

Is Shakespeare a Modern Colonist?

J.Jebi Sheljah
II M.A English Literature
St. John's College
Palayamkottai

Abstract

The paper aims at analysing the influence of Shakespeare in India's English world of schools and colleges. It also studies his dominance in India by analysing the syllabus of various institutions. By doing so, the paper will be able to give a blue print of how much Shakespeare has colonised India with his language. And also, the paper will focus on the purpose of placing certain works of Shakespeare in certain syllabus and the impacts of such plays in the young minds. In India our school syllabus contains many of Shakespeare's poetry and stories from his plays. Some plays were presented to them in the simplified language or like a parable. This creates an interest among students and certain moral values. In colleges no Literature course is complete without a paper on Shakespeare. There is no soul in this mortal world especially in India without uttering the immortal name Shakespeare. The paper's task is to prove this fact.

Shakespeare colonised India with his language. The academic shrine in India is constructed with the foundation of schools and colleges. Shakespeare's plays form the major composure of the syllabus of various institutions in India. The syllabi of certain institutions of varied prestige have been selected and analysed for a deeper understanding.

University	Class	Drama	Sonnets
Delhi University	BA	Othello As You Like It Antony and Cleopatra	----
	MA	Romeo and Juliet A Midsummer Night's Dream Hamlet King Lear The Tempest	18, 29, 73, 94, 110, 116, 129, 130, 138.
Calicut University	BA	Macbeth The Merchant of Venice	18, 116
	MA	Hamlet As You Like It Measure For Measure Antony and Cleopatra The Tempest	15, 16, 65, 112, 120, 128, 130, 141, 150.
St. Joseph's College	BA	Julius Caesar Romeo and Juliet As You Like It A Midsummer Night's Dream Antony and Cleopatra Hamlet Macbeth The Winter's Tale	116, 8, 24, 35, 40, 56, 67, 75, 83, 127, 130.
	MA	Othello	127
Gujarat University	BA	Hamlet Macbeth Othello	104

		King Lear As You Like It A Midsummer Night's Dream Twelfth Night	
Calcutta University	BA	A Midsummer Night's Dream Macbeth Julius Caesar Hamlet King Lear	
Punjab University	BA	Othello The Merchant of Venice Richard –II Julius Caesar Hamlet	18, 20, 300, 33, 55, 60, 71, 105, 60
	MA	King Lear	

Schools

Samacheer	XI	Sonnet 116
	XII	Julius Caesar (simplified form)
NCERT	X	Julius Caesar (speech and play)
	XI	Sonnet 109
APCERT	IX	Antony's Speech
MPCERT	X	All the World's a Stage

From the table, it is evident how Shakespeare is ruling over India's education system with his literary works even from his tomb. Though he had left the world his soul has become a part of this world. Some of his works have found their place in almost all institutions. This illustrates the fact that certain plays (like *Macbeth*, *Othello*, *Hamlet*, *Antony and Cleopatra*) and certain sonnets (despite the numbers) are entertaining the young minds of the modern world. In addition to that, these plays create a platform for the young minds: i) to understand the impact of feelings on human life. To support this fact we have *Othello* whose suspicion has ravaged his romantic life. ii) to understand the Shakespearean Age better iii) especially for the school kids the Shakespeare's plays acts as a parable which teaches them the ethics, morality and the path of life. Further, it is important to note the fact that though we have ample writers in Indian Literature, Shakespeare's plays form the majority of the syllabus. This reinstates the fact how Shakespeare influences India.

Literature

The penetration of 'influence of Shakespeare' does not leave the field of Literature. In particular, the influence finds its host in the form of 'drama'. The Indian National Library in Kolkata made a count of Shakespeare translations and adaptations in Indian languages up to 1964. Out of 670 items in all, Bengali led the list with 128, followed by Marathi (97), Tamil (83), Hindi (70), Kannada (66) and Telugu (62). The first performance of *The Taming of the Shrew* in Gujarati was held in Surat, in 1852.

The tradition of classical Marathi drama has lost its hold when Marathi writers became familiar with English and European Drama. Between 1870 and 1920 the Marathi stage was dominated by translations and adaptations. Most of Shakespeare's plays were being translated during this period along with some of the works of Moliere, Schiller, Goldsmith, Sheridan and many others. Shakespeare's tragedies were considered high by the scholars who translated them. Marathi saw about 65 versions of Shakespeare, starting with a popular version of *Othello* composed by Mahadevshastri Kolhatkar and performed by the Aryaddharak Natak Mandali. Gopal Ganesh Agarkar translated *Hamlet* into Marathi as *Vikaravilasita* in 1883.

Shakespeare's influence on Assamese literature has been of a far-reaching nature. In form, tone and content, the modern drama of Assam has been directly shaped by Shakespeare. In the epoch of the *Jonaki* era the high priests of new drama were Lakshminath Bezborua and Padmanath Gohain Barua. Both of them were influenced by not only the form and technique of Shakespeare plays but also the Shakespearean way of characterization. Gajpuria and Priyaram of Bezborua's play, *Chakradhwaj Sinha* were modelled after Falstaff. Lakshminath Bezborua's *Padum Kunwari* is an imitation of *Romeo and Juliet*.

In Hindi, the first translation of Shakespearean plays appeared in the year 1879 when Munshi Imdad translated *The Comedy of Errors* as *Bhram Jhalak*. In 1881, *The Merchant of Venice* was translated by Mitra Vilas press, *Venice ka Vayapari*. Gopinath Purohit translated *Romeo and Juliet* as *Prem Lila* in 1889 and Gadadhar Singh translated *Macbeth* as *Sahasendra* in 1893. Harivansh Rai Bachchan, Amrit Rai and Raghuvver Sahay are some other famous translators of Shakespearean plays into Hindi. Bharatendu Harishchandra, a founder of modern Hindi literature, produced a prose *Merchant* in 1888. In the 1950s, the eminent Hindi poet Harvansh Rai Bachchan produced verse translations of *Macbeth* and *Hamlet*, sometimes staged though apparently intended chiefly for reading.

The pioneering Bengali novels of Bankim Chandra Chatterjee, with a pan-Indian influence, constantly draw chapter epigraphs from Shakespeare. Interestingly, the tutors who educated Tagore at home made him translate all or part of *Macbeth* when he was thirteen. Clearly, Shakespeare's texts were used pedagogically in more ways than we might imagine.

All the above stated information leads us to the speculation that Indian Literature (despite the language) is an imitation of Shakespeare in one way or the other. It is also obvious that Shakespeare has hypnotized the minds of Indian writers. Such influence is shown in the words of Indian authors. Girish Karnad, a renowned Kannada playwright, said in one of the interview that "*Whenever I am asked who is the playwright who has influenced you the most?*" I say, "*Shakespeare*". P. Srinivasacharya, a well-known Tamil writer in one of his books writes that, "*I had before me the best tragedies of the immortal Shakespeare to guide me in the development of characters*". Ramachandra Deva, a famous Kannada writer said that '*I was trying to bring*

Shakespeare to Kannada through myself, and understand myself and my times through Shakespeare.'

From all these data, it can be concluded that Shakespeare has penetrated into the literary ground of India and is dominating it. He has contributed a proportionate amount to the Literature of India and had even acted as a catalyst for the growth of Literature in general in India.

Movies

Following Literature, Shakespearean influence does not leave cinema field of India, where hundreds of movies produced every in different language. It is evident that a definite number of movies are imitating Shakespeare character, art of characterisation or the mode of construction of plot.

Indian cinema is largely influenced by crisp narration and strong characters created by Shakespeare. Filmmakers such as Vishal Bhardwaj have been boldly using the playwright's plots and given them cinematic twists, which is an encouraging trend.

Bhansali, a prominent director in Bollywood said in an interview that "*I have always been influenced by literary work. It is a liberating experience for a filmmaker to make a film on Shakespeare, though. I have taken away several portions from the original Shakespearean play,*". This reinforces the fact how far has he been influenced by Shakespeare which is reflected in his movies.

The movies which have adopted Shakespeare into them are enlisted below. In some movies the characters are of direct influence of Shakespeare whereas in some the plot would have been an imitation of Shakespeare plays.

Khoon Ka Khoon (1935)	Hamlet
Zalim Saudagar (1941)	The Merchant Of Venice
Shylock (1941)	The Merchant Of Venice
Ek Duuje Ke Liyem (1981)	Romeo and Juliet
Angoor (1982)	Comedy of Errors.
Qayamat Se Qayamat Tak (1988)	Romeo and Juliet
Kalyattum (1997)	Othello
Maqbool (2004)	Macbeth
Omkara (2006)	Othello
10ml Love (2010)	A Midsummer's Night's Dream
Do Dooni Chaar (2010)	The Comedy Of Errors
Karmayogi (2012)	Hamlet
Ishaqzaade (2012)	Romeo and Juliet
Goliyon Ki Raasleela Ram Leelam (2013)	Romeo and Juliet
Haider (2014)	Hamlet

From the information it is evident that Shakespeare has imprinted his foot prints in all most all the literary fields in India from School Syllabus to today's movies. There are ample examples to support this hypothesis. Further it adds how much Shakespeare has colonized India with his language. On the whole, Shakespeare in the Indian Context is inseparable and indistinct from the Literature of India.

Works cited

---. Wikipedia. "Omkara." Wikipedia, [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Omkara_\(2006_film\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Omkara_(2006_film))

---. Wikipedia. "list of Shakespeare film adaptations." Wikipedia, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_William_Shakespeare_screen_adaptations

---. Kumar Das Sisir. *A History of Indian Literature*. Sahitya Akademi. 1991.

---. Indian Review. "Shakespeare in Assamese literature." Indian Review, <http://indianreview.in/shakespeare-and-assamese-literature/>

