‘The Readiness is all’

SUMMATION

So far, the present dissertation *A Study of the Selected works of Shakespeare in the light of Sri Ramanuja’s Philosophy* has ventured to scrutinize a few of Shakespeare’s works to find out how certain concepts of Sri Ramanuja’s philosophy get resonated in them. Shakespeare, the unparalleled playwright of all times reveals his humanistic philosophy through his characters. Sri Ramanuja, nearly 400 years earlier to Shakespeare, established the system of *Visistadvaita* by his study and scrutiny of the Hindu *Vedanta* that resulted in instituting a religious method, *Sri Vaisnavism*. An analytical study of the popular dramatist of the west and a great philosopher of the east is possible when both readily involve in interpreting human mind in the micro level and suggest solutions to elevate human status. To Shakespeare Man is the paragon of all creations and so, through the characters in his plays he tries to project how perfect a man can be in the given circumstances. He knows that ‘to err is human and to forgive divine’. Ramanuja also thinks in terms of perfecting the human beings through the path of devotion and total surrender to the Supreme, Sriman Narayana. This dissertation attempts to identify the humanistic features of both Shakespeare and Ramanuja and see how the ideology of the latter gets expressed in the former’s thinking.

The objective of the investigation is to show that philosophy is fundamentally humanistic and is not for the elites alone. The thesis is an attempt
to communicate the inclusive characteristic of ancient philosophical views of our country in a more known way. The philosophers are not sectarians; they belong to the entire world. Shakespeare’s plays though obviously portray the Elizabethan culture of his period, nonetheless do not fail to present that the human beings, with their strengths and weaknesses, remain the same but relating themselves to their environment. Interestingly, many of his ideas, psychological reactions and course of incidents, seem to correspond to the views of Sri Ramanuja as constituted in Visistadvaita and in the methodological precepts of Sri Vaisnavism. Visistadvaita with a humanistic concern teaches the world to conduct a righteous life by stressing on important guidelines such as, time once wasted is gone for ever, beauty should be not only outer but also inner, show respect to all beings, get self-realization to grasp the divinity in them and the supreme factor to attain liberation is to protect those who make a surrender. Sri Ramanuja’s system identifies Lord Vishnu Narayana as the Supreme One, the goal of liberation or moksa and preaches the method for its realization. It is a treatise that amalgamates divinity and humanity. The eternal, unchangeable One, allows for itself changes and descends to the world to alleviate man’s sufferings. Man caught in the intricate psychic network must slowly come out, however, following certain societal norms, rules and regulations, lead an honorable life within the boundary, his goal in life being ‘realization’ of his self, the vision of the in-dwelling God. To attain this realization, seers of different countries have
presented multifarious ways and means under different religious names according to their own perspective and experience.

Shakespeare being a playwright and also a theatre-man has to do with entertaining the people. But, he also conveys through his poetry as well as the dialogues in the plays many principles and human values required to be a model human character. He never loses a chance to instill the meaning and truth of life through his characters. His is an empirical wisdom based on his society and culture. In general culture or civilization is founded on certain universal truths. How these ‘Universal truths’, which can never go out of the life of righteous persons of any time - past, present or future - have been culled out from the works of Shakespeare and studied in the light of Sri Ramanuja’s philosophy.

Chapter I “Introduction: An Orientation” introduces in general Indian philosophical system and in particular Sri Ramanuja’s system of philosophy, *Visistadvaita* and *Sri Vaishnavism*. The chapter also briefly introduces Shakespeare’s works and presents a few critical appraisals that talk about Shakespeare’s philosophy. His unique contribution to the exploration of human nature is the profound appreciation of the capacity of other minds and the mysteries of the soul, presenting a view of the self as theatrical in nature, more a matter of artistic creation than a natural one. A defence for such a study, between Literature and Philosophy, and between the western dramatist and an
eastern thinker, has been undertaken based on the norms of Comparative Literature.

Chapter II, “All Losses are Restored - The Concept of Kala or Time” obviously talks about time, the most fascinating issue of enquiry to the philosophers, scientists, psychologists and creative artists of different ages, cultures and religions. According to Ramanuja Kala or Time has a special status in the Visistadvaitic system, the crux of the argument being that Time constitutes the body of God. This chapter investigates how Shakespeare looks at Time in his works, especially in his Sonnets, resonating Visistadvaitic point of view. A few citations from some of his works are also appended to support the argument. ‘Time’s Speech’ in The Winter’s Tale has been examined in depth to show that it is not a mere structural device as Chorus, but it informs precisely its triple activities.

Chapter III is “Truth and Beauty Together Thrive -The Concept of Bhuvana Sundara or Beauty”, which includes also the western scholars’ and aestheticians’ observations on Beauty, discusses primarily Ramanuja’s view on Beauty, that is God - Truth, Goodness and Beauty. Beauty under various heads such as ‘Natural Beauty’, ‘Antique Beauty’, ‘Literary Beauty’, ‘Human Beauty’ (Outer / Inner or Physical / Mental Beauty), and above all ‘Divine Beauty’ is discussed. The philosophy of Visistadvaita perceives the whole world with all its cit and acit matters, form the body of Iswara. It is generally admitted that beauty
is more attractive than Truth and Goodness, since it is tangible to optic sense. Visistadvaita gives a unique focus to this factor in the religious principle, especially in adoring the *arca* forms, the icons, installed in the temples. Instances abound in Shakespeare’s plays and undoubtedly in his *Sonnets* to explicate the concept of Beauty.

Chapter IV talks about “Tongues in Trees, Sermons in stones - The Concept of *Dharmabhuta Jnana* or Attributive Consciousness”, an exclusive premise of the *Visistadvaita*. Ramanuja asserts that all created substances, *jada* and *ajada* – material and immaterial possess inherent consciousness. ‘Knowledge’ is at its lowest ebb in materials like stones. They cannot express it explicitly. But, if they are perceived as an object by a person of higher consciousness they reveal their *swarupa* or elementary structure to such persons. This concept is akin to G.M.Hopkins’ theory of ‘inscape’ and Duns Scotus’ ‘*haecceitas* or thisness’. Shakespeare, with both sensuous perception and spiritual intuition is able to ‘catch’ up those revelations and has transmitted them to the world through his characters. Instances are available in the plays like *Antony and Cleopatra* and *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*.

Chapter V is “It is an Attribute to God Himself - The Concept of *Daya* or Mercy”. *Daya* is associated with the *purusakara* principle, recognized as the feminine aspect of *Sri Vaisnavism*, and is considered as a religion of redemption that accepts the Fatherhood and the Motherhood of the deity. *Purusakara*
principle is identified as Goddess Lakshmi or ‘Sri’ who compassionately intercedes and pleads to the Lord on behalf of the erring mortals. Mercy or compassion is acknowledged as the prime feature of purusakara principle. The best illustration in Shakespeare comes from The Merchant of Venice. In the court scene the disguised Portia pleads to the Duke on behalf of Antonio who must yield a pound of flesh to Shylock for the debt he has to pay him. Portia’s speech is perhaps the greatest explication of ‘Mercy’. Portia herself is the vital illustration of purusakara principle.

Chapter VI is “Prayer which pierces, assaults Mercy itself, frees all faults - The Concept of Prapatti or Absolute Surrender”, the genius-stroke of Ramanuja that finds a magnificent status in the theistic aspect of Visistadvaita. Prapatti is above bhakti yoga that demands certain austerities, whereas Prapatti requires an open mind to surrender oneself to the Supreme leaving aside all inhibitions and delicacies. To surrender means to put aside one’s pride and ego. God alone with all largeness can accept an erred being if he makes prapatti. “To err is human and to forgive, divine” sums up the nature of prapatti. The last plays of Shakespeare, especially The Tempest adequately displays this wonderful feature.

It is now to be seen how Shakespeare has been received all over the world. The supreme dramatist continues to wield power and engage the critical attention perhaps, at all time, throughout globally. As it is, the critical studies and reviews
of Shakespeare is a universe by itself. To talk about the “Review of Shakespeare Literature” is like diving into the ocean. Since the concern of this dissertation is the scrutiny of Shakespeare’s works in terms of philosophy, especially Indian Philosophy, a limited study of this area can be taken up in three segments, namely ‘Shakespeare and Western Philosophy’, ‘Shakespeare and India’, and ‘Shakespeare and Indian Philosophy’. James L. Hammond, a present day American philosopher, believes ‘The Philosophy of Today’, his method of approach and avers that his “work is optimistic, since it predicts a renaissance in our time... and since it believes that we can unite East and West, the humanities and the sciences, the spiritual and the intellectual, into the Philosophy of Today”(http://www.ljhammond.com/hammond.htm). He, in his Manifesto of his work Home of Philosophy and Literature: Nietzsche, Shakespeare and Hammond presents an insightful proposition:

The Philosophy of Today is both a religion and a philosophy; it satisfies both spiritual needs and intellectual demands. ... it believes that the universe is suffused with energy, power, mystery, even a kind of consciousness. Thus, it isn’t exactly atheist, and it isn’t exactly theist; one might say that it defines god in a different way, or calls god by a different name. The Philosophy of Today is akin to Eastern worldviews, such as Zen, insofar as those Eastern worldviews are both a philosophy and a religion, and those Eastern
Hammond seems to take Shakespeare as a touchstone to develop a new mode of thinking, to define “a god in a different way”. Such an attempt, evidently, is a cross-cultural study promulgated by Comparative Literature, investigating Literature in terms of other areas of human endeavor such as philosophy, psychology, sociology, history, fine arts and so on. Each sector gets a natural expansion by including several components. The works of Shakespeare are malleable and are veritable medium to allow fine tuning in thinking. One can evidently accept Hammond’s view.

The study of Shakespeare and the Western Philosophy visibly follows the Eurocentric tradition and is once again a vast area with multifarious inputs as several books and numerous articles, the compiling of critical bibliography itself is a good research. A few instances will suffice to show the nature of investigation carried on. As early as 1937, Walter Clyde Curry published Shakespeare’s Philosophical Patterns that concentrates on Macbeth and The Tempest particularly. In his ‘Introduction’ he says that he would like to indicate how Shakespeare came to participate in the philosophical traditions of his time and to illustrate his employment of inherited concepts as philosophical patterns of his dramas. It defines a philosophical pattern as any unified system of philosophy, involving definite
relationships between man and an external world of given texture, which the dramatists may allow to serve as active, formative principle of his work. Specifically, it attempts to show that the integrating principle of *Macbeth* is to be identified with a body of patrimonial doctrines transmitted to the Renaissance from the scholastic philosophers. Fundamentally, therefore, *Macbeth* is mediaeval and Christian. On the contrary, *The Tempest* is found to be formalized by traditional Neo-Platonic conceptions and may be considered, therefore, as being essentially classical and pagan in spirit. (vii)

Clyde forwards a remarkable assessment that Shakespeare’s genius could at once grasp medievalism and paganism, and employ them effectively in different settings to present man’s relationship with the external universe in a given philosophical texture.

Another scholarly treatise is Colin McGinn’s *Shakespeare's Philosophy: Discovering the Meaning Behind the Plays* (2007), which examines thoroughly six plays of Shakespeare with a philosopher’s insight and explores the dramatist’s philosophy of life. He illustrates how Shakespeare must have been influenced by the essays of Montaigne which were translated into English during that time. He also relates the ideas to the later day philosophers like David Hume. The book also has essays based on Shakespeare and gender, studied in terms of
psychology and ethics. McGinn prefers to consider the spirit of uncertainty that pervades the plays, namely, knowledge and skepticism; the nature of the self; and the character of causality. Colin McGinn has already been discussed briefly in Chapter One of this dissertation.

Tzachi Zamir, Chair of the English Department, Hebrew University, Jerusalem in his scholarly work, *Double Vision: Moral Philosophy and Shakespearean Drama* (2007) points to Shakespeare’s philosophy and its comprehensiveness. The book has two parts: Part 1 ‘Philosophical Criticism in Theory,’ is “nuanced, careful, and comprehensive in treating philosophical theories of the value and significance of literature (cognitive and moral) as anything in the professional literature”. Part II, ‘Philosophical Criticism in Practice,’ consisting of seven chapters, “each on an individual play of Shakespeare's, is profound”, says Richard Eldridge, the Reviewer for *Iyyun* (http://press.princeton.edu/titles/8300.html), Zamir makes a persuasive case for the philosophical value of literature, and suggests that certain important philosophical insights can be gained only through literature. He asserts that the philosophical knowledge is not opposed to, but is consonant with, the literariness of literature. He manipulates the experience of reading literature as literature and sets a theoretical framework for a philosophically oriented literary criticism that will appeal both to philosophers and literary critics. *Double Vision* is thus concerned with the philosophical understanding stimulated by the aesthetic experience of literature.
Paul Allan Backer’s book *Shakespeare, Alchemy and Dao (Tao): The Inner Alchemical Theatre* (2009) is not only a cross-cultural study but also a cross-continental one that employs the philosophy, cosmology and practices of Taoist inner alchemy in Shakespeare's *Hamlet* and *King Lear*. The author views that this exploratory cross-cultural methodology contributes to the related fields of critical theory, namely, Performance theory, Comparative Literature and Philosophy, Hermeneutics and Intercultural Studies. The author rightly opines that over the years Shakespeare has been scrutinized using a variety of different critical methodologies, the majority of which is based in the Western critical tradition. In the Abstract of the book, the author states:

There have been few critical analyses that have viewed Shakespeare from a non-Western perspective, even fewer from a Chinese philosophical perspective. This analysis is a comparative, cross-cultural reading of Shakespeare from the perspective of Daoism (Taoism), the classical Chinese philosophy, religion and practice, and simultaneously employs historical analysis and critical theory. . . . Alchemy was an interdisciplinary cultural discourse and physical practice in both the West and China for many centuries, and was particularly significant in both the Western early modern period and in Daoism. (http://gradworks.umi.com/33/65/3365814.html)
The author briefly indicates the basic formulation of his book. He says that Alchemy has two related forms, outer or physical alchemy (wàidān) which uses external materials, and inner or spiritual alchemy (nèidān) employing the body, spirit and soul of the alchemist. Both processes are a journey of transformation that take place within, referred to as the "alchemical theatre". The goal is to return to the original wholeness or dào, often paradoxically equated with primordial "chaos" or hùndùn. Backer thus enters the area of ‘Esotericism’, an area that can be well-manipulated by Indian scholars.

Incidentally, Backer’s analysis shifts the attention of a Shakespeare scholar towards the viability of utilizing the variety available in Indian Philosophy, Aesthetics and Literature to investigate Shakespeare and thus expand the Shakespearean Space. One has to concur with Backer’s view that little has been done in Shakespeare’s works in Eastern traditional methodology, which of course includes Indian traditional approach. Shakespeare is an obvious influence in the Asian theatres also, just as in the European and American theatres. Almost every country in the Asian region has opted his plays and produced them in their indigenous modality either in the original or translations or adaptations. For instance, a Japanese theatre could show King Lear in the ‘Kabuki’ style or The Merry Wives of Winter in the ‘Noh’ tradition. Thus, Shakespeare plays in the Asian theatres is a rich collection, providing abundant substance to research. India is no exception.
Sukanta Chaudhuri of the Jadhavpur University, Kolkata in his erudite article entitled “Shakespeare in India” for the Internet Shakespeare Editions (http://internetshakespeare.uvic.ca/Library/Criticism/shakespearein/india1.html) provides an adequate summary of Shakespeare’s renderings in India in different headings such as, ‘Early English productions’, ‘Pedagogy: the academic Shakespeare’, ‘Shakespeare and Indian Literature’, ‘Shakespeare on the early modern Indian stage’, ‘Shakespeare on the Indian stage after Independence’. In the ‘Introduction’ he writes:

The Shakespearean presence in India is older and more complex than in any other country outside the West. That is owing to India's long colonial history, and the presence of unusually receptive elements in the mother culture. The local culture of most states or regions could absorb Shakespeare within its inherent structure and, in turn, be reshaped and inseminated by Shakespearean influence.

He further says that during the so-called ‘Indian Renaissance’ happened between the mid-19th to the early 20th century, Shakespeare remained as “the biggest single channel for not only literary or artistic innovations but the underlying transformation of values”. It is not that the values were imbibed from Shakespeare but were implanted or evolved through his works. Chaudhuri traces the progress of Shakespeare theatre in Kolkata from 1822 onwards. Plays were performed by the students in Bengali, Punjabi and Sindhi. The significant development came with Shakespeare entering the curriculum of the new style of
education. This Western fusion permeated the cultural stream of Indian languages.

The academic Shakespeare in India is a separate history. The scholar-community avidly produced a robust corpus of publications. For instance, the Srinivasa Varadachari firm in Chennai brought out Shakespearean editions to which all eminent English professors of south India contributed volumes. Chaudhuri records: “From Chennai too came a series of studies by William Miller, later collected as *Shakespeare's Chart of Life* (1900), using Shakespeare as the vehicle to impart moral messages to the colonized youth”. This fact certainly needs attention by the scholars to find out how far the Indian tradition, culture and philosophy have been used as vehicles to convey ethical values. The output of the Indian Shakespeareans may look scanty compared to the European counterparts. However, this line of production gets mingled with the mainstream Shakespeare scholarship. Chaudhuri provides an important information, about the journal *Hamlet Studies* - the world's 'only journal devoted to a single literary work', fully international in outlook and range of contributors. Once again this area can be subjected to scrutiny. The scholar also mentions several readings of Shakespeare from specific Indian angles. For example, A.A. Narayanadasa, a Sanskrit scholar has compared Shakespeare with the classical Sanskrit dramatist Kalidasa in his book *Navarasataringini* (1924). Recently, S. Viswanathan has proposed a programme of specifically Indian investigations into Shakespeare, in his article “Indian Shakespeare Criticism: Some Fresh Possibilities”, included in
the edition *Shakespeare in Indian Languages* published by the Indian Institute of Advanced Study, Shimla, 1999 in pages 29 to 39. Chaudhuri is much concerned that serious academic interest in Shakespeare seems to be on decline in spite of his presence in the curriculum. He states: “We need to look at the potentially wider reach of literature and the stage”. And this is more true of studies on Shakespeare and Indian philosophy.

Sukanta Chaudhuri’s section ‘Shakespeare and Indian Literature’ provides a rich repertory that covers entire India and its languages, the details of which deserve intricate enquiry. He observes: “The wider influence of Shakespeare on Indian poetic idiom and sensibility calls for separate study, only randomly undertaken so far”. This is certainly a call to the scholars to divert their attention on Shakespeare’s plenty. Shakespeare's plays in terms of Indian aesthetics or philosophy abound in Indian languages no less than in English. The scholar makes a significant mention of Swami Vipulanandha's 12 Tamil adaptations of actual plays to illustrate the aesthetic theory of ‘meypaddu’, a grammatic category treated in the *Tolkkapiyam*, an ancient Tamil Grammar treatise, analogous to the famous Sanskrit *rasa* theory. Shakespeare is the major generative force behind the entire body of dramatic literature in almost all Indian languages. He is often an activating element in the traditions of classical Indian drama as well as popular and folk theatre like Jatra in Bengal, Nautanki in northern India, Yakshagana and Kathakali and Therukoothu in the south. His texts are often remoulded according to the cultural and theatrical compulsions of
each specific area. Chaudhuri gives abundant information about Shakespeare and the early modern Indian theatre as well as the Indian stage after independence. Sukanta Chaudhuri, however, has not concentrated much on the topic ‘Shakespeare and Indian Philosophy’, as he does not delve into the content part of the Shakespeare’s plays.

Incidentally, studies related to ‘Shakespeare and Indian Philosophy’ remain scattered in terms of different articles that have been published in various journals. Compiling of these articles, editing and critically evaluating require special research that should be undertaken as a University project. Full-length studies of Shakespeare’s works with reference to the various Indian philosophical structures have to come out yet. However, most of the articles are quite learned and provide adequate clues for further expansion. A few illustrations are included here to show how Indian philosophy has attracted Shakespeare scholars. An interesting feature to note is the publication of an article entitled, “Hamlet, the Indian” by Dr. Arthur Pfungst in the *Franfurter Zeitmii* on September 15, 1906, reviewed by Dr. Paul Carus, the Editor, *The Open Court* (Vol.XXL (No.6), June 1907. No.613, pages 359 to 363) under the caption “Hamlet, the Hindu” (http://opensiuc.lib.siu.edu/cgi/viewcontent).

Dr. Pfungst was a poet and “a thinker of unusual talent”. The Editor notes that in the article, “he points out the many similarities in Shakespeare's "Hamlet" to the philosophy of ancient India. Other dramas of the English poet contain remarkable thoughts which read as if they were quoted from Brahman or
Buddhist scriptures”. Dr. Pfungst quotes Prospero’s words from *The Tempest*, “We are such stuff / As dreams are made on; and our little life / Is rounded with a sleep” and observes that “Sankara, the interpreter of the Vedanta, expresses exactly the same idea, "The world is like a dream". He continues to say that Shakespeare makes a pessimistic application of this statement in *King Henry IV Part II* in the King’s words. The critic also draws copiously from the *Bhagavad Gita* in support of his case in point. He says that the similarities between Arjuna and Hamlet are remarkable. The Editor in this long review quotes Dr. Pfungst: “Hamlet did not live in the Occident; he never saw Helsingor or Wittenberg. His home was India” and his own words are to be pondered about even after a century: “Would it not be truer to say that what Dr. Pfungst regards as typically Indian is typical rather of a certain class of thinkers, and they may be found scattered all over the face of the civilized world?”

SusHEEL Kumar Sharma and VinOD Kumar Singh have employed certain concepts of Indian political philosophy in their article “Shakespeare’s *Antony and Cleopatra*: An Interpretation in the Light of Indian Idea of Kingship”, published in *The Indian Journal of English Studies* (XLVIII (2011), pages.54-67). The five kingly characters of the play, Mark Antony, Octavius Caesar, Lepidus, Sextus Pompius and Cleopatra have been adjudicated “on the parameters of Indian kingship that gives a vivid description about a king’s status, category, virtues, education, appointment, duties and assistants”. The scholars examine the four virtues required for kingship, namely, the virtues of enthusiasm,
inviting nature, intelligence and intuition, and self-restraint and identify them in these kingly characters to assess their strength as well as weakness. Their finding is: “Thus on surveying these kingly characters it is found that all of them are passionate. Because of their reluctance towards kingly virtues, which according to Indian polity thinkers are very essential for a king, they are creating many hardships for each other and are helping to bring the final catastrophe of the play”. The ‘Abstract’ of the paper has appeared in http://allduniv.academia.edu/SusheelSharma/Papers/401333. Rajnithi or dharma of kingship in Shakespeare’s plays can be explored in full detail with reference to Tirukkural in Tamil, an ethical literature with prescription for the entire humanity and especially to those in the helm of political affairs. Incidentally, Padma Srinivasan has interpreted Antony and Cleopatra in the Indian philosophical lines in her unpublished paper “Antony and Cleopatra from the point of view of Sankhya Philosophy” presented at the Fifth World Shakespeare Congress held at Tokyo in August 1991. This has been already mentioned in Chapter III of this dissertation.

Laxmi Shanker in her brief essay, “Diffusion of Indian Philosophy in World Lit” written for http://content.msn.co.in/MSNContribute/Story on 16th March 2009 forwards general views that can be worked out elaborately. She says:

Indian philosophy and Shakespeare are quite intriguing to say the least. Both have many features in common. Both are fascinating, mysterious and unfathomable. . . . Faith in God and fear of Him are
deeply engrained in Shakespeare and Indian Philosophy. The voice of Geeta echoes in his _Tempest, Hamlet, King Lear_ and other plays. Like Ramakrishna and Vivekanand Shakespeare believes that man is the best creation and human life is the best in this material world. Through Hamlet, he accepts "What a piece of work is a man/How noble in reason, how infinite in faculties”. Like Indian philosophers, he believes that reason is divine, God like. He believes in Indian Karmic philosophy, in para normals and super normals, in maya (illusion) and gives voice to the Indian philosophical concepts such as Soul and Body, destiny or providence, Knowledge as the path to Moksha (Salvation), Justice. He even believes in re-birth.

The writer concludes saying that in this age of interrogation, nightmare and anxiety, humanity is engulfed in search of identity. Though the World Literature has had great impact, “the impact of Buddhism, Upanishadism and Vedantism can be widely noticed everywhere” that could certainly sustain moral values.

Harish Trivedi in his learned book, _Colonial Transactions : English Literature in India_ (1995) has dedicated one chapter, ‘Shakespeare in India: Colonial Contexts’ in the Part 1 of his book “Reception: English Literature in India” mentions Professor C.D. Narasimhaiah’s book _Shakespeare Came to India_, a commemorative volume to mark the quarter-centenary wherein he
explains: “For the England of trade, commerce, imperialism and the penal code has not endured but the imperishable Empire of Shakespeare will always be with us” (23). Trivedi is also much concerned about the slavish attitude of the Indian scholars. He angrily says: “As for the trends in academic scholarship and criticism of Shakespeare in India, the tendency on the whole has been assiduously to follow the Western critical model, as and when it gets to be imported into this outpost after the necessary jet-lag. . . . the Indian contribution to the mainstream of Shakespeare studies has been so nugatory as to be virtually invisible” (23). The scholar does not fail to mention the learned contributions of professors like S. Nagarajan, Sukanta Chaudhuri, S. Viswanathan and others, and about a half a dozen articles by the Indian authors in the journals of standing such as Shakespeare Quarterly or Shakespeare Survey, and “last but not the least, t he regular publication from Delhi since 1979 of the half yearly Hamlet Studies, proudly claimed by its founder editor-publisher Professor R.W. Desai to be only the academic journal in the whole world devoted to a single literary work” (23-24). Trivedi views that in this subordinate condition the only alternative of being “an Indian drop in the vast Anglo-American ocean of Shakespeare studies is to be a frog in an Indian-Shakespeare well, i.e., to give a distinct and original orientation to our study of Shakespeare. The task here is of devising an approach or perspective which would be validly Indian without being eccentric . . .” (24) Harish Trivedi also talks about the ambitious dream of establishing an ‘Indian Institute of Shakespeare Studies’ in 1971 which simply resulted in ‘Shakespeare
Society in India’ and “an Indian Journal of Shakespeare Studies was also reported to have been brought out for a couple of issues” (24).

Subsequently, as Harish Trivedi has pointed out, the publication of the Indian Journal of Shakespeare Studies must be noted. The Shakespeare Association of India was founded in 1983 with Madurai as its headquarters. Apart from its other activities of conducting seminars, organizing lectures and screening films, this journal was published to encourage Shakespeare studies in India. Volume 1 of the journal ‘Shakespeare: Asian Perspectives’ came out in 1985. Of the eight articles, two are based on Indian philosophy: “Hamlet-A Vedantic View” by S. Ramaswamy (29-39) and “Shakespeare Upanishad” by Seetharam Ramasamy(63-66). The former essay is well-argued out with the back up from the Bhagavad Gita, the author focusing on Hamlet’s world-weariness and disgust with mendacity. The author observes:

While his world-weariness leads to Vairagya, his disgust with the ‘world’ of human mendacity creates the necessary jihasa, resulting in a longing for liberation, qualifying him for mumukshutva. His intensely strong desire to turn away from all vyavahara is the source of his so-called ‘inaction’. All this springs from the fact of his innate, inborn propensity – his swabhava as an individual. (29)

With apt references, the author establishes that Hamlet gives himself to nivritti, turning into oneself. He submits saying, “what is generally considered a failing
in Hamlet is actually his strength considered from the Vedantic point of view and that Hamlet is not only a prince who happens to be a philosopher but he is a prince among philosophers” (37). As a concluding observation, the author compares the Hamlet’s mystery to that of the enigmatic smile of Mona Lisa and concedes that he is attempting to partake in that mystery realizing “that it is perhaps Hamlet’s ideal of disinterested action and his ideal of attaining the level of gunatita that especially endears ‘the sweet prince’ of Denmark to the hearts of Indian readers. The rest, indeed, is silence” (39). S. Ramaswamy’s article is an obvious indicator to the expansiveness of one single play Hamlet.

Seetharam Ramasamy’s short article “Shakespeare Upanishad” concentrates on Shakespeare’s tragedies in general and presents the view that Shakespearean tragedy is unlike a Greek tragedy in which the tragic hero suffers in his intense, vain struggle with the ruthless destiny. Shakespeare’s heroes suffer no defeat – it is a victory to them. The author asserts:

Shakespeare presents us with the spectacle of glorious encounter between the Atman within and the numerous forces of panoplied avidya and agnana. The fruit of the encounter is that the jivatman becomes gloriously aware of its true nature, that it is no other than supreme, sole Reality behind the appearance which is this world and all its works. Tragedy tells us all ‘Tat twam asi!’ in vibrant,
unmistakable terms. And we learn that life is the values we live for and – die for.

Ivi Shakespeare Upanishad
Om Shanti! Shanti! Shanti! (66)

Seetharam Ramasamy concludes his article in the typical Indian incantatory note.

A brief mention of the thin volume Shakespeare: Quarter Centenary Lectures published by the Annamalai University, Chidambaram in 1969 must be included. The book contains seven articles by notable scholars, one of them being K.D. Sethna, the most famous Aurobindo scholar. He has contributed two articles, “The Dramatis Personae in Shakespeare’s Sonnets” and “Sri Aurobindo on Shakespeare” – the latter runs about 48 pages. In this article, Sethna talks in detail about Sri Aurobindo’s Future Poetry and his notion of ‘Poetry as mantra’ by applying it to Shakespeare’s poetry. Towards the end of the article Sethna makes a precise statement, after quoting a few lines from Savitri, Book IV, Canto 4:

In spiritual terms proper to the future that Sri Aurobindo seeks to create, the last line – a Mantra about Mantra – [Sight’s sound-waves breaking from the soul’s deeps] sums up the secret heart of the revelatory energy whose most godlike outflow in secular terms in the past was Shakespeare. (81)

As shown above, the ‘Review of Shakespeare Literature’ is inexhaustible. The study of ‘Shakespeare and Indian Philosophy’ needs a lot of attention.
Shakespeare has to act certainly in a different manner catering to the present-day generation who are progressing with a significant IQ. The dramatist should make his presence in the various fields such as Management, Commerce, Science, Politics, Sociology, Psychology and so on in a completely new attire. It is regrettable that Shakespeare’s works have been pushed to the back-seat in the colleges and it is needless to be talked about in the schools. The same is true with Philosophy, hailed as ‘Mother of all Sciences’, relegated aside with pseudo-respect. The Researcher firmly believes that the Indian philosophical system need not remain the subject of the elites and it can reach ordinary people through uncomplicated modes such as plays, stories, dialogues and other forms. Philosophy is ultimately humanistic and it should catch mortals. This dissertation is an attempt to remind the present humanity about their old cultures and traditions, the following of upright path directed by any religion and scriptures and the necessity to read good literature, with the idea that this would help them form a society of good values.

The purpose of reading a literature is to make know the nature of society during the period of the author, as the works of the author are mainly based on the day to day life of the people of the society. Even centuries later, this helps to study and compare the society at present and the past. The lessons learnt from the past and present pave way for a better society in future. Literatures have a purpose and a message to convey to the public. Instead of passing on the message as a dictate, if the same is imparted through stories and other forms of
arts, the youngsters would involve themselves, understand and follow the message.

To conclude, this researcher, as a teacher, sincerely feels that a teacher has to catch the students young to make them understand ancient wisdom and art to implant values in their minds. This is a very much needed exercise to the racing modern generation grappled in fast life. With terrorism rampant, youngsters should learn to empathize, develop eco-sensibility, venerate ancient wisdom and above all appreciate that life is immense. More innovative pedagogic devices must be thought of, to highlight the wisdom of the yore by means of the modern techniques. Educationists today have greater responsibility and commitment in developing the young minds to mould them into honest citizens of future India. For this they need to build up mental strength and ability. They must then absorb the advice of the Supreme Master, *Jagadguru* Lord Krishna’s admonition in the *Bhagavad Gita*:

\[
\text{Yogasthah kuru karmani sangam tyaktva dhanamjaya} \\
\text{siddhyasiddyoh samo bhutva samatvam yoga ucyate. (II.48)}
\]

The meaning is: “Fixed in yoga, do thy work, O Winner of Wealth (Arjuna), abandoning attachment, with an even mind in success and failure, for evenness of mind is called yoga”. Our master Dr. S. Radhakrishnan explains further: “We must work with a perfect serenity indifferent to the results. He who acts by virtue of an inner law is on a higher level than one whose action is dictated by his whims” (120).