タイトル

影響についての研究の要約

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Influence of Shakespeare in Indian Film and Culture

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Abstract

Due to India’s 200 years of colonisation by Britain, Shakespeare’s presence in this country differs from that in any other. Shakespeare’s plays initially came to India as a pastime of the colonial rulers. Since then, they have inspired fascination and admiration among the Indians. This thesis examines how Shakespeare’s plays have influenced Indian film and culture since their arrival in India. It comprises two parts. The first part discusses the influence of Shakespeare’s plays on Indian films. I have examined four films: Vishal Bhardwaj’s *Omkara*, based on Shakespeare’s *Othello*; Merchant Ivory’s *Shakespeare Wallah*, which depicts the travels of a troupe of Shakespearean actors in India; Ajoy Kar’s film *Saptapadi*, draws on *Othello*; and another of Bhardwaj’s productions *Maqbool*, based on *Macbeth*. The second part will discuss the relationship between Cleopatra’s death in Shakespeare and the practice of “sati,” which is typical of Indian patriarchal culture.

*Othello* has always been a favourite among Indians because many elements of the play speak directly to Indian sentiments. The first chapter analyses the way *Othello* has been adapted in Bollywood films. In addition, besides adaptations, some scenes from Shakespeare are introduced into some films, and these are discussed in the second chapter. *Shakespeare Wallah* portrays the reactions of Indian audience’s to the performances of Shakespeare’s plays in India. *Saptapadi*, it is argued, explores India’s deep-rooted problems of racism and religion by featuring *Othello* as a play-within-a-film. The third chapter examines the way Bhardwaj’s *Maqbool* parallels Mumbai’s underworld corruption with Macbeth’s tyrannical despotism.

The second part of my thesis discusses the relationship between Cleopatra’s suicide and sati, the Hindu custom of “voluntary death of a widow.” Sati means loyalty to a husband, but applied in the sense of widows throwing themselves on their husband’s funeral pyres and burning themselves alive. Sati was considered the duty of a virtuous wife, was practiced extensively among the Hindu upper castes, and was approved of in Hindu society. On the other hand, Antony and Cleopatra are the most mature lovers among all Shakespearean characters. If we consider Cleopatra’s suicide not that of a mistress but of an affectionate wife, we may consider Cleopatra an example of sati. By her death, I argue, she tries to demonstrate the perfect wife-husband relationship that she perhaps never achieved in real life. Cleopatra’s death proves her status as the true wife, as opposed Octavia’s status as the lawful wife of Antony. We can compare this scenario with the ancient meaning of sati. This chapter also tries to establish the relationship between Cleopatra’s devotion towards Antony as a sati.