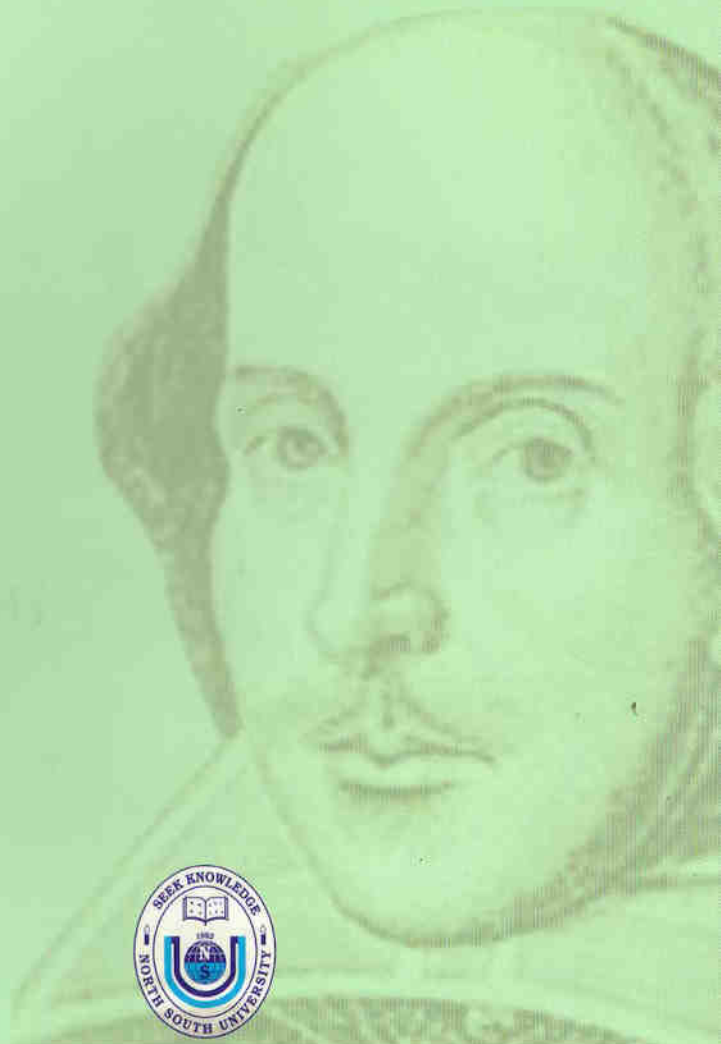


Panini

NSU STUDIES IN LANGUAGE & LITERATURE



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PANINI

Editor's Note

Welcome to the seventh volume of *Panini: NSU Studies in Language and Literature*.

The year 2016 marks the 400th year anniversary of the death of William Shakespeare, an occasion this special issue commemorates. Shakespeare's lasting legacy ranges from the beautiful to the belligerent, and his influence permeates the globe. Our collection of articles displays this range from the flower gardens of Shakespeare to the politics of Shakespeare studies. It simultaneously evinces the comprehensiveness of a playwright who breathed his last 400 years ago and thousands of miles away and who is yet integral now to our part of the world.

This issue includes articles written by several generations of scholars, from the distinguished to the upcoming, which in itself gives us an indication of how important the scholarship of Shakespeare has been to the study of English literature in Bangladesh. We thank all our reviewers and appreciate the patience of the contributors.

Shakespeare's Garden: Beauty, Order and Increase

Niaz Zaman

Abstract

In several of his plays, Shakespeare refers to flowers and gardens. While these references draw upon the Elizabethan fondness for gardens, Shakespeare also used the garden as a metaphor for order and prosperity. An unkempt garden was symbolic of disorder, of the wilderness outside. The fear of disorder was a continuous presence in both Tudor and Stuart England. This paper will examine how Shakespeare used flowers and gardens to complement his themes in *Romeo and Juliet*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Richard II*, *Hamlet*, *The Winter's Tale* and *The Tempest*.

"I like men in their right places," Tradescant agreed.

"It's like a garden. Things ordered in their right places, pruned into shape."

"No wild disorder? No tumbling vines?"

"That's not a garden, that's outside," John said firmly. He looked down at the knot garden, the straight lines of the low clipped hedges, and behind them the sharply defined colored stones, each part of the pattern in its right place, each shape building up the design. . .

The Reactive Mode in Presenting Shakespeare

Mohit Ul Alam

Abstract

Based on an idea of Jonathan Bate, I have tried to say in this paper that Shakespeare's plays have been read, performed and filmed from a reaction which issues from a judgmental sense in which the past is always viewed by the present. In the scope of this paper the present spreads from the Restoration to the period as late as the early 21st century, while obviously the past constitutes the age of Shakespeare. The reactions embodying the performance of Shakespeare's plays from Davenant to Garrick to Kemble to Hugh Quarshie have been informed by moral judgment as well as by gender and racial concerns. So I have focused on *Macbeth* to show how staging the eponymous hero presented a set of difficulties to Davenant, Garrick and Kemble alike, and how they all have tackled the problem by resorting to the reactive mode, that is judging the events in the play of *Macbeth* from a moral perspective. In all three productions by each of the three actor-managers mentioned above, Macbeth appears to be a repentant hero rather than a tragic hero, which he is in Shakespeare. This is the first contention of my essay, and the second one is informed by the transition of the English stage from the one-sex theater to the two-sex theater, and I have argued that though this process opened the career for the female actors, it also took away the simple stage pleasure derived from the use of the device of transvestism, on which Shakespeare capitalized so much. The third contention of my essay is concerned with the staging of *Othello* and *The Merchant of Venice*, that is, with Othello and Shylock to be more proper. I bring up Hugh Quarshie's view of *Othello*, based on a generalized racist argument, for discussion against

Edelman's reading of Shylock, done from a non-generalized perspective, to say that this type of contrary views fertilizes our understanding of Shakespeare.

The Politics of Shakespearean Studies: A Creation and Inheritance of Literary Merit

AQMA Rahman Bhuiyan

Abstract

To question a body of work that has survived for over 400 years, that has been impervious to sustained scrutiny and assault over generations by some of the greatest minds that have applied themselves to the language arts, is an audacity that can easily draw flak for being sensationalistic. But to suggest that the survival and the significance of the works of Shakespeare is a result of the works' *essential merit*, would tantamount to scholarly negligence, and a methodological mishap. For something as ephemeral as "literary taste," that completely relies on subjective values, cannot be rendered objective solely on the basis of its popular support. The establishment of a discipline and the institutionalization of an author and her work within that discipline is a highly complex process, and when the author is Shakespeare, it becomes all the more intricate. This process is checkered with sociological insights and historical perspectives, plays of power and political dynamics. The survival has much to do with the taste both inculcated and induced in the generations of its readers. Hence, our appreciation of Shakespeare is not just our *own* appreciation of this great playwright. It is the result of a legacy, a tradition, passed on by generations through masters and their apprentice, teachers and their disciples, instructors and their students. Therefore, the credibility and respect commanded by Shakespearean plays should not be seen as a self sustaining project that is fueled primarily by

the artistic splendor of the Shakespearean oeuvre, but rather it can be seen as a body of work that has been engineered and politically driven to gain this very respect. This paper will deal with the political decisions (purposeful and accidental) that have made the works of Shakespeare significant in our part of the world today. In order to illustrate this point, I have restricted my discussion to two crucial moments in history that have been instrumental in establishing the credibility that the works of Shakespeare and Shakespearean scholarship enjoys today. The two key moments include: the canonization of Shakespeare in Europe and particularly Germany, as a force against French literary hegemony and the reception of Shakespeare as part of a colonial discourse, a discourse which is part of our own legacy and inheritance in Bangladesh.

Heroes Reflecting Their Zeitgeists: Hamlet and Oedipus

Rukhsana Rahim Chowdhury

Abstract

No man can surpass his own time, for the spirit of his time is also his own spirit.

Georg Hegel

The Great Man theory by Thomas Carlyle sees history as the result of the actions of heroes and geniuses. This paper counters the concept by arguing that it is very difficult to extricate individuals from their environs. Heroes reflect their civilizations and cultures and are as much a product of their own societies as any. They are shaped and molded by their zeitgeists. Sophocles' Oedipus is the epitome of the Greek man of action, while Shakespeare's Hamlet is an intellectual who is plagued by questions of morality leading to a delay in action. Where Oedipus acts, Hamlet procrastinates. Every expressive act of Oedipus and Hamlet is embedded in and a consequence of a whole network of material practices by their respective contemporary societies. Oedipus as a Greek hero shows the towering spirit of his age by going to extreme ends, without any kind of fear to apprehend the killer of Laius, just to end through finding out that he himself is that killer. The cruel truth does not daunt our hero; rather he valiantly accepts the reality and inflicts punishment on himself. On the other hand, Hamlet is a man of the Modern age, which has its genesis in the Renaissance. Hamlet also seeks knowledge just like the Greek hero; however, he does not use his knowledge to act but is instead led to a profound contemplation of ideas like

truth, morality and justice. Hamlet is over conscious of himself and is therefore extremely doubtful of the steps he takes. Here he shows the split personality of modern day individuals. This paper aims to look at these two tragic heroes with such contradictory character traits to show how they reveal the ethos and spirit of their times expressly because of the extent to which they were influenced by the general attitudes of their respective ages.

***Titus Andronicus*: Violence on Screen**

Noora Shamsi Bahar

Abstract

When one thinks of tragic plays written by Shakespeare, *Anthony and Cleopatra*, *Hamlet*, *Julius Caesar*, *King Lear*, *Macbeth*, *Othello*, and of course *Romeo and Juliet* come to mind. *Titus Andronicus*, is one of Shakespeare's least popular tragedies. One of the reasons for the play's unpopularity (having fallen out of favor in the Victorian Era) may be the violence it entails. There are fourteen killings (nine of which are on stage), six severed body parts, one rape, one live burial, one case of cannibalism, and one case of insanity. One may question, how can such savagery be enacted, without turning off the audience? Julie Taymor's direction in *Titus* (1999) makes sure that the story is *not* violent; it is rather *about* violence. Her use of the "Penny-Arcade Nightmares" (a term coined by herself), to portray surreal and graphic "daymares" (if you will), gives her audience the ability to look into the psychological state of characters. For instance, the third of the Penny Arcade Nightmare sequence is Lavinia's post-traumatic flashback of her rape, which makes the audience *feel* her unstaged rape, thanks to Taymor's visually-stylized hunter (Chiron and Demetrius as tigers) and prey (Lavinia as doe) imagery, with the hard-core metal track adding to the tension. Taymor makes sure that her adaptation of the play is not as gruesome as it could have been and this is owing to her tactic of showing the aftermath of violence, and not the act itself. For instance, we don't witness the decapitation of Martius and Quintus; instead we see their severed heads presented to Titus. Even though visual representations of

violence affect the human psyche on a more disturbing level, I find Taymor's adaptation of *Titus Andronicus* to be as sober as it could ever be, despite being rated R (Restricted). Taymor's deconstruction of violence and her use of violence as entertainment are instrumental in critiquing her direction.

Martyrs of Male Chauvinism Across the Border - Desdemona, Haimanti and Chandara

Nazua Idris

Abstract

The female characters portrayed in the works of William Shakespeare and Rabindranath Tagore symbolize the oppression and disintegration of women in a patriarchal society. Both writers have portrayed women in their personal relationship with men, and in their relationship with the wider community outside their home. Various theoretical schools have interpreted Shakespearean and Tagorian portrayal of women according to the existing power relations which also includes psychological, domestic, and communal dimensions. In my paper, I am going to focus on how the women in Shakespeare and Tagore's work uphold their subjectivity, sense of autonomy and individual morality against the ideologies imposed by the patriarchal order in 16th century England and 19th century India. For the purpose of comparative analysis, the paper will focus upon one of Shakespeare's female protagonists, Desdemona in *Othello*; and two of Tagore's female protagonists, Haimanti in *Haimanti* and Chandara in *Shasti*. Though these three female protagonists belong to different geographical and cultural locations and time period, all of them share the same fate that unites them under the same identity – they are martyrs in the male chauvinistic society.

Shipwrecks as a Plot Device in Shakespearean Comedies

Imani Khaled

Abstract

The notable exploits of Elizabethan seafarers have influenced profoundly the history of England and the course of literature. In these men the spirit of the Renaissance was brilliantly manifested, and all aspects of sixteenth century art, literature, religion, commerce, industry, colonization, and the expansion of the English civilization thereafter bear the marks of the borders they had crossed. Shakespeare, influenced by these new achievements, incorporated in his plays elements that the audience of the day would enjoy, marvel at and easily identify with. With the increase in sea travel, stories of shipwrecks and accidental discoveries gained increasing popularity, the proof of which is evident in the playwright's extensive use of shipwrecks as a tool to throw his characters in a remote setting where the lines between class distinctions, gender roles, reality and illusion are blurred. Ranging from one of his early plays, *The Comedy of Errors*, to *Twelfth Night*, to the play that marked his farewell to stage, *The Tempest*, Shakespeare uses the sea as an intersecting point between separation and reunion. Characters initially presented as hovering in the shadows of their own unfulfilled identities are engineered to find the missing piece in a land where their new identities are the only roots tying them to the foreign land. As such, it may be argued that Shakespeare employs shipwreck as a literary device to set in motion a wilful suspension of disbelief thereby allowing the exploration of such themes and ideas in fantastic and idealistic settings.

Intertextuality in *Hamlet* and *The Story of Edgar Sawtelle*

Nabban T. Haque

Abstract

It was long thought that the epitome of creative genius was the creation of a work that was completely original, yet continued to embody the timeless ideals of human nature. However, the development of literary theory has altered this perception in a variety of ways. While the age old liberal humanist demands for a work that stands the test of time have been somewhat discredited, one of the most famous writers in the history of the English literary tradition, whose work continues to echo in the present day, is William Shakespeare.

According to Julia Kristeva, all writings are based upon their predecessors, and as such, the intentional use of intertextual references to these preceding texts adds multiple layers of meaning to the understanding of the informed reader. One modern novel that makes use of this intertextuality is David Wroblewski's *The Story of Edgar Sawtelle*. As a base for his novel, Wroblewski used one of Shakespeare's most famous and contemplative revenge tragedies: *Hamlet*. As there is little in the way of Kingdoms in the modern world, the state of Denmark has been replaced in the novel by the Sawtelle farm, where the family spends their time training their own unique breed of dogs. This particular caveat actually has a profound impact on the feel of the novel itself, particularly with regard to the two iconic scenes in the original - the appearance of the ghost and the dumb show. It can thus be seen that while the novel is indeed adapted from the play,

there are significant differences that completely alter the reader's perception despite remarkably similar plotlines.