethnic) as insignificant.

William Shakespeare being a popular playwright of the period included characters who represent several of these marginalised communities in his plays. This portrayal as we will see in this paper is very interesting in the sense that these marginalised characters are given a voice in the plays. From this, we get glimpses of their sides of the story, and often the audience as well as the readers of the later generations appreciated his portrayal of these characters, which seemed to be very progressive considering the time when they were written and performed. We will analyse how he represented these socially marginalised characters in his plays by taking

examples from three of his very famous plays: *The Merchant of Venice* (1600), *The Tempest* (1611), and *Macbeth* (1623). This article focuses on marginalisation based on gender, religion and race, which we discuss in the following sections.

Women in Shakespearean Plays:

Shakespeare's portrayal of women has been widely researched by scholars for a long period. His female characters are strong, intelligent, resilient, free willed and are quite independent which goes against how women were perceived in the Elizabethan era. However some critics are also of the view that some women in his plays are attributed with vile and negative qualities which makes us realise that he was not fully free from the influence of his age. However, even then there is no denying of the fact that this portrayal was quite progressive with respect to the age. According to Pragati Das (2012),

Shakespeare, with his extraordinary genius for portraying human behaviour, depicts the condition of women in a patriarchal society and his women characters who in their richness transcend the limitations of time and Shakespearean theme becomes timeless. (P.38).

For instance in his play *Macbeth*, Lady Macbeth has been portrayed as a very powerful and ambitious woman, who counsels her husband and advises him into taking great political decision, such as the way in which he can establish himself the next ruler of Scotland by killing king Duncan. Both power and ambition are qualities which were not associated with women in the 16th CE England. She even held the power to influence her husband. In the fifth scene of the very first act itself we find that Macbeth wrote a letter to his wife informing about the witches' prophesy and him getting the title of the "Thane of Cawdor". In this letter he calls her "my dearest partner" which clearly gives us a hint that Macbeth considered his wife his companion, his equal, which was very much unlike to the kind of marital relationships which existed back then. After reading this letter, Lady Macbeth's ambition to make Macbeth the ruler of Scotland came into play. She wanted Macbeth to kill Duncan, but she was uncertain if Macbeth possesses such depravity that is required to murder Duncan and get over the throne of Scotland. Therefore, she prevailed over Macbeth to murder Duncan even though Macbeth was faltering from this decision. This shows her determination to fulfill her ambition was much more than that of Macbeth, who was totally confused about what he should do. Finally Macbeth was successful in murdering Duncan and framing the royal guards for it with the mental support and encouragement of his wife. However, for gaining this

resolve to kill Duncan, Lady Macbeth was shown to abandon her feminine self. Thus, she pleads the spirits to help her shed feminine traits to become strong enough psychologically to commit the crime. Therefore, it can be said that though Shakespeare was progressive in his portrayal of Lady Macbeth as a strong, ambitious and determined woman, he still had his limitation in the way he made Lady Macbeth lose her 'femininity' in order to accomplish her job. She says:

The raven himself is hoarse
That croaks the fatal entrance of Duncan
Under my battlements. Come, you spirits
That tend on mortal thoughts, unsex me here,
And fill me from the crown to the toe topful
Of direst cruelty!

(Macbeth Act 1, Scene 5, Lines: 38–43)

Not only this, Lady Macbeth also got punished for her unnatural transformation, she got detached from her husband gradually after the murder and turned insane and ultimately died a disgraceful death. Macbeth on the other hand, even after committing a regicide gets almost a hero's death while fighting in the battlefield. Thus it seems that Shakespeare's portrayal of women was not free from misogynistic influence that was characteristic of the age.

This can be also seen in the way the witches are portrayed in the play. They are apparently females with masculine characteristics like they had beards. Since they were not feminine enough, it seemed that they were powerful, and had the ability to see and predict the future. However, they are wicked and so is Lady Macbeth and all of them led to destruction and contributed to the tragedy in the play leading to the inference that women in power cause destruction.

In his another play *The Merchant of Venice* (1600), the women characters go against their traditional roles and showed their intelligence and exercised their freedom of choice. However, the condition of women in the then society is reflected in terms of societal norms and customs. In this play, the central female character, Portia, is seen to be tied with her dead father's wish regarding the choice of her suitor that reveals her helplessness through the words:

I may neither choose who I would, nor refuse who I dislike; so is the will of a living daughter curbed by the will of a dead father.

(ActI, Scene-II, Lines 20-24).

In the casket choosing game, however, she gets her lover Bassanio as her husband when he won the game following its instruction. Later in the play, she is found to save her husband's dear friend Antonio from Shylock with her intelligence. On the other hand, the character Jessica in the play marries her lover without consulting her father and she also changes her religion to Christianity exercising her own choice. These things were quite progressive in the context of the 17th CE England. In those days, women could not decide about whom they want to marry, or whether to change their religion.

Portia is arguably the most interesting and intelligent character among all the characters in the play. As mentioned earlier, she was the one who saved Antonio from Shylock and thus saved him from impending doom. This incident of outwitting the male characters of the play was very much progressive at a time when women were considered dumb and incompetent in intellectual matters particularly in the public place. However, as in the play *Macbeth*, this progressive portrayal is again limited. Portia had to take the guise of a man in order to be able to participate in the court proceedings and to make the male characters pay heed to her opinions. Further, Julia had to take the guise of a man to elope from her father's house. Therefore, in a way, just like Lady Macbeth and the witches in *Macbeth*, these women had to shed their femininity in order to gain access to the power and authority, which were in the masculine domain at that point of time.

In the play *The Tempest* too, Caliban's mother Sycorax poses an unfigured threat even though she never appears in the play and seems to have already died before. She was apparently very powerful which is why as we have already seen in the earlier plays he is considered to be a cruel witch. She is described in the following manner:

This blue-eyed hag was hither brought with child, and here was left by th' sailors.
(Act – I, Scene-II Line: 269)

Miranda who is the main female character of the play is passive and follows her father's commands without protest. She is used like pawn for her father Prospero's interests. Thus in this play Miranda represents a typical woman of the 17th CE English society, whose life is completely controlled by patriarchy.

Religious Marginalised Characters in Shakespeare's Plays:

As mentioned earlier, 17th CE English society was inhabited by heterogeneous population, and though the dominant religion of the people was Christianity, there were Jews as well. However, the Christians were highly prejudiced against the Jews and hated

them. This anti-Semitic attitude of the people is reflected in Shakespeare's play, *The Merchant of Venice*, as well. However, as we will see that this portrayal is multilayered in the sense that though it maintains some of the prevailing prejudices against the Jews, the audience or the readers are also made to see the Jews in a more humane manner. They are made to empathise with their plight.

In the play, we see the Jew character Shylock is portrayed in a stereotypical fashion, a cruel and greedy money hoarder who wants to extract his revenge at any cost. However, the audience and the readers are made to feel sympathetic to the reasons of his revenge. The audience feel empathetic towards the way in which Shylock has been unfairly treated by the Christians just because he was a Jew, a member of a religious marginalised community. When in the beginning of the play, Antonio and Bassanio went to Shylock to borrow money for Bassanio we hear from Shylock the first time from his monologue on why he dislikes them. He says:

He hates our sacred nation and he rails
Even there where merchants most do congregate,
On me, my bargains, and my well – won thrift,
Which he calls interest. Cursed be my tribe
If I forgive him.

(Act I, scene – III Lines: 44-49)

Here he talks about how Antonio hates him for his religious identity. He also informs the audience about how he was insulted and mistreated for the same:

Signior Antonio, many a time and oft
In the Rialto you have rated me
About my moneys and my usances:
Still have I borne it with a patient shrug,
For sufferance is the badge of all our tribe.
You call me misbeliever, cut-throat dog,
And spit upon my Jewish gaberdine,
And all for use of that which is mine own.

(Act-I, Scene- III, Lines 103-109)

Therefore the readers and audience feel empathetic to the unfair treatment meted out to the Jews which reflects the social condition of the Jews in contemporary England. Even when he was asking for money from him, Antonio was arrogant enough to declare that

he will do these same atrocities on him again in future. Thus even though Shylock ask for a cruel deal of having a pound flesh extracted from Antonio if he cannot repay the debt taken for Bassanio within the stipulated period of time, we understand the reason behind his animosity towards Antonio. We also see how Shylock's daughter Jessica was made to believe that being a Jew is a sin which is why we find her promising that she will change her religion to Christianity if Lorenzo, her Christian lover, marries her. In the end of the play we see that in the trial scene, the cruelty of a Jew is juxtaposed with the merciful Christian. According to the critics Mamoon Khaled Alqudah and Radzuwan Ab Rashid (2019):

The play Merchant of Venice is purely opposing Jewish justice and also against Christin's mercy. Shylock as a Jew, demands impartiality and justice and rejects mercy. Portia, as a Christian counter with the claim of mercy which favors justice. Therefore, the merchant of Venice Justice and mercy are considered to be the most prominent features of the play. Shylock talks to Christians and Jews by following their same expects and believes. When Antonio acknowledged that he cannot repay his doubt, Shylock becomes keen for his justice and bound.(P.27).

Since Antonio could not repay the debt, Shylock was adamant to enforce the agreement and demanded to have a pound of flesh from his body. However, Portia disguised as Balthazar asks him to cut off that flesh without spilling even a drop of blood since it was not mentioned in the contract. At the end of the play not only he is unable to get his revenge, but he also loses his money and was asked to convert to Christianity. This makes the audience feel pity for him, even though he was supposed to be the villain of the story. The cause behind the feeling of sympathy for him is because the audience or readers can relate with his plea for equality. He says:

I am a Jew. Hath not a Jew eyes? Hath not a Jew hands, organs, dimensions, senses, affections, passions; fed with the same food, hurt with the same weapons, subject to the same diseases, healed by the same means, warmed and cooled by the same winter and summer as a Christian is? If you prick us do we not bleed? If you tickle us do we not laugh? If you poison us do we not die? And if you wrong us shall we not revenge? If we are like you in the rest, we will resemble you in that. If a Jew wrong a Christian, what is his humility? Revenge. If a Christian wrong a Jew, what should his sufferance be by Christian example?

Why, revenge. The villainy you teach me I will execute, and it shall go hard but I will better the instruction.

(Act-III, Scene- I, Lines 49-61)

This justified plea for equality that the Jews did when they were treated unfairly by the English people and the injustice of their forced conversion to Christianity is something that makes the audience feel bad for them. This empathetic portrayal of the Jews was something which was progressive for that age when there was widespread hatred against them. Shakespeare though tried his best to stick to the fate of the Jews at that point of time by punishing Shylock by the end of the play, but still his empathetic portrayal of the religious marginalised character is remarkable.

Racially Marginalised Characters in Shakespeare's Plays:

Racial marginalisation is the marginalisation of a group of people based on their different racial or ethnic identities. As we all know, the process of Colonialism fostered racism. The period of colonialism began from the year 1500 onwards. Shakespeare wrote his play *The Tempest* in 1611 during the heyday of colonialism, so it is not very shocking that he would include the racially marginalised characters in this play. According to Upasana Kath Borah (2020),

In the play, the colonizers oppress and subjugate the natives, the colonized people are hegemonized due to the racial differences. The play presents the character Caliban, who is the original inhabitant of the island, as a savage and uncivilized. The main male protagonist of the play, Prospero is the outsider but he is the colonial master who dominates the other characters of the play. Shakespeare also showcases the dehumanization of colonial rule throughout the play. *The Tempest* depicts the power relation between master-slave, colonizer-colonized, white-black, civilized -uncivilized.

(P.7675)

Several critics are of the view that Prospero represents a western colonizer who comes to a foreign island and in the pretext of civilizing the savage natives enslaves them and exploits their land and resources. From the play we learn that he had taken the land from Sycorax and rules over it and imposed his own rules and regulations over the inhabitants of the island. Sycorax's son Caliban represents the native of the island who is reduced to slavery by his coloniser Prospero. In spite of the fact that he is the original inheritor of the land, Prospero mistreats him. He is introduced in monstrous and racist manner:

A devil, a born devil, on whose nature / Nurture can never stick; on whom my
pains, / Humanely taken, all, all lost, quite lost; /And as with age his body uglier
grows, / So his mind cankers. I will plague them all, / Even to roaring

(Act-IV, Scene- I, Lines 188-193)

The practice of dehumanising the natives of foreign land in an attempt to justify the rule over them has been the topic of discussion in Postcolonial study for a long period. As we can see the same thing happened over here. Even the name that was given to him that is Caliban is much similar to the word cannibal to highlight his savage nature. However, like we have already seen in some other cases, Shakespeare's portrayal of the marginalised characters is quite progressive. Therefore we find the character Caliban is not a blind follower of his coloniser, and is very vocal about his disapproval of him. He is not interested in learning the things which were taught to him by his master and thus protests against his coloniser. He also had possessive feelings towards his own land. He also explains how he was wronged by Prospero:

This island's mine, by Sycorax my mother,
Which thou tak'st from me. When thou cam'st first,
Thou strok'st me and mad'st much of me, wouldst give me
Water with berries in 't, and teach me how
To name the bigger light and how the less,
That burn by day and night. And then I loved thee,
And show'd thee all the qualities o' th' isle,
The fresh springs, brine-pits, barren place and fertile.
Cursed be I that did so! All the charms
Of Sycorax, toads, beetles, bats, light on you,
For I am all the subjects that you have,
Which first was mine own king; and here you sty me
In this hard rock, whiles you do keep from me
The rest o' th' island.

(Act-1, Scene-II, Lines: 333-345)

Another interesting way adopted by Caliban to fight back Prospero is the knowledge of the coloniser. He says:

You taught me language, and my profit on 't
Is I know how to curse. The red plague rid you

For learning me your language! (Act-I. Scene-II, Lines: 364-366)

Whatever he learns from his coloniser Prospero, he tries to use that to harm Prospero.

According to Upasona Kath Borah (2020),

Shakespeare is successful to showcase the various phases of colonialism during his time through the play. He projects the colonial conquest over the colonies by representing the island in the play. The conqueror are the precapitalis, they always try to manufacture the lower class and enslaved them. Though the play is written during the Elizabethan period but it can be re-read as a play of Colonialism, Postcolonialism and Marxism of the modern period.

(p. 7679).

He is desperate to get back his land from Prospero at any cost. Throughout the play we find him rebellious and looking for sovereignty. Thus, in this play we find a colonised 'other' with a voice of his own. A little glimpse of racism can also be seen in the play *The Merchant Of Venice*, where we find Portia unwilling to marry the prince of Morocco because of his dark complexion. Therefore marginalised communities and the way they are treated has found their depictions in Shakespeare's plays.

Conclusion:

To conclude, as we can see from our analysis of a select Shakespearean plays; Shakespeare depicted the condition of several socially marginalised groups in several of his plays. These depictions are remarkable by the way they are so progressive considering the time when they were written and performed for the first time. Shakespeare has portrayed these characters not as caricatures but as real people who have voices of their own. They use this voice to make the audience look into their life even from their perspective. Even though these portrayals are not free from the colours of prejudices but yet considering the time when these were written, it was definitely remarkable.

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____XXX____

SHAKESPEARE IN FRANCE: FROM THE NEO-CLASSICISTS TO THE ROMANTICS

Anindita Saha

Abstract: Shakespeare does not belong to any age or country. He is universal. During his lifetime, English troupes were seen performing in various European countries like Germany, Austria, Sweden, Denmark, The Netherlands and even Latvia, and in most of the country, the bulk of the repertoires was Shakespearean but in France, we did not get any mention of Shakespeare during his lifetime or after his death, or, to speak most accurately, in the seventeenth century. In this paper, I would primarily focus to find out the reason behind Shakespeare's late entry into France. I would also endeavour to trace how and when Shakespeare was introduced into France and became popular. In other words, besides tracing the cause behind Shakespeare's delayed introduction in France, I would try to trace the journey of Shakespeare from the Neo-classical period to the Romantic period in France.

Keywords: French classical tragedy, English theatre, enlightenment, romanticism, enmity, barbarous, adaptation, translation.

During the seventeenth century Shakespeare was almost unknown to French readers. Cannaday writes: "No Frenchman [between 1604 and 1682] is known to have made any reference to him, or to any of his plays, nor is there any concrete evidence of performances of his plays, or those of any other English playwrights, by actors of any nationality, in France" (qt. in Green 1). There is a historical reason behind this. France knew very little about England during the seventeenth century and had no interest also to know England more because there was a great enmity between France and England which was reflected during the "Hundred Years War". Not only that, at the battle of Agnicourt, the French nobility had been decimated by the English longbowmen. Joan of Arc had been killed by the English ecclesiastics. English king separated the English throne from the English church and supported the Protestants, and above all, a large number of British people rebelled against the young Charles I and beheaded him (Green 149).

Apart from these ignorance and general prejudices, there are others reasons and facts also that hint us why Shakespeare remained almost unknown in France throughout the seventeenth century. We know that in England and in France drama had begun in church. During the Renaissance, the development of English drama began to differ markedly from that of the English. It is true that in both the countries, the drama moved from the church to the public square due to the introduction of the comic, crude and

grotesque elements into the drama and at the same time both the countries reacted against the excesses but the timing and intensity was not the same because the resistance in France was sudden, and forcible, sixteen years before Shakespeare was born, i.e., in 1548, but in England it began to develop about the time Shakespeare embarked on his career, but remained as an undercurrent until the Puritans came to power toward the middle of the seventeenth century (Green 4).

Actually in 1548, the French parliament pronounced against the coarse humour and grotesque scenes of the mystery plays by decreeing the suppression of religious drama. French critics and writers were also successful in eliminating other excesses of the theatre, like time, place, and action, during the next hundreds years. This gradual elimination of excesses ultimately led towards establishing simplicity, purity, refinement, and verisimilitude as guiding principles of an improved French theatre. During this period, Renaissance poets were condemned for their free play of imagination and emotions and for expressing their personal sentiments in their verse.

One thing is also to be mentioned here that before 1625, no play was supposed to carry the name of the playwright. But by 1625, “when notices began to carry the name of the playwright”, a new era in the world of French drama began because people of merit attracted to write drama (Green 150). In 1636, *Le Cid*, a drama by Corneille, “gave modern French drama its first masterpiece” and established the form of French Classical tragedy which Racine and his contemporaries carried to perfection (Green 150). This drama was characterized by simplicity, refinement, and purity. In this way, this drama set the guiding principles for the French theatre and this principles remained unchallenged in France for nearly one hundred and fifty years until the Romantics, especially Victor Hugo revolted against the tradition and established their own like the Renaissance playwrights. Thus we find that French society in general and French theatre in particular put a barrier during the seventeenth century to “any extension of Shakespeare’s genius or influence across the channel” (Green 151).

Shakespeare was introduced into France during the eighteenth century. But Shakespeare was not introduced for the first time by Hugo or by the ‘Romantics’ in France. The credit to a very limited extent goes to the Abbe Prevost, an exiled monk, and mostly to Voltaire, the enlightened ‘Philosoph’ of France. Abbe Prevost, came to France from England to “to play his part in the movement of ideas” by conceiving “the idea of gaining his livelihood by spreading among the French public a taste for things English” (Havens2). In 1731, he speaks for the first time about Shakespeare in the *Memoires d’un homme de*

qualite (Havens 3). Here his admiration for Shakespeare is expressed but at the same time, he found “bouffonneries” in Shakespeare. In short, he was very much a classicist. It may be that either from the timidity in the face of French opinion or from the limitation of his taste, he failed to embrace the cause of Shakespeare too ardently. So, we cannot call him the first ardent champion of Shakespeare in France. However, from 1733 to 1740, the Abbe published his weekly periodical, the *Pour et Contre*, which was of utmost importance for Voltaire to seek in it favourable reviews of his works (Havens 2).

Voltaire, in Prevost’s weekly newspaper, while discussing about Bolingbroke and Chesterfield, “whose pronouncements against Shakespeare are known to have exceeded a mere “Tiph, toph”, unintentionally aroused the interest of all France in English literature, generally, and in Shakespeare, particularly” (Green 152). It is to be noted here that in 1746, La Place published an eight volume edition of Shakespeare’s plays by omitting ‘objectionable scenes’ and rendering the rest into alexandrine verse or prose (Green 152). This was the first translation of Shakespeare into French.

Actually During Voltaire’s brief English sojourn, as I have already noted, Shakespeare was virtually, unknown in France. Voltaire discovered Shakespeare during his exile in England and introduced Shakespeare into France. But Voltaire was ambivalent about his introduction of Shakespeare into France because he had some reservations about Shakespeare for not being neo-classical, or, in other words, “barbaric”. However, Voltaire did a lot in the 1730s to bring Shakespeare to France but he believed that the French playwrights were superior to this “artistic quack” (Hart, “Shakespeare and Translation”5). This neoclassical ambivalence regarding Shakespeare was not something new in England too because this ambivalence was also discernible during the Restoration period when Charles II restored to the throne after returning from France to England after 1660. Regarding Shakespeare, Dryden and Pope were ambivalent. Like Dryden and Pope, Voltaire saw Shakespeare through a classical lens (Dryden 41). He published in pamphlet form, in 1760, an *Appeal to All the Nations of Europe* and through this pamphlet he called on everyone who could read from “St. Petersburg to Naples” to examine with him *Hamlet*, *Othello*, and Otway’s *The Orphan* to compare them with best plays of French playwrights, such as Corneille or Racine. This reason behind writing this pamphlet was to establish the superiority of French theatre (Green 152). What Havens says in this respect is worth-quoting: “Nevertheless even his admiration, keen enough sometimes, was often greatly limited either by professional jealousy or by prejudices due to birth and education”(2).

It is to be noted here that Voltaire was more decided than Prevost, both in his first enthusiasm and in his later hostility. As Hart says, “Voltaire translated Shakespeare against much resistance about four decades before then to this later and immediate context, that is Shakespeare being called a god of the theatre in 1776, by Letourneur” (Hart, Webinar). Le Tourneur published a twenty volume of prose translations of Shakespeare’s work containing a list of over 800 subscribers for more than 1200 copies. This list was quite attractive because it was headed by the king and queen of France, the king of England, and the Empress of all the Russias (Green 154). Before 1776, we also notice that Jean-Francois Ducis, “who literally worshipped Shakespeare” adapted Hamlet for the French stage in 1769 (Green 154). The French audience applauded wildly by watching the performance of the drama while Diderot disapproved it and suggested that Ducis should quit playwriting and should turn to copywriting (Green 153). However, after reading the preface of the Le Tourneur’s translations, Voltaire reacted vigorously and wrote a long “Letter to the Academy” reminding the Academicians of “the horrors of Shakespearean tragedy and the elegance of the French” in 1776. He was eventually informed by the Academy that his personal view could not get official sanction (Green 155). In 1778, Voltaire died and Ducis was elected to replace him in the Academy.

So, “just as Voltaire appeals to taste, so too do others later: tastes change” (Hart, Webinar). Thus, in spite of the resistance by the French neo-classicists, the popularity of Shakespeare in France began to increase and it gathered momentum with romanticism and in this respect Victor Hugo and his son Francoise-Victor Hugo proved instrumental in establishing Shakespeare’s popularity in France.

But before Hugo we find that Madame de Stael was also an admirer of English and German literature and asked the French writer to seek inspiration from Germany and England. In her novel *Corinne*, Lord Oswald Nelvillis is a Hamleian character (Lancaster 11). But Chateaubriand, one of the precursors of French Romanticism, was against the growing Shakespeare cult: he also called Shakespeare’s works “barbarous”, full of “bad taste and vice” (Green 155). He dismissed *Hamlet* as ‘bedlam’ but the French did not give any importance to his words. They had seen the adapted version of Othello by Ducis where the character of Iago was eliminated and Hamlet was reworked by him. Though they did not see the real Shakespeare on the stage, they believed they had seen. Even those French people who had read Le Tourneur’s translation found a similarity between Shakespeare and the French Revolutionaries because according to them, Shakespeare was free of the

unities and the rules and all the rest, as the French revolutionaries had made themselves in 1789.

In 1820, Guizot published a good prose translation of Shakespeare. During 1820s Stendhal (1783-1842) made again a comparison between Racine and Shakespeare in his essay on “Racine and Shakespeare” and opined that Racine was a great writer for the court of Louise XIV and a modern adaptation of Racine would seem out of place with nineteenth century audiences. On the other hand, Shakespeare was free of the slavery of the Alexandrine rhyme and the unities and, thus, he offered a better model. Stendhal, with the support of Lamartine, became the leader of the younger writers. But in 1827 they had grouped under Hugo. Hugo wrote his first play, *Cromwell*, this year and the preface of the play served as the manifesto of the romantic school, which ultimately placed Hugo, not Stendhal, at the head of the Romantic Movement in France.

During this decade two troupes of English actors performed in Paris. The first troupes were little better than the troupes which had performed before the Dauphin in 1604. The acting was very poor. But the second troupe which arrived in 1827 was talented. After watching the performance what the young Romantic writer, Alexander Dumas said is noteworthy:

And I recognized that, in the world of the theatre, everything emanated from Shakespeare, just as in the world of reality everything emanates from the sun, that no one could compare with him for he was as dramatic, as Corneille, as comic as Moliere, as original as Calderon, as much a thinker as Goethe, and as passionate as Schiller.....I recognized, lastly, that he was the man, next to god, who had created the most (qt. in Grant3)

He set up the *Theatre Historique* in 1847 for presenting Shakespeare in French in 1847. But here too we find that Shakespeare was adapted in a way to suit French taste. The originality of Shakespearean writing was not retained.

George Sand, one of the great romantic authors of France, in her *Historie de ma Vie* (1854-55) reminisces her earlier reading programme at the age of fifteen and records that the characters of *Hamlet* and of Jacques in *As You Like It* made a profound impact on her (Sand, *Historie* 211). Duke Alber in her novel *Consuelo* (1843) is a Hamleian character. In her own adaptation of *As You Like It*, Jacques moves to the centre of the play and the writer thought it was better to reward him with a marriage to Celia (Schabert 21). She creates a kind of female Hamlet in one of her early novels. Lelia, in *Lelia*, serious and pale, appears at a ball dressed in dark, male clothes (Sand, *Lelia* 21). She claims an intimate

relationship with Shakespeare's hero. She even published an essay in 1845 where we find Sand in an intimate dialogue with Hamlet. About this essay what Helen Phelps Baile wrote in her book, *Hamlet in France* is worth quoting: "No analysis of the period is more characteristically romantic in one emphasis or more meaningful... than the one contributed by Sand..." (Baile 31).

French poet Charles Baudelaire (1821-1867) and Stephane Mallarme (1842-1898) were great admirers of Shakespeare too.

Vicor Hugo, like Dumas, after watching the performance of the second troupe, highly rated Shakespeare's plays. In 1864, his son, Francoise Victor Hugo undertook the work of translating Shakespeare in French systematically in 18 volumes and Victor Hugo, the great writer, actually, contributed a great deal in promoting his son's work by writing a preface to it and thereby, contributed a lot to make Shakespeare famous in France (Hart, "Shakespearean Studies: Text and Context").

What Jonathan Hart said in this respect is worth quoting: "It is important to focus most on the father's preface in the first volume and on the son's translations of the sonnets in volume 15. The reason for this choice and method is that the pioneering work in the first phases of literary translations needs close examination, what I call the establishment of translation or reputation" ("Shakespeare and Translation" 9)

To conclude, we must say that though the popularity of Shakespeare gained momentum during Romanticism, it does not mean that his popularity began to wane after the waning of Romanticism. As Green has put it very nicely: "French literary critics and historians would be willing...to write in the name of Shakespeare at the top of the list of the world's greatest writers..." (Green 157). But, to speak precisely, I would say that Shakespeare came to France with the Enlightenment reaction to the Neo-classical convention and became popular by the French Romantics.

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REVENGE AND MERCY IN SHAKESPEAREAN DRAMAS: A STUDY

Anurag Banerjee

While revenge is generally looked upon as a justified reason to settle scores or an act of punishment, William Shakespeare considered it to be a moral duty — a duty which should be executed only as a last resort by the ruler of the land. He was well aware of the futility of revenge, so, having described it as ‘wasteful’, he made King Henry say:

...and his soul
Shall stand sore charged for the wasteful vengeance
That shall fly with them; for many a thousand widows
Shall this his mock mock out of their dear husbands,
Mock mothers from their sons, mock castles down,
And some are yet ungotten and unborn
That shall have cause to curse the Dauphin’s scorn.

Henry V, Act II, Scene II

In the lines which follow the aforesaid passage, we find Henry V express his unwillingness to shed blood for the sake of revenge:

But this lies all within the will of God,
To whom I do appeal, and in whose name
Tell you the Dauphin I am coming on,
To venge me as I may and to put forth
My rightful hand in a well-hallow’d cause.

Ibid.

In his drama *Richard II*, we find Shakespeare suggesting a more polished or purified approach to vengeance instead of the common and popular blood-for-blood and eye-for-eye attitude which he believed was unsuitable for a genuine and faithful Christian. ‘We are no tyrant, but a Christian king’, says King Henry in Act I, Scene II of *Henry V*. One could ask: if Shakespeare was not an advocate of revenge, why did King Henry sentence Cambridge, Scroop and Grey (the conspirators) to death? Was it not an act of revenge? Here it is to be remembered that Shakespeare treated death sentence not as an act of vengeance but as a ‘sacrifice’. In the following passage of Act II Scene II, one comes across King Henry’s standpoint when one finds him say:

Touching our person seek we no revenge;
But we our kingdom’s safety must so tender,

Whose ruin you have sought, that to her laws
We do deliver you. Get you therefore hence,
Poor miserable wretches, to your death:
The taste whereof, God of his mercy give
You patience to endure, and true repentance
Of all your dear offences! Bear them hence.

In fact, how a misdeed could invite the wrath of the gods in heaven is evident in the soliloquy 'O God of battles' in Act IV Scene I in which King Henry expresses his apprehension as well as his repentance and also asks for mercy:

... More will I do—
Though all that I can do is nothing worth,
Since that my penitence comes after all,
Imploring pardon.

So, instead of striking back to avenge any misdeed, Shakespeare suggested in Act I Scene II of *Richard II* that like a true and faithful Christian:

Put we our quarrel to the will of heaven,
Who, when they see the hours ripe on earth,
Will rain hot vengeance on offenders' heads.

And

God's the quarrel; for God's substitute,
His deputy anointed in his sight,
Hath caus'd his death; the which if wrongfully,
Let heaven revenge, for I may never lift
An angry arm against his minister.

The concept of sacrifice has been made good use of by Shakespeare in his drama, *Julius Caesar*, where the assassination of Caesar is treated as an act of sacrifice and those who were associated with the murder were not assassins but sacrificers. Accordingly, Brutus says:

Let us be sacrificers, but not butchers, Caius.
We all stand up against the spirit of Caesar;
And in the spirit of men there is no blood:
(Act II, Scene I)

And:

Let's carve him as a dish fit for the gods,

Not hew him as a carcass fit for hounds:
And let our hearts, as subtle masters do,
Stir up their servants to an act of rage,
And after seem to chide 'em. This shall make
Our purpose necessary and not envious;
Which so appearing to the common eyes,
We shall be call'd purgers not murderers.

(Ibid.)

Brutus claims that he murdered Julius Caesar to save Rome and that though he and his co-conspirators appear to be 'bloody and cruel', their hearts are 'pitiful'. Pitiful for whom? 'And pity to the general wrong of Rome', says he in Act III, Scene I. However, in *Julius Caesar*, we find a chain of revenge. Pompey was dethroned by Caesar, his lieutenant, who also got him murdered at Egypt. Brutus, a friend of Caesar, killed him to remove him from his seat of power. Mark Anthony decides to avenge Caesar's death; along with Octavius he is determined that the 'three-and-thirty wounds' inflicted upon Caesar need to be 'well aveng'd' (Act V, Scene I). But the story of revenge does not end here. In the third scene of the fifth act, we find Cassius dying on the same sword which was used by him on Caesar. Thus he says:

Caesar, thou art reveng'd,
Even with the sword that kill'd thee.

Brutus too realizes especially after seeing the ghost of Caesar that his end was approaching and so he says: 'Caesar, now be still; / I kill'd not thee with half so good a will.' (Act V, Scene V)

Othello cannot be called a revenge play like *Hamlet* or *Titus Andronicus* although the element of revenge does exist in it. Iago poisoned Othello's mind and turned him against Cassio and Desdemona so much so that Othello decided to kill Desdemona (the love of his life) as 'she must die, else she'll betray more men' (Act V, Scene II). Out of sheer fury and pang of betrayal, he cried out:

Arise, black vengeance, from the hollow hell!
Yield up, O love! thy crown and hearted throne
To tyrannous hate ...
O! blood, blood, blood! ...
Even so my bloody thoughts with violent peace,
Shall ne'er look back, ne'er ebb to humble love,

Till that a capable and wide revenge
Swallow them up.

(Act III, Scene III)

Desdemona knew for certain that under no circumstance her love for Othello would ever change. To Iago she had said: 'Unkindness may do much; / And his unkindness may defeat my life, / But never taint my love.' (Act IV, Scene II). When Emilia expressed her suspicion to Desdemona that an 'eternal villain, some busy and insinuating rogue' could have conspired against Othello, Desdemona replied that that if any such person did exist may heaven pardon him. When Emilia asked Desdemona when the latter was in her death-bed who was responsible for her death, the noble lady replied: 'Nobody. I myself.' (Act V, Scene II) Othello wanted to take revenge on Desdemona for being unfaithful to him. But in reality, it was Desdemona who took her sweet revenge on Othello by pardoning him for suspecting her to be disloyal and punishing her with a 'guiltless death'. Mercy was Desdemona's instrument of revenge against Othello.

The Merchant of Venice, although being a comedy, is actually a revenge-centric drama. Shylock, the villain, has nothing in his heart for Antonio except profound hatred. He hated Antonio for being a Christian, hating the Jewish nation to which Shylock belonged and bringing down the 'rate of usance' in Venice. In other words, Antonio was a personal foe on whom Shylock bore an 'ancient grudge'. So, when he came to know that Antonio's ship had sunk and that he was no longer in a position to repay the loan he had taken from Shylock, he pounced upon the opportunity to seek his much-craved revenge. And what did he ask for? It was a pound of flesh from Antonio's heart which would 'feed his revenge'. He justified his demand by stating that Antonio had disgraced him, laughed at the losses he had incurred, made fun when he profited, humiliated the Jewish race to which Shylock belonged, turned his friends against him and provoked his enemies. And all these deeds were done by Antonio for the sole reason that Shylock was a Jew. Shylock argues:

...hath not a Jew eyes? Hath not a Jew hands, organs, dimensions, senses, affections, passions? Fed with the same food, hurt with the same weapons, subject to the same diseases, healed by the same means, warmed and cooled by the same winter and summer as a Christian is? If you prick us, do we not bleed? If you tickle us, do we not laugh? If you poison us, do we not die? And if you wrong us, shall we not revenge? If we are like you in the rest, we will resemble you in that. If a Jew wrong a Christian, what is his

humility? Revenge. If a Christian wrong a Jew, what should his sufferance be by Christian example? Why, revenge. The villainy you teach me I will execute—and it shall go hard but I will better the instruction.

(Act III, Scene I)

In *Cymbeline*, we find a plot similar to *Othello*. Iachimo plots against Posthumus and poisons the mind of Imogen (Posthumus' wife) and urges her to take revenge on him for being unfaithful to her. Iachimo instigates Imogen by saying:

Be reveng'd;
Or she that bore you was no queen, and you
Recoil from your great stock.

(Act I, Scene VI)

When Imogen asks how should she take the revenge, Iachimo reiterates: 'Revenge it.' Another character of the drama, Cloten (Imogen's step-brother), sought revenge from Imogen because: 'She hath despised me rejoicingly, and I'll be merry in my revenge.' (Act III, Scene V) Being misled into believing that Imogen had been unfaithful to him, Posthumus too sought to avenge Imogen's infidelity. In a soliloquy he speaks of revenge which he counts to be among the worst demerits of human personality:

For there's no motion
That tends to vice in man but I affirm
It is the woman's part; be it lying, note it,
The woman's; flattering, hers; deceiving, hers;
Lust and rank thoughts, hers, hers; revenges, hers.

(Act II, Scene V)

However, he falls a prey to the spirit of vengeance and instructs Pisanio, his servant, to murder Imogen. But as revenge is an emotion which is not to be glorified, Shakespeare brought in a significant turn of events in the drama. Iachimo's conscience pricked him and being full of remorse he asked for death from Posthumus who tells him:

Kneel not to me:
The power that I have on you is to spare you;
The malice towards you to forgive you. Live,
And deal with others better.

(Act V, Scene V)

And the message which *Cymbeline* finally conveys is: 'Pardon's the word to all.' (*Ibid.*)

Revenge as a concept has been rejected in Shakespeare's *The Winter's Tale* although in the beginning of the drama we find Leontes, the King of Sicily, in the grip of the spirit of revenge which he advocates vehemently in Act II, Scene III:

Fie, fie! no thought of him;
The very thought of my revenges that way
Recoil upon me.

But he had a change of heart when he received the news of the young prince's death and he realized that his 'jealousies' had transported him to 'bloody thoughts and to revenge.' (Act III, Scene II) Towards the end of the drama, in Act V Scene III, we find Leontes confess:

I am asham'd: does not the stone rebuke me
For being more stone than it? O, royal piece!
There's magic in thy majesty, which has
My evils conjur'd to remembrance.

So, ultimately we observe that pity and not revenge has been emphasized in *The Winter's Tale*.

The element of revenge is also noticed in the *Twelfth Night* although in this drama the main motive of revenge was to teach a lesson. In *Twelfth Night*, revenge has been described as a 'sportful malice'¹ by Fabian. The Clown also remarks: 'And thus the whirligig of time brings in his revenges.' (Act V, Scene I)

A careful perusal of Shakespeare's dramas would reveal that although most of his works were revenge-oriented themes, he neither advocated nor glorified revenge. Jagannath Chakravorty aptly remarks in his book on Shakespeare that the idea of 'outright revenge' is rejected by Shakespeare and it does not reappear in the tragedies penned by him.² A misdeed must not be repaid with vengeance but with mercy because forgiveness is a virtue of the highest order. In *The Winter's Tale*, we find Hermione, the Queen of Sicily, evoking pity instead of revenge when she says: '... yet with eyes/Of pity, not revenge.' (Act III, Scene II) In *The Tempest*, we find mercy being glorified instead of revenge when we come across the phrase: '... the rarer action is/ In virtue than in vengeance' in Act V, Scene I. And finally, mercy is described as an 'attribute to God himself' when Portia (in Act IV, Scene I) says:

The quality of mercy is not strain'd,
It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven
Upon the place beneath: it is twice bless'd;

It blesseth him that gives and him that takes:
'Tis mightiest in the mightiest; it becomes
The throned monarch better than his crown;
His sceptre shows the force of temporal power,
The attribute to awe and majesty,
Wherein doth sit the dread and fear of kings;
But mercy is above this sceptred sway,
It is enthroned in the hearts of kings,
It is an attribute to God himself,
And earthly power doth then show likest God's
When mercy seasons justice. Therefore, Jew,
Though justice be thy plea, consider this,
That in the course of justice none of us
Should see salvation: we do pray for mercy,
And that same prayer doth teach us all to render
The deeds of mercy.

Shakespeare knew that the spirit of revenge would eventually lead to bloodshed whereas through pardon or mercy one could bring about peace. That is why he never celebrated the triumph of revenge but preached the transmutation of revenge into mercy. Through the dialogues of the characters of his plays, he has advocated the glory of mercy. Let's cite, as an instance, the following lines of *Measure for Measure* spoken by Isabella:

... Well, believe this,
No ceremony that to great ones 'longs,
Not the king's crown, nor the deputed sword,
The marshal's truncheon, nor the judge's robe,
Become them with one half so good a grace
As mercy does.

(Act II, Scene II)

Also:

Alas! alas!
Why, all the souls that were forfeit once;
And He that might the vantage best have took,
Found out the remedy. How would you be,
If He, which is the top of judgment, should

But judge you as you are? O! think on that,
And mercy then will breathe within your lips,
Like man new made.

(*Ibid.*)

Thus, it is observed that Shakespeare, although being the author of several revenge-centric plays, was never quite a staunch follower of the philosophy of revenge as he knew its futility. On the contrary, like a true Christian, he believed in the fruitfulness of mercy and that is why, through most of his dramas, he has shown how revenge could and should be transmuted into mercy.

Note

1. How with a sportful malice it was follow'd, / May rather pluck on laughter than revenge.— *Twelfth Night*, Act V, Scene I.
2. *The Idea of Revenge in Shakespeare*, p. 258.

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TAGORE'S AESTHETICS OF MUSIC: THROUGH THE LENS OF SHAKESPEARE AND SRI AUROBINDO

Gargi Saha

Abstract: Both Shakespeare and Sri Aurobindo had a deep feeling for music. Their verses expressed a rhythmic voice of life. In the *Merchant of Venice*, Shakespeare anticipates Tagore in his ability to feel the music in the abundant grace of Nature, the moonlight and the soft stillness of night, where the sounds of music can be heard. Whereas Shakespeare hints at the mystic music of Nature, Sri Aurobindo listens to the spiritual note directly and expresses it in his prose and poetry. This world is music to them, as expressed by Tagore more specifically in his more than two thousand songs and in his essays on music.

Keywords: Sweet harmony, mantra, music and feeling, psychic, surplus.

“How sweet the moonlight sleeps upon this bank!

Here will we sit and let the sounds of music

Creep in our ears: Soft stillness and the night

Become the touches of sweet harmony.”

(The Merchant of Venice, Act 4, Scene 1)

“The outer singer should indeed disappear into the past, - it is only so that the inner singer can take her place.” - Sri Aurobindo

(Letters)

Music appears almost in all the well-known plays of Shakespeare, often indicating a deeper meaning related to the theme of a situation, sometimes pointing to the taste of a character as in *Twelfth Night*. In the passage we have cited above from the *Merchant of Venice*, we have an immediate insight into the psyche of the dramatist, despite his elusive personality hiding behind the character who speaks those words. It is a passage relevant to the mystic realization of Tagore, who hears music in the sky, the land and the waters. It suggests an opening of the soul to the music in the universe. Sri Aurobindo too stresses on the essentiality of music to open up to a finer life, a deeper realisation, a means of touching the deepest centre of our being. He observes:

Music deepens the emotions and harmonises them with each other. Between them music, art and poetry are a perfect education for the soul; they make and keep its movements purified, self-controlled, deep and

harmonious. These, therefore, are agents which cannot profitably be neglected by humanity on its onward march or degraded to the mere satisfaction of sensuous pleasure which will disintegrate rather than build the character. They are, when properly used, great educating, edifying and civilising forces (*The Complete Works of Sri Aurobindo* 448).

Sri Aurobindo wrote it as Aurobindo Ghose in Calcutta in Section 4 of his treatise on the *National Value of Art*. It shows that both for Tagore and Sri Aurobindo music is part of the education process of a human being.

Music in the *Tempest* is mostly to pass on messages, though it is symbolic too. But, the importance of music in building up the character of a person is only indicated in *The Merchant of Venice*:

The man that hath no music in himself,
Nor is not moved with concord of sweet sounds,
Is fit for treasons, stratagems and spoils;
The motions of his spirit are dull as night
And his affections dark as Erebus:
Let no such man be trusted. (5.1 93-98)

This relates to the importance of music in Rabindranath Tagore and why music was so absorbing in his life style and sadhana. Although Sri Aurobindo was in favour of the classical instrumental music, he does find in Tagore a kind of “chant-filled realms” (*Sri Aurobindo Birth* 229), which is part of his sadhana. For Tagore, Music is feeling. Ragas and Raginis express a meaning or indicate a mood in nature or human beings. He observes:

However, we see then, that the musical rhythm is also a part of expression of feeling. The musical feeling must be commensurate with the note. Both are equally necessary. The musical rhythm must be fast or slow in keeping with the change in feeling. There is no need to keep the musical rhythm uniform throughout. The primary object should be the expression of feeling; the note and the rhythm should be secondary. (*Introduction to Tagore* 44)

In his essay, “Music and Feeling”, Tagore speaks in favour of modernization of music, where the feeling will occupy the central place even at the cost of breaking the grammatical structure of music: “As our Sanskrit is a dead language so our science of music is a dead science. Life has disappeared; only the lifeless body is left behind.” (*Introduction to*

Tagore 42). He wants to draw our notice to the evolving nature of music, where the form has to adapt to the feeling or emotion conveyed by the words in poetry.

Music is nothing but the best way of reading a poem . . . so the primary object of a raga is to express a feeling. But what has it come to now? The feeling is forcefully subordinated to the raga. The raga entrusted with the expression of feeling has treacherously killed the feeling and usurped the throne. Whenever one hears a song one would like to ensure that the forms of the raga—*Jayjayanti*, *Behaga* or *Kannada*—have been perfectly retained. But, Sir, how are we bound to *Jayjayanti* that we should be so servile? If a change in the pattern helps in expressing the feeling better I would welcome the change. If the 5th note in place of the 4th note sounds better and helps in expressing the underlying feeling better, then, come what may to *Jayjayanti*, I would have the 5th note. Have I taken any bribe from *Jayjayanti* that I would try to save it at the cost of my life? (*Introduction to Tagore 44*)

In saying all these things and practising them out, Tagore is virtually going out of the musical view of a classicist like Sri Aurobindo. But then, Sri Aurobindo is highly appreciative of the musical nature of Tagore's lyrics, which verges on his theory of poetry as mantra of the Real. Mantra is also music and that takes us to the true province of Tagore's aesthetics of music, which is also the concept of music in the universe which Shakespeare hears through a character in the *Merchant of Venice*.

Talking of the rapid immediate fame of Tagore in the world, Sri Aurobindo draws us to his own theory of aesthetics and poetic theory, which sees 'vision' as the characteristic power of the poet. Sri Aurobindo was talking of the poets writing in English, like Whitman, Carpenter and the Irish poets, but suddenly he brings in Tagore as a model, as assign of what poetry is to become in future as rhythmic voice of life. What Sri Aurobindo speaks on Tagore's poetry has a close relation with *Rabindrasangeet* (songs of Tagore). Let us observe the following passage from the *Future Poetry*:

The poetry of Tagore owes its sudden and universal success to this advantage that he gives us more of this discovery and fusion for which the mind of our age is in quest than any other creative writer of the time. His work is a constant overpassing of the borders, a chant-filled realm in which

the subtle sounds and lights of the truth of the spirit give new meanings to the finer subtleties of life (*Sri Aurobindo Birth* 229).

We have already referred to the phrase “chant-filled realms”, where Tagore, according to Sri Aurobindo, has frequent access. The passage mostly refers to the mysticism of Tagore and only once indicates that he had constant entry into the spiritual world when he overpasses the borders between the mystic and the spiritual. Here is an example of a song where Tagore has direct feeling of the Divine’s embrace:

Ei lobhinu songo tobo,
sundoro he sundoro !
Punya holo ongo momo,
dhanyo holo antoro
sundoro hey sundoro.
Aloke mor chokkhuduti
mugdho hoye uthlo futi,
Hridgogone pabano holo
sourobhete monthoro
sundoro hey sundoro.
Ei tomari poroshorage
chitto holo ronjito,
Ei tomari milonosudha
roilo praane sonchito.
Tomar majhe emni kore
nobin kore lo je more
Ei jonome ghotale mor
janmo janomantoro.

This company of yours, O Handsome!
Has purified my body, heart filled with gratitude.
Your light has helped open my eyes with admiration,
Your sublime aroma has slowed down the wind within the heart.
Your melodious touch offers colour to my mind.
Your pious conjugation would remain stored within the soul.
You take me rejuvenated within yourself
O Handsome, you have imposed a resurrection within my life.

(Translated by Anjan Ganguly, *Geetabitan.com*)

Tagore's theory of surplus in art is related to his concept of music. Animals spend all their energy, but Man cannot spend all. Something is always in excess in man, the emotional efflux. Tagore draws this concept most probably from the concept of *rasadvani* of Sanskrit poetics. This excess is expressed in our art and music.

In animals, these emotional expressions have gone little beyond their bounds of usefulness. But in man, though they still have roots in their original purposes, they have spread their branches far and wide in the infinite sky above their soil. Man has a fund of emotional energy which is not all occupied with his self-preservation. This surplus seeks in the creation of Art, for man's civilization is built upon his surplus (*Personality* 8-9).

This surplus is also the inspired efflux in Tagore's music, as he feels like Shakespeare in Nature. Again, it is that which is the mantric utterance in Tagore's psychic songs and lyrics. The psychic being according to Sri Aurobindo, is our inmost subliminal centre, which is our true centre and the divine nucleus in us. A large part of Tagore's songs are prayer lyrics, where the poet becomes humble before his true self, whom he calls *Jiban Debata*. Although the songs are divided into types like, Devotion, Love, Nature and Variety, in every type of song there is mostly the presence of the Supreme Being, either directly or indirectly. Of course, not all songs are mystic; some are written for the plays, dance dramas and poetic dramas, which may not fall in the mystic category. But, throughout his life he composed songs, mostly as part of his sadhana or spiritual practice. Poetry in the past was a means of ascension of consciousness. The word Kavi in classical Sanskrit referred to any maker of prose or poetry. But in ancient or Vedic Sanskrit it meant the person who just saw and sang. They were singing poets. Preaching, thinking or imagining something were not the subject of poetry. Poetry was chiefly vision of the Truth. The fire symbolism that we see so frequently in Tagore's poetry comes from his reading of the RikVeda. This is the vedic *agni*, the purifying fire. Poetry as mantra of the Real was part of the spiritual discipline in ancient India.

Tagore was trying to create a new thing with the help of words and the tune, as Goutam Ghosal writes in his book, *Rainbow Bridge: A Comparative Study of Tagore and Sri Aurobindo*:

The best Indian songs are rarely high poetry. Quite often the poetry is mediocre and the *sur* is not the best manifestation of a Behag or a Kedar or

a Kamod. The words and the tune seek to marry in the right spirit and therefore each of them seeks to sacrifice. Out of this sacrifice, a new art is born. This new art—neither the tune nor the poetry—is totally independent, a new product. It is a third art through the sacrifice made by the *sur* and the words (106).

This new creation is spontaneous, an act of a “rhythmic voyage of self-discovery” (*Sri Aurobindo Birth* 16), an incantation in his serious songs, not necessarily in the Devotion phase, but also in his songs of love and Nature. Thus, Tagore creates his own aesthetics of music out of the Vedic tradition mostly, but also through the traditions of Vaisnav Padabali, making most of the songs a sublime thing of beauty, joy and pain, a pain which also sucks out beauty through his magical fusion of words and rhythm.

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EMERSON ON SHAKESPEARE: AN INTERPRETATION

Anasua Das

Abstract: The reception of Shakespeare in America and other post-colonial countries does not always harmonize with his reception in Europe. The nineteenth century American writer, Ralph Waldo Emerson, welcomed him quite critically in his essay, “Shakspeare, or the Poet”. Instead of eulogizing him for his writings, Emerson calls him a master of revels to mankind, who shared the imperfection of human beings. Emerson judges Shakespeare from a transcendentalist’s point of view. According to Emerson Shakespeare was not able to transcend this worldliness. He adopted the stories, characters and scenes already made available by other writers and reproduced them for public entertainment. Hence, he lacks the qualities of a creator and he is not an original writer. A strong sense of equality and democracy empowers Emerson to critique Shakespeare in this way. This criticism does not come from a priest, as most critics often called him, but from a subject of postcolonial country who wants to decentre the Euro-American history and culture and create a history of his own.

Key Words: Emerson, Shakespeare, cultural resistance, creativity, transcendental theory.

William Shakespeare (1564–1616) received significant critical attention during his own lifetime and afterwards. As early as 1598, Francis Meres (1565/1566 – 1647), an English churchman and author declared Shakespeare to be the greatest writer in comedy and tragedy in his commonplace book, *Palladis Tamia, Wits Treasury being the second part of Wits Commonwealth*. In 1599 John Weever (1576–1632) praised Shakespeare as honey-tongued in his book, *Epigrammes in the Oldest Cut, and Newest Fashion*. While being admired worldwide Shakespeare was also staunchly criticized throughout ages. Ben Jonson (1572 – 1637), a classically educated literary critic condemned Shakespeare for not following the classical rules. He disliked the fact that Shakespeare extends history over many years and changes dramatic scene from one place to another instead of concentrating on a single day or a single location. He also objected when Shakespeare mingles clowns and kings, fairies and human beings and lofty verse with vulgarity in his plays. Jonson’s views are again to be found in the literary criticism of the seventeenth century. In his essay, “Of Dramatic Poesie” John Dryden (1631 – 1700) criticizes Shakespeare. He admits that Shakespeare excels in fancy or imagination but he lacks the notion of judgement and his plays should be rewritten in order to get rid of vulgarity. Acceptance and rejection go on

instantaneously in Shakespeare's criticism. Interestingly, the criticism of the criticisms is not less in number. With the spread of the British colonies throughout the world the study of Shakespeare flourished in the continent of Africa, Australia, the Caribbean islands, Indian subcontinent and in North and South America. With the advent of imperialism Shakespearean studies began to receive different interpretation with new notions and distinct identities. The American transcendentalist, Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803–1882) expresses his own views on Shakespeare in his essay, "Shakespeare; or, the Poet". His interpretation of Shakespeare from a transcendental point of view has surely drawn the attention of the followers of Shakespeare. This paper will try to explore and bring out Emerson's understanding of the Bard of Avon in a new way.

In "Shakespeare, or the Poet", Emerson writes, "Great men are more distinguished by range and extent, than by originality. If we require the originality which consists in weaving like a spider their web from their own bowels, in finding clay, and making bricks, and building the house, no great men are original.... The greatest genius is the most indebted man" (247). Emerson judges Shakespeare's talent with this notion. Shakespeare, as Emerson found it, reproduces old, traditional stories in his plays. The court and church often tried to suppress the political allusions from the contemporary audience as they might reveal the hypocrisy of those, who were at the top powerful positions of the state. Besides entertainment, the plays used to expose them cunningly in the innyards or country fair. The audience felt this new joy. Emerson further writes –

The secure possession by the stage of the public mind is of the first importance to the poet who works for it....All the mass has been treated with more or less skill by every playwright, and the prompter has the soiled and tattered manuscripts. It is now no longer possible to say who wrote them first. They have been the property of the Theatre so long, and so many rising geniuses have enlarged or altered them, inserting a speech, or a whole scene, or adding a song, that no man can any longer claim copyright in this work of numbers. (249)

In the essay, "The American Scholar" Emerson elaborates the idea clearly. He explains how the poet is influenced by the "mind of the Past" (58). The poet comes to know this past mainly from books. From the books he receives the raw data for his writings. Then he gives it "the new arrangement of his own mind....It came into him, life; it went out from him, truth. It came to him, short-lived actions; it went out from him, immortal thoughts. It came to him, short-lived actions; it went out from him, immortal thoughts.

It came to him, business; it went from him, poetry” (58). Unfortunately, nobody can escape this influence of the past. But as Emerson noted that the past cannot stop a true genius. Only when a poet cannot “read God directly” he could rely on the books (60). For Shakespeare, tradition provided a better tale than any creation. Emerson noted that Shakespeare owed to the historical accounts and classical texts for his plots characters and stories. T. S. Eliot’s argument in “Tradition and Individual Talent” might elucidate Shakespeare’s attitude, as he advised every author to subordinate himself to tradition, which itself empower sandshapes the individual poet’s vision into his own present. For Emerson, the mind of the past being obstructive, is exactly what the contemporary writer should transcend in articulating the truth of his own time. Hence, from a transcendental point of view Emerson did not find Shakespeare as a creative writer.

It is evident from his journals that Emerson is familiar to Shakespeare for a long time. He places him besides Dante, Homer and Milton and acknowledges his mastermind in creating a scene. In *Journals* (1838) he wrote – “...for our lives could not I, or any man, or all men produce anything comparable to one scene in Hamlet or Lear. With all my admiration for this life-like picture, - set me to producing a match for it, and I should instantly depart into mouthing rhetoric” (125 - 26). Such notions do not reconcile with the idea of the transcendentalist Emerson, who in the essay, “Shakespeare, or the Poet” rejects Shakespeare as a “master of revels to mankind” (259). Hence, critics like John Burroughs interprets in the essay, “Emerson” that Emerson’s views lack sympathy and “the key to all he has said and written is to be found in the fact that his point of view is not that of the acceptor, the creator, - Shakespeare’s point of view, but that of the refiner and selector, the priest’s point of view” (191). Another critic, Norman Forester accused him to be “predominantly priestly rather than poetic” and discarded his views as “the rejection of art in favour of religion” (109). These critics refute the transcendentalist view of life as religious or priest’s point of view. Reason and intellect only cannot judge the transcendentalist ideas, as they give priority to imagination over reason, creativity over theory and action over contemplation. They hoped that human beings can transcendence all their mundane limits. That might be the reason that Emerson, one of the founders of American Transcendental Movement, expected Shakespeare as a creative, original, imaginative and self-reliant writer. He could not accept him as an imitator of the stories available in the market for public entertainment. At the same time he never forgets to acknowledge his skills at describing a dramatic scene or portraying human nature.

The time Emerson had been writing, America was not free from the colonial hangover at all. On 4th July, 1776, America was declared as an independent nation. But apart from the political independence, the European colonizers affected the cultural, social, educational and economic domains too. In *Decolonising the Mind*, Ngũgĩ waThiong'o wrote:

The real aim of colonialism was to control the people's wealth.... Colonialism imposed its control of the social production of wealth through military conquest and subsequent political dictatorship. But the most important area of domination was the mental universe of the colonized, the control, through culture, of how people perceived themselves and their relationship to the world. Economic and political control can never be complete or effective without mental control. To control a people's culture is to control their tools of self-definition in relationship to others. (6)

So, the leaders of America attempted to eradicate the colonial aftermath. They wanted to bring profound changes in American culture. They desired to decentre Euro-American history and culture. They were in search for alternatives to colonial discourse. Emerson, one of the transcendentalist leaders, found that alternative in the ancient Indian philosophy and expressed his transcendental ideas. His choice of spelling of Shakespeare in the essay, "Shakspeare, or the Poet" may be one instance of this. This might be seen as a cultural resistance of a subject from a once colonized nation. Instead of following the European tradition of eulogizing Shakespeare, a British dramatist, the choice to judge him with the transcendental ideas must be another way of cultural protest. The Europeans' proclaimed superiority of their own culture and dismissing the culture of the Other as inferior is challenged in this way.

This trend could be seen in other post-colonial countries of the world. Aurobindo Ghose (1872 – 1950), one of the Indian postcolonial writers, articulated such kind of expressions in *Early Cultural Writings*. He wrote simultaneously on Vyasa, Valmiki and Kalidasa, comparing them with the European masters of literature including Shakespeare. As he compared the Hindu drama with the Elizabethan plays, he showed the basic aesthetic difference between the Elizabethan dramatic models and the Hindu models. The English mind, habituated with the violence and crudities of *The Duchess of Malfi* and *Othello* could not understand and appreciate the non-violent plays of Kalidasa. In an essay, "Hindu Drama" in *Early Cultural Writings* Aurobindo wrote:

Now the average English mind is capable of appreciating character as manifested in strong action or powerfully revealing speech, but constitutionally dull to the subtleties of civilized character which have their theatre in mind and the heart and make of a slight word, a gesture or even silence their sufficient revelation. The nations of Europe, taken in the mass, are still semi-civilized; their mind feeds on the physical, external and grossly salient features of life; where there is no brilliance and glare, they are apt to condemn the personality as characterless.... The Hindu on his side distastes violence in action, excess in his ideal temperance and restraint as well as nobility, truth and beneficence; the Aryan or true gentleman must be... restrained in action and temperate in speech. (189)

Like Emerson, Aurobindo acknowledges that Shakespeare secures the highest rank among the European playwrights but he did not forget to point out Shakespeare's limitations in dealing with the child psychology in his plays, where Kalidasa, an ancient Indian playwright, had excelled. Emerson as well as Aurobindo offered a critique of the Eurocentric discourse of "world-history" by invoking an alternative discourse of what Ranajit Guha called *itihasa* (51-52).

So, the essay, "Shakespeare, or the Poet", was not written to disapprove Shakespeare. It was a critical judgement of Shakespeare with a particular notion, called transcendentalism. The transcendental thoughts had taken Emerson in such a position that he could not but cry out against the vulgarities of this mundane world. With the strong feelings of democracy and equality, belief in what is common in all men and an aesthetic bend of mind Emerson could not stop himself from pointing out Shakespeare's too much worldliness.

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