

Review of

***Approaching Shakespeare Through Comparative Literature***

**Dr. J.Vijayalakshmi**

Assistant Professor

Department of Communication Skills

Marwadi Education Foundation's Group of Institutions

Rajkot, Gujarat

*Approaching Shakespeare Through Comparative Literature*, a 2017 publication is a critical work edited by Kamal Mehta, Sanjay Mukherjee and Sunil Sagar. The essays in this collection are the papers presented at the International Conference organised in association with the Shakespeare Society of India, English Department Alumni Association, Department of English and Comparative Literary Studies, Saurashtra University, Rajkot, on February 4-6, 2017. The authors of these essays are a heterogeneous group comprising of former Professors at well-known Universities, Department Heads, Associate and Assistant Professors and research scholars. Besides the heterogeneity of its authors, these essays too are an interesting amalgamation of topics about the Bard of Stratford-Upon-Avon that includes his fascinating sonnets, a historiography of his works in Gujarati and a number of comparative works.

These essays attempt to deal with Shakespeare from indigenous and global perspectives vis-à-vis comparative literature. Prof. Kamal Mehta introduces the readers to the Indian response of William Shakespeare ranging from *Othello: An Oriental Study* (1923) to India's Shakespeare

Translation, *Interpretation and Performance* (2005). His essay acts as a backdrop to understand Shakespeare through the realm of comparative literature. Prof. Prashant K.Sinha is primarily concerned with the text of the sonnets which answers the question of these being autobiographical. The unbounded admiration and surrender of Shakespeare for the dark lady and the contempt at the same time makes the question open-ended. Prof. Mahesh Champaklal focuses on the adaptations such as *Barnam Vana*, *Stage of Blood* and *Charudataham* which are famous in India than the original plays of Shakespeare. The opposing Western logic was disruptive when Shakespeare became a phenomenon of the theatre history.

It is interesting that these essays, besides focusing on individual works and characters deal with the issues like the history of the translation of Gujarati along with the socio-economic events of the accompanying event of translation. This is seen in Dr Sunil Sagar's essay "History of Translation in Gujarat: A Case Study of Shakespeare's plays". Likewise Jammel Ahmed Al-Ghaberi's essay, "Global Shakespeare : A Bard Roving in Arabic Translations and Adaptations" looks into the Arabic translation and reception of translation of Shakespeare. Dr. Bhakti Vaishnav portrays *The Tempest* and its adaptation in the Canadian text *Hagseed* by Margaret Atwood. Dr.Mrilanalini Thaker's essay looks into personifying womanhood by comparing the celebrated characters of Desdemona from *Othello* and Shakuntala from *Abhigyan Shakuntalam*. Dr.Mukta Mahajan attempts to deal with the reception and influence of Shakespeare on the ever-dynamic Marathi theatre.

Prof. Ashok Chandravadia addresses the problem of Shakespeare's intellectual background in his essay, "Shakespeare and Epicurus: A Critical Conspectus". Shakespeare with

his courting optimism made himself the architect of his plays with the most absorbing philosophies of his life-time. Ms. Neela Ketan Pandya rewrites *Hamlet* from a different perspective of concealment and revelation of truth.

Mr. Parth Joshi compares Shakespeare's "Sonnet 130" and Harryette Mullen's *Dim Lady*. Mullen and Shakespeare come on par with each other on the grounds of 'race', 'moment' and 'milieu'. Ms. Reeti Pandya in her essay entitled "A Transcultural study of *The Merchant of Venice* and *The Tempest* in the light of their Gujarati translations' explores the arena of transcreations which provides a new dimension to contemporary research. Ms. Swati S. Kapadia analyses the transadaptations of Shakespeare's plays which played a vital role popularizing Shakespeare into 'Popular Culture'.

These essays have attempted to provide its readers with the varying perspectives of Shakespeare from a contemporary ideology with the desire to underline the omnipresence of Shakespeare and its impact on India and the world. These essays have been commended on how people across ages have made this playwright and poet their own.