Chapter VI

SHAKESPEARE AND JAISHANKER PRASAD (1889-1937)

In the age of Dwivedi (1901-1915), dramatic activity was on a low ebb, due partly to political unrest and partly to the lack of impetus. The genius of Mahavir Prasad Dwivedi, the 'Man' of the age, was more suited to criticism than to drama. It was indeed a period of transition when attempts were being made to stabilise values in literature and more attention was being paid to consolidation and criticism than to creative writing. This period, nonetheless, cannot be ignored as it produced various translations of Shakespeare's plays and of the plays of Bengali playwrights that were influenced by Shakespeare. In fact, the dearth of original plays was made up by these translations. Besides, with the publication of periodicals, a good number of biographical sketches of Shakespeare appeared in Saraswati and other well-known monthlies.

The work of translating Shakespeare's plays into Hindi, began by Munshi Imdad Ali and Bhartendu followed by Gokul Chandra Sharma, Baleshwar Prasad and others, was furthered by Gopinath Purohit, Arya, Chaturbhuj Audichya, Gajpati Krishna Gurjar, Lala Sitaram and so many others in this period. The translation of Bengali plays bearing the

1. See Chapter II of the present study.
The impact of Shakespeare upon the plays of these Bengali playwrights has been fully analysed by Priyaranjan Sen in his celebrated treatise *Western Influence in Bengali Literature*. As regards biographical literature on Shakespeare, it has been treated separately in Chapter IX.

Until Prasad, we do not have any dramatist of outstanding stature. Prasad's emergence on the scene of Hindi drama after a period of lull reminds us in many ways of Shakespeare's emergence on the Elizabethan scene. Prasad was a man of genius, who was keenly alive to the native trends as resuscitated of late in the works of Bhartendu Harishchandra.

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1. Ram Krishna Varma translated Madhusudan Dutta's *Krishna Kumari* (1888), Rajkishore De's *Padmavati* (1888), and Dwarikanath Ganguli's *Veer Nari* (1889).
4. Ram Chandra Varma translated Girish Chandra Ghosh's *Balidan* (1922).
5. Rup Narain Pandey translated most of the plays of Dwijendralal Roy, Girish Chandra Ghosh, Kshirod Prasad Vidyavinod, and Rabindranath Tagore by 1921-22.
and his successors, as well as to the new influences from the West which had been at work for more than half a century in both life and letters. The translations of Shakespeare that appeared in the contemporary periodicals, we have every reason to believe, must have stimulated his dramatic imagination a good deal.

What is even more important than the translation is Prasad's own study of Shakespeare. Without any doubt, he possessed a sound knowledge of English and read Shakespeare's works. A copy of the complete works of Shakespeare was found in his library after his death. Besides he read some criticism on Shakespeare in English as well as in Hindi. Keenly alive to contemporary trends in literature, Prasad must have also read with both profit and pleasure the essays on Shakespeare which appeared from time to time in *Saraswati*, and he should

1. Dr. V.N. Mishra, *Western Influence in Hindi Drama*, p.212.
2. Dr. Prem Shanker, *Prasad ka Kavya*, Prasad Pustakalaya, p.579. Dr. Prem Shanker mentions a book named *Shakespeare* but does not mention the name of the author. It is most probably written by Walter Raleigh who first published his book on Shakespeare in 1907 in the English Men of Letters series and it was very popular in Prasad's times.
4. *Shakespeare ka Hamlet* by Pandit Suryanarain Dixit (June, 1906); *Shakespeare* by Pandit Suryanarain Dixit (November, 1906); *Shakespeare* by Kashi Prasad Jaiswal (February, 1907); *Kavita ka Darbar* by Lalli Prasad Pandey (May, 1909); *Shakespeare* by Ganga Prasad (March, 1915); *Sita aur Portia* by Khangjita Mishra (January, 1920); *Bharatvarsha*; *men Shakespeare* by Mahavir Prasad Dwivedi (July, 1920); *Kalidas aur Shakespeare* by Manoharial Srivastava (May, 1921); *Sahitya ka Adarsha* by Din Dayal Srivastava (March, 1924).
have been inspired by them to go to the original works of Shakespeare to seek the beauties for himself. His strong interest in Shakespearean drama is further borne out by the fact that he possessed a copy of Plutarch's *Lives*, which was "the only supremely great literary work which Shakespeare set himself to fashion into drama", and whose authority he followed "phrase by phrase and word by word". There is every probability that he read and studied some other works on Shakespeare as he usually borrowed books from Benaras University Library and other libraries, of which he was a member. Prasad has also referred to Shakespeare at one or two places in his essays. A voracious reader and an explorer into the dark and dim regions of Indian history as he was, Prasad could never have embarked upon the subject without a comprehensive study and a proper understanding of Shakespeare.

Prasad may have been struck by the similarity of situation in the domain of drama that existed between

Shakespeare and himself. Like Marlowe who paved the way for Shakespeare, Bhartendu Harishchandra had prepared the way for Prasad. Prasad accepted the arousal of the sentiments as the object of drama like his predecessor but also recognised the importance of action and conflict, individualisation of characters etc., taking his cue, direct or indirect, from Shakespeare. Thus, the dramatic theory, which Prasad formed, was a compound of the Sanskrit classical tradition and the Shakespearean technique.

Prasad was an artist of romantic sensibilities. Now, a romantic artist presents life retouching and colouring it with his own imaginative vision and thus making it seem novel and fresh. This sensibility had prompted Shakespeare to take mediaeval themes for his historical plays and to present them in quite a renovated form. And, like Shakespeare, Prasad, under this very impulse, took to dramatizing the themes from Indian history. If Shakespeare had accepted the authority of Aristotle in toto, and had followed into his footsteps, he would never have painted life in such a variety and completeness. Similarly, if Prasad had taken for granted without demur the old classical rules and not incorporated action and conflict, individualisation etc., taking them from Shakespeare, his dramas would never have interested the modern man influenced by Western thought. Let us now examine the dramatic writings of Prasad to trace the impact of Shakespeare.
The first dramatic composition of Prasad, Saijan (1910-11), has the traditional dramatic setting of 'Nandi', 'Prastavana', 'Sutradhar', and 'Bharatvakya', and bears little signs of the impact of English drama except in the arrangement of the battle-scene on the stage in the second scene.

Khavani-Parinaya (1912), the next play, is a dramatisation of the marriage of Chandragupta and Cornelia (Kalyani), which was later on incorporated with modifications into his play Chandragupta (1931). Karunalaya (1913) is an opera in blank verse of the English \* type. In making a daring attempt to use blank verse in drama Prasad was inspired by the example of Shakespeare, though the inspiration came through Bengali adaptation of Shakespeare and not directly.

Pravashchita (1914) is the first drama of Prasad written under the influence of Shakespeare. In the whole range of Sanskrit drama we do not find such a beginning as is presented in this play. The first scene shows two 'Vidyadharies' who want to make Jaichand penitent for his sin and who, according to Kishorilal Gupta, are the counterparts of 'the weird sisters' in Macbeth. But, while the witches in Macbeth are the breeders of evil, the 'Vidyadharies' in Prasad's play are the ministering angels of good. In Lamb's words, the Witches of Shakespeare originate deeds of blood, and begin bad

1. Dr. Shripati Sharma, Hindi Natakon par Pashchatya Prabhava, pp.130-31.
impulses to men', and they 'raise jars, jealousies, strifes, like a thick scurfe ov'r life'; while the 'Vidyadharies' of Prasad make penitent the originator of the deeds of blood, and allay jars, jealousies and strifes. Mr. Gupta, again, quotes Mr. Shilimukh as saying that there is no hero in the play, while Jaichand is the hero of the play in the same way in which Macbeth is the hero of Shakespeare's play. Macbeth does not have a predisposition to murder; he had only an inordinate ambition which is played upon by the Witches. Likewise, Jaichand has no predisposition to repent but this inward soul has some seed of it to be exploited by the 'Vidyadharies'. Macbeth sees the ghost of Banquo which disturbs the work in hand and gives a turn to the whole situation. Similarly the ghost of Sanyogita seen by Jaichand in the third scene turns the tide of events in the present play.

The play is a tragedy in the Shakespearean sense, quite similar to Macbeth in its tragic conception. Jaichand is a king who has all the qualities of a brave rajput but the only flaw in his character is his jealousy for Prithviraj, which is responsible for the death of Prithviraj, Sanyogita,

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2. वे दिल्लीराज ने इस पुरुषराज को अर्था महाराज रूप में सम्पूर्ण किया था उसी क्षण मे हंगाम में एक विषमता का बीज बढ़े विप्लव का तीड़कौं गाड़ा गया था।

- Prasad, Chitradhar, Pravashchita, scene iii, p.93.
and for his own tragic end. *Macbeth* is the story of a noble and valiant man brought to his damnation, which is presented in such a way as to arouse our pity and terror. Likewise, we can say, Prasad presents the story of the damnation of a brave rejiput, whom we may detest, yet the way in which his end is shown by the playwright arouses in us sympathy and a sense of fear. In the opinion of Dr. V.N. Mishra, the madness of Jaichand in the third scene is like the madness of King Lear, but this madness seems to be of a different nature. While Lear's madness is caused by the ingratitude of his daughters, that of Jaichand is due to the pricks of his own conscience, though the outward behaviour of both is apparently much similar. Nevertheless, there is some substance in the claim of Dr. Mishra as Lear's lunatic behaviour is also partly due to his brooding over his own injustice towards Cordelia as is evident in the case of Jaichand who holds himself responsible for the tragic end of Sanyogita.

In technique also, the influence is discernible. Prasad does away with the traditional devices of 'Nandi', 'Sutradhar', 'Prastavana', and 'Bharatvakra' and employs the ghost, the suicide, the battle-scene, and the burning pyre etc., devices which are not sanctioned by Sanskrit dramaturgy but are

2. Dr. V.N. Mishra, *English Influence on Hindi Language and Literature*, p.316.
imitated from Shakespeare. The suicide of Jaichand also seems to have been inspired by the similar act of Othello. In Othello, there is no previous indication of Othello's suicide, though there might have been some thought of it in his own mind. Suddenly, Othello plunges the dagger into his heart, with the words:

"I took by the throat the circumcised dog,
And smote him thus." (Othello, V, iii, 354-55)

Similarly, though the 'Vidyadharies' had prescribed the punishment and Jaichand also speaks of repentence, but no indication is given of the nature of it. In the last scene, he goes to the Ganges and takes a plunge into it with the words:

(Prasad, Chitradhar, Pravashchita, p. 98)

Rajyashri (1915) is Prasad's first major dramatic composition having a sort of 'Bharatvakya' in the end. It is a historical play depicting the vicissitudes in the lives of Harshvardhan and his sister Rajyashri. The subsidiary story of Surma and Shantideva, running throughout the play, gives a romantic touch to the play. This romantic theme seems to have fascinated Prasad so much that he begins the play with a love-dialogue between Surma and Shantideva. There is the presentation of the scenes of duel and war, murder, fainting and fighting on...
the stage. For the first time the playwright divides the acts into scenes. The play is full of both external and internal conflict.

There are two more occasions in Rajyashri, where Prasad follows Shakespeare. The second scene of the fourth act of Henry IV, Part II, portrays how John of Lancaster wins Mowbray, Archbishop of York, Hastings and their followers without battle and afterwards arrests them. A similar situation arises in act three, scene three of Rajyashri. Harshavardhan and Pulkeshin are ready to fight on the battle-field of Revatat with their armies properly arrayed, but Harshavardhan declines to fight and wins Pulkeshin over to his side without bloodshed. In the English play, John of Lancaster uses the strategy of war when the two armies are ready to fight but the Hindi play displays the gentleness of Harshavardhan. The characters involved in this situation are historical but the situation itself, as the playwright himself points out in his introduction to the play, has no source in history.

The second echo of Shakespeare is in the conversion of Shantideva into a dacoit after he is frustrated in his love with Surma, the flower-maid who becomes the chief queen of King Devadutta. He reminds us of Valentine in Two Gentlemen of Verona who becomes an outlaw after being banished by the Duke for loving.

Silvia, the Duke's daughter. In this connection there is one more similarity; both Shantideva and Valentine do not become outlaws all at once but the playwright contrives such circumstances as compel them to be so. Valentine, banished and bound for Verona, meets the dacoits in the way and joins them. Similarly, while Shantideva is brooding over his future course, he is overtaken by dacoits and he joins their fold. Like Shakespeare, Prasad provides a full scene for this purpose. Then, Shantideva is as thoughtful as Valentine. After his banishment, Valentine is pensive and swells upon his love for Silvia. Shantideva likewise cogitates in Rajyashri:

1. Shakespeare, The Two Gentlemen of Verona, IV, i.
2. Ibid.,
4. "She is my essence; and I leave to be,
   If I be not by her fair influence
   Fostered, illumin'd, cherished, kept alive.
   I fly not death, to fly his deadly doom:
   Tarry I here, I but attend on death;
   But fly I hence, I fly away from life."
The characters of this play, Rajyashri, Shantideva and Divakarmitra, in respect of their reflectiveness of temper often recall Shakespeare's characters like Hamlet and others. Like Hamlet, Rajyashri thinks too much on the subject of life and death. Being sick at heart she says:

(Prasad, Rajyashri, II, iv, p.36)

And:

(Prasad, Rajyashri, III, ii, p.54)

And, when, in act three, scene two, Rajyashri says to Divakarmitra: देवि अन्तिमकाला,वेधा देवि मने के लिये प्रस्तुत होना नगवान की अज्ञा है। Divakarmitra forbids her with the words:

(Rajyashri, I, ii, p.56)

These words seem to be Divakarmitra's version of the following words of Hamlet:

"Or that the Everlasting had not fix'd His canon 'gainst self-slaughter."

(Hamlet, I, ii, 131-2)
The dramatist uses, for the first time, the device of contrast in characterisation on the Shakespearean pattern. He introduces inconstant Surma and her romance to illuminate and enhance the purity and sensitiveness of Rajyashri. Their intensity of emotion and internal conflict is revealed through their soliloquies. The songs introduced in this play have the same spirit as the songs in Shakespeare. They help us in understanding the feelings and sentiments of the characters as well as the situations in which they are placed. The four songs of Surma give us a glimpse of her mood on the different occasions. And the song in act three, scene two highlights the situation. The element of humour is also devised in the vein of Shakespeare. It is introduced not as a mere stock-in-trade device used for mere fun but as an integral part of the play itself. This is decent and genial and has something to contribute to the development of the action. The following is a good instance which will do credit to Launce:

In Vishakh (1921), Prasad takes another step towards perfecting his dramatic technique which is compounded of the best of both the classical and Shakespearean canons. The play deals with the union of Chandrolekha, the daughter of Sushrawa, the chief of Nagas, and Vishakh, a young man fresh from Gurkul after completing his education. King Nardev tries to persuade Chandrolekha to become his queen even after her marriage with Vishakh. When disappointed, he uses force to accomplish the task, but, finally, his purpose is defeated. On a previous occasion Nardev had punished Satyasheel, a Buddhist monk, for keeping Chandrolekha locked up being attracted by her beauty. The source of the story, as stated by the author himself in the introduction of the play, is Kalhan's Rajatarangini, a history of ancient India in Sanskrit but he also introduces some new characters such as those of Premanand and Mahapingal. Though the setting of the story is historical, the various details are worked out under the influence of Shakespeare particularly of his play Measure for Measure. Like Angelo in the English play, King Nardev proceeds to commit the same crime for which he punished Satyasheel, the Chief Mahant of Kanir Vihar. The play establishes that law is law for all and it is not one for the king and another for the subjects and also that pardon, and not punishment, is the best remedy for a penitent sinner. This is the theme of Measure for Measure which is
is delightfully clinched in the following lines:

"Thieves for their robbery have authority
When judges steal themselves."  

(II,ii,176-7)

In Vishakh, Nardev also expresses the same idea thus, in quite a straightforward manner:

(II,iii,p.51)

Premanand explains it:

(II,iii,p.86)

Like Shakespeare’s romantic plays, Prasad’s play is also a blend of romance and conflict. It opens with the first meeting of the hero and the heroine who are smitten with the shafts of love at first sight, but the course of love does not run smooth: it leads to much conflict - both outward and inward. The play also presents scenes of open rebellion, suicide, fire etc. which obviously violate the canons of Sanskrit dramatic theory. Besides, the author does away with the traditional formalities of ‘Nandi’, ‘Sutradhar’ etc.

The characters of Premanand and Nardev are also modelled after the Duke and Angelo. In the play, Premanand plays, more
or less, the same reconciliatory role as the Duke plays in Measure for Measure. In the English play, Angelo wants sexual gratification with Isabella. Isabella had gone to him to plead for mercy for his brother who had been sentenced to death by Angelo for incontinence. Motivated by lust, Angelo tempts Isabella. He offers to spare Claudio if she is ready to submit to him. He is thus ready to commit the same crime for which Claudio is to be sentenced to death. When Isabella goes away after the first interview with Angelo and Angelo is left alone, he reflects thus:

"O, fie, fie, fie.
What dost thou, or what art thou, Angelo?
Dost thou desire her fouly for those things
That make her good? O, let her brother live.
Thieves for their robbery have authority
When judges steal themselves. What, do I love her,
That I desire to hear her speak again,
And feast upon her eyes? What is't I dream on?
O, cunning enemy, that, to catch a saint,
With saints dost bait thy hook."

(Measure for Measure, II,i,172-81)

King Nardev, faced with a similar situation, speaks likewise. He conceives love for Chandralekha, the wife of Vishalk, and longs to make her his queen by means fair or foul. The agitation in his mind on this occasion, strikingly reminiscent of Angelo's in the lines quoted above, finds vent thus:
All the characters in the play - Nardev, Vishakh, Premanand, Chandralekh and Iravati are introspective and meditative, having much in common with Shakespeare’s characters of a like nature. Nardev, frustrated in his hopes, says:

"The name of King? O, God's name, let it go: I'll give my jewels for a set of beads, My gorgeous palace for a hermitage, My gay apparel for an almsman's gown, My figur'd goblets for a dish of wood, My sceptre for a palmer's walking-staff," etc."

Premanand too, at the sight of a Budhist monastery in which the remains of Lord Budha are preserved, waxes philosophical in a soliloquy:

(Vishakh, II, iii, p.51)

(Vishakh, II, iii, p.51)
This reflection on mutability strikingly recalls Hamlet's thoughts in the last act of the play:

"To what base uses we may return, Horatio. Why may not imagination trace the noble dust of Alexander, till he finds it stopping a bung-hole?" (Hamlet, V,i,221-25)

And:

"...Alexander died, Alexander was buried, Alexander returneth into dust; the dust is earth; of earth we make loam, and why of the loam, whereto he was converted, might not stop a beer-barrel?" (Hamlet, V,i,230-34)

The same idea is adumbrated in the fourth act:

"Your worm is your only emperor for diet: we fat all creatures else to fat us, and we fat ourselves for maggots: your fat king and your lean beggar is but variable service; two dishes, but to one table: that's the end." (Hamlet, IV,ii,22-27)

Regarding characterisation, one thing more deserves notice. The dramatist sharply individualises characters by employing the device of contrast - a device which we believe he found effectively employed by Shakespeare and seldom so used in Sanskrit drama. The various traits of the characters are preordained so that the characters take their well-defined course. In connection with the dramatic propriety of this method, Prasad himself points out in the 'Preface' to Vishakh:

हम यह अच्छा समझते हैं कि प्रातृतिक बरित्र अपना स्वतंत्र और स्वामीविशिष्ट बतिच्छूति रखता है और एक दूसरे का विपरेत है। है वही प्रातृतिक बरित्र को बनकर दे। यही सिद्धान्त हमें प्रयुक्त किया गया है। (Vishakh, Bhumika).
One thing more needs to be mentioned in regard to the character of Mahapingal. He is presented like the traditional Sanskrit Vidushakas in the beginning but gradually he assumes the form of a valet helping in the romantic amour of the King like Shakespeare's valets in *Two Gentlemen of Verona* and *The Comedy of Errors*. Mahapingal's character is also influenced by the villains of Shakespeare. The Vidushakas in Sanskrit drama amuse people by their queer dresses, vain talk and ludicrous behaviour but never indulge in such intrigues as Mahapingal does. He plays the role of a villain in assisting the immoral act of Nardev by forcing a Bhikshu to conceal himself in a ruined monastery and to ask Chandralekha to become the queen of Nardev, in a voice as if it were of the god whom Chandralekha worshipped. The tragic end of Mahapingal is also shown like the end of a Shakespearean villain.

In point of humour Vishakh registers an advance on the earlier play *Rajyashri*. It becomes all the more Shakespearean as its purpose is to act as a corrective force by arousing sympathetic and thoughtful laughter. It becomes now an integral part of life and a corrective force in society. But, unlike Ben Jonson's, it is 'serious in its fun, innocent in its mischief and ingenuous in its guile', for it is through our

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1. Dr. V.N. Mishra, *Western Influence in Hindi Drama*, p. 220.
'sympathetic, not our selfish emotions' that this humour interests us. Mahapingal is presented as a glutton like the traditional Vidushakas, but there is a novelty in his humorous remarks which further the plot. The following dialogue clearly manifests these features of humour:

**Maha Bhishu**: में उन महाराज की जिन्हें यहां बुद्धि नाटकों के स्नातक की लाइ रहती है वोसे नाटक कै से कार्य हूँ तुम नहीं जानते?

**Vishakha**: महाराज की बुद्धि नाटकों के स्नातक की लागू कैसी?

**Maha Bhishu**: वह नाटकों के पात्र स्नातक जैसे कहते है वह दशक समय लागू सुन लेता है पर यह कहा कहा दूरा पात्र नहीं सुन सकता। उन्होंने मतलब बाणा की शेखरी हैं। उनकी लाई राजा की बुद्धि देश पर का न्याय करती है पर राजा को न्याय नहीं सिला सकती।

(Vishakh, I,i,pp.21-2).

And:

**Samasmat**: पूर्वी नाथ यह कहा कहता है निजी कहता है विष खिलाये कल खिलाये कै सी हजरती हाथ पर न भुलाये।

**Maha Bhishu**: कोई है जी, लाऊ भारी इनका हाथ छता दो। तनिक बृह लो देखाए, पहले उसे घो लो। कोई है नाल उठा देवा है। तो है तो तुम्हारे नाम खिलाये। खिलाये।

बह ला नी के तब कहे मारी शारी की तार जातती है। उसमें नमक बिंबेशण का जीर्ण की मीठा का या लाल गोला था। झूँ? (Vishakh, I,iii,p.27).

Here Prasad seems to hold out a mild warning to us against these foibles and we laugh not at others but at our own foibles, with Mahapingal. Regarding the corrective force of humour, Prasad himself says:

पूर्वीका उद्देश्य की क्षीणता है। धारक पारंल रगमव नाटक एक स्वरूप कथा गढ़कर दौ तीन दंडों में फिर नाटक में बाह जग सह संगर दौरे पर देवा है निजी कै सी कै सी रैल है भाला है। वह अंतरं दल हृदय के बाद ही एक फूड़ हसी का हृदय सामने उपरिलिख हो जाता है।

(Vishakh, Introduction).
Shakespeare presents the supernatural elements in two ways: one, by presenting ghosts and witches on the stage influencing his characters, and, the other, by depicting it through the superstitions of the people. In Vishakh, Prasad seems to have been inspired by the second method. He presents blind beliefs to show how they defraud people. Mahapingal tries to exploit this belief by forcing a Bhikshu to hide himself in a ruined monastery and to order Chandralekha in an oracular voice, to become the queen of Nardev. The widow Tarla is cheated by the Bhikshu who exploits her belief that he knows how to prepare gold.

Ajitshatru (1922), more than any other earlier plays bears out a strong impact of Shakespeare's dramatic technique. The dramatist does away with the traditional devices of 'Nandi', 'Sutradhar', 'Prastavana', and 'Bharatvakya', and chooses for its basis the elements of action and conflict, both external and internal. This like King Lear deals with the theme of

1. See Hamlet, Macbeth and Richard III.
2. See Julius Caesar.
4. Ibid, III,iii,pp.78-82.
5. हाँ अभाव की के नाटक ऐसे ही हैं। वे न तो फेल अनन्यदन्द के लेकर मुख्तारकेश ने बताया कि मानसी युग्म की तरह बनाया 'तुम्हारा' तथा 'विद्वयार' और 'रितुवलय' जगत की अवतारणा करते हैं कि केवल वर्तमान नदन्द 'दिवाकर मानवता' के सामने पाना आदर करते हैं वर्ष वे इन दोनों के 'समस्त' के समुच्चित अभिव्यक्त होने के कारण मानवता के उच्चतम आदर के तुलना अन्य के पुरों उच्चता अन्य मानवता का एक बड़ी मात्रा पूरी है। (Krishnadas, Foreword to Ajitshatru,p.5).
ingratitude of a child towards a father. In *King Lear*, Shakespeare presents the ingratitude of Lear's daughters, Goneril and Regan, and the love of Cordelia, Lear's youngest daughter, towards their father. Prasad shows the two feelings in the character of Ajatshatru alone. In the beginning, though King Bimbisar abdicates his throne in favour of his son Ajatshatru and begins to lead the life of a hermit with his chief queen Vaswi, Ajatshatru, at the instigation of his mother, Chhalna, and a Buddhist, Devdatta, troubles his father in several ways. He imprisons him in his own garden along with his chief queen, and does not allow him even to give alms to the beggars. These incidents remind us of the maltreatment of King Lear at the hands of his two daughters, though he had divided his kingdom between them. But towards the end, Ajatshatru comes to realize his misdoing, and shows love towards his father like Cordelia. Thus, Prasad fuses the two feelings in one character, taking the necessary hints from Shakespeare.

Besides the main plot, the sub-plot is also presented in the Shakespearean manner. Sanskrit dramaturgy also makes provision for the sub-plot in the Prasangika or the accessory

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1. बिन्द्वार : दुःख तो नहीं देवी फिर भी दुःखीक के व्यवहार से अविकार का ध्यान हो जाता है । तुम्हें विश्वास हो या न हो निःस्व भी कभी बाबतका लौट जाना मेरी वेदना का कारण होता है ।
वाक्य द : नाथ में अपने हिरासती बी फिर भी क्षण ही फंसा कि हम लोग वानुपथ अवधार में ने रूकते नहीं रहे गये हैं ।

(Ajatshatru, I, iv, pp. 35 and 38).
story, but the way in which Prasad makes use of it in *Ajatshatru*, shows the distinct impact of the great English dramatist.

Usually in Shakespeare, the sub-plot serves either as a parallel or as a contrast to or as a commentary upon the main plot and heightens the effect of the main story. Thus, in *King Lear*, the subordinate story of Edmund and Edgar runs parallel to the main story of Goneril, Regan and Cordelia and both have the same theme of filial ingratitude so that the sub-plot serves as a commentary upon the main plot and heightens its effect. Edmund is the bastard son of Gloucester and returns the love of his father with ingratitude like Goneril and Regan while Edgar, though treated shabbily by his father Gloucester, is devoted to him like Cordelia. Prasad, in his play, devises the sub-plot in a like way. The main plot seeks to depict the ingratitude of Ajatshatru towards his father Bimbasar and in the sub-plot of Virudhak and Prasenajita, the same theme is taken up. Virudhak is depicted as showing ingratitude towards his father Prasenjita and as intriguing against him. Like *Ajatshatru*, Virudhak too feels penitent and is reconciled to his father. Just as Prasad shows the fusion of ingratitude, in the beginning, and love, in the end, in the character of *Ajatshatru* in the main plot, similarly he shows the alternation of these two feelings at the two periods in the character of Virudhak in the sub-plot. Prasenjita too, in his somewhat harsh treatment of his son Virudhak recalls Gloucester.
This parallelism of the sub-plot may also be sought in another direction. The main plot, in the play, Ajatshatru, also seeks to depict the theme of the conflict in the royal family of Magadh. The key-figure in this conflict is Chhatala, the mother of Ajatshatru and the second queen of Bimbisara, and the principal factor responsible for this conflict is Chhatala's ambition to see her son installed as king and to become the queen-mother in the real sense with more power in her hands to exercise. To achieve this end, she demands the installation of Ajatshatru. This theme is again taken up in the conflict in the royal family of Koshal, in which case the key-figure is Mahamaya, the mother of Virudhaksha and the queen of Prasenjita. The factor responsible for this conflict too is Mahamaya's ambition to become the queen-mother and to assume more power. For the fulfilment of her ambition Mahamaya also employs her son Virudhaksha.

1. कहना: (संगत) में होटी है यह अभिमान तन्माया की गया नहीं है। (प्रकट) में होटी है या होटी हैं जिन्होंने राज्याधिकार किया है। कविता के किसी अन्य ने को गुप्त अभिकार किया है। कोई नहीं ने कोई अन्य ने नहीं ने। (Ajatshatru, i,pp.26-27).

2. राणी: देखिले मेरी कुच्छा होस्कर भरे मेरे साथ देखिले ही बाल न कहे। दाही की धूर्त कौकर ती मेरे राजवंशी के हो और हठ ही के हठ पद को गूढ़ता बिख्य और तुम राजा के पुत्र ही करता हल्लै निश्चित और कुछ भी होगे यह कही की स्वर्ग में भी न गूढ़ा था। बालक, मानव अपनी इच्छा निद्रित दूर पौश्चित ही तो होता है। जन्तुविश्व की कोई भी अभिविकार दशरथ के धर्मन को गूढ़ता बाह्य तथा है। धर्म भर में होटे हैं कहा यही कुच्छा नियम है। तुम इसकी कहां अभिकार करते हैं? महलमाता के प्रसंग में इसके को गूढ़ता हो जाते हैं विद्या दाही के कहना कहने के लिए काल वसूल बनै बाह्य है, उसका शमना कही क्यों फिर या तो तम निर्माण या तो ही भाग जायेंगी। मुलिका तो कहा राजवंशी तुल्माया पैरों पर लोटेगी। मुलिका तो कहा, इस धूर्त के फिर तो फिर तो कुछ ही कौकर किया नहीं होता, तो मेरे ही कुल अभिविकार कहने का तुम्हें अभिकार नहीं।
Dr. V.N. Mishra traces certain other echoes of Shakespeare's *King Lear* in the plot of Prasad's play. In his opinion, the Hindi playwright depicts the story of Ajatshatru's love for Vajira and the story of Virudhak's love first for Mallika and afterwards for Shyama, the prostitute, in the same way as Shakespeare shows the love-story of Edmund with Goneril and Regan. The English playwright makes a contrast between the amours of the two sisters Goneril and Regan, and the true love of Cordelia. Goneril and Regan make love with Edmund even though they are married. But Cordelia rises to the height of her character by refusing her hand to the money-minded Duke of Burgundy, by consenting to marry the King of France on account of his pure love and by remaining constant in her love towards her husband to the end. The two elder sisters are fickle and inconstant in their love towards their husbands while the youngest is constant and true to her husband. Prasad too contrasts these two kinds of love. He depicts the true love between Ajatshatru and Vajira and the fickle and inconstant love of Virudhak, who first expresses his love towards Mallika and then, turns towards Shyama and then, again, shows preference for Mallika. The other echo is in the portrayal of the conflict between the wife and the husband. Goneril is shown as coming into conflict with her husband, the Duke of Albany. Similarly,

1. Dr. V.N. Mishra, *Western Influence in Hindi Drama*, pp.223-24
Prasad depicts Chhalna, Magandhi and Shaktimati or Mahamaya as coming into conflict with their husbands, Bimbsar, Udayan and Prasenjita respectively. Thus, Prasad's Ajatshatru, like Shakespeare's King Lear, presents a contrast between true love and false love and depicts the conflict of a wife with her husband together with the theme of the ingratitude of children towards their parents.

The play is a tragic-comedy and resembles Shakespeare's tragic-comedies. But the suggestion that Bimbsar dies at the end of the play under the impact of emotion indicates that Prasad had in his mind Shakespeare's conception of tragedy as reflected in King Lear, though due to his bias for the evocation of 'Rasa' or sentiment and for a happy ending as in the Sanskrit plays, he does not fully work out the conception. In the end of the play, all tangles are resolved as Ajatshatru realizes his folly and comes to beg pardon of his father for his past misdeeds along with other members of his family. Bimbsar forgives him and Chhalna, and rises to go with them to see his new-born grandson with the words:

(Prasad, II.11, x1, p.138).

These words are indicative of Bimbsar's death. Now, at this stage when everything is alright and the differences are resolved, if Prasad had wished, he could not have shown the death at all and could have ended the play on a comical note, quite in conformity with the tradition of Sanskrit dramaturgy. But the death of Bimbsar is contrived in the manner of Lear's death in the English play. The same situation is there. If Shakespeare had wished, the play could have ended happily in the reunion of the father and the daughter, Lear and Cordelia. But Shakespeare arranges the death of Cordelia and Lear and, following his pattern Prasad also depicts the death of Bimbsar to make it Shakespearean. Even then we cannot style the play a tragedy. The hero, Ajatshatru, survives in the end and comes to realize the force of filial love, the depiction of which is aimed at by the dramatist, And, though the death of Bimbsar is hinted at, yet the unexpected entrance of Gautam Budha at the very moment lifting his hand to relieve them of fear and the dropping of the curtain with a flash of light takes us to a plane of spiritual happiness.

Characterisation in Ajatshatru too recalls Shakespeare's method. The principle of contrast which Prasad had employed earlier in Vishakh to individualise the characters is more fully worked out in Ajatshatru. Another Shakespearean technique of characterisation is also put to use; it is the presenting
of parallel characters to enhance and illuminate each other. Vaswi and Chhalna, Bimbsar and Ajatshatru, and Gautam and Devdatta are the contrasting pairs; and, Bimbsar and Prasenjita, Ajatshatru and Virudhak, Chhalna and Shaktimati (Mahamaya), and Vaswi and Mallika are the parallel character-pairs. A playwright may easily individualize the contrasting characters but the individualisation of the parallel characters requires a subtle skill to peep into the inmost recesses of human nature. Prasad fully shows the grasp of and the grip on this faculty by giving individual touches to the parallel characters also. Let us take the example of Bimbsar and Prasenjita. Both are kings facing the ingratitude of their sons. But how different they both are! Bimbsar is passive while Prasenjita is active. Bimbsar is all good while Prasenjita is a mixture of good and evil, he can even conspire with the dacoit Shalendra to take away the life of Bandhul, his own Commander-in-chief. Both pay high respect to Gautam Budha, but, while Bimbsar has no hesitation in abdicating the throne in favour of his son aj增进ce at his command Prasenjita is very scrupulous even in declaring Virudhak as the heir to the throne at his command. Bimbsar is of a philosophic and brooding nature while Prasenjita is of a practical bent. Thus, Prasad, like Shakespeare, individualizes his characters by contrasting as well paralleling them.

Some of the characters, individually considered, also bear the stamp of Shakespeare's characters in *King Lear* and
Richard II. Like Lear, Bimbhar abdicates the throne. He has the same reflective nature, the same passionateness, and, sometimes, the same fury. The soliloquy in act one, scene two, his words spoken to Jivak in act two, scene two, and his soliloquy in act three, scene nine, clearly show this resemblance. The following words clearly recall the speeches of Lear in the storm-scene:

"Blow, winds, and crack your cheeks, rage, blow.
You catracts and hurricanoes, spout
Till you have drenched our steepless, drown'd the cock
You sulphurous and thought-executing fires,
Vaunt-couriers to oak-cleaving thunderbolts,
Singe my white head, and thou, all-shaking thunder,
 Strikes flat the thick rotundity o' the world.
Crack nature's moulds, all germens spill at once
That ingrateful man."

(King Lear, III,iii,1-9).

This soliloquy strikes us with the passion and fury of Bimbhar's rage for the ingratitude of his son like the following speech of Lear:
And:

"Rumble thy bellyful, spit, fire, spout, rain.
Nor rain, wind, thunder, fire, are my daughters:
I tax not you, you elements, with unkindness;
I never gave you kingdom, call'd you children,
You owe me no subscription: then let fall
Your horrible pleasure; here I stand your slave,
A poor, infirm, weak, and despis'd old man.
But yet I call you survile ministers,
That have with two pernicious daughters join'd
Your high engender'd battles 'gainst a head
So old and white as this. O, O, 'tis foul."

(King Lear, III,ii,14-24).

These passages quoted above from both the plays indicate the similarity of mood of Bimbsar and Lear. Both, being tormented within by the ingratitude of their children, urge the elements to be unkind to the world. Bimbsar also accepts the force of destiny behind every activity of man. He says:

"As flies to wanton boys, are we to th' gods;
They kill us for their sport."

(Ajatshatru, I,ii,p,27).

Shakespeare also expresses such feelings through Lear. He says:

"I am even
The natural fool of fortune."

(IV,vi,195-6).

The other characters also express such views. Gloucester says:

"As flies to wanton boys, are we to th' gods;
They kill us for their sport."

(IV,i,36-37).
But, as Empson says, this is just 'a summing up of what Lear has repeatedly implied'. The ideas of Edgar regarding destiny are different. He believes that the gods are just and punish us for our faults. But we do not find this in the play.

King Lear ends in the death of Lear and Cordelia who are virtuous. Thus, there is ambiguity of ideas regarding destiny in King Lear. The same thing may be said of Prasad's Aijatshatru. This is clear from the opinions of Bimbisar and Vaswi in the play.

There is also some influence of Richard II on Bimbisar's character. The following passages are highly characteristic of the speech of King Richard II:

(From Aijatshatru, III, ix, p.135).

The character of the royal physician Jivak recalls in several ways the character of the Duke of Kent. Both are the old trusted servants of the respective kings and remain as such.

2. Shakespeare, King Lear, V, iii, 172-3.
3. Dr. V.N. Mishra, Western Influence in Hindi Drama, p.225.
till the end. Both take upon themselves the task of a messenger to serve their masters. Like Kent, Jivak is always faithful and runs from place to place at the behest of his master Bimbabar. His view of destiny (Niyati) also resembles that of Kent. Kent says:

"It is the stars,
The stars above us, govern our conditions;"

(IV,iii,33-4).

And, like him, Jivak also expresses his view:

नियति की हौरी पकड़कर में निर्यात करकिय में कद सकता है क्योंकि
मुक्त विद्यास है कि जी होती है वह तो होगी ही फिर कायर
क्यों नहूँ।

(Ajatshatru, I,iv,p.36).

Jivak is not only faithful but also fearless like Kent. Kent criticizes boldly the act of Lear, the division of kingdom and his angry attitude towards Cordelia. Jivak has no occasion to criticize Bimbabar but he faces boldly even Devdatta who becomes a turn-key in the reign of Ajatshatru. If Kent is put in the stocks for opposing Regan and others and supporting Lear, Jivak is also threatened with murder for opposing Devdatta and supporting Bimbabar.

The character of Virudhak seems to have been inspired by Shakespeare's portrayal of the character of Edmund in King Lear.

2. Shakespeare, King Lear, II,ii.
Edmund is the bastard son to Gloucester and Virudhak is 'Dasiputra', the son of a queen whose mother was a maid servant. Like Edmund, Virudhak is also the key-figure in the sub-plot and is of an intriguing nature. As lovers also they resemble very much. Edmund professes love for both the sisters, Goneril and Regan and thus, is false and fickle. Virudhak too likewise makes love with Pellika at one time and with Shyama at another. Both are inconstant.

Regarding the probable impact of Shakespeare in the portrayal of the other characters - say Magandhi and Devdatta - in Ajañatshatru, we may do well to bring in the testimony of Dr. V.N. Mishra for our support. In his opinion, the irresistible lust of Goneril and Regan is visible in Magandhi in the Hindi play. But she and other characters of the play bear the stamp of Shakespeare's characters only partly as they become good in the end repenting for their past misdeeds. The only exception is Devdatta. Devdatta, incorporating all the characteristics of a Shakespearean villain till the end, dies by drowning. In Shakespeare, we find two types of villains. The one type is represented by Edmund in King Lear, who leaves all villainy before his end and wants to do something good. The other type is represented by Aaron in Titus Andronicus who persists in villainy till the end. Prasad presents these two types in the character of Virudhak and Devdatta: one is changed.
by the force of the circumstances while the other dies with all his villainous tactics.

In the view of Dr. D.K. Lal Srivastava, Prasad, in his play Ajatshatru, lays emphasis on action and character. He seems to have believed with Aristotle that action is of supreme importance in a play, but he also seems to have agreed with Shakespeare that an action or an event has no meaning in a play in so far as it proceeds from a will. Thus, his emphasis is on character revealed through an event or an action. He fully portrays the strong points and the weaknesses in the character of Ajatshatru – his ambition, his intrigues, his battle with Udayan and defeat, his imprisonment, and his love with Vajira in the prison. The psychology behind the ambition of Ajatshatru, the pride of Magandhi, the jealousy of Devdatta, the nobility of Gautam, and the inactive brooding of Bimbsar are fully analysed through the tangle of events and action in the play.

As we have already pointed out, the play is based on conflict and action. In Sanskrit plays, the aim of the playwright had always been to arouse a particular sentiment and, therefore, the conflict and action had never been presented with such keenness lest it should hinder the creation of the sentiment.

1. Dr. V.N. Mishra, Western Influence in Hindi Drama, p.226.
Battle, murder and death had always been avoided. But Prasad does not follow the Sanskrit masters. He takes inspiration from Shakespeare to present much conflict, battle and strife, and to project deaths, murders, and intrigues on the stage. There is external conflict in the shape of battles between Magadh and Koshal. There is strife between Chhalna and Vaswi, Ajatshatru and Udayan, Virudhak and Prasenjita, Virudhak and Bandhul, Devdatta and Gautam, and Udayan and Magandhi. The internal conflict is also shown in the hearts of Bimbsar, Ajatshatru, Virudhak, Magandhi, Padmavati and Vajira. In fact, the plot of Ajatshatru evolves through the presentation of this Shakespearean type of internal and external conflict and action.

In order to reveal the internal conflict and the psychology behind a character, Prasad, like Shakespeare, takes recourse to the method of providing soliloquies in his plays. Like Shakespeare, he arranges these soliloquies as a means of exposition, as an accompaniment of the action and as a device for revealing internal thought and feeling. The soliloquies of Bimbsar, Jivak and Vajira shed light on the wider and mortal aspect of life. Ajatshatru, Virudhak and Magandhi are introspective and their soliloquies are the various 'magic casements opening on the foam of perilous seas' raging in their hearts. And the soliloquies of Magandhi, Jivak, Bandhul, Shalendra and Vasantsena serve as links between the various
disconnected parts of the plot or rather as a type of chorus giving information regarding the various events which could not be presented on the stage.

In the use of four other devices in this play, Prasad recalls Shakespeare. They are: (i) the use of dramatic irony; (ii) the use of pathetic fallacy; (iii) the personification of natural objects; and (iv) the presentation of some impending disaster to a character through a dream. The best example of the use of dramatic irony is in act two, scene four where Shyama is looking out for a man to be put to gallows in place of Shalendra, her lover. For this purpose she prepares Samudradatta to go and to be put to death. Samudradatta, does not know the situation and says:

अमृतदत्त : मूल यह बात बुद्धि स्थापित श्यामा कूप नै जीरे हंसी उठाती है ! तुम्हारे लिये यह प्राण प्रस्तुत है !

(Ajatshatru, II,iv,p.77).

There is ample use of 'pathetic fallacy' in the plays of Shakespeare to suggest the coming events. A character projects his feelings into natural objects which to him give premonitions of some future happening. Thus, the Captain in Richard II says:

"The bay-trees in our country are all wither'd
And meteors fright the fixed starts of heaven,
The pale-fac'd moon looks bloody on the earth
And lean-look'd prophets whisper fearful change."

(Richard II, II,iv,8-11).
Prasad too conveys the same effect with the help of this device when Magandhi says:

यह दैनिक पवन पानी किसी भर से चीरे चीरे सांस से रहा है। किसी अंतरक से पतिव्रत्न अपने पासलियों में जाकर बिहिय गये हैं। वाक्यायिनी में ताराओं का फूलन्द नीरव सा है अब कौई भयानक बात देखकर भी वे बौल नहीं। सबसे केवल धारण में हृदय कर रहे हैं। अंधकार किसी भयानक समय में निमन्त्रण सा दृष्टिपत्त होता है।

(Ajatshatru, II,ii,pp.67-8).

In each of the passages quoted above natural objects are personified so as to represent the inner self of the speaker. This conflict in nature is symbolical of the inner conflict in the heart of a man. The wind and the stars seem to be human figures full of fear for some imminent calamity. As regards the fourth device, Prasad seems to have taken the hint from Macbeth and spins it out fully. In Macbeth, while Macbeth is going to murder Duncan, he has dreams or hallucinations of murder. Macbeth himself describes it to Lady Macbeth thus:

"There's one did laugh in's sleep, and one cried 'Murder'. That they did wake each other! I stood and heard them; But they did say their prayers and address' them Again to sleep.

One cried 'God bless us!' and 'Amen' the others As they had seen me with the hangman's hands."

(Macbeth, II,ii,24-6 and 28-9).

Prasad uses the same device with equal effectiveness. While Shyama is asleep, Shalendra plans to kill her. While asleep
she sees a fearful dream and wakes up to say:

स्थाना : (बागकर शेल्डन) विमोचन देखी कहीं ००० बीज भयानक ००० अल बन्द कर लेती है।

(Ajatshatru, II,viii,p.94).

It seems as if she had some hint of her own murder in her dream.

Dr. V.N. Mishra cites two occasions where Prasad's words echo Shakespeare's. Ajatshatru sets himself against his father and when he gets the news of Virudhak being punished by his own father, Prasenjita for opposing him, he says:

हम नहीं समझते कि बुझदों को क्या भद्री है और इन्हें सिंहासन का हिस्सा क्या किया लोग है। क्या यह पुरानी और नियुक्त पर बही झुंझुंबार के कोच में नियुक्त राजलेख की पद्धति नवीन उदयम को अफल कर देगी? तिल्ला भी जो अपने पुराने विचारों से हटना नहीं चाहता उसे व्यक्तिगत ही जाना चाहिए क्योंकि यह जगत ही गतिकल है।

(Ajatshatru, II,i,p.61).

These words recall the wordings of the letter addressed by Edmund to himself on behalf of Edgar:

"This policy, and reverence of age, makes the world bitter to the best of our times, keeps our fortunes from us, till our oldness cannot relish them. I begin to find an idle and fond bondage in the oppression of aged tyranny, who sways not as it hath power, but as it is suffered."

(King Lear, I,ii,47-52).

1. Dr. V.N. Mishra, Western Influence in Hindi Drama, pp.229-30.
The other echo is in the following words of Prasenjita:

मथा खैड़ी की तरह भयानक बहसी दुरावारी बंतान अपने माता पिता का ही जन्म न करेगी?

(Ajatshatru, III,vi,p.50).

These words seem to have been inspired by the following words of the Fool in King Lear:

"He's mad that trusts in the tameness of a wolf, a horse's health, a boy's love, or a whore's oath."

(King Lear, III,vi,18-9).

Dr. Jagannath Prasad Sharma emphatically suggests that the structure of the plot in Ajatshatru does not lend itself well to the Sanskrit dramaturgical plot-division into the five stages of action namely beginning (arambh), effort (yatna), prospect of success (praptyasha), certainty of success (niyatapti), and attainment of the result (phalagam), but in the presentation of exposition, complication, climax, denouement and catastrophe according to the Western technique of plot-construction. Here Prasad may have benefited from his study of Shakespeare.

1. Dr. J.P. Sharma, Prasad ke Natakon ke Shastriya Adhyayan, pp.55.