

## Shakespeare & Hindi Literature

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### ABSTRACT

*Shakespeare is not only a name for the present scenario, but he is unknown behind force or spark for all genres of literatures. He is extensively regarded as the best playwright in the history of the English language & literature, and the world's most excellent dramatist. Shakespeare is the most quoted writer in the history of the English-speaking world after the various writers of the Bible; many of his quotations and neologisms have passed into everyday usage in English and other languages. Colonialism brought Shakespeare to Indian subcontinent. India's extensive history of colonial domination extends to cultural domination. The colonial education system in India was filled with western texts, including Shakespeare. The political factor, no doubt, accounts to a great extent, for the introduction of Shakespeare into India, but Shakespeare's subsequent victory over the mind of India was independent of any political influence; it was entirely owing to the intrinsic merit of his works - a merit "which the Indian mind, well steeped in the best of its own ancient classical lore, was not slow to recognize". Shakespeare was included in the colonial curricula not only as the excellent figure of literary and artistic importance, but also because his works demonstrated the core values of Western tradition. For centuries, after the great dramatic tradition of Sanskrit had died out, drama was regarded merely as source of entertainment and not as a great literary medium of human expression, but with the introduction of Shakespeare into India there came a renewed sense of realization that drama was not merely a thing of thrills and laughter but a true mirror of life.*

Shakespeare is not only a name for the present scenario, but he is unknown behind force or spark for all genres of literatures. He is extensively regarded as the best playwright in the history of the English language & literature, and the world's most excellent dramatist. Shakespeare is the most quoted writer in the history of the English-speaking world after the various writers of the Bible; many of his quotations and neologisms have passed into everyday usage in English and other languages. Colonialism brought Shakespeare to Indian subcontinent. India's extensive history of colonial domination extends to cultural domination. The colonial education system in India was filled with western texts, including Shakespeare. With the help of English settlers who made "a theater for amusement on the victory of 'Plassey' Shakespeare first made his appearance in the history of India." (Dasgupta)

Ever since his introduction into India, Shakespeare has been a source of constant stimulus to the various Indian literatures and Hindi literature is no exception. Rightly has Professor C.J. Sisson, after going through Dr. S.G. Gupta's pioneer work towards assessing Shakespeare's influence in Indian Literatures, observed that:

"His admirable pioneer work makes it all the clearer to me that Indian survey must be carried out in sections and by provinces, and that literary culture must not be allowed to obscure the lessons to be drawn from the practice of the Indian stage,"

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subsequent victory over the mind of India was independent of any political influence; it was entirely owing to the intrinsic merit of his works - a merit "which the Indian mind, well steeped in the best of its own ancient classical lore, was not slow to recognize". (Gupta) Shakespeare was included in the colonial curricula not only as the excellent figure of literary and artistic importance, but also because his works demonstrated the core values of Western tradition. By the twentieth century, Shakespeare had been translated, adapted, and assimilated into many Indian languages, and writers and performances in the general Indian cultural landscape were contributing to sustaining his presence.

A number of Indian authors from every major Indian language have written about his works, translated and adapted them, and or been influenced by them: Bankim Chandra Chatterjee, Girish Chandra Ghosh, Dwijendralal Roy, Rabindranath Tagore, Jaishankar Prasad, Harivanshrai Bachchan, Pammal Sambanda Mudaliar, Gopal Ganesh Agarkar, Vrinda Karandikar, Kavalam Narain Panikkar, Kainikkara Kumara Pillai, Kuvempu, Masti Venkatesh Iyengar, Mayadhar Mansingh, Laxminath Bezbarua, H.S. Shivaprakash, to name but an eminent few. Theme, characterization, genre, structure—there are many ways in which the works of Shakespeare have influenced and have been absorbed in Indian literature and culture.

Shakespeare has been and is still popular in India especially in the Hindi speaking areas, is evident from about two hundred translations and adaptations of his plays into Hindi, from the reception given to European and Indian theatrical companies staging his plays from time to time.

Why has Shakespeare been so popular? The reason is not far to seek. Apart from the fact that Shakespeare's plays and poems have been prescribed from the various examinations in Indian schools, colleges and universities, a fact that we have already examined, the phenomena may be viewed from the following angles:

- A- The popularity of Shakespeare is the Home-country;
- B-The Background of the Indian Public;
- C- The Affinity between the Elizabethan and the India temperaments; and
- D- The Specific Reasons for their Preference for Certain Plays.

The popularity of Shakespeare in his home-country awakened the curiosity of the Indian Mind towards his works. The Indians, visiting England, or coming into contact with the English people in India, were attracted towards Shakespeare, first out of curiosity, and then, by a keen desire to know and appreciate the universal appeal of his mighty works. This was also, partly, due to the good Shakespeare-teachers like Captain D.L. Richardson, who taught his plays in such a fascinating style that his students implored him to teach Shakespeare's plays other than those actually prescribed for them.

By pointing out the beauties of Shakespeare's composition in certain plays, these teachers stimulated the Indian students to look for them for themselves in the other plays. Thus Shakespeare's popularity in the home-country combined with a good teaching of his plays went a long way towards inculcating a love of Shakespearean literature in the Indian Mind. The Indian mind, particularly of the Hindi speaking areas, has been fully steeped in the tradition of Sanskrit drama which belongs to that division of dramatic composition which has been termed 'romantic' by the Westerns critics as opposed to classical.

Another reason why Shakespeare has been so readily acceptable to the Indian audience is the close affinity between the Elizabethan and the Indian temperaments. The Elizabethan age, in the words of Emile Legouis, "was the Flowering of the Renaissance." During this period external influences, more particularly of Italy, France and Spain, were at work and English literature developed in their wake.

Shakespearean productions in Calcutta and other big cities of India revived the interest of the Indian people in stage and drama. The Shakespearean stage being "a raised bare platform, jutting out some considerable distance among the audience, so that the groups of players were seen from any points of view" (Raleigh) drew the attention of the Indian people towards the medieval stage which had many things in common with Shakespeare's.

The influence of Shakespeare of both his style and dramatic productions led to a revival of the great dramatic tradition in India which flourished from the ancient classical times down to the medieval, literary and folk, well-defined and crudely devised but inherently vital, forms. Shakespeare may have been regarded as an "enemy to morals and as a creature of the stage in America and, may not have been introduced into Early American School, but, in India, people have always readily responded to his works." (Simon)

The Comedy of Errors "reflects the Indians sense of mystification." (Shahani) They like the situations and accidents of play. There is an under-current of love in it and the farcical

incidents arising out of mistaken identity have their parallels in current popular stories in India. Romeo and Juliet present the piety and purity of love most dear to the India. There is an intensity of passion which exercises witchery over the Indian mind. The bright beautiful and brilliant love of a youthful couple, who come to grief, is the theme of which the Eastern people are never tired. According to Shahani, "Othello is much popular in India, first because, Othello is an Oriental figure, secondly, because, his heroic demeanor awakens a ready response in the Indian mind, and lastly, because there is the love interest in the play."

"As You Like It" is appealing to an Indian because of its love interest and its pensive philosophy. The reverses of fortune in the play and the retirement of the Duke into the woods are said to approximate to an ascetic ideal. The Tempest is dear to an Indian reader as it has a heroine who is almost the prototype of Shakuntala, Rabindranath Tagore and Chhunnulal Dwivedi have brought out this comparison beautifully. The Taming of the Shrew is a story of a bad-tempered lady not wanting in Indian homes. The ending of the play is quite in accordance with the traditional Indian point of view. And the following lines are quite pleasing to an Indian as they approximate to his prejudices:

"Thy husband is thy lord, thy life, thy keeper.  
They head, thy sovereign; one that cares for thee.  
And for thy maintenance commits his body  
To painful labor both by sea and land,  
To watch the night in storms, the day in cold,  
Whilst thou liest warm at home, secure and safe;  
And craves no other tribute at thy hands  
But love, fair looks, and true obedience;  
Too little payment for so great a debt.  
Such duty as the subject owes the prince  
Even such a woman oweth her husband;  
And when she's forward, peevish, sullen, sour,  
And not obedient to his honest will,  
What is she but a foul don't ending rebel,  
And graceless traitor to her loving lord?"

Romeo and Juliet, Shakespeare's famous love tragedy has had several versions, out of which Romeo aur Juliet - Do Mitra (1884) by Kashinath Khattri, Romeo Juliet (1912) by Shiv Prasad Dubey, Romeo Juliet (1912) by Jai Vijai Narain Singh Sharma, and Romeo Juliet (1922) by Ganga Prasad are in the form of prose narratives. Prem Kasauti (1931) by Lala Sitaram is not a literati translation; the author takes the sense of the passages of the original and puts it into Hindi. The translation is in prose with a sprinkling of commonplace verse here and there. At one or two places, the translator renders it beautifully. Romeo says: "Sad hours seem long". The Hindi translation puts it admirably:

"Dukh ki gadiya pahad ho jati h"

And the second scene of the second act begins beautifully. How admirably the spirit of the words: "He jests at scars that never felt a wound", has been infused into the translation:

"Jiske paav n pde biwai, vo kya jane pir parai"

The whole of this speech of Romeo conveys the idea that the translator here seems to be in his inspired moments. But such moments are very rare.

Cymbeline is prized for its idealistic qualities which are embodied in the marvelous figure of Imogen who is whiter than

the sheets and chaste as un-sunned snow. Her great constancy is of high value to an Indian. Mr. M.U. Malkani wrote that “but for the creation of Imogen, Shakespeare had no business to write his Cymbeline.” (Malkani)

## CONCLUSION

Thus, it's demonstrated how far Shakespeare has influenced drama and other forms of Hindi literature. For centuries, after the great dramatic tradition of Sanskrit had died out, drama was regarded merely as source of entertainment and not as a great literary medium of human expression, but with the introduction of Shakespeare into India there came a renewed sense of realization that drama was not merely a thing of thrills and laughter but a true mirror of life. The Hindi dramatists now aimed at to the reading public as well as to the spectators in the theatre. In the field of comedy, Shakespeare exercised a refining influence while urged Hindi dramatists to substitute fine romantic comedy for vulgar medieval farces of the type of *Indrasabha Imanat*. Moreover, Shakespeare convinced Hindi dramatists that tragedy is one of the highest forms of dramatic writing. The use of this dramatic form opened up unparalleled and unprecedented vistas before them. They could now depict the acute internal conflict in the soul of a treat hero.

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