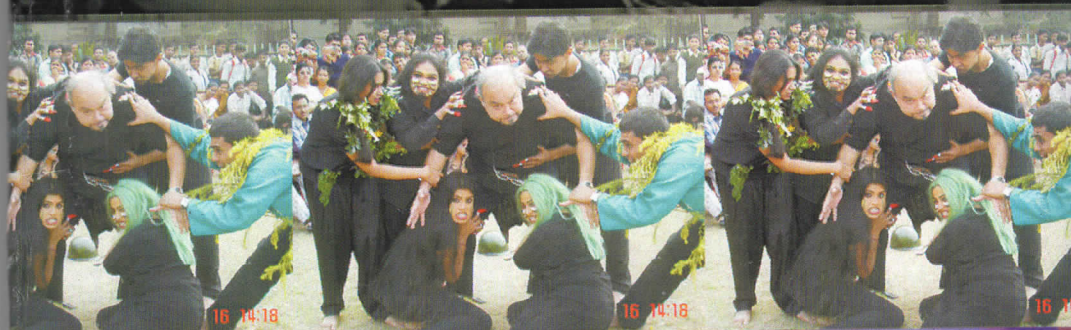


THEATRE INTERNATIONAL

Vol. X



Eds.

Amitava Roy, Bryan Reynolds, Sheila T. Cavanagh, Subir Dhar, Tapu Biswas

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AVANTGARDE PRESS

TI Vol X

Shakespeare is very well served in this issue of *Theatre International*. From U.K. Ronan Paterson reveals the impact of the *Transformative wilderness*, exotic mountains, landscapes, skylscapes and seascapes on the mind and behavior pattern of the Bard's characters. Dibakar Sarkar opens up new ground with Children's Editions of *Macbeth*; Pinaki Roy explores love and lust in Shakespeare; Indranil Ghosh makes a comparative study of translations of *Othello* from India and Bangladesh; Swati Banerjee comments on the *Othello* scene in the film *Saptapadi*; P.P Singh reveals Shakespeare's perspectives on the Divine Right of Kings in *Richard II*; Lopamudra Dey surveys the critical controversy relating to the love-test and the "bond" between father and daughter in *Lear*.

Tapu Biswas gives new insights into Osborne and Jimmy Porter's misogyny; Sujato Ghosh analyses alienation in Albee's *Zoo Story*; Laki Molla gives us a triangular perspective on the Indian epics, Shakespeare and Girish Ghosh's *Jana*.

Cover Pix

Top row: Amitava Roy as Macbeth attacked by a forest of witches in the open-air Indo-Canadian production *Lady Macbeth in Kolkata* at RBU (2009-2011).

Middle row: Mandar Bhanage as Hamlet in Marathi production (2017).

Bottom row: Two witches as two lady Macbeths painting themselves with blood in Kalyani Kalamandalam's *Macbeth Mirror* directed by Santanu Das (2017).



AVANTGARDE PRESS

ISSN NO: 2278 - 2036TI

SHAKESPEARE SOCIETY OF EASTERN INDIA

THEATRE INTERNATIONAL

**UGC Approved Peer-Reviewed International
Journal. UGC Serial No - 49202**

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SHAKESPEARE SOCIETY OF EASTERN INDIA

THEATRE INTERNATIONAL:Journal-cum-DramaBook
UGC approved Journal no : 49202

Published by
Dr. Tapu Biswas
for Avantgarde Press, Shakespeare Society of Eastern India.
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© Shakespeare Society of Eastern India, Registered, Govt. Approved, non-profit Society, Reg. no. S/49021 of 1985-86
In collaboration with Tagore Gandhi Institute for Culture Studies.

First Published: 2017

Page setting and cover design :

Printed at :

Price: INR ₹ 400.00 (Rupees Four Hundredonly)
US \$ 20
UK £ 15

TIReg. No. B - 1554/11 dt 23/3/11
Book Registered under Act XXV as modified upto the 1st March, 1970
under Section 9, Govt. of West Bengal

ISSN NO: 2278 - 2036

Theatre International, Peer Reviewed Journal

Theatre International

Vol. X July 2017

In Memoriam

SHIMA MUKHERJEE (1937-2017)

Former Faculty, Deshbandhu College for Girls, Kolkata
and

Life Member, Shakespeare Society of Eastern India

R.I.P.

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From the Editors' Desk

Theatre International Vol. X begins with Ronan Paterson's wide-ranging perspective on how Shakespeare's characters undergo radical change in personality and behavior pattern when they relocate themselves (either voluntarily or otherwise) to the countryside or natural wildernesses far from their courtly or urban homes. Professor Paterson is renowned for his ability to wed the large perspective to the microdetail which he does brilliantly here by focusing on "the transformative wilderness" (or its variations) in nearly the whole of Shakespeare's Oeuvre. As the cliché has it "travel broadens the mind". It is a truth perhaps universally acknowledged that unfamiliar, strange, exotic and distant forests, mountains, seascapes and landscapes do effect psychological and moral change in us. Paterson explores the presence of this idea from the Greeks, through the Judaeo-Christian traditions down to Shakespeare. This topoi of the transformative wilderness is prevalent not only in Classical and Renaissance writings. But it is also of central interest in Persian and Indian Literatures as well. Rabindranath Tagore has importantly focused on the "Ashramic Tradition"-(from Ashram the abode of the wise, the sages and the philosophers in the lap of forested and mountaneous hinterlands) and its relation and dialectic with urban civilizations to reveal how great truths have emerged from the wilderness to help transform ourselves.

A different skyscape can create great and small transformations in man. Classical and modern Indian literatures explore the lives of men and women who light out for the blue hills yonder and return to their familiar urban surroundings with their drained-out emotional, moral and intellectual batteries re-charged. Ronan explores this theme in his habitual witty and provocative way and concludes with a stunning sentence that the Bard could very well have used as a profound slogan for his Globe Theater if he had the good Fortune to read Paterson's paper:

"Thus the ultimate Transformative Wilderness, as Puck and Rosalind remind us, is the Theatre itself" ("As a man of the theatre myself, I most heartily agree" *Bryan Reynolds*) "As an Editor of Theatre International I am very happy that one of my more interestingly titled papers "*The Bard for Babies*" has inspired Dibakar, an young Indian college teacher, to explore the editions of *Macbeth* meant for children and young adults. Its nice to see that I have some avid readers in far-distant (or not-so-distant nowadays) India too" (*Sheila Cavanagh*). In spite of Prof. Cavanagh's throwaway modesty ("its nice to know that....") the fact remains that our editor is a globally- renowned and globe- trotting Shakespearean (among other things) and a mentor to many of our young and not-so-young scholar and university teachers from Delhi to Darjeeling, Lucknow to Lolegaon in North-East India and from Purulia to Punjab. Here Dibakar Sarkar initiates a lively discussion on the children's editions of *Macbeth* published between 1936-2006. To our knowledge this is the first such comparative study of the subject to emerge from India and we do hope that Dibakar follows this up with similar comparative explorations of the Bard in Comics, Graphic Shakespeares and on the rather "ghastly series of publications" (in noted Indian Shakespearean scholar Rupin Desai's phrase) entitled *No Fear Shakespeare*.

Indranil Ghosh has dedicated himself to exploring Bangla translations of the Bard both from Bangladesh and Bengal, Shakespeare's first port of call in India. Some of his research has been published in previous issues of this journal. *Different Moors* compares and contrasts in relevant detail how Bengali and Bangladeshi translators have responded to Othello, the person and the play, at critical junctures in the history of the two contiguous nations. The agenda and perspectives are intriguingly different for an India in 1950 which had recently become an Independent nation after negotiating colonial rule and the Hindu-Muslim Partition catastrophe (mostly felt in Bengal and Punjab) and in Bangladesh in the 1970s

which was coming to terms with its violent birth and break-up from Pakistan. What is most interesting is that our response to Shakespeare can be used as a marker for the socio-political-cultural scenarios of two emerging non-European nations like India and Bangladesh.

From Racial violence, jealousy, hatred, misogyny, madness and murder in Shakespeare and post-colonial nations, Dr Pinaki Roy in his well-researched survey, *Amorous Evil Angels* takes us through the major critical literature on love and lust in the Bard's plays. This paper interestingly brings together classical deities like Venus and Aphrodite, political scientists like Machiavelli and contemporary Feminist, Neo-Historicist and Cultural Materialist Critics to explore the role of Love and Lust not just in the Bard's Plays and Poems, but in his family life too.

The love-test and the ramifications of the "bond" between father and daughter, the king and his subjects in the opening scene of *King Lear* have always been the contested site of endless debate and critical controversy. The scene has been labeled on occasion as "absurd" "fairytaleish" and even "incomprehensible" Lopamudra Dey surveys and analyses much of this critical battleground to arrive at some moral conclusions about "bond/bondage of love" between different sets of partners and attempts to use Shakespeare as a possible and practical guide to leading the "good life" and solving the "love-riddle".

Dr Tapu Biswas renowned for his brilliant research into the global response to such playwrights as Beckett and Ionesco, Pinter, Albee and Badal Sircar here turns his attention to problems of misogyny and marriage both for Jimmy Porter and his creator Osborne. Biswas's analysis in Anti-Feminism in *Look Back in Anger* surprisingly reveals that the mid-century British Alison is a sister under the skin of the traditional, much-abused and battered Indian wife in life and literature. Like the ever victimized Indian wife, Alison too is

condemned to return and "grovel" at the feet of her lord and master even if she plucks up enough courage to momentarily leave her brutal, tyrannical husband.

Among all the modern American plays Albee's *Zoo Story* is perhaps the most translated/ adapted and staged play across the globe, with Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman* coming a close second. Leaving aside a clutch of translations/ adaptations of both these plays in the Indian "Bhasa" Languages (Marathi, Odiya, Gujarati, Hindi, Urdu, Kashmiri to name a few) there are atleast four excellent translations/ adaptations of both plays currently available in Bangla. This Editor (A.R.) himself directed Albee's *Zoo Story* and acted the role of Jerry in a transcreated Bangla version which kept audiences enthralled for over a year in the 1980s when staged in "Muktangan", Kolkata's famed "off-Broadway" Auditorium. New versions are always being staged by campus, amateur and professional theatre groups across India and Bangladesh. It is Albee's most popular and accessible "two-hander" and though very American it is also universal in its powerful and moving portrayal of urban alienation, isolation and the desperate attempts of lost souls trying to connect to each other.

Dr Sujato Ghosh re-locates *Zoo Story* into its original 1958 pre-Gay Liberation setting to explore its muted and often then-embarrassing homosexual content, its misogyny and its patterns of verbal and non-verbal communication. Ghosh's paper proves once again that more than fifty years after its first publication Albee's *Zoo Story* still speaks to us tellingly of the cage-bars that divide and isolate us as we continue to struggle through our existential predicament imprisoned within our self-constructed urban human zoos.

Modernisms, Postmodernisms, Surrealisms, Untruths and Postruths may come and go but Albee's *Zoo Story* will ever remain a classic mastertext of modern World theatre.

The last two papers return us once again to Shakespeare, the originary fountainhead, from which so to say, it all begins. Prof P. P. Singh and

Preety Rashmi consider *Richard II* as a play where history and tragedy meet to explore the theme of "the Divine Right of Kings" and the "Mirror for Magistrates" exemplum of pride and arrogance resulting in fall and ruin.

Prof Laki Molla maps the impact of Vyasa's epic the *Mahabharata* and Shakespeare on the first and perhaps greatest Actor-Manager, Producer and Director to emerge on the professional Bengali-Indian stage during the last decades of the 19th and early decades of the 20th centuries. Molla's paper is a rich source of transgeneric and transnational acculturation as it reveals in in-depth detail how the Mahabharata and the Bard of Avon infiltrated into the consciousness of Bengal and of Girish Ghosh, its theater maestro, the Bard of the Ganges by Kolkata's riverbank.

Happy Reading.

Bryan Reynolds
Amitava Roy
for the Eds.

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