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THE DEATHLESS ANGEL OF ENGLISH LITERATURE, AND THE LIVING LEGEND¹

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ABSTRACT

This article begins with the sketchy presentation of the controversy surrounding the questions of hypnotic popularity, astounding contemporariness and surprising relevance of the theme of his plays and poems (sonnets in particular) and their perennial appeal to the international community of international people transcending the barriers of space, time and social structures divided with the binary of the rulers and the ruled. Of course, with some spatio-temporal variations on the degree of his popularity with the peculiarity that he was more popular abroad than in his own country and in his own time. And this is an anomaly which has here been pointed out with no clear and concrete explanation which has been left out as an open problem. Roots may lie, of course, in the then existing political discourse of England for the sixteenth-seventeenth century; these secrets could possibly be divulged by some hard-nosed researchers in the field and it is thus left as an exercise and open problem for the researchers in future. This observation has been highlighted in a tabular form in a separate section. Thereafter, with a deep insight into the various philosophical strands of Shakespeare's writings which act as interpretative tools to cogently explain Shakespeare's plays and poems. With this tool in hand, we attempted to understand here why Shakespeare still lives intellectually in a very vibrant manner. How were the recent events arising out of the current, contemporary socio-political storms and vortex mirrored in some of his plays? And that is a big question for all of us. The play, 'Macbeth' constitutes a classic example of innate killer-instincts, cruelties in mankind and Lady Macbeth is a case in point. In fact, she symbolises the corrupt motives and vaulting ambitions for fulfilling one's foul dreams leading to all types of sinful activities leading to villainy. And this villainy persists and pervades the entire society with the people to whom the end justifies the means; for which adoption of no-holds-barred methods is no rarity.

Despite the complexities of colonialism and post colonialism, Shakespeare turned into a revered icon for the intellectual classes, cultural activists of India for nearly last sixty years at a stretch. The reciprocity of Shakespeare's love and respect for even ancient and primitive India and Indian's love for Shakespeare for the last sixty years with numerous productions of stage plays (adaptation or almost original form), films (mainly Bollywood variety) have been discussed as concisely as possible, though in a somewhat scattered manner. The Japanese artistic forms have also been accommodated and embraced. Shakespearean play productions in a new internet-dependent manner called 'manga', which has here been briefly highlighted. And the content of 'modernity' of Shakespeare's plays has also been

¹ This article is in commemoration of the 400th death anniversary of William Shakespeare who died in London (Stratford-upon-Avon) in 1616. And this work is dedicated to him in deep reverence to the literary masterpieces authored by him during the short span of his life of only fifty-two years.

applied to interpret the latest US election-results of 2016. Finally, the conviction that Shakespeare shall continue to live for centuries even further has been affirmed with great emphasis. The paper also attempts to organise the array of intriguing questions on Shakespeare's plays in a compact and comprehensive manner.

Key Words: Quadricentenary, Bardolatry, Contemporaneity, Modernity, Postmodernity, Postcolonialism, Adaptation and 'Manga'

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1. INTRODUCTION

Even an innocuous question like, " is Shakespeare (Shp) still relevant? ", suffers, according to some critics and commentators from an element of inverted intellectual arrogance; or smacks of some degree of virtual audacity on part of the questioner [1]. Some fanatics believe very strongly that the worth and values of Shakespeare's (Shp's) plays are not in any way a perishable intellectual commodity, rather it is such " a thing of beauty " and joy that they are likely to be immortal, so to speak, even after 4,000 years! For example, Ben Jonson, a close pall, an ardent admirer and staunch Shp- critic remarked that " He is for all time to come ", not only for today, tomorrow or day(s)- after-tomorrow(s). But the continuance of the immense and immeasurable popularity of Shakespeare rests on the fulfilment of some conditions and Criteria [2]. We must cease to view him and his cultural products not just as a 'brand ' or as a source of tourist attraction with lures of dollar-or-foreign- exchange hunting. Putting him on a pedestal would actually amount to kill him off (ii) only successful adaptations of Shp could be consistent with the spirit of times, the societies and the extant contemporary culture could enliven and lengthen the profound influence of Shakespeare's plays and products. All the time he needs to be 'reinvented' [2]. We shall have to accept that Shp is not just a heritage-industry; all the time he needs to be updated. He is to be viewed as a symbol, an epitome of universal human culture and the core-content of both ancient and modern civilization. And through this rich cultural legacy Shp will continue ' to live ' in the minds of the homo sapiens, presumably for ever. Let us quote from William Shakespeare's play, Hamlet " Thou Know'st 'tis common – all that lives must die, / Passing through nature to eternity".

Even a playwright of William Shakespeare's standing and excellence could not escape dislike, criticisms and / or attacks from a set of intellectuals of his time and beyond [3]. Admittedly, he had many fans, strong admirers and also had many vitriolic critics as well. One of the very strong Shakespeare – addicts is his very close friend, Mr. Ben Jonson, commented on Shakespeare in the words " He was not of an age, but for all time ". And the prophecy has turned out to be true which is proven by the fact of our tremendous fascination and fancy for Shakespeare's writings – his plays, tragedies, comedies, romances and historical plays and memorable sonnets. A point is to be made here. According to Laura Estill [4] Shakespeare's popularity was not for tragedies but for histories in his own times. For some people, to some viewers Shakespeare presented (present) "all things to all men" as it appeared to the eye of ' The Spectator ' [5] because "Shakespeare is what we make of him" [6]. The contrasting remark is sampled below [7] " why do people still cheer for Shakespeare? " In a word, indoctrination. It begins in our places of learning and continues in adulthood through an aggressive circulation of, " consensus" – the unquestioned, monolithic, blind adulation and worshipping of Shakespeare. Peter Beech [7] in his article entitled " Much ado about nothing **much** " remarked in the Guardian (UK) remarked that " in my experience, reading or watching Shakespeare is , by turns, baffling, tiring, frustrating and downright unpleasant ", though this is an extreme case of both apathy - cum – antipathy about Shakespeare. In fact, Leo Tolstoy was more pungent in criticism of Shakespeare. According to him, this was ' no summit of perfection ', as Shakespeare was depicted by his blind admirers. Tolstoy [8] expressed his open disagreement with universal adulation, of

Shakespeare, for which he felt an irresistible repulsion, weariness and his utter bewilderment at his age of 75 years [9].

Shakespeare's era is quite different from ours. With the passage of time, some natural changes creep in somewhat silently and automatically, infinitely slowly, almost quasistatically. This apart, with the advent of modern new technology, some sweeping changes do also take place in the mode of production, communication, transportation and presentation. Today, production of our own works can be done in just a snap; this was simply inconceivable in the late 16th or early 17th century. Another prime factor that contributes to the difference of Shp's time from our time is the application of very advanced information technology in presentation today; besides, forms of languages and expression-styles also change with time and that causes major difference in prose-structures. Coinage of new words, newer forms of expressions flourish the language and stir new life in it. For which Shp's usages of old words and somewhat archaic styles, constitute sometimes a communication barrier for a section of even the serious, sensible and the intelligent readers .

2. On World-wide Popularity of Shakespeare : Some Striking Facts and Strange Features

Shakespeare's popularity among the masses, it is well known, is unsurpassed in limit. He crossed even the luminaries, like J.K.Rowling, Bob Dylan etc in the measure of popularity-barometer. In the recent past the British Council in UK and the US-Britain- Shakespeare Study Team made some strange and striking observations. The first and foremost is Shakespeare is more **popular abroad than in UK** [10,11]. Secondly, he is now more popular than he was in UK in his own times. Very strangely, his popularity is found to be highest in India at 89% : followed by Brazil at 87% : Of them 83% of Indian sample claimed that they understand Shakespeare while in UK (Shp's country of birth and living) was a far lower percentage at only 59% of whom only 58% : claimed to like him. Fourthly, Shakespeare's popularity among the English-speaking countries like USA, Britain and Australia lie at much lower percentages 63%, 59%, 60%

List of Countries	"Like Shakespeare"	"Understood Shakespeare"
India	89%	83%
Mexico	88%	80%
Brazil	87%	79%
Turkey	79%	77%
South Africa	73%	71%
China	68%	53%

respectively. Somewhat quite naturally, Shakespeare ranks relatively poor percentages, France (51%) and Germany (44%). The undernoted country-based data presented in a tabular form demonstrates how Shakespeare is loved by some BRICS- countries and others in recent times.

Why Shakespeare is so popular in India ? It might be due to Indians' strong penchant for drama and histrionics from the days of the "Ramayana "- 'Mahabharata ' and from the ages of ' Purana'. Besides, Shakespeare's literary verve is the most contributing factor for all the countries including India who are temperamentally much attuned to poetry, 'Slokas '/ 'Mantra ' and verses. Unbounded encomiums do at times, mar the objective assessment of any situation and exact evaluation of any personality; as these are generally marked by exaggerations and hyperboles .

3. Shakespeare's Philosophical Strands and discourses

Shakespeare's writings (plays, sonnets etc) do essentially rest on three pillars: (a) Knowledge and Scepticism (b) The Self (c) Causality [12-17] Amongst these scepticisms, causality constitutes the kernel of all philosophical disquisitions. In fact, they form a microcosm in the world of philosophical studies.

The quest for knowledge is central to human existence. And knowledge is a normative concept; One must distinguish between knowledge and a cache of 'Information' which is certainly not normative . Information, one could find, is ubiquitous whereas knowledge is rare; though one must admit that valuable sources of 'information' could be the basis of knowledge.

Dramas or plays are all about array of selves. Ancillary activities, actions and events constitute the plot of the play. For Shakespeare ('Shp' , in brief) self is interactive and theatrical .

There are two types of over arching. One is teleological principle, which imparts events or occurrences some moral and ethical significance. The second type of principle would be somewhat naturalistic and non - moral. Attempts to explain events from the viewpoints of the frame of rationality alone and a well-defined purposive order in the universe bring some elements of just chance-dependences of the occurrences. In fact, Shakespeare's plays challenge the complacent views about causality. Rather, in his plays, causality was the gravest casualty. In effect, chance, fate, coincidence, etc. assumed much importance and played crucial roles. According to Shakespeare, 'destiny', is found to be at play behind the randomness of the events in life and so also in his plays.

3.1) How Isolated is modern man?

If one were charged with identifying one outstanding feature of Shakespeare's is, it would have to be his creation of character not just the provision of people who are there so that the plot can unfold, so thing can happen to them, but rounded, flesh and blood, complex characters-believable characters who make things happen. Before Shakespeare presented his vast cast of character to the world, audiences had never been shown such real. But by watching his plays, observing such characters , his audiences could come to see the face of humanity in those around them in a new, in a more enlightened way. We are still doing this, and sometimes it can be a very unsettling process! His plays bring us to ask , along in his characters, such universal and eternal questions as : (i) What is man? (ii) Why am I here (iii) How free am I to determine my own destiny? (iv) Does evil exist and if so where does it reside? (v) What is the nature of justice? (vi) How do I cope with an ever – changing world ? we are still pondering these questions 500 years after Shakespeare had his characters ask them and five hundred years, five thousand years into the future man will still be asking them, because times change but human nature does not.

3.2) Shakespeare's outlook on Fate, Fortune and Destiny

Shakespeare created in the dramas the basic understanding of what we call humanity --that is why his work is still relevant in the 21st century . As Dame Judi Dench said recently when interviewed by Michael Praxin, " Anyone who has been passionate about anything, is ready for Shakespeare".

Can we defy the rulings of destiny? Can we really be the architects of our own 'fate'? Can we conquer all the odd forces of nature by dint of our will force, valour and hard labour?

It is to be taken note of that characters like Romeo, Juliet, Hamlet, Lady Macbeth have become typical and cultural stereo types over the years since their own times after and early 17th century. They are instantly recognizable as soon as the associations tally and their names are invoked. A Romeo is a frivolous, persistent romancer and philanderer rather than a truly faithful lover into death, a Hamlet is a scholarly but confused person of indecisive nature and another stereotype is the character of Lady Macbeth who, for achieving her goals and fulfilling her vaulting ambitions would and could stop at nothing , however criminal the type of activities could be. Collectively all these typically theatrical characters reveal a lot modern life , its crises and contemporary culture.

The word Shakespearean is now a multi-purpose adjective meaning great, tragic or resonant when applied to people, events, emotions whether or not they have any real relevance to Shakespeare. Journalists quite often use the phrases like "a downfall from grace of Shakespearean proportions; "a great betrayal of almost Shakespearean proportions " Ernest Jones a Freudian psycho analyst, remarked that "Shakespeare was the first modern ". Jones argued that Shakespeare was the first to understand the complex issues of the entire spectrum of psychology which acts as the watershed between " prehistoric and civilized man ". The inner conflicts are taken to be treated as neurosis by the big band of psychologists and psycho- analysts who seek for fundamental motives and the basic instincts of mankind for their each and every action(s) followed by personality -types and thought -

processes. In fact , according to Jones, Shakespeare's plays made hints to and inroads into the development of "psychoanalysis " as a special field of knowledge and human quests analyses – anticipations about future of culture.

3.3) On Shakespearean Metaphysics

Metaphysics is normally associated with that part of philosophical school of thought which poses questions on "all hypothetical propositions about 'last things' such as , " How many substances are there in the world? " Which is more fundamental, quantity or quality? Do events precede the things or do they happen to those things? Shakespeare by profession or passion wasn't a philosopher per se, but was a poet and a playwright. Still, he was interested in all such 'ultimate(s)'. Instead of probing the causes of multiplicity of phenomena and the answers to various difficult philosophical questions with strong arguments, he had chosen to deal with them through his plays, as they were his mettle. Shakespearean metaphysics argues for Shakespeare's inclusion within a metaphysical tradition that opposes empiricism and Cartesian dualism. Shakespeare's manner of depicting life on stage itself constitutes an answer to metaphysical questions raised by later-day thinkers like Spinoza, Bergson and Whitehead. Each of these readings shifts the interpretative frame around the plays in radical ways, taken together they show the limits of our understanding of theatrical plays as an illusion generated by the physical circumstances of production of the play(s).

3.4) On Scientific Outlook of Shakespeare

One could read the line in Hamlet about shuffling off his mortal coil' and think it had something to do with the helical structure of DNA. But that would certainly be crazy, as it is too far-fetched to imagine at that time. Perhaps equally wild would be a view : Many Shakespearean scholars conclude that the playwright was not aware of the implications of the scientific revolution that was happening around him. But, it appears to a large section of the bard's fans that he was mindful of the developments in the field of astronomy with the reversal of earlier – held geocentric view to the correct heliocentric point of view of contemporary

periods. So, by all accounts Shakespeare seemed to subscribe to the revolutionary views of Copernicus, Tyco Brahe, Galileo etc and used them as fodder in his plays, whenever necessary and possible. Dan Falk's book entitled "The Science of Shakespeare " constitutes an example of what is called an 'overstatement' by a votary.

4. Despite all attempts at busting 'bardolatry' Shakespeare still lives!

The onset of bardolatry started from the days of John Milton and it was at its great height as is reflected in the first few lines of the following poem entitled 'On Shakespeare' in 1630 [18] :

"What needs my Shakespeare for his honour'd bones
The labour of an age in piled stones
Or that his hallow'd reliques should be hid
under
Star-y pointing Pyramid ?"

Very strangely, Shakespeare is more popular today than he had been in his own time or at any point since his death comprising more than four centuries including the period of his adult life-time. There are no research-based solid statistical studies to prove this astounding finding ; but the scholarly persons and critics hold very strongly the same or similar view.

All these ideas and / or beliefs are considered even today quite contemporary even with the flowering of 'postmodern' ideas in our present day societies [19]. Two current observations make us really wonder-struck and wide-eyed: (i) The British Council found that Shakespeare (Shp) was more popular outside the UK than he was in his own country. (ii)The second observation is centred in the frame of time. Observers are unanimous about the point that Shp is now a days more popular than he was in his own time [20]. In fact, Will Gompertz , concluded his studies on Shakespeare by commenting that Shp is more popular in "contemporary periods than ever ". Yes, the internet has played a very crucial and significant role in creation of the brand 'Bard' propagation. In fact he has entered into the pages of eternity and his popularity crossed all the limits of space-time barrier. The appeal of his famous quotation(s) or pronouncement of " to be or not to be" rings in the

ears of the listeners of any country, any time whatsoever. And, apparently this will continue to remain so , even in the remote future. Now has his magic spell survived and thrived and transformed him into an international superstar when his contemporary big names have failed out into insignia. His fellow playwrights of theatre from the Elizabethan Golden age like, Marlowe, Jonson, Fletcher et al are no longer existent in the public memory in an omnipresent manner and in an omniscient way. His writings only outlast, outshine almost every other wordsmith of English literature during his lifetime and the prolonged period thereafter. It is observed in the last 400years or more that Shakespeare belongs to every culture [21], though his relevance and contemporary worth are changing with time [22].

Relevance of any poem, play or literary work is influenced and determined by the combination of twin factors: its contents and the receptiveness of the cultural climate. Let us study the role of these two points and its contextuality between 1686 and 1838. Shakespeare's play , "King Lear" (a famous Shp tragedy) vanished from the British stage. Audiences preferred the altered version of it by Nahun Tate who reoriented the play to a happy ending, that is, Nahun Tate introduced some components of comedy. This must be viewed as a failing of that cultural period rather than of Shakespeare himself.

But with the transitions in social mores, cultural trends and societal taste(s), the original version has regained, once again, the massive popularity, as people are now much more "receptive to the violence, cruelty, tempestuous power and bitter- sweet poignancy of Shakespeare's King Lear." the cases of 'Coriolanus' and 'Titus Andronicus' by Shakespeare undergoing almost similar fates in so far as the popularity of these two plays is concerned in the history of seventeenth to the twentieth century. In fact, in his sonnets too he was much 'ahead of his times'. The plays foist not only memorable characters are might subtly change from actor to actor, but they also epitomise the essential core of human emotions in its entire spectrum of feelings, acquired ideas, held views and opinions: joy, sorrow, love, wrath, depression, jealousy.

Shakespeare has put them into words in his plays that resonate in our memory and in the minds of all sufferers. For example, let us cite Macbeth's despair on hearing of his wife's death.

" Life's but a walking shadow , a poor player,

That struts and frets his hour upon the stage,

And then is heard no more. It is a tale Told by an idiot , full of sound and fury, signifying nothing".

Shakespeare showed us through his plays that everyone is important whether the messenger or the king, or the queen and that is the crème of democracy [23]. Secondly, the broad democratic base of any modern liberal country does encourage the people of the country towards boldness and innovation.

5. How do Shakespeare's plays Reflect Current Affairs ?

In 2016 we can list most of the global issues and topical agendas of our times and find Shakespearean resonance and explanation as well [24] :

- (i) Refuge crises as numerous immigrants flee foreign oppression or shipwreck and seek to survive in alien lands [from 'Comedy of Errors' to 'The Winter's Tale']
- (ii)Inequality and poverty [from ' King Lear ' to 'Timon of Athens ']
- (iii)The Value of Higher Education versus learning from experience [from ' Love's Labour's Lost' to Henry IV]
- (iv)The just war and the just assassination [from Henry V to ' Julius Caesar ']
- (v)Racism, prejudice and Xenophobia [from ' Merchant of Venice ' to ' Othello ']
- (vi)Imprisonment and punishment [from ' Measure for measure ' to ' Two Noble Kinsmen']
- (vii)The machinations of the tyrant [from Richard III to Macbeth]
- (viii)The Clashing of Civilizations [from ' Troilus and Cressida ' to ' Antony and Cleopatra ']
- (xi)Tribal loyalties, Gang warfare, Urban fracture [from ' Romeo and Juliet ' to ' Coriolanus ']
- (x)The Symbolic meaning of the Sovereign whether in a first or second Elizabethan age [from Richard II to Henry VIII]
- (xi)Slavery and Servitude [from ' Taming of the Shrew to the 'Tempest ']
- (xii)Macroeconomics, credit crises, debt [from ' The Merchant of Venice ' to ' Timon of Athens ']

Furthermore, one could add the typology of governance (dictatorship, oligopoly, democracy) . Qualities for leadership, the nature of justice and law; political and social corruption embraced by party-spin and hypocrisy; class, caste and social mobility nature and the environment , international public-diplomacy, sexual predation and harassment , mental health.

Besides the aforementioned points, numerous other aspects of his literary creations excel and inspire us to live the life that we have been gifted :

- i. The bard's reach and range, one could speak, is simply cosmic !
- ii. In fact, to tell the truth, Shakespeare has turned nowadays into a profitable brand and still offers an important cultural commodity in the consumers' market
- iii. His literary works are based on universal emotions and have enduring appeal to both the commoners and the intelligentsia-almost alike.
- iv. In most cases- almost without exceptions- his plot-structures and style of presentation are genuinely moving, credible, memorable, mesmerizing. He (Shakespeare) teaches us magical power of words as a psychedelic drug, the brilliance of his language, in fact, make and keep us spell-bound for a long stretch of time.
- v. The themes and ideas of his plays must be considered timeless – even if their excellence were not uniform or at par all the time.
- vi. He portrays many credible characters in his plays and the types are quite common.
- vii. For the heroes, heroines and other ancillary characters, his depictions are quite faithful to the experiences of the viewers of his times and the present.
- viii. His plays are remarkable reservoirs of quotable quotes with unfathomable wisdom.
- ix. His writings are repository of commonly used phrases and newly coined words.
- x. In fact, he gave voice to the marginalised in society, raised words of protest against injustice, oppression and especially against all forms of repression by the state or the rulers in any regime.
- xi. Correct sense of fairness aid meting out right justice to the suffering people and others was the leitmotif of his plays.
- xii. His plays and /or poems are fountainheads of lyrical and dramatic entertainment.
- xiii. Some intellectuals believe sincerely that his writings could be a source of remedy and resource for reforming the prisoners.
- xiv. Professor Ewan Fernie [25] believed that he could teach us " to be free " individuals, to live fuller, more expressive lives both as individuals and as a society. According to her, Shakespeare's characters give us vital lessons on and unforgettable examples of freedom – the freedom to be us or them. And this can help us a lot to change our own lives for the better.
- xv. Obviously, he was thus an ardent advocate of freedom movement and a man of egalitarian ideals and zeals.
- xvi. One must feel and appreciate his (Shakespeare's) infinite compassion for every human being. Even in his most evil characters – the people who are just irredeemable, Brent Gibbs [26], finds traces of humanity in them. ' No body is a cardboard cut-out'. 'And this view necessitates an extremely empathetic soul ' said Brent Gibbs. Somewhat in such a context of sunshine and rains. A.C. Bradley [27] emphatically remarked
"..... a Shakespearean tragedy is never depressing. No one ever closes the book with the feeling that man is a poor mean creature. He may be wretched and he may be awful but he is not small he is not contemptible. Rather the reader, even with a sense of deepest degree of sadness could have exclaimed in the outburst of the Shakespearean words " what a piece of work is man ", he (or she) cries " so much more beautiful and so much more terrible than we

knew ! Why should '(s)he' be so if this beauty and greatness only tortures itself and throws itself away ?".

6. Post-Colonial Rebirth of Shakespearean Plays in India

Among the South- Indian film – directors of non- Hindi vernacular one of the first was ‘Kaliyattam’ a creative adaptation of Othello by film –market. Jayaraj [28] with his extreme fascination for the Bard, William Shakespeare. “ Othello haunted me : Why would a man so much in love with his wife Kill her ” asked director Jayaraj. His direction in the play Othello was seasoned with They Yam colours and Keralanian folk music that won him accolades and applause by the audience or the viewers of the movie- show. Kannagi brought together Kannagi from Tamil literature and Shakespeare’s Antony and Cleopatra with Nandita Das playing the lead. His latest film ‘Veeram’ which is a trilingual production starring Kunal Kapoor is an adaptation of the Bard’s ‘ Macbeth ’ which would be the opening film at the first – ever film festival of the BRICS summit to be held in New Delhi on 2nd September 2016. According to Jayaraj “ Shakespeare is always relevant. No one knows the human mind better ” . and “ it is a great feeling when an international and appreciates your take on Shakespeare ” . For ‘Veeram’ the Shakespearean narrative was dependent on “ Vadakkan Veergandha ” a ballad tradition of the North Malabar region. Recreating ‘ Macbeth ’ in the mould of “ Vadakkan Veergandha ” tradition was quite a difficult task which was supposed to be an act of transcreation of sorts, an interpretation of the original text, rather than just a mechanical remake in vernacular of a South Indian language. The benefit of utilising the plot of a classic is two – fold : (i) merging the theme and fitting the context in any society and at any time (ii) the liberty with costumes, colours, music and lending the primitive feel of Macbeth in the contemporary society with merger of tradition, ancientness and modernity. Macbeth was staged in past by some groups of movie- players – directors by the likes of Akira Kurosawa and Roman Polanski Committed to serious cinema, Jayaraj never attempts to trivialise his

production gimmicks and/or VFX effects. Rather, he tries to make a grand package of history, folklore and Shakespeare.

In his play ‘Julius Caesar’ Shakespeare put up an innocent question in a somewhat boastful manner in the voice of Cassius. “ How many ages hence/ shall this our lofty scene be acted over, in states unborn and accents yet unknown ? / This harmless question has historically turned into a great prophecy. In his sonnets Shakespeare declared “Not marble, nor the gilded monuments/of princes, shall outlive this powerful rhyme” [29]. Originally what appeared to be an arrogant boast has turned out now to be a statement of fact to the sensible, sensitive section of the intelligentsia. Popularity of Shakespeare is a sphygmomanometer of the health of civilization of any society or its culture. Of course, despite such loud propaganda – work launched by editors, publishers, booksellers the readers have to be extremely intelligent and sufficiently diligent to have real appreciation of Shakespeare which would thus be finally rewarding and stimulating. So, the final reward would be a great pleasure in lieu of little bits of intellectual toil. From this point of view, Shakespeare’s characters provide thought–provoking insights into issues which are ubiquitous in the contemporary business and management scene. The usages of words like “ Shakespearean in proportions ” or “ Shakespearean dimensions ” make the events extremely ‘ironic’, ‘astonishing’ or of ‘grandiose’ nature. Overtime adjectival form of the playwright’s name has become identified with an intensifier which indicates a shift in the degree of magnitude and/or a scale of effect. Even in some sheer commercial advertisements Shakespeare’s poetic ironies are successfully made use of eg., “ Now is the winter of our discontent ” is twisted in the form of “ now is the winter of our discount (on our products) ” . Thus, and so we might view that Shakespeare is not only modern but postmodern : a simulacrum , a replicant , a montage, a bricolage. It is to be viewed as a collection of diverse objects, repurposed as art.

The best sort of contract, according to the work pioneered by Holnstrom is one that strikes right balance of risk and incentives. This provides the right stimulus to innovate “ without being

reckless ". Finding the clues to answer the important questions of risk , incentive and reward ; the tangle has been addressed by the work of O. Hurt & Bengt Holmstrom to the attentive, inquisitive reader of the Shakespeare's plays other writings . They must find out some pearls of profound wisdom which would be relevant to him/ her as it was to his contemporaries. He advised to " go wisely and slowly " and cautioned his readers " those who rush , stumble and fall " (Romeo and Juliet) . Correct analysis of strong facts and solid data could lead to the working out of the best strategies and appropriate plans : " strong reasons make strong actions " (King John); the next nugget of wisdom is expressed in the usage of the famous quote : " Brevity is the soul of wit " (Hamlet) . If a mistake is committed in the process, candid confession and honest admission of the fault would be the best remedy. On taking risks in a complicated situation one must be smart, steady but certainly not harshly rash. All these virtues are an integral part of basic common sense of human beings. And management science is heavily based on some mother – wit and a cascade of commonsenses. Modern management issues and corporate executive lessons are connected with the instinctive contents of Shakespeare's plays. The lessons on good leadership and the hazards of incompetent authority remain almost the same whether applied to 16th century England or current management boards in Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai, Kolkata or any important metropolises [30].

7. Macbethisation of Shakespeare in Asia

In the western countries people tend to think of Macbeth – like – Lear – as a psychological drama : a case study for a man driven to murder of his guest – king, and his wife to madness or gross insanity by vaulting. In ambition for power less settled conditions and contexts such acts of reprehension might appear to be more ambivalent. In 2014 in Kolkata Andrew Dickson [31] met a group young Bengali theatre – makes whose production came under serious pressure and threat- perceptions from the State Government because it drew attention to the corruption of the Chief – minister Mamata Banerjee's Trinamool Congress party . A 407 – year old play about a feudal Scottish

King was deemed " in conflict with peaceful social order ". In fact , in Taiwan last spring , a film – maker's adaptation of Shakespeare's Macbeth was banned by the Thai Government on the grounds that the play resembled very closely the rise and fall of the former prime minister Thaksin Shinawatra. Shakespeare was considered masterful at even using apparently innocent fairy tales to illuminate dark truths about political reality. Macbeth was written in 1606 for James I whose parliament had nearly been blown skyhigh in what would have been the largest act of terrorism in English history trains a beady eye on /those in power. In the words of Polish critic Jan Kott [32] on Macbeth's representation of tyranny : "once the mechanism has been put in motion , one is apt to be crushed by it" [32]. Speaking in an essential vein, the clear and concrete message is : " If power is your game, Shakespeare's your man " as was very aptly commented by Martin Kettle [33].

This is a time of great economic and social change, in a world dominated clashing politicians and shifting ideologies. Quite strongly the Elizabethan and Jacobean eras Shakespearean and post Shakespearean England have surprising similarities with our turbulent times now in the contemporary India and the world in this 21st century.

7.1) Macbeth in the 19th Century Bengal

It is quite well-known that adaptations are always very complex bilingual and bicultural process that always leave room for new-to-newer interpretations of the plays. The issue is further problematized by colonial scenario and the imperialist rulers. In curbing anti-colonial activities in the cultural arena a few repressive measures like the Theatre Censorship Act (1876) and the Vernacular Press Act (1878) were introduced to combat the spirit of Indian freedom movement. This apart, the British rulers consciously attempted to sow the seeds of communal disharmony; the religious divide between the Hindus and Muslims was made use of. But the generic problem of negotiating, technically and thematically is marked by the absence are compounded by the socio-linguistic limitations of a Sanskritised adaptation of Macbeth by Nagendra Nath Bose named 'Karnabir'. Bose's deployment of native historiography and mythology to relocate

incidents and situations in a familiar context and linguistic devices like momatopocia to reproduce an enigmatic effect found several emulators. But excessive use of Sanskritised Bengali hindered the flow of normal colloquial Bengali speeches made the prose passages stilted and artificial.

7.2) Macbeth in India in the 21st Century

'Macbeth' had been performed on the Delhi stage marked by a variety of assorted styles and interpretations. Kolkata's Team named SWAPNA SANDHANI [34] ended. "Bharat Rang Mahotsab" stood out for the deep insight into the dark, bloody, ghostly and nightmarish world of 'Macbeth' and its fresh interpretation as the unending bloody struggle for the throne. According to this reason of interpretation of play, the tyranny perpetrated by a ruler does not end with the violent overthrow of the tyrant. The new occupant of the throne does soon metamorphose into another tyrant – this according to Kaushik Sen, the director of the play is the lesson from history. In fact, on this score, Sen was fully in concurrence with Jan Kott who was referred to in the previous paragraph by Andrew Dickson [35]. Kaushik's production was replete with blood and he marked a departure from many other productions by the show of an on – stage commission of suicide by Lady Macbeth who was played by Ms Reshma Sen, wife of Kaushik Sen in the lead-role of Macbeth. One of the remarkably innovative feature of this production is the presence of a throne with a human – skull on top which occupied the Central stage. And this symbolically depicted the and desire craze for and affinity with power of all the rulers all over the world in any country whatsoever. The next play 'Antigone' directed by Mr Sen (Kaushik Sen) was performed in Japan Mancha in December 2015 was well- received by the urban views and the general audience. Theatre- critics and playwrights like Suman Mukhopadhyay, Anjan Dutta etc also strongly appreciated the playing an unreserved manner. In the recent past on 24 April 2016 Sen affirmed that Shakespeare's works speak of " changing times" and thus the works have become more relevant in present day West Bengal. In a discussion entitled "Shakespeare – the world voice for emotions " organised by British Council here in Kolkata on his 400th death anniversary in which

lyricist – rebel poet Srijato and music – composer – director Debojoyoti Mishra spoke about Bengali theatre's tryst with Shakespeare for centuries which started from Girish Ghosh, Michael Madhusudan, Dutta and Utpal Dutta etc. Debjyoti connected finally " In the present conflict – ridden times Hamlet, King Lear, Macbeth gain more topicality " and hence popularity is now at peak even in this 21st century.

8. Indianisation of Shakespeare in vernacular(s) [36]

One of the most intriguing aspects of the Indian encounters with Shakespeare is the period from 1910s to 1950 in which performances and productions of Shakespearean plays were very rare, so much so that Shakespeare appeared to have been obliterated from the cultural space and Scenario of India inclusive of Bengal. In fact, China also witnessed a similar phase of absence and disappearance of Shakespeare plays while, on the contrary, Japanese comments Shakespeare's 1916 tercentenary with contributions in book from such as "Shakespeare: His Life and Works ". Is it due to the pre – existing framework in India in which Shakespeare was tied to the presence of British 'colonialism'. Is this the hallmark of very conscious movements against the colonial spirit upheld by Shakespeare and accounts for his virtual absence in Indian culture in this period. Poonam Trivedi and Dennis Burlhomusz [37] explained the silent passing away of the 1916th centenary[tercentenary] of Shakespeare's death due to the strengthening of the nationalist movement in India under the Yoke of British rule. This, in fact, dampens the spirits of celebration, for which the tercentenary of Shakespeare's death in 1916 passed thoroughly unnoticed . Finally, the drastic change in the mood of this (Indian) nation came around and after 1947 the year of India's so-called/real 'independence ' . However, during this phase of world war (ww1 & ww2) the works on Shakespeare's plays and their performances took place only in Japan. But , the high tides of Asianization and Indianization of Shakespeare's plays occurred periodically and their popular successful adaptations with extensive vernacularisations in India came only after 1950 which were mostly city – centric in both stage –

plays and film – worlds. Let us cite a concrete example from ‘bollywood’ traditions with ‘Hindi’ as the medium of Indian vernacularisation of ‘Romeo and Juliet’ by Shakespeare which, for understandable reasons of teen – agers’ love – plot was most popular. The production of this play is shown in the following table with ‘Bobby’ as the first hit in Bollywood film in 1973. ‘Bobby’ (1973) Rishi Kapoor and Dimple Kapadia , ‘Ek Duje Ke Liye’ (1981) , Kamal Haasan & Rati Agnihotri , ‘Sanam teri Kasam ’ (1983) Kamal Haasan & Reena Roy , ‘Qayamat se quayamat tak ’ (1988): Amir Khan & Juhi Chawla, ‘Galiyon Ki Raasleela - Ramleela’ (2013) Deepika Padukon & Ranveer Singh [Sanjay Leela Bansali – directed] [38]. . Vishal Bhardwaj had clearly expressed his strong fascination and special fancy for Shakespeare’s tragedies by successfully transforming scripting and directing the films ‘Maqbool’ (Shakespeare’s Macbeth) , ‘OmKara’ (Shakespeare’s Othello) and ‘Haider’ (Shakespeare’s Hamlet) Of all these few ‘Haider’ was cast in the background and perspective of “Kashmir” acted in the lead role by Sahid Kapoor which makes it the most important contribution . On most the same plays the unconventional takes by Rajat Kapoor [38] , for whom style is intrinsic , fashion external- cum – extrinsic, like the ‘Clown King’, ‘Nothing like Lear’ (based on King Lear) of Shakespeare, “what is done is done” and “I do not like it as you do” respectively are very bold, symbolic & significant additions in the field of ‘Shakespearean’ in Indian film front. Shakespeare’s plays are if possible, to be competent by apt translations , adapt adaptations pastiche and parody [39].

Ms Aparna Sen [40] of Bengali movie in West Bengal performed a sort of Bengali version of ‘Romeo and Juliet’ in the film titled ‘Arshinagar’ [‘Mirror ville’ ,2015]. It is a musical lay with strong socio- political drive and this emphasised how Indian/ Bengali politician fan the flames of communal conflicts and tensions for political gains in electoral battles between the ruling parties and their opponents. In madam Aparna’s film, the montagues are Hindu, capulet, Muslim, Baul, Sufi musical traditions associated with Hinduist tinges. Hinduism and Islami traditions are juxtaposed and different theatrical (or, cinematic) traditions such as

direct address and painted backdrops underline. Ms Sen’s message that someone should tell the fundamentals that Hinduism talks of a sense of a vast oneness in our existence in the societies. And that spells out the very essence of Hinduism, according to the religious fanatics of Hindu religion. And this is the narrative of Hinduism for this specific sect. ‘Hamara Shakespeare’ [41] produced three experimental vernacular (Indian, specifically south Indian) adaptations of Macbeth in February 2011 : a ‘Malyalam ’ ‘Macbeth’ which avoided progressive unfurling of the plot for the sake of narration of the outline of the story which was done by Lady Macbeth in the form of monologues combined with ancient performing tradition of dance Kerala in the form , named Koodiyattam ; this was also a mixture of Indian classical dance form , iconography, mythology and demonology. The chosen dance form was based on facial expressions, eye–movements of the dancer, named Margi Madhu. The full effective apparatus of ‘Angika’ (body – movements), ‘Vachika ’(verbal expressions), ‘Sattwika ’ (manifestation of internal feelings) and ‘Aharya ’ (extraneous) to express the psychodrama to reveal the psychodrama of Macbeth’s life with the dramatic ending of the plot when Macbeth was found to faint at the sight the approaching ‘Birnan woods’. The sight, sound, light were made compatible with what situation demanded i.e, for reforming or reshaping a classic story the deployment of semiotics of an esoteric Indian dance – drama form was made extremely effective.

9. Shakespeare’s Attitude to India as Reflected in Some Plays : [42]

For the most part of his Shakespeare lived in UK while India was being ruled by emperor Akbar, the great Moghul. Akbar is / was famous for his goodness, greatness and India was also in prosperous state even with a monarchic feudal economy prevailing in the country. In this pre-google era of the world and Indian history India was not unknown to Shakespeare He collected stories from numerous sailors in London and filtered the information received from them by virtue of his intellect and wealth of imagination. His India was quite rich, famous for its precious pearls and valuable stones; its people were deeply religious-

minded and the veiled womenfolk were dark beauties, incarnate.

So, there are a few references to India in Shakespearean plays. In the play, " A Midsummer Night's " Dream he made four – time reference to India. And the earliest reference in King Henry VI (Act III, Scene I) :

" My crown is in my heart, not on my head; Not decked with diamonds and Indian stones, nor to be seen: My crown is called content, a crown it is that seldom kings enjoy ". Besides, in " Troilus and Cressida (Act I, Scene I) he mentioned India in a laudatory manner once again : " Her bed is in India,

There she lies , a pearl.'

'The Merchant of Venice' contained luminous reference to India which was a major centre trade for many countries of Europe finds a mention of India on more than one occasion in the context of protagonist Bassanio makes a reference to his friend Antonio's trade with India (Act III, Scene II)

" What, not one hit ?

From Tripolis, from Mexico and England,
From Lisbon, Barbary and India?"

The next occasion, Bassanio tells Antonia [Act III, Scene II]

" Thus ornament is but the guiled shore
To a most dangerous sea, the beauteous scarf

Veiling an Indian beauty..... "

The final reference was made in the play " All's Well That Ends Well " in the love-duo of Helena – Bertram pair ; but the portrayal here is, to some extent , less positive for the image of Indians and of Indians well.

10. Secrets of Sustainability of Shakespeare's Enormous Popularity

Ciaran Devane [43] , an important Shakespeare- expert remarked that " A time of great economic and social change, in a world dominated by clashing politicians and shifting ideologies. Yes the Elizabethan and Jacobean eras have surprising similarities with our own turbulent times. William Shakespeare is the most eloquent chronicler of his

age. He circumvented censorship by using historical sources and well known stories to comment on political events and social issues in England in the 16th century. Extraordinarily his voice is just as potent and relevant today ".

David Womersley [44] recently commented that Samuel Johnson knew why Shakespeare's plays were so popular. The guiding principle was clear. " Nothing can please many, and please long, but just representations of general nature ". For Johnson, Shakespeare's popularity rested on the fact that his writings embodied that principle more richly and more fully than did those of any other author. Furthermore, Michael Dobson [45] remarked that Shakespeare remains endlessly adaptable though adaptability has its own limitations depending upon the time, medium of expression and the personal biases of the adaptationist as was pointed out by A. J. Mohamed who questioned the actual motivation of Sanjay Leela Bansali after his completion of the trilogy of Omkara (Othello), Maqbool (Macbeth) and Haider (Hamlet). Shakespeare is above all writers, at least above all modern writers, the poet of nature, the poet that holds up to his readers a faithful mirror of manners and of life. His characters are not modified by the customs of particular places, unpractised by the rest of the world, by the peculiarities of studies or professions, which can operate but upon small numbers; or by the accidents of transient fashions or temporary opinions : they are the genuine progeny of common humanity, such as the world will always supply and observation will always find.

Dominic Dromgoole [23] Shakespeare knew very well how to do a great ending. Besides, Shakespeare always contained multitudes. He could be just as vicious and sardonic and sceptical as he was generous and sincere and open. At his best he was everything at once, and in the late plays are where he finds the most perfect balance between those two sides of humanity – the bright sides and the dark spots. From Shakespearean point of view, all human beings are in the final analysis 'greyish' ; with the illumined sides of chiaroscuro the person is defined and/or categorised. And, according to him, none is absolutely loveable or is totally despicable. So , none could be embraced on an overall basis. Or,

none could be repudiated on a wholesale basis. Shakespeare shows that everyone is important, whether the messenger or the queen or the prince and that is the very essence of democratic spirit. And , temperamentally Shakespeare was /is surely democratic.

Harold Bloom [46], described Sigmund Freud as 'Shakespeare 'prose'ified '. His description with tinges of exaggeration was proven to be correct as Shakespeare tried to deal with carnal activities of the human including the freakiest and the most repressed. In the content of a sonnet Shakespeare repulsed the major part of the prudish scholars with his explicit hint to 'masturbation' for substituting real physical pleasure of orgasm, or the scene in the 'Winter's Tale ' which is suggestive for a sex-toy and that was un-imaginable in his times in the Elizabethan era even at the conceptual plane. His extremely powerful exposure of the various manifestations of human libido shake us, and thus awaken us. Psycho-therapy and the gender-revolutions of 1960s, it is commonly believed, drew heavily from his ruthlessly realistic portrayals of the varied patterns of how human 'desire' works.

11. "Shakespeare Explains 2016 Election-result " [47]

How could a great country wind up being governed by a sociopath? In 1590 Shakespeare put pen to paper to write a play on England's most hated ruler Richard III . And the empire in the UK had fallen in the hands of a Caligula, called Richard III.

Richard, as Shakespeare conceived him, was inwardly tormented by insecurity and rage, the consequences of a miserable unloved childhood and a twisted spine that made people recoil at the sight of him. Richard III depicts no violent seizure of power, as in the case of Shakespeare's play 'Macbeth'. Instead, there is the soliciting of 'popular votes', complete with a fraudulent display of religious piety, the slandering of opponents and a grossly exaggerated threat to national security. The element of consent in the play was constructed by the henchmen, sycophants and the hangers on. And the alternatives seemed to be 'like dumb statues or breathing stone'. Richard villainy was readily apparent to everybody. There was no secret about

his fathomless cynicism, cruelty and treacherousness, no glimpse of anything redeemable in him and no reason to believe that he could govern the country effectively.

All the characters in Richard III, sketch a whole country's collective failure. Taken together, they itemize a nation of enablers.

For his vile nature Richard III is obviously and grotesquely unqualified for the supreme fusion of power that they dismiss him from their minds. They relied on a structure that proves unexpectedly fragile. Second, common people have a strong penchant for forgetting, for which they were in the habit of forgiving and forgetting his faults and the anti-people activation. They are irresistibly drawn to normalize what is not normal. Third, the bullying tactics that was adopted by Richard III and the threats of violence, (like, "I 'll make a corpse of him that disobeys") makes Richard III an odious and a hated ruler. It helped that he was an immensely wealthy and privileged man (or just an animal being!! ?) and he was accustomed to having his way, even when his way is in violation of every moral norm or civil code of conduct. Fourth, the immoral allies and servile followers helped him ascend from step to step, providing assistance in his all dirty work and watching the casualties mount with cool indifference. They acted as the pawns in the fulfilment of the evil designs of Richard III. It is not necessary to look around to find who constituted this band of collaboration of Richard III. They are we, the audience of yesteryears or of today!!

Shakespeare's words (or prophecies) have an uncanny ability to transcend the boundaries of time and space and to speak directly to the people of posterity. And, in times of perplexity, risk and confusion we had looked to him for the most fundamental human truths. So it is now for the cases of shock-win of US elections by trump and the unthinkable victory-margins won by Ms Mamata Banerjee in the West Bengal Assembly elections-both occurred in 2016.

12. Shakespeare Manga [48]

'Manga' is a special artistic form of Japanese origin, mostly of comic strip variety. The act of adapting a play is a distinct type of

transmediation. Adapting a Shakespeare's play, then should be merely a case of abbreviating and possibly re-writing the test and putting it in word balloons emanating from the right characters.

The theatrical mediation of the plays are not just visual experience; the viewers would also like to hear the monologues for the dialogues of the play. So, on the whole, the plays in printed words turn into a verbal- visual culture. Scenes, sights and sounds and occasional music do only intensify the effects on the interested audiences.

Shakespeare's culture, moreover, was one for which imitation and copia were or are central concerns. These two terms bring to mind mimesis and imitation. The terms, therefore, exist in the intersection between creativity and reproduction. Adaptation is always fraught with many complexities, controversies and problems, like abridgement or elongation etc. Adaptation studies are, at the very outset, plagued by the problem with the 'original', a problem which is especially intricate when the playwright is Shakespeare, as there is no authoritative original of his plays. The word 'model' is both more versatile, because a model can be both a point of departure as well as a copy and more precise and compact than what is viewed as agreed-upon-by-all 'original'. Anyway, let us now cite an example from 'Manga Shakespeare's 'imitatio' of Shakespeare's 'Twelfth Night'. The mangaka is Nana Li, an Asian expatriate currently residing in England. Viola is in disguise (cross-dressed) as a boy page under the name Cesario. She is in the service of Orsino, the duke of Illyria, unhappily in love with him but unable to act on her infatuation due to her false identity. Furthermore, she acts a go-between for the duke and the object of his desire, personified by Olivia, the countess of Illyria

..... she pined in thought,
And with a green and yellow melancholy
She sat like Patience on a monument,
Smiling at grief. Was not this love indeed?

In an article entitled "Shakespeare –world-apartheid-hero-nazi-favourite-bollywood" by Andrew Dickson Emma Visceli provided a striking illustration of the cover for 'Manga Shakespeare' in 'the Guardian' of UK in 2015 [49].

13. Shakespearean Miscellany : Spectrum of Some Stray, Salient and Significant Specificities

"Age cannot wither him, nor custom stale his infinite variety. Gender reversal aside, what William Shakespeare wrote about Cleopatra is no less true about him. For someone 400 years dead this month, the bard is not only very much alive, but as quicksilver as ever." Studies, productions, commemorations are rising to a crescendo – traditional and formal takes are sharing the stage with endless reimaginings including gender-blurring versions and radically revamped history plays. [50]

* * * * *

"One thing that is pretty much indestructible in Shakespeare is his sense of how to tell a story and angle a story by the way in which he shapes it into successive scenes. In the terms used by cinema scriptwriters now, he was very skilled at making 'treatments' as well as at writing dialogue. So you can make Romeo and Juliet into a ballet, taking out all the dialogue but leaving the scenic structure intact and still it works." [51]

* * * * *

" 'Macbeth , Macbeth' is as close as one can come to quantum physics literary criticism – a reading which supplements the explicit text of a classic with the dense network of its superposed states, unmentioned presuppositions and implications. It is an analysis totally faithful to the original and at same time totally contemporary. A miracle, an instant classic." – Slavoj Zizek [52]

* * * * *

" An adaptation of Shakespeare's plays as a basis of critical exploration of identity formation in India.

Even while a conscious dismantling of colonization was happening since the 19th century, the Indian literati, intellectuals, scholars and dramaturges were engaged in deconstructing the ultimate icon of colonial presence – Shakespeare. This book delves into what constitutes Indianness in the postcolonial context by looking into the text and sub-text of the bard of Avon's plays adapted in visual culture, translation, stage performance and cinema. It reveals an extraordinary negotiation of colonial and postcolonial identity issues-be it in language, in social and cultural practices or in art forms." [53]

* * * * *

"Sexuality and gender are very prominent and highly charged themes in life and society. Depending on the genre of the play, Shakespeare used them as either a tool of manipulation, a form of propaganda or sometimes both. As is now, during the time of Shakespeare there was a social construct of gender and sexuality norms. There was a hierarchy of sexes and each had their own specifically assigned roles in society. By blurring the lines between sexuality and gender in his plays, Shakespeare deconstructs these norms to display their ambiguity and by virtue of this insightful property Shakespeare dealt with even the strong cases of some 'gender-fluidity' of this era. The only exception is Shakespeare did consciously not reckon with any feminist tinge of philosophy of our present times." [54 , 55]

* * * * *

" As far as the religious views of William Shakespeare are concerned, it is difficult to ascertain in decisive terms. Because his preference to religion, if any, is of non-descript category. In some plays, he appeared to be a conforming member of the established Anglican Church. But he was a crypto-catholic! His tilt, at times, to Protestantism is not beyond question. His ideological flirtations with atheism and paganism are also not explicit. On the whole, he used to have very liberal views on religion, including even Islam. But he did never subscribe to the extreme views held by the Marxist that 'religion' (as practised by various communities) is the ' opium ' to the people." [56 , 57 , 58, 59, 60, 61, 62]

* * * * *

The title character in ' Timon of Athens 'launches a blistering attack on how economic factors have led him to the pit of despair and unravels the evil(s) of money and of amassing large quantity of material wealth [63].

"Gold? Yellow, glittering precious gold? No, gods, I am no idle votary : roots, you clear heavens! Thus much of this will make black white, foul fair , wrong right , base noble, old young , coward valiant. Ha, you gods! Why this? What this, you gods? " Marx provides his own analysis of the wider significance of Timon's words : "Shakespeare brings out two properties of money in particular : (i) It is

the visible divinity, the transformation of all human and natural qualities into their opposites, the universal confusion and inversion of things; it brings together impossibilities (ii) It is the universal whore, the universal pimp of men and peoples. " Thus, Shakespeare echoed in his writings the reverberations of the Marxist viewpoints and that had happened long before Marx.

The crash of 2008 and the mounting bubbles of debt and financial speculation that had accumulated in western economies provide the contemporary resonance of the messages of both Karl Marx and Shakespeare. It is not difficult to imagine Timon's words being hurled as poetic abuse targeting Wall street or city of London financier today.

14. Concluding Remarks

Shakespeare completed his literary works (plays, poems/ sonnets) while European colonial project was on the anvil. England was shaping up with some positive socio- economic features with the attending evils of some natural adverse effects. The ventures of early capitalism ushered to a new dawn leading to a new era. In the later part of his life he experienced some form of activities leading to the menace of deforestation which began to spread slowly; fields were being gradually denuded and enclosed by the landed aristocracy so that land – owners could graze sheep for the benefits of European cloth–trade merchants, displacing and uprooting those who used the land for either primitive form of agricultural cultivation or for pastoral activities of cattle – rearing – cum grazing. In contrast, Shakespeare's London was a world of urbanization, crime, intelligence- networks, mercantilist stock–exchanges which gave rise to the arousal of a new form of secular entertainment which we now call popular theatre. The world he was writing about was in the process of being then and becoming later their own. That is why he continued to speak the language of transitions, transformations and thus the language of anxieties, angst and of dreams of his times for the near and not-too-distant future. His quests were on what the mankind was about to face and confront in its "yet to be perfected future"[64]. Shakespeare handed down to us a rich cultural legacy with a newly

influential ideology for the societies to grow. And his contributions to literature for the mankind of the past ,present and for the posterity was not of esoteric kind, rather these of inclusive nature which permeate almost each and every layer of society. Quite agreeably, thus, Shakespeare then belonged to all of them and now belongs to all of us.

After the win of Nobel prize in literature this year (2016) by Bob Dylan, Joan Baez[65], his former close companion and compatriot posted a warm congratulatory message of joy and happiness in her 'Facebook' post around mid-October 2016: "The Nobel Prize for Literature is yet another step towards immortality for Bob Dylan. The rebellious, reclusive, unpredictable artist/composer is exactly where the Nobel Prize for literature needs to be. His gift with words is unsurpassable " [65]. This last sentence is certainly equally or more aptly applicable to the case of Shakespeare with no Nobel prize in hand. Still, for last 400 years Shakespeare continues to be widely accepted, appreciated and applauded. But Nobel prize winning is no indispensable condition and criterion for remaining memorable in the cultural history. So, Shakespeare will continue to be remembered for his great and noble creations in the realm of English literature. Undeniably, Shakespeare shall live in the minds of the readers by his deeds i.e. the noblest creative works in the domain of English literature and ----- -- certainly not by robust longevity or the glory of winning a Nobel prize in literature!

In a tone of self-praise tinged by a degree of confidence , but with no stint of narcissism , Shakespeare wrote :

" your praise shall still find room ,
Even in the eyes of all posterity
That wear this world out to the ending
doom." [66]

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