

Global Dimensions of Shakespearean Cinema: A Study of Shakespearean Presence around the Globe

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Abstract : Shakespeare has been widely revisited by dramatists, critics, filmmakers and scholars around the globe. Shakespeare's kaleidoscopic work has been borrowed and redesigned into resonant patterns by artists, thus weaving myriad manifestations to pick from. Along with adaptation into wholly verbal medium (e.g., translations) the practice of indigenization through performing arts has played a great role in amplifying the reach of plays. The proliferation of Shakespeare's oeuvre commenced with the spread of colonialism itself. The plays illustrating the core values of Western tradition were introduced in the colonies. Therefore, the colonial domination extended to cultural domination. The plays were translated and adapted by the locals at times as it is and sometimes intermingled with the altered landscape and culture. The present paper discusses the global dimensions of Shakespearean cinema along with the historical cinematic shift from silent era to spoken dialogue in multiple languages. The methodology followed is descriptive in nature, and related information is availed from related literature, i.e., books, research articles and films. America and Europe dominated the silent era Shakespearean film production, thereby giving the term 'global' a less broad meaning. Five nations that dominated silent Shakespearean cinema were the United States, England, Italy, France, and Germany. Gradually the work of the exemplary figure with artistic and literary greatness surpassed the boundaries of the colonies and became a global legacy. Presently apart from English speaking nations Shakespearean films have been shot or produced in many of non-Anglophone locales. The findings indicate that when discussing about global dimensions of Shakespearean cinema various factors can be considered: involvement of actors and directors of foreign origin, transportability and universal comprehensibility of visual imagery across geographical borders, commodification of art or West's use of it as a tool of cultural hegemony or promotion of international amity, propagation of interculturalism through individual director's cultural translations and localization of Western art. Understanding of Shakespeare as a global export also depends on how an individual Shakespearean film works. Shakespeare's global appeal for cinema does not reside alone in his exquisite writings, distinctive characters, the setting, the story and the plots that have nurtured cinema since the medium's formative years. Shakespeare's global cinematic appeal is present in the spirit of cinema itself, i.e., the moving images capturing human behaviour and emotions that the plays invoke in audiences.

Keywords : adaptation, global dimensions, Shakespeare, Shakespearean cinema

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