

# **To Analyze Shakespeare's Views According to Indian Critics**

**Kb Jyothi<sup>1</sup>, Dr. Tulika Anand<sup>2</sup>**

<sup>1</sup>Research Scholar, Sunrise University, Alwar

<sup>2</sup>Assistant Professor, Sunrise University Alwar

## **ABSTRACT**

**The ancient Indian legacy of art and ideas incorporates cosmic awareness from the Age of the Vedas and the Upanishads all the way up to the current Renaissance, giving India a significant edge when replying to Shakespeare. We have seen very innovative experimentation with unfaltering universality throughout the major creative epochs of the epics and ancient Sanskrit literature. Once again, this cosmic awareness is the same thread that connects Shakespeare with India. Shakespearean critique in India is the focus of this research. Within the context of Indian poetry and culture, Shakespeare has been both analysed and adapted. Around 1775, under the reigns of Johnson and Garrick, he made his debut here. Since he is still India's best-selling playwright, long after the country gained its independence, he was clearly the best investment the British could have made. The majority of our country's regional languages have adaptations or translations of his plays. They have also been performed in several theatres, but the concept of criticism as it is often understood— that is, the evaluation and study of literature did not emerge until much later in this region.**

***Keyword: Cosmic, Regional, Innovative, Unfaltering, Universality***

## **INTRODUCTION**

Despite the fact that critical analysis of Shakespeare has long been a thriving field, particularly in the United Kingdom and the United States, it is clear that different readers and critics bring different strengths to the table. While American critics may dissect Shakespeare's ideas and tactics with the same rigour as their British counterparts, the former must scrub Shakespeare's sources, compile several editions, and edit the texts. The French critics focus on the imagological analysis of his plays, whilst the German critics give philosophical readings. The Russians provide a communist vision, while the Japanese bring their unique Kabuki and Noh theatrical viewpoint to bear. As a result, we see that Shakespeare has been appropriated in various ways in many nations.

On April 23, 1564, Shakespeare came into this world. He came from a family of Shakespearean actors— John and Mary Arden. He attended the grammar school in Stratford-upon-Avon for his elementary schooling. It was here that he learned the basics of Latin and Greek. The need to provide for his family likely forced him to drop out of school when he was fourteen years old. His biographers disagree on whether he "might" have taken up a profession. Anne Hathaway, who was eight years his senior, was his bride in 1582. It seems from the facts that this marriage may have been rushed and unsatisfactory. He departed from his family about 1587 and proceeded to London to join Burbage's band of performers. During his most prolific writing period, which spanned 1587–1611, he remained in London. He went a long way from his experimental pieces to writing a string of brilliant plays during this time. In the same year that Shakespeare wrote *The Tempest*, his last play, he sold his shares in the Globe and Black friars theatres, thereby ending his involvement with the theatre. He lived a peaceful life for a while before passing away on April 23, 1616— his birth anniversary— and was laid to rest in the parish church's chancel. He penned 154 sonnets, 37 plays, and 3 poetry collections: *Venus and Adonis*, *The Rape of Lucrece*, and *The Phoenix and the Turtle*.

In 1775, during the American War of Independence, during the era of Johnson and Garrick, Shakespeare was brought to India. Shakespeare was among the most significant items brought to India from England. Despite the decline of the British Empire and its many legacies, Shakespeare's empire lives on. For as long as anybody can remember, the English have understood Shakespeare's value and treasured him. For this reason, Carlyle would not hesitate to say, "We cannot do without Shakespeare," in response to the question of whether he would relinquish the Indian empire or not. The Indian subcontinent will eventually crumble into dust, but Shakespeare will remain a part of our history indelibly. Shakespeare, in Sri Aurobindo's opinion, was better than Kalidas especially admired the vitality, attractiveness, and inventiveness of the Fortner. He composes poetry for the future, "More than any other poet Shakespeare has accomplished mentally the

legendary feat of the imperious sage Vishwamitra; his power of vision has created a Shakespearean world of his own." "the primordial Creative energy that was going to be the cause of all Creation," as sensed it in Shakespeare. With three quarters of the text being from the Bible and one quarter from Shakespeare, Gandhi was pleased. Even Jawaharlal Lal Nehru must have had a close relationship with Shakespeare. That's why he used the famous sonnet "When to the sessions of sweet silent thought summon up remembrance of things past" by William Shakespeare as the epigraph of The Discovery of India.

### **Need of the Study:**

The aim of this study is to that William Shakespeare is not only the greatest writer of England but also one of the greatest writers of the world. His reputation transcends geographical boundaries and he has become a great literary heritage of mankind. His plays and poems are studied all over the world. He has become a veritable industry and is being studied not only in terms of the western but also in other traditions. After his introduction in India, he has been appropriated in accordance with diverse cultures. He is the most popular foreign writer in the country. His plays have been translated and adapted into almost every regional language. They have also been acted in different theatres but the tradition of criticism of his plays in India is rather a late-developing phenomenon. It begins with some translations which contain critical prefaces exhibiting a typical Indian attitude and comparisons made between him and the classical Sanskrit playwrights. Comparative studies in terms of dramaturgy further enrich this tradition. Since Shakespeare has always been a necessary component of the curriculum in Indian universities, some important theses have also been submitted to them. Some of the important early critics include Pandit Muktarām Vidyavāgīs, Bankim Chandra Chatterjee, R. Saupin, R.V. Subbarau, Anand Coomarswami, R.N. Tagore, Dr. R.K. Yajnik, C. Narayan Menon, Amar Nath Jha and Harendra Kumar Mukhopadhyay. They are followed by K.R.S. Iyengar, S.C. Sen Gupta and H.H. Anniah Gowda. Taraknath Sen is also an important critic but his critical output comprises only two essays. Recently, some articles have been contributed by contemporary critics dealing with various aspects of Shakespeare's art which have been edited by Basavaraj Naikar under the title Indian Response to Shakespeare. This book is also a significant contribution to Shakespeare criticism in India.

### **Objectives of the Study**

The main objectives of the study are as follows:

1. To study the themes and techniques in the works of Shakespeare.
2. To analyze Shakespeare's views according to Indian critics.

### **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

Shakespeare: His World and His Art, written by the prolific critic K.R.S. Iyengar, covers almost every facet of Shakespeare criticism. His breadth of perspective and depth of knowledge suggest he may be considered India's preeminent critic of Shakespeare. As far as Shakespeare criticism goes, his books are the gold standard. He has studied every one of Shakespeare's plays and poems and, as any good scholar would, has analysed them for their text, history, sources, topic, method, narrative, plot, characters, language, versification, and overall impact on society. With uncommon profundity and intelligence, he handles them. His interpretation, which takes into account both Elizabethan factors and human constants, demonstrates excellent judgement. His analysis of Shakespeare's plays in light of modern political, social, and religious climates demonstrates their timeless relevance. He talks about them from the perspectives of Indian and European poetics. His extensive research on the issue is shown by the many critics he mentions.

Ben Jonson, John Dryden, Edward Dowden, L.C. Knights, E.E. Stoll, Walter Raleigh, T.S. Eliot, G. Wilson Knight, Quiller Gouch, Shucking, E.K. Chambers, Caroline F.E. Spurgeon, Middleton Murry, and many more are among the prominent critics cited by him. However, Lawrence, W.W., Charlton, H.B., Till yard, Theodore Spenser, Gordon, George, Granville, Bradbrook, Allardyce, Thomson, Derek, Harrison, G.B., etc. There are at least a hundred detractors that Iyengar cites in his work. Aurobindo, S.C. Sen Gupta, C. Narayan Menon, Syed Mehdi Imam, K.M. Khadya, M. Mahood, Ranjeev Shahani, Ananda Coomaraswamy, Subbarau, and many more Indian intellectuals have been cited by him. Although they may not influence his decision-making, these quotes allow Iyengar to thoroughly examine the topic from all angles.

As he sees fit, he examines all arguments and decides whether to accept or reject them. Shakespeare tries to bridge two different cultures by drawing parallels between Indian and Western life, literature, mythology, history, rituals, and social and political situations in order to prove that Shakespeare's works are relevant to their environment. To illustrate his point, Iyengar uses the analogies of Everest and the Himalayas to describe Shakespeare's grandeur and the breadth of his plays. He categorizes his work into five distinct eras: Experimental, Terrestrial, Existential, Sacrificial, and Transcendental. During the 'Sacrificial' time, he notes, actors learn "how to die," leading to depictions of "Shiva's frenzied Dance of death"

and other tragic events. Using examples like "Sat, Chit, Anand" and "damyata! datta! and dayadhvam!" he demonstrates the idea of degree and order.

It is from Indian mythology that he draws the illustrations. He draws parallels between the doctrine of Lord Krishna in The Geeta (Chapter XVII) and the statement of Montaigne that man is nothing, less than nothing by himself, though he might still redeem himself by surrendering to the will of God (Chapter XVII), and the demon Bhasma Sur, whose egotistical desire for power destroys everything and himself. Shakespeare, according to Iyengar, rises from earthly levels to the heights of eternity in his work as a playwright. He deserves attention in both the big picture and the little details. He is both the architect and the fixer-upper. The design encapsulates the detail, which in turn enhances and completes the design. He gives the example of the song "Sruti," where the deep bottom provides stability and the varied notes provide flavour, to drive his point home. He makes references to religious ceremonies and unique yearly festivals held in Indian temples in his depiction of Miracles and Mystery plays. The Mahabharata and the Ramayana are also cited by Iyengar.

Richard II's remarkable scene (Act IV, Scene III) demonstrates that women always bear the brunt of suffering. This is similar to an episode in the Mahabharata where Gandhari, Kunti, and Draupadi, who have all lost sons, weep together and seek solace from each other after the great war ends. Similar to the indignation directed against Draupadi in Dhritrashtra's Durbar Hall, the moment when Hero collapses in a tizzy after being humiliated in the church is an obscene display of masculine indifference in Much Ado About Nothing. In All's Well That Ends Well, there's a bed-trick that brings to mind the counsel provided by Vichitraviya to his two childless queens, Ambika and Ambalika, to conceive by Vyasa. They send a maid servant to the ceremony, and then one of them goes blindfolded, while the other wears all white.

Consequently, Pandu, who was pale and white, was born to Vidura, who was 'illegitimate,' and Dhritrashtra, who was blind. Kunti begs Karna to take up arms against the Pandavas in the Volumnia-Coriolanus scene from Coriolanus. Once again, Iyengar draws parallels between Claudius' murder of his older brother Julius Caesar in Hamlet and Sugriva's murder of his own older brother Vali. While discussing the moral lessons of All's Well That Ends Well, Iyengar uses the characters of "Surpanakha," who goes after Ram, and "Ravana," the demon king, to highlight the differences between men and women. It highlights the psychological fact that men often want other women and that women who chase after men seem less appealing and funnier than guys who chase after women.

In Ahalya, the goddess Indra masquerading as her spouse Sage Gautama tricks her into giving him her wealth and power. In The Comedy of Errors, Adriana entertains Antipholus, the other Antipholus, while the actual lover finds himself barred out. In his commentary on tragedy, Iyengar uses the same phrase that Valmiki had Sita utter after listening to Hanuman describe Rama's faithfulness and grief:

"Amritam Vishamsrishtam." Shakespeare and the Sanskrit playwrights have similarities, according to Iyengar.

In his analysis of Shakespeare's poetry, he notes that the sensuality of Adonis and Venus is more reminiscent of Kumarasambhava and Ritu Samhara by Kalidasa. He draws parallels between Othello's tale of the misplaced handkerchief and Kalidasa's Abhigyan Shakuntala, highlighting the tragic loss of the ring in both works. But what he finds most striking is the resemblance between Sanskrit dramatists' works and Shakespeare's later plays. He notes that, as in the Sanskrit plays Sakuntala and Uttar Ram Charita, the reunion in The Winter's Tale takes on a spiritual dimension, making it comparable to other forms of spiritual change rather than mere reunion.

A new kind of drama emerges as a consequence. When drawing a comparison between Hamlet and Gautam Buddha, who endures a series of shocks throughout his life, Iyengar cites historical events. Because the Montagues' and Capulets' quarrel affects relatives, friends, retainers, and servants much as it did Hindus and Muslims during India's partition, he argues that evil is a dispersed atmospheric presence in Romeo and Juliet. When confronted with Tybalt, the Capulet, Romeo is the only one who, like Ashoka Varadhana, the king of India, fearlessly proclaims the retreat from vengeance and hatred. 'Gol Gumbaz,' the splendid mausoleum of 'Muhammad Adil Shah' at Buzapur, is likened by Iyengar to the possessive characteristic of Shakespearean tragic heroes. As Iyengar explains in his discussion of the myth of the Phoenix and the Turtle, these mythical creatures are manifestations of the forces of Prakriti and Purusha, respectively. Each is a mythical bird in its own right. He makes the observation that the rituals (Sradha Ceremony) observed by a son upon the death of his father are comparable to the calls made by the reborn phoenix to the other birds to attend the obsequies of the deceased Phoenix and her companion, the Turtle.

The poem concludes with a deep Revelation. stillness, the shaiti of the Vedas. Much Ado About Nothing's heroine, Beatrice, is the blessed eternal Feminine, woman as "Shakti" who keeps the world of Much Ado bright even when the sky

lours and darkness is about to invade and conquer, just as Shakespeare's heroine is the very heart and soul of his play, according to Ruskin. Iyengar agrees with this assessment. He goes on to say that the four young heroines of Shakespeare's plays— Portia, Beatrice, Helena, and Isabella— appear to be representations of the mother— the supreme world creatrix— and her many aspects, bringing to earth-play various aspects of these divine feminine qualities and rescuing humanity from its fallen state. From the continent, Iyengar draws analogies as well.

Take the deposal of Russian Premier Malenkov and the installation of Marshall Bulganin as the new Chairman of the Council of Ministers as an example. He draws parallels between this event and the coronation of Edward II, the son of Richard III. Similarly, to how Nikita Khushov drove Russian growth, the Earl of Northumberland drove British development. All of the aforementioned similarities across various sources attest to Iyengar's extensive knowledge. It is clear from his work on Shakespeare that he studies the Bard with a microscope, paying attention to every detail of his life and art. The book is arranged into parts and consists of fifteen chapters

There are six parts to the first chapter of *The Man from Stratford*, which analyses Shakespeare's traits as a person and an artist. First, in "Approaches to Shakespeare," Iyengar likens Shakespeare to the ocean, saying that not even the most experienced sailors can unravel all of the ocean's mysteries. Then he likens him to Everest, which, once climbed, stays only in one's mind. Shakespeare, he says further, has great strength and ability as an artist. He possesses a keen understanding of the complexities and diversity of human experience, a wealth of musical talent, and a sharpness of eloquence that cuts through poetry. When discussing Shakespeare's universe, Iyengar notes that it is full of diverse human beings, each with their own set of strengths and weaknesses, who are not exclusive to a given era but rather exist over all of human history, although in various guises and at varying levels of power. Even if his plays deal with themes like envy, tyranny, division, and criminality, the "reconciliation" is a footnote.

Thus, they are a blend of the good and the bad, joy and sorrow, fantasy and reality, comedy and tragedy, all held together by a complex and intricate web that provides strength and harmony behind the seeming chaos and flux. Nothing here breaks the thread of life," Jean Paris notes. The most entertaining part is the part when the crime and punishment are connected...puns are sprinkled throughout lamentation. Every situation and expression has a fundamental unity; without tragedy, there would be no joy, and vice versa. If the contrasts between these plays are not as vast as we would think, it is because there is a fundamental unity underlying all of them.

Paradoxically, the most diverse theatre so becomes the location of ultimate identification. What this means is that despite their outward differences, all forms of human experience— comedy, history, and tragedy— unveil a common goal or secret. Ultimately, Iyengar notes that the scope of Shakespeare's work is too vast for any one method to cover it all.

In the second part, we will talk about the scope of Shakespeare studies. There are many ways to understand Iyengar's works, according to him. These include looking at them through the lens of their uniqueness, his own life and surroundings, and the larger universal background. Their relevance to the Elizabethan era is understood, and their eternal relevance is validated. Critics like Shaw and Johnson have done a lot of study on him, but he is still a mystery, and the little we do know about him is so insufficient that it's frustrating when we put it all together.

There are countless volumes on Shakespeare because, as Allardyce Nicoll puts it, "the wonder which is in him defies exact description, that it constantly reveals fresh facets and that we can hardly imagine a time when we shall have exhausted the magic and became absolute masters of the mystery." His intellectual, social, and political background, his relationship to his times, his contemporaries, and the theatre are all important aspects of his studies, according to Iyengar. His texts' authenticity and the chronology of his plays are also important aspects. His topical significance, verbal wizardry, imagery, soliloquy, music, song, and the role of the abnormal or supernatural are other aspects of his work. In Section 3, under "The Biographical Problem," Iyengar asserts that the first book to provide a comprehensive overview of Shakespeare's work was Dowden's *Shakespeare: His Thought and Art* (1875). He brings up the fact that Malone was the first to determine the sequence of events in Shakespeare's plays.

Scholarly works by people like Fleay, Herzberg, Conrad, and others have also contributed to the canonization of the plays. A number of publications by authors like as Sidney Lee, Ben Jonson, Greene, Bradley, etc., include Shakespeare's biography. According to Iyengar, the secrecy surrounding his life story is blown out of proportion. Although critics have put forth fifty to sixty candidates to claim authorship of Shakespeare's plays, the debate has been put to rest by scholars such as R.C. Churchill, H.N. Gibson, and James McManaway, who rightly argue that Shakespeare's contemporaries knew and accepted him as the author.

## CONCLUSION

From my early years in school, I was captivated by Shakespeare's plays, and during my time at university, I focused extensively on his major tragedies. Rereading the tragedies allows me to process them in my own unique manner, each time considering them in light of the key resources at my disposal. I was astonished by Shakespeare's insight of human nature, his vivifying use of new imagery, flowing language, lofty seriousness, philosophical depth, and above all his humanity. His music seemed like a rousing hymn of joy and elation to me. Reading critical analyses of Shakespeare's plays by scholars like Wilson Knight and Dr. Johnson piqued my interest in the Bard's work because they revealed the vast emotional landscapes and theoretical avenues open to interpretation.

Over time, I came to the conclusion that Shakespeare's major tragedies may be better understood by comparing them to Indian philosophy. I set out on my adventure armed with a rudimentary understanding of Indian poetry. I started by collecting all of the published works on Shakespeare that were accessible in India. It was a difficult undertaking. In order to gather books and articles written by Indian intellectuals, I had to go from one location to another. Personal and institutional restraints were on my side. Still, I was able to triumph over these obstacles and amass almost every book, essay, and monograph, no matter how big or little. The fact that Shakespeare's tragedies had captivated everyone from saints to philosophers to poets to professors to intellectuals to actors to men in power to the average man caught me off guard. From what I can tell, Shakespeare had an impact on almost every great Indian language writer. Chapters one and two of my thesis make strategic use of criticism of Shakespeare offered by Indian academics in order to achieve two goals: Before everything else, it had to demonstrate why Shakespeare captivated Indian thinkers, authors, critics, actors, and audiences; Secondly, to create an Indian viewpoint to analyse and assess Shakespeare's major tragedies by following the tradition of Shakespeare criticism in India.

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