

Editorial

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How to start? Where to start? If we consider the recent comprehensive developments in dissecting the multidisciplinary approaches to reading Shakespeare, we find how the re-telling of his plays recreates and destroys the boundaries of knowing him. If closure in reading is seen as an excuse, then certainly, Shakespeare's performances are open-ended in all plausible sense of the term. Playing Shakespearean characters and re-inventing them through lights, sounds, costumes, stage productions include a continuous shift from the original themes, styles, and techniques. The ideas related to representation, performance, nativity of the characters, scenes, display elements, succinct layers of meaning-everything undergo a drastic alteration when critical and academic scrutinization of the plays are taken into account. Hamlet on stage, Hamlet in film adaptations, and studying regional versions of Hamlet present insightful articulation of re-locating Shakespeare's studies from a new angle. In his essay 'The Play's not the only Thing', Antoni Cimolino refutes the idea of an exclusive script of Shakespeare as such. In terms of narrating innovative ideas, (especially when we scan through Shakespeare's manual) he says that all Shakespeare left was a script:

"We can imagine the scenes in as much, or as little, detail as we like. And what we mentally see or hear in one scene need not be consistent with what we hear or see in the next. In our mind's eye, we can envisage both a dashing Byronic romantic hero and a fat thirty-year-old who still hasn't finished school. In our mind's ear, we can hear a whole chorus of the various inflections and emphases that could be given to a single line." ([Cimolino](#),15)

This is the point where any singularity related to performance gets nullified. Multiple voices that create and protract the binaries in Shakespeare get authenticated through this mental hearing, the mind's eye that produces either a Byronic romantic hero or a fat thirty-year-old.

Litinfinite Journal Vol. III, Issue- I contains research papers from across the globe, that deconstruct any unidimensional notion of studying Shakespeare. Purbali Sengupta's paper attempts to re-imagine the bard and to offer a fresh perspective to the theatrical presentation of Hamlet. Traversing from local to global-this remains the thematic idea in her paper, where she talks about the proliferation of Shakespeare studies in the western canon, and how the recent studies and performances dismantle the erstwhile ideas. Manidip Chakraborty's paper, on the other hand, makes a succinct presentation of locating an 'audience' in Lady Macbeth's bed-chamber: studying the dramatic trope in the sleep-walking scene of *Macbeth*. The function of the chorus and the play-within-a-play technique all highlight the different angles from which one particular scene needs to be constructed afresh.

Going beyond the trajectory constituted by metaphors of sexual and imperial domination, the new phases of Shakespearean studies concentrate on the anti-patriarchal and anti-colonial tendencies, as Jonathan Gil Harris puts forward in his seminal work *Shakespeare and Literary Theory*:

"When we apply theory to Shakespeare's writing, we are not really exposing it to foreign bodies, whether pathogenic or curative. If theory is a virus that has invaded Shakespeare, its genetic material already contains traces of its host. Theory, then, is not straightforwardly foreign to Shakespeare: it is already Shakespearean." ([Harris](#), 3)

Theories of decoding, unearthing, and accentuating major streaks of Shakespearean drama are thus, fraught with complications. Everything, right from Formalism to the Feminist theories, from poststructuralist Marxism to the Lacanian goals- there has been no dearth of how these theories embark upon a dialogue-journey with Shakespeare. And the critical discourse keeps on changing through several methodical approaches that scholars and critics have undertaken.

Kimberley M Glassman's paper, for instance, highlights the bifocality of dance in Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night*. The dance adaptations through ballet-movies, dance as the part of performance, and the contribution of dance to the forms of Shakespearean comedy are well-exemplified in Kimberley's articulation of research. The acts and performances allow a kind of cultural sympathy between a literary icon that Shakespeare is, and one of the leading institutions like the Royal Ballet. The dance forms do not give rise to abstract pieces, but they are new narratives that have become an intense source of academic discussion and also extend beyond classrooms.

Rahul Kar and Sangeeta Saha's paper focuses upon how to contemporize the topos of Shakespearean drama. The larger interest area of the paper remains in the re-reading of memory, masculinity, and vengeance with special reference to Shakespeare's tragedies and history plays. The ideals of valour, encouragement, masculinity and vengeance at a time, bloodshed, and patriotic consciousness all are portrayed in a most succinct manner by the researchers.

Each study of Shakespeare brings something new and fresh to the fore. The studies vary from one geographical location to another. The critical reception of Shakespeare in Bengal is yet another study that has gained much prominence in and beyond academia. Dr. Samik Sen's paper analyzes the biographical criticism of Shakespeare in Bengal. This he does with a special reference to S.C. Sengupta's 'Shakespeare the Man'. The paper emphasizes various ideological ideas that gave birth to the construction of Shakespeare's criticism in Bengal.

Reading theatre and reading film adaptations are completely different. A closeted knowledge of Shakespearean studies can never do the required justice to his works. Dr. Neenu Kumar's take on Indian filmic adaptations of Shakespeare's plays delves into the variable dimensions of society, class representation, and the study of power and resistance as part of Sanjay Leela Bhansali's adaptation of Shakespearean stories into his films. The cultural ethos, representation of the 'glocal' and the 'masala' ingredients in the Bollywood films have been discussed at large in Dr. Kumar's research paper.

Shakespearean studies do give rise to variety. Varieties of performance, varieties in decoding the myths of male/ female, black/white, high/low, savage/ civilized, and so on. The regular and more conventional modes of understanding gender binaries, for instance, alter to a large extent when we take recourse to read Transvestism and gender appropriation in his plays. Sanghita Sanyal's paper addresses exactly these issues pertaining to cross-dressing, social mores active during his time and how women were not allowed to play a distinct role on the stage. The paper also aims to bring around the aftermath of cross-dressing on stage. And finally, we also have an insightful paper of understanding race, class, cultural distinctions, and hierarchy in *Othello*. Sneha Chakraborty and Oly Saha's paper aims to examine the themes of ownership, motiveless malignity and honour as reflected in *Othello*.

For this issue, we have two book reviews. I have dwelt at large on an academic review of internationally-acclaimed poet Sudeep Sen's artistic journey in his new book, *Anthropocene: Climate Change, Contagion, Consolation*. The book contains Sen's pointed and important observations in his typically original, lyrical and tightly-wrought style. Thoughts and ideas about the causality of environmental forces and their effects are turned into the most exquisite, palpable poetry coming out of India – one that is both local and global, national, and international in its outlook. The brink of human existence and the kaleidoscopic vision of human instinct and survival are painted through the changing and astute perceptions of Sen's artistic lens.

Finally, we have another book review- Heba Rajili has done a review of *The Help* by Kathryn Stockett. The review highlights racial camps and demarcation for domestic workers, and astutely develops a critical review of white women and black servants. The reviewer has also included a comparative study of the book and the film related to it.

So, here goes Litinfinite Journal Vol. III, Issue I for our readers.

I express my sincerest thanks to all my respected editorial and advisory board members and contributors.

I take this occasion to thank Penprints Publication, for extending their untiring support to the journal.

Thanking you,

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