

## BEYOND BOUNDARIES: THOU NAME IS SHAKESPEARE

**Dr. YOGESH SHARMA**

Associate Professor, Department of English, Swami Shraddhanand College, (University of Delhi), Alipur, Delhi, India

### ABSTRACT

The Bard of Avon has broken All the barriers has been broken by the great Bard of Avon, William Shakespeare: national, international, right, left, and centre. He has been rediscovered by the world. Most of the English departments have thrashed Shakespeare, where his plays have been removed from the course syllabus. However, Shakespeare now lives in the heart of the people. He is a very popular household name. He is very widely quoted by all type of people and in all walks of life.

**KEYWORDS:** 1- Divinity, 2- Heraldry, 3- Theatre, 4- Colonial, 5- Bhakts, 6- Comprehended, 7- Adapted, 8- Impressions, 9- Transposed, 10- Godfather, 11- Thriller, 12- Ghost, 13, Manga, 14- Separable, 15- Generations, 16- Phraseology, 17-Homosexuality, 18-Groundlings, 19- Catapulted, 20- Witches, & 21- Camaraderie

### INTRODUCTION

The work and plays of Shakespeare have also been highly popular and being adapted in theatres, fictions, lecture rooms, leaders and eminent people. All over the globe, in every university, colleges and board syllabus, Shakespeare has been an inseparable part and very popular part. In this way, he has silently entered our thinking, existence, and life and become a part of our intellect and psyche. He has been inspiring generations of academics, writers, filmmakers, leaders across the world.

"Some, like John Ward, Vicar of Stratford-upon-Avon, and unlike Ben Johnson, have judged Shakespeare to be" natural wit, without any art at all." Others, whose name is legion, have held that since Shakespeare is nature, the right way to study him the way of naturalist; they have treated his work as encyclopaedia of information, and have parcelled it out in provinces, writing immeasurable books on Shakespeare's divinity, Shakespeare's heraldry, Shakespeare's law and medicine, Shakespeare's birds, beats, fishes, and insects, -- all tacitly proceedings of strange assumptions that it was a part of Shakespeare's purpose to impart an accurate knowledge of those branches of learning, and that by his success his true greatness may be judged."

(WALTER RALEIGH, SHAKESPEARE, CHAP.I, p.22.)

The famous Polish theatre scholar and critic Jan Kott, in his famous and significant work Shakespeare: Our Contemporary, published in 1965 wrote, "Shakespeare is like the world, or life itself. Every historical period finds in him what it is looking for and what it wants to see..."

(Jan Kott, Shakespeare: Our Contemporary, 1965).

It seems that in the twenty-first century India, Jan Kott is very right. It is very natural too for a nation whose people have been brought up from the very childhood about listening and reading majestic Shakespeare and his immortal

quotes and his works. Due to erroneous education policy and colonial bhakts in India, Bard of Avon is more popular than Kalidass or Vyasa. However, for academician, he is only a ceremonial attraction, only a showpiece to make discussions spicy.

“The truth is that Shakespeare, by revealing his whole mind to us, has given us just cause to complain that his mind is not small enough to be comprehended with ease. It is man’s most settled habits when he meets with anything that is new and strange, to be unhappy until he has named it, to be forever at rest.”

(Walter Raleigh, Shakespeare, Macmillan And Co., Limited, St. Martin Street, London, 1953, pp.17-18.)

However, Shakespeare cannot be discovered in books and lectures. His never-ending popularity in India can be judged by the fact that his numbers of plays have been adapted as popular films by famous filmmakers. For example ‘Omkara’, made in 2006, is a film based on Shakespeare’s Othello, directed, co-written and produced by Vishal Bhardwaj. It stars Ajay Devgn, Kareena Kapoor and Saif Ali Khan in the main role, with co-stars like Vivek Oberoi, Bipasha Basu and Konkona Sen Sharma.

([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Omkara\\_film](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Omkara_film), 2006)

“To the thinking mind of the divorce of unusual intellect from goodness is a thing to startle, and Shakespeare clearly felt it so. The combination of unusual intellect with extreme evil is more than startling, it is frightful. It is rare but it exists; and Shakespeare represented it in Iago. ”

(A.C.Bradley, Shakespearean Tragedy, Macmillan And Co., Limited, St. Martin Street, London, 1952, p.237.)

‘Haider’ is another film made in 2014 and based on Hamlet by William Shakespeare. The film is again directed, written and produced by Vishal Bhardwaj, and Basharat Peer as co-writer. It has galaxy of stars like Shahid Kapoor, Tabu, Irfan Khan, Kay Kay Menon and Shraddha Kapoor. Some of them have appeared in very impressive special appearance.

([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Haider\\_\(film\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Haider_(film)))

Gentlewoman: She has spoke what she should not, I am sure of that: heaven knows what she has known.

Lady Macbeth: Here's the smell of the blood still, all the perfumes of Arabia will not sweeten this little hand. Oh, oh, oh!

Doctor: What a sigh is there! The heart is solely charged.

(A. W.Verity, Macbeth, Cambridge, At The University Press, 1952, p.74, ll. 47-53.)

“What false impressions are conveyed in the phrases which we have to use to express the process whereby Shakespeare converted the stocks and stones of the old dramas and chronicles into the living, breathing men and women! We say 'he drew his original from this source, or he found his materials' in that source.”

(A. W.Verity, Macbeth, Cambridge, At The University Press, 1952, p.xxii.)

‘Maqbool’ is also based on Hamlet by William Shakespeare. It was also written and directed by Vishal Bhardwaj. The crime and intrigues of Macbeth by Shakespeare are transported and scripted to the criminal and underworld of Mumbai. Macbeth type conspirators and Godfathers can be transposed in present-day Mumbai. The famous Scottish tragedy pictures in the commercial capital of contemporary India and her powerful underworld. Two corrupt policemen,

telling fortune, play the roles of the rogue weird sisters, and Abbaji is Duncan, that the head of a family of criminals. The mistress of Abbaji's and Maqbool jointly conspire and carry out his death; the superb role of Birnam wood is played by the sea magnificently and that is written by James McLeod.

(<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maqbool>)

Another movie Karz is a famous and popular 1980s Indian-Bollywood Hindi-language murder mystery film, directed by Subhash Ghai, that stars Rishi Kapoor and Tina Munim in lead roles, and supported by classic star Simi Garewal, in the significantly much-admired role of Kamini Verma. The storyline is also influenced by the plot of Shakespearean Hamlet in which murder, rebirth, revenge and ghost story is there. 'Khoon Ka Khoon' directed by Sohrab Modi is inspired by Hamlet. "The story of Hamlet has a long history. It has evidently provided entertainment for a great variety of readers and listeners in many countries."

(Nigel Alexander, Hamlet, Macmillan Education Ltd, Basingstoke and London, p.8.)

'Angoor' written by Gulzar is based on Comedy of Errors. 'Do Dooni Char', directed by Bimal Roy is also inspired by Comedy of Errors. After the movies and theatres, now, Manga comics are written, inspired by the plays of Bard. Nearly more than four centuries on, the magic of Bard of Avon is more and more strong.

Not only the films but also the works and plays of Shakespeare have also been highly popular and being adapted in theatres, fictions and lecture rooms. In every university and board syllabus, Shakespeare has been an inseparable part. In this way, he has silently entered our thinking and life and become a part of our intellect and psyche. He has been inspiring generations of academics, writers, filmmakers, leaders across the world.

"He was (though not equally) at home in tragedy and comedy, and his genius took in innumerable aspects of both ; he was supreme, not only as dramatist, but also as poet to whom the words of high imagination and delicate fancy were alike open ; and while not himself a profound and original thinker, he possessed in a superlative degree the faculty of digesting thought into phraseology so memorable and so final that, as we all know, he is the most often quoted of all our writers."

(Hudson, p.75)

Shakespeare is very truly an inseparable part of all the big and famous names in India and their political-legal and socio-cultural perception and awareness. Even judges also refer Shakespeare on a number of occasions to clarify their point:

"Uneasy lies the head that wears a crown". King Henry IV by William Shakespeare was also quoted by the honourable Supreme Court of India in a case on the fragile and troublesome position of the Prime Minister's in the very famous corruption case relating to the petition for granting approval of trial in the 2G spectrum case against minister A Raja.

King Henry: "Canst thou, O partial sleep, give thy repose To the wet sea-boy in an hour so rude, And in the calmest and most stillest night, With all appliances and means to boot, Deny it to a king? Then happy low, lie down! Uneasy lies the head that wears a crown."

(King Henry IV, Act-III, Scene-I, ll. 26-31)

"Justice A K Ganguly, who concurred with the findings of Justice G S Singhvi on the issue, quoted the line while referring to the delay which had taken place at the Prime Minister's Office in taking a decision for according sanction for the prosecution of Raja."

(Supreme Court quotes Shakespeare to describe PM's position in 2G scam case)

(India | Press Trust of India | Updated: January 31, 2012, 23:29 IST)

(<https://www.ndtv.com/india-news/supreme-court-quotes-shakespeare-to-describe-pms-position-in-2g-case-568681>)

Shakespeare must be turning sides in his grave when he was quoted recently by a judge of the Supreme Court. The Supreme Court of India quoted the famous line from Romeo and Juliet; while pronouncing its judgment on much publicised case on September 6, 2018 related with on Section 377 of IPC.

"What's in a name? That which we call a rose

By any other name would smell as sweet."

(Romeo and Juliet, Act-II, Scene-II.)

The Chief Justice of India, Justice Dipak Misra, relating the significance of identity, mentioned in his judgment the famous phrase in its central wisdom, expresses that "what actually matters is the necessary worth of the essence and the essential features of an entity but not the name by which it or an individual is identified or called."

Poor and unconcerned Shakespeare must be crying in his grave, in his Elizabethan age in England, gay, lesbian and homosexuality were treated as a sin and crime at equivalent to murder. But today he is being invoked in India to decriminalize and legalizes homosexuality.

This does not stop with the judiciary but sportsman and film stars have also quoted Shakespeare to express their views forcefully. In his famous autobiography, Sachin Tendulkar: A Definitive Biography, on the predicament of the captain of the cricket team of Indian, Sachin Tendulkar has used the same quote of the bard in his biography, used by Justice Ganguly "Uneasy lies the head that wears a crown," quoted from King Henry IV, a play by William Shakespeare, to describe the crisis. A number of commentators have used Shakespeare to describe the greatness of Sachin Tendulkar.

'A privilege to watch: Peter Roebuck on Sachin Tendulkar's...' 'Oct 11, 2013 - For more than 20 years Sachin Tendulkar terrorised bowlers.... Bogart that there was no point reciting even Shakespeare if he was smoking a...'

(<https://www.smh.com.au/sport/cricket/a-privilege-to-watch-peter-roebuck-on-sachin-tendulkars-centuries-against-the-australians-20131011-2vcms.html>)

Famous film actor Deepika Padukone has lately uploaded her image on Instagram with a citation from Shakespeare's Henry IV, referring her film 'Chhapaak.'

"The actor had recently shared a behind-the-scenes image from a table read session from the film, which also showed her co-actor, Vikrant Massey, in a bearded look. 'All things are ready if our mind is so,' (Act IV, Scene-III) Deepika quoted William Shakespeare in the caption."

(<https://www.hindustantimes.com/bollywood/chapaak-deepika-padukone-transforms-into-acid-attack-survivor-in-first->

[look-from-meghna-gulzar-film-see-it-here/story-ujvw1bcNDp9DFX3cKbFGZJ.html](http://look-from-meghna-gulzar-film-see-it-here/story-ujvw1bcNDp9DFX3cKbFGZJ.html))

Indian politicians also have been using the 'Quotes of the Bard' to express themselves because nobody can beat the Bard at oratory and rhetoric. In addition, everybody knows that Indian politics is only hallowing rhetoric.

"Now, Shakespeare certainly had no liking for the rough, uneducated mob ; he was a man of sensitive feeling, acutely responsive to breeding and culture, and nothing of that demagogue spirit that leads and to lay down to the "groundlings" for personal aggrandizement and popularity. Brutality and ignorance he hates heartily with Elizabethan frankness, and states it without equivocation in forcible language."

(A HISTORY OF ENGLISH LITERATURE, ARTHUR COMPTON-RICETT, 'SHAKESPEARE', p.137.)

Former finance minister Pranab Mukherjee used the quote from Shakespeare while presenting the annual Union Budget 2012. He used Shakespeare to validate the 'cruel' and 'harsh' budget but with the 'kind' and 'positive' intentions of the government.

"In the end, it was the Bard of Avon that FM turned to administer the "painful" pill of economic policy. "I must be cruel; only to be kind," (Hamlet, Act III, Scene IV, II 173-179) He went to the much-awaited quote. Prince Hamlet, long fed up with the rot in the state of Denmark, was suddenly catapulted into the august house of world's largest democracy. "Union Budget 2012-13: Pranab Mukherjee invokes Shakespeare on Budget day."

(<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/opinion/er-commentary/union-budget-2012-13-pranab-mukherjee-invokes-shakespeare-on-budget-day/articleshow/1230048.cms?from=mdr>)

Smriti Irani, former Human Resource Development minister, quoted the notorious witches of Shakespearean Macbeth, condemning the opposition parties of distorting the truth in the controversial and much hyped Rohit Vemula suicide while replying in February 2016 in the Rajya Sabha.

"Quoting from William Shakespeare's Macbeth, Ms Irani said, 'Fair Is Foul, Foul Is Fair,' accusing the opposition of turning facts around in the debate. Ms Irani and the opposition engaged in a war of words when neither yielded to the requests of the Chair."

'Fair Is Foul, Foul Is Fair', (Act I, Scene I) Smriti Irani Quotes Macbeth in Rajya Sabha.

('The Times of India', New Delhi, Saturday, April 23, 2016, p-26.)

(<https://www.ndtv.com/cheat-sheet/arun-jaitley-vs-sitaram-yechury-as-rajya-sabha-debates-jnu-nationalism-1281094>)

The National Conference and Kashmir Muslim leader Omar Abdullah, who is very extensively chased on Twitter by the readers, tweeted these three words, "Et to Karnataka", while expressing his frustration and shock over the victory of nationalist BJP in Karnataka. He was quoting the sublime tragedy of Julius Caesar by William Shakespeare. The immortal dying words of Julius Caesar 'Et tu Brute', a phrase in Latin translated in English as 'Even you Brutus' that signifies brutality and treachery when stabbed by Brutus who was his most trusted and best friend, were spoken by Julius Caesar in the famous tragedy and play when he was murdered by the unexpected stabbing by Brutus.

(Julius Caesar, Act III, scene i)

'Et tu, Karnataka' Omar Abdullah quotes Shakespeare to describe Karnataka election result, May 15, 2018.

(<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/et-tu-karnataka-omar-abdullah-quotes-shakespeare-to-describe-karnataka-electio-result/articleshow/64172519.cms>)

During the Kolkata Book fair held in 2017, controversial leader Mamata Banerjee, became a subject of laughter, in her zeal to boast of Bengal's reverberations with Shakespeare, made a shocking statement that great Shakespeare and John Keats were great friends of Rabindranath Tagore. Legendary Shakespeare, was born in 1564, was a playwright of the Elizabethan age. Keats was a poet of the romantic age. The time gap between the period of Tagore and Shakespeare was about two hundred years. Tagore was born in 1861, and the Gitanjali was written around 1913. There was no connection and camaraderie between the three. Keats had died forty years before Tagore was born, while Shakespeare died in 1616.

“The belief that power bestows on the powerful an indemnity against every transgression, even ignorance, is obvious in Banerjee's astonishing capacity to alter the fact, even history, to suit her needs. Therefore, Rabindranath Tagore had “good relations” with John Keats and “Shakespeare ta (that Shakespeare)” is loved by children according to the chief minister. But how is this surprising?”

([https://peoplesdemocracy.in/2015/0315\\_pd/politics-first-education-can-wait](https://peoplesdemocracy.in/2015/0315_pd/politics-first-education-can-wait))

On August 27, 2017, in the ‘Mann ki Baat’, the famous radio show of the Prime Minister of India Narendra Modi, displayed his varied and good acquaintance when he described and referred to the ‘Hindu Scriptures and Shastras, William Shakespeare and Mahatma Gandhi all together.

‘Shakespeare in his play, The Merchant of Venice, while explaining the importance of forgiveness, has written, “Mercy is twice blest, It blesseth him that gives and him that takes,” meaning, the forgiver and the forgiven both stand to receive divine blessing’.

(Portia, in William Shakespeare, The Merchant of Venice, Act 4, Scene 1)

([https://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/pm-modi-condemns-haryana-violence-in-mann-ki-baat-here-s-the-full-text-of-his-address/story-TxuFhxOqWchRyxbDY1OtiL.html?utm\\_source=inshorts&utm\\_medium=referral&utm\\_campaign=fullarticle](https://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/pm-modi-condemns-haryana-violence-in-mann-ki-baat-here-s-the-full-text-of-his-address/story-TxuFhxOqWchRyxbDY1OtiL.html?utm_source=inshorts&utm_medium=referral&utm_campaign=fullarticle))

However, perhaps, in recent years, the boldest use of Shakespeare was the creation of ‘Anti Romeo Squads’ by Yogi Adityanath government in 2017 for the protection of women. Opposition parties were baffled to see the name of the squad after the Shakespearean hero. In Uttar Pradesh, the name is used for the molesters and criminals.

‘The ‘anti-Romeo squads’ was formed soon after Yogi Adityanath assumed the office of chief minister in Uttar Pradesh, thereby fulfilling the BJP's election promise to ‘protect the honour of women’ once the party comes to power’.

(<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/politics-and-nation/uttar-radesh-anti-rmeo-squads-to-get-more-teeth/articleshow/64996001.cms?from=mde>)

It is remarkable to note the difference between ‘Romeo’ of Juliet's versus ‘Romeo’ of Yogi’.

Juliet converses to Romeo as somebody who will return after his death:

Juliet waits for nightfall when Romeo will return.

Juliet That runaway's eyes may wink and Romeo Leap to these arms, untalked'd of and unseen. Lovers can see to

do their amorous rites By their own beauties; or, if love be blind, It best agrees with night Think true love acted simple modesty. Will make the face of heaven so fine That all the world will be in love with night, And pay no worship to the garish sun." Come, night, come, Romeo, come, thou day in night; For thou wilt lie upon the wings of night Whiter than new snow on a raven's back. Come, gentle night, come, loving, black-brow'd night, Give me my Romeo; and, when he shall die, Take him and cut him out in little stars, And he will make the face of heaven so fine That all the world will be in love with night And pay no worship to the garish sun. O, I have bought the mansion of a love (Romeo and Juliet, Act III, Scene II.)

But in the views of the police of Uttar Pradesh now, Romeo, the great lover, is a mawaali (ruffian), an asamajik (anti-social), awara/chichore-type ladka (a young man of a bad character). In his new version, Romeo, is the possible eve-teaser, molester and rapist, that needs to be identified and punished. It is an abnormality and another example of west and non-Hindus corrupting and harassing girls in India.

Such squads were bitterly criticized by the non-BJP leaders and communist intellectuals, lawyers, activists, NGOs etc. Giving space to these elements, the name of the squad has been changed from 'Anti-Romeo Squad' earlier to now 'Nari Suraksha Bal'.

'The Hindustan Times' quoted Rajendra Pratap 'Moti' Singh as saying, "Behen betiyon ka samman sarkaar ki prathmikta hai. Ab anti-Romeo squad ka naam 'Nari Suraksha Bal' kar diya gaya hai (Protecting the honour of our sisters and daughters is the top priority for our government. Anti-Romeo squad would now be known as Nari Suraksha Bal)."

([https://www.huffingtonpost.in/2017/05/19/yogi-adityanaths-anti-romeo-squad-will-now-be-known-as-nari-su\\_a\\_22098859/?utm\\_hp\\_ref=in=anti=romeo-squads](https://www.huffingtonpost.in/2017/05/19/yogi-adityanaths-anti-romeo-squad-will-now-be-known-as-nari-su_a_22098859/?utm_hp_ref=in=anti=romeo-squads))

However, as Juliet said,

'What's in a name? That which we call a rose

By any other name would smell as sweet.'

(Romeo and Juliet, Act-II, Sc-II.)

The changing of name and title does not change the role and targets of the squads. One thing, however, is that it had very effectively achieved its aim with a positive ideology.

## CONCLUSIONS

The Bard has travelled into the heart and mind of the people. Shakespeare is sleeping in his grave undisturbed for the last four centuries and many more centuries to come but he will enlighten and sparkle the heart and mind of the masses. He will live and survive like The Bible, The Quran and The Srimad Bhagwad Gita, The Ramayana, The Mahabharata, The Manusmriti, and wherever there are people who matters and care. The unrivalled and matchless dramatist lives on gloriously. Shakespeare will remain an un-forgetful asset of England like Rugby, Derby and Lords.

The world is not ready to forget "Hamlet" and "Horatio" and say "Good night, sweet prince...." and not at all to Shakespeare.

HORATIO- Now cracks a noble heart. Good night, sweet prince, And flights of angels sing thee to thy rest. Why does the drum come hither? (Hamlet, Act Five, Scene Two, p. 293, ll. 363-66.)

**REFERENCES**

1. Arthur Compton-Ricett, A History of English Literature, 'Shakespeare', Thomas Nelson and Sons Ltd. New-York, 1952.
2. A.C.Bradley, Shakespearean Tragedy, Macmillan and Co., Limited, St. Martin Street, London, 1952.
3. A.W.Verity, Macbeth, Cambridge, at the University Press, 1952.
4. Google.
5. Hamlet, Ed. Nigel Alexander, Macmillan, London, 1973.
6. Jan Kott, Shakespeare: our Contemporary, 1965.
7. 'The Hindustan Times', New-Delhi.
8. 'The Economic Times', New-Delhi.
9. 'The Times of India', New Delhi.
10. Walter Raleigh, Shakespeare, Macmillan and Co., Limited, London, 1953
11. Wikipedia
12. William Henry Hudson, an Outline History of English Literature, London, 1952.