

ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Opposing Themes Involving Natives and Colonizers in Shakespeare's *The Tempest* and Tagore's *Tasher Desh* and *Achalayatan*: A Comparative Study

Muhammad Safiur Rahman^{1*} and Mohd Muzhafar Idrus²

¹ Faculty of Arts and Humanities, International Islamic University Chittagong, Kumira, Chattogram 4318, Bangladesh.

² Faculty of Major Language Studies, Universiti Sains Islam Malaysia, Bandar Baru Nilai, 71800 Nilai, Negeri Sembilan, Malaysia.

ABSTRACT – In the field of literature, the study of colonization and its aftermath is a significant phenomenon. Shakespeare's *The Tempest* presents the story of colonial exploitation, and the tragic and inevitable disintegration of native culture as the result of European invasion and colonization. Instead of justifying the idea of colonization, *The Tempest* presents a criticism of it. On the other hand, in Tagore's *Tasher Desh* (The Country of Cards) and *Achalayatan* (The Land of Immobility), we see the different attitudes toward European invasion and colonization. Instead of presenting the negative aspects of colonization, as expected from a writer who spent whole of his life under the British colonial rule, Tagore rather shows ambivalent attitudes towards colonization. This paper discusses different attitudes towards colonization as expressed in Shakespeare's *The Tempest* in one hand, and Tagore's *Tasher Desh* and *Achalayatan* on the other hand. This paper draws on a close analysis of the texts using some postcolonial insights, theory of hybridity, and theory of ambivalence. Hybridity theory is credited to Homi K Bhabha. It claims that in creating a shared culture the colonizer and the colonized are mutually interdependent. Again, ambivalence theory, adopted by Bhabha into colonial discourse, examines the ambivalent feeling of repulsion and attraction that typifies the relationship between the colonized and the colonizer. The insights developed from the research will contribute to academic understanding of the shared culture constructed by the interactions between the colonized and the colonizer.

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INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this paper is to investigate how the plays of two different playwrights of different ages, different countries, and different cultures relate the social and cultural conventions as far as the encounter between the colonizer and the colonized people is concerned. The study has taken three works of two playwrights - one is *The Tempest* by William Shakespeare who is from England, a colonizing country, and, on the other hand, two plays, *Tasher Desh* (The Country of Cards) and *Achalayatan* (The Land of Immobility) by Rabindranath Tagore who is from India, a colonized country. All these three texts deal with some aspects of colonial thoughts and feelings. In addition, these two writers are from two different times. Shakespeare (1564 -1616) is from late 16th and early 17th centuries. It was an early period of colonization. In contrast, Tagore (1861-1941) is from late 19th and early 20th centuries. Relatively it was a late period of colonization.

At the centre of this study is the question on how these two playwrights in their selected plays deal with opposing themes involving the natives and the colonizers and whether their treatment of the colonial themes goes in favour of their native interest or against it. Hence, this study addressed the following research questions:

1. Does the treatment of these themes by Shakespeare, the playwright from colonizing country, uphold the interest of the colonizers?
2. Does the treatment of these themes by Rabindranath Tagore, the playwright from colonized country, uphold the interest of the natives?

The study answers the questions by examining different incidents and situations from the selected plays of these two playwrights.

SHAKESPEARE'S *THE TEMPEST*

Shakespeare (1564 -1616), the most famous of Elizabethan playwrights, has been regarded as the world's most influential dramatist in the English language (Alam, 2016). He wrote thirty four plays – tragedies, comedies and history plays. Apart from the plays, he wrote a sequence of 154 sonnets, and also some narrative poems. The life span of Shakespeare coincides with a very critical time. In Europe, it was the end of middle ages and the beginning of the Renaissance. On the one side, it coincided with the end of the powerful feudal kings; on the other hand, it started to experience the birth of modern educated, scientific, business minded and imperialistic colonizing Europe.

Among the plays of Shakespeare, *The Tempest* has an extraordinary position in dealing with colonial themes. Alqaryouti and Ismail (2018) opines that in writing *The Tempest*, Shakespeare “was profoundly influenced by the colonial milieu of the time” and observes that “several postcolonial studies have approached *The Tempest* as a play that falls in the purview of colonial literature” (p. 140). On the surface level, the play appears to be an allegory of Renaissance attitudes towards art and artistic creation. It depicts the story of a wronged man who takes sweet revenge by using his power derived from art and magic. However, under-the-surface level, it conveys a deeper meaning. In fact, *The Tempest* presents the response of Shakespeare to the racial, cultural and religious stereotypes by depicting an imaginative story of colonial exploitation, and the tragic and inevitable disintegration of native culture as a result of European invasion and colonization. Although Shakespeare is from a colonizing country, instead of justifying and encouraging the idea of colonization, in *The Tempest* he subtly presents a criticism of it.

TAGORE'S TASHER DESH AND ACHALAYATAN

The position of Rabindranath Tagore, in Bengali literature, is singular. He is the most versatile genius in the history of Bengali literature. He contributed to almost all the forms of literature – poetry, drama, novel, short-story, essay- and achieved lasting success everywhere. His creative literary career spans over a period of more than sixty years. Tagore was born in 1861 in Bengal of Indian sub-continent, and died in 1941. Bengal was under British colonial rule from 1757 to 1947. It is a remarkable fact that Tagore spent his whole life and long literary career during the British colonial rule in Indian sub-continent.

Living in the colonized state, Tagore experienced appalling colonial torment of the native people of India. He had the chance to observe how the thousand years' glorious native cultural, religious and intellectual heritage encountered the British cultural and intellectual hegemonies. In spite of this historical fact, we observe that Tagore's response to the colonial invasion, as presented in these two plays, is not as could be reasonably expected from the most distinguished poet and litterateur who spent whole of his life under the British colonial rule. He had magnanimous scope of portraying the agony of a colonized nation like the Indians.

Among the plays of Rabindranath, *Tasher Desh* (The Country of Cards) and *Achalayatan* (The Land of Immobility) are two celebrated ones. *Tasher Desh*, a rather one dimensional allegorical play, was written in 1933. It conflates the notion of free will with breaking out of authoritarianism. Purkayastha (2017) considers *Tasher Desh* as a “comic socio-political satire” (p. 65), which questions the repressed lives of the people of the country of cards, and extolls the virtue of liberty. The dance-drama ends with a revolution against the coercive regime of subjugation. At the end, the inhabitants are shedding their card identities and turn back into the human beings. She opines that the drama satirises an authoritarian British Empire.

Achalayatan, a symbolic drama representing a land of conflicting faiths, was written in 1912. The play points out the story of Panchak, a young boy, who is anguished under the tedious learning system of Achalayatan, an educational institution. Banta (2015) contends, among other themes, the play expresses “the idea of a wider freedom in the context of an infertile, typecast society”, and again, “Achalayatan has forbidden itself from the outer world and are living a constricted life within the wall of their institution” (p. 464).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Alqaryouti and Ismail (2018) argues that in *The Tempest*, Shakespeare, by presenting two antithetical characters – Prospero and Caliban, questions the very purpose of colonialism and shows that it is a process of dehumanizing the colonized people. Alqaryouti and Ismail (2018) further argues that towards the end of the play, Shakespeare realizes that the natives should be emancipated from the dominance of the colonizers, and presents some counter-colonial beliefs, and puts the cultural or linguistic superiority of the colonizers, and their right to dominate into question. A need for deconstructionist call is conveyed through the language of Prospero, who “breaks away from his magic, and orients his power to be personal rather than hegemonic” (p. 140).

Bloom (1998) called *The Tempest* one of “Shakespeare's visionary comedies”. But he thinks that the play shares “the sad distinction of being the worst interpreted and performed”. He is critical of the view that makes Caliban “an African-Caribbean heroic Freedom Fighter”. Considering Montaigne's essay on the cannibals as the source of the play, Bloom opines that “Caliban is anything but a celebration of the natural man.” He analyses *The Tempest* from a different point of view. To him “*The Tempest* is neither a discourse on colonialism nor a mystical testament”. Bloom considers the play as “much more Prospero's” play, and comments that “*Prospero* would be far apter title than *The Tempest*”.

Singh (2016) in “Post – colonial Reading of *The Tempest*”, opposes the traditional analysis of the play and observes:

This long tradition of privileging Prospero's creative powers as beneficent and God-given began to be overshadowed by the growing stature of Caliban, following the de-colonization movements of the 1960s and 1970s in Africa, the Caribbean, and the Latin America. If, traditionally, Prospero's art represented the world of civility and learning in contrast to the ‘natural’ black magic of Caliban's mother Sycorax, anti-colonial revisions of the play challenged this rather abstract Eurocentric division between art and nature (p. 29).

Frey (2004) opines that in the *The Tempest*, Shakespeare creates “a world of imagination, a place of conflict, and ultimately a place of magical rejuvenation”. It presents “a journey to the world of art”. But Frey is quite aware of the fact

that “the journey is no escape from reality”, rather, here, Shakespeare presents “visions to test people’s intentions and awaken their conscience”, and to test “some imperfect men and to make them reveal their true selves”.

Shukla and Banerjee (2013) regard Rabindranath Tagore as a ‘radical visionary’ in expressing his ‘inspirational ideas’ on the nation. Terming the ‘concept of nation’ as ‘problematic one’, they opine that Tagore’s ‘concept and imagination of nation’ is prominently ‘impressive’. Categorizing *Tasher Desh* as a dance opera, they observe that “it imbibes a deeper reading”. In their opinion, *Tasher Desh* is a satire “on the rigidity of the class system”. They suggest reading it as a text “representing nation in the imagination shaping and providing a direction to the emerging perspectives of ‘Nation’ with special reference to the Indian scenario”.

Purkayastha (2017) explores the role of danced movements through which colonized women negotiated deep tensions between Indian patriarchy and colonial domination. She focuses on the contributions of Rabindranath’s dance work to the development of Indian nationalism and decolonization of Indian stage. Among the dance-dramas of Rabindranath, she explores *Tasher Desh* and shows how dance offers a unique historical insight into colonial and Indian national discourses. She further argues that the Indian independence movement against the British Empire gained momentum from the beginning of the twentieth century on two distinct domains – the outer domain of political conflict, and the inner domain of national cultural production. The inner domain resisted colonialism by advocating a modern national culture.

Banta (2015) argues that *Achalayatan* is a portrayal of conflict. At the same time it is “an attack against soulless rituals and institutionalised religious power” and it “gives a call for breaking down the walls of bondage”. From the literature reviewed here it is evident that the selected texts from Shakespeare and Rabindranath Tagore dealing with the colonial theme question the very purpose of colonialism and show some various aspects of it. In presenting the mutual relationship between the colonizer and the colonized, the realization of both the playwrights surpasses the general expectation of the readers.

METHODOLOGY

The Tempest is one of the most potential texts for postcolonial studies. The way Prospero becomes the owner of the island – it is simply an allegory of colonization. Again, among the plays of Rabindranath Tagore, *Tasher Desh* (The Country of Cards) and *Achalayatan* (The Land of Immobility) are two remarkable ones that deal with the theme of colonization. In order to explore attitudes towards colonization in the three texts, this paper draws on a method of close reading the texts and textual analysis using selected postcolonial insights and theories.

In the field of literary studies, textual analysis is a remarkable component of research. As a broad term, it takes account of various research methods used to interpret, describe, understand, and explain texts. The literal meaning, context, assumptions, symbolisms, values- all are gleaned from texts. The methods used to conduct textual analysis aim at connecting texts to social, political and cultural context. Mckee (2003) observes, “when we perform textual analysis on a text, we make an educated guess at some of the most likely interpretations that might be made of that text.” This paper aims at in-depth interpretation of the meaning and significance of the texts - *The Tempest*, *Tasher Desh*, and *Achalayatan* using textual analysis.

Postcolonial theory considers the conditions of marginalized, subjugated, and other stigmatized social groups. “Post-colonial criticism is a method of analysis that addresses questions of racial identity and equality, and also of gender equity...” (Singh, 2016). The theory of hybridity and the theory of ambivalence have been adopted as the foundation of the study. In postcolonial theory the term ‘hybridity’ is generally used to define culture that arises out of the mutual interactions between the colonizer and the colonized. Hybridity theory is credited to Homi K Bhabha (Zainal, 2016). It claims that in creating a shared culture the colonizer and the colonized are mutually interdependent. Again, ambivalence “refers to a simultaneous attraction toward and repulsion from an object, person or action” (Young, 1995, p. 161). Ambivalence theory, adapted by Bhabha into postcolonial discourse theory, examines the ambivalent feeling of repulsion and attraction that typifies the relationship between the colonized and the colonizer. The main focus of postcolonial theory is on the notion of subversion, of resistance, or opposition. Resistance always creates two opposite groups - the resisted and the resisting. The idea of resistance usually brings with it ideas about freedom, individuality, and identity.

As a theoretical approach, post-colonialism challenges the ideology of colonization. It takes ideological, political, economic implications into consideration. This approach deconstructs Eurocentricism displaying that European ideals are not universal. The same incident can be construed in different ways depending on standards, values, and perspectives. The main assumption of it is that literary works should not only be judged on the basis of their aesthetic value; its ideological implications should also be taken into account. From the critical and theoretical framework of post-colonialism, this paper will examine, in the mentioned texts, how much the claim of cultural superiority of the colonizer is justified. It will also analyse the legitimacy of stigmatising the colonized as barbarian and uneducated. The trustworthiness of the civilizing mission of the colonizer will also be questioned.

FINDINGS

Setting of the Texts

On the narrative level, the setting of *The Tempest* is mainly an island in the Mediterranean Sea. “Yet, there are overtones of the new world – the Western Hemisphere. Ariel brings dew at Prospero’s command from the ‘Bermudas’ (I.ii.230). Caliban reminds Trinculo of a ‘dead Indian’ (II.ii.23) who could be exhibited before naive crowds who are

eager to see such an extraordinary being from across the sea. Caliban's god, Setebos was worshiped by South American natives" (Frey, 2004).

In writing *The Tempest*, Shakespeare might have been inspired by the "various accounts of the shipwreck in the Bermudas in 1609 of the *Sea Venture*, which was carrying settlers to the new Virginia colony" (Frey, 2004). Shakespeare could also have got details from Sylvester Jourdain's *A Discovery of the Bermudas; Otherwise called the Isle of Devils*, published in 1610. In locating the island, geographically Shakespeare is not very accurate at all. The fascination with the Western Hemisphere provided him a state of mind related with newness and the unfamiliar (Frey, 2004). From this bizarre and strange place- the island, we get a sweeping viewpoint on the old world of European culture. Over this imaginary world, Prospero, as artist-king, rules autocratically.

On the other hand, in *Achalayatan*, the setting is an educational institution, symbolizing India under British rule. Tagore shows a country- India, where people are entrapped by their tradition, culture and superstition. "An entire human settlement is stuck in *Achalayatan*" (Chowdhury, 2010). Nothing moves in this land. The place is characterized by boundaries, the hum of prayers, shut-doors, walls, and folk-lore. Darkness prevails in the atmosphere. It seems akin to the middle ages in Europe. People here are reluctant to advancement and enlightenment. They have the practice of knowledge, but they remain so limited in their fixed practice that it does not remove their backwardness. They uphold some false beliefs and malpractices in religion and folklore. That is why the society is considered as a place of superstition, obsolescence, and immobility.

Again, Tagore sets his play *Tasher Desh*, like *The Tempest*, in an unknown island. Tagore presents it as a country of cards- here the characters are cards, not human beings. At the beginning of the play we see the Prince is bored and unhappy with his present condition, and is very agitated to break it up: "It's no more functioning at all" (scene I, line 1). He feels the bonding here unbearable, and expresses a strong yearning for freedom. The Prince considers it as a golden cage and refuses to remain captive here because there is no variety of life and no opportunities for adventure. Life here is monotonous. He feels himself to be a stone-idol in a golden temple. At last, the Prince, along with a merchant's son, starts a voyage, with a dream, in search of something new – "Nobena".

Colonizers' Political Culture

In *The Tempest*, Shakespeare presents the ruling class and aristocratic people of the civilized world as political intriguer. We see, from the beginning to the end of the play, their ruthless inhuman behaviour. Our first impression on Antonio, the brother of Prospero, is appalling. Prospero calls him a 'perfidious brother', 'a false brother', "that a brother should / Be so perfidious-" (I.ii.67-8). He is depicted as devoid of conscience. Even a three year child was not safe at his hand. His conspiracy was supported by Alonso and Sebastian – the King of Naples and his brother. Sebastian and Antonio try to grasp the opportunity afforded by sleeping Alonso and his companions to plan a murder and political overthrow. This attempt is utterly contemptible and madly ridiculous. Because all of them are now shipwrecked and they do not have a kingdom over which they quarrel. Here we find Antonio in the role of a tempter like Satan-

Sebastian: But for your conscience?

Antonio: Ay, sir, where lies that? .../ but I feel not / This deity in my bosom. Twenty consciences / that stand 'twixt me and Milan, candied be they, / And melt ere they molest. (II.i.268-72)

The temptation of Antonio readily appeals to the evil-self of Sebastian- "Thy case, dear friend, / Shall be my precedent. As thou got'st Milan, / I'll come by Naples" (II.i.283-5).

When their conspiracy is outsmarted and they are caught in utter embarrassment- "Why are you drawn? / Wherefore this ghastly looking?" (II.i.301-2), they fabricate false story of "bellowing of bulls or a whole herd of lions" (II.i.309). Here Gonzalo's remark, "Heavens keep him from these beasts" (II.i.317) is ironically very dramatic. It equates these conspirers to the beasts. The readers or audience know that the source of the danger - "these beasts" - are not any bulls or lions of this so called uncivilized island, rather these beasts are Sebastian and Antonio - two people born and brought up in civilized Europe.

In Prospero's evaluation, Alonso, Sebastian and Antonio - these people from civilized Europe are 'worse than devils'. Prospero calls Caliban "on whose nature / Nurture can never stick" (IV.i.188-9). But we feel that this comment is more appropriate about Sebastian and Antonio. They were born in civilized world, brought up there, nurtured there, but prove that 'on their nature nurture can never stick'.

Again, Ariel, accusing the three men of overthrowing Prospero, addresses them as "You are three men of sin" (III.iii.53), "you 'mongst men / Being most unfit to live" (III. iii. 56), "you three / From Milan did supplant good Prospero; / Exposed unto the sea- ... / Him and his innocent child;..." (III.iii.69-72). Towards the end of the play, Prospero forgives Alonso, Sebastian and Antonio, but only after recognizing and exposing their evil nature.

Thus, in *The Tempest*, from the beginning to the end, Shakespeare exposes the evil nature of three highly educated, cultured and aristocratic people from so called civilized world. They are so vicious people that they need 'sea change' (I.ii.402-5) into something "rich and strange" as Ariel suggests it in his song about Alonso. Shakespeare depicts them as imperfect men and reveals their true selves. It puts their claim of being civilized into question.

Nature versus Nurture

The encounter between nature and nurture is one of the major themes in *The Tempest*. Can nurture – education, civilization, etc. change the nature of the people? Prospero observes that in spite of all his training and art, he is unable to

improve Caliban's nature. On the other hand, he succeeds in educating Miranda. Again, Miranda claims that Caliban's true nature is resistant to 'goodness'. "Which any print of goodness will not take" (I.ii. 352). It means it is impossible to stamp or impress morality into his nature because he comes from a "vile race", which is hateful to good nature. But, we see Miranda's own words are full of hatred because she assumes the inferiority of other culture. After taking the total hold of the island from Caliban, the colonizer imposes his own language on the defeated people. Miranda describes the native language as "gabble" and assumes that it has no meaning. But it is not true that Caliban cannot express himself, rather it is the inability of Miranda to understand the language of the natives. Again, Prospero's view of nurture is a narrowly limited one. He did not actually try to educate Caliban, rather he tried to train him simply as a servant, not with real education. What Prospero describes as "devilish nature" of Caliban, it is actually Caliban's hatred for an occupier of his own island.

Prospero and Miranda call Caliban unteachable. This is actually the trick of the colonizers to stigmatize and marginalize the natives to torment and exploit them. Caliban's experience is a typical example of what happens to any race subjected to colonization. Through this point Shakespeare shows that nature is much more deep-rooted which cannot be uprooted so easily by the colonizers. Colonization can suppress the native culture for the time being, but cannot totally eliminate it. Nature ultimately belongs to the natives. Shakespeare directs the sympathy of the audience towards Caliban – the native.

Culture in *Achalayatan* and *Tasher Desh*

Tagore's plays - *Achalayatan* and *Tasher Desh* are much shorter in comparison to Shakespeare's one. His plays are very symbolic and metaphorical. "Although Tagore wrote his plays about human life and the crisis of humanity, his drama contains theory and philosophical look at life for which he uses symbols and metaphors, and the meaning is not simplistic; subtlety has made easy equations difficult." (Chowdhury, 2010).

In *Achalayatan*, the native culture is presented symbolically and metaphorically as suffocating one. Here the tradition, culture and superstition prevail so dominantly that aesthetic freedom is totally denied. Life is entirely immovable and stuck. The practice of knowledge is traditionally limited and fixed by the name of religion. It denies the enlightenment and advancement, and keeps the people in their backwardness. Amidst this strict culture, Panchak, an inhabitant of this land of immobility, has heard a clarion call in his imagination. He cannot ignore it. At the beginning of the play he expresses it in a song. But his elder brother Mahapanchak rebukes him for singing. Singing is forbidden here. Here windows are always closed. Closed window symbolizes the denial of advanced knowledge and enlightenment. One day a boy called Shubhadra mistakenly opens a window that faces the north and allows seeing the beautiful world containing hills, cows and valleys. This window was not opened for more than three hundred years. This mistake makes the boy insecure at the hand of tradition and culture. So he starts crying. The crying of the boy suggests his utter helplessness, which necessitates the arrival of the Guru to rescue him.

In *Tasher Desh* the playwright depicts the restlessness in the mind of the inhabitants. At the beginning of the play the Prince feels that nothing is performing in his country. Life has become mechanical and monotonous here. Everywhere he feels tedious flattery and artificial behaviour of the people, and the uninteresting repetition of same meaningless things. He has started cherishing a dream to break this meaningless culture. He wants to fly away from this smothering situation. He has started a sea voyage in search of new culture, new kingdom and new atmosphere.

At the beginning of scene two, after a storm and a shipwreck, the Prince and his companion set foot on a new land. As Gonzalo, in *The Tempest*, wants to establish a commonwealth in the new island, the Prince, also plans to triumph over the new land, new language and new culture. He discovers that it is a strange country – all the inhabitants of this country are cards. Although the natives have their own heritage, culture and tradition; they have their King, their Queen, and Joker, the Prince finds that they do not have any 'human' identity. This view of the Prince is the view of a colonizer. From that point of view, he finds them "imprisoned in many ways like the face of a colonized India under imperial rule. Everyone goes by the rules; nothing can make them flout the system. Chains are ornaments for them, and the prison, they think, is a place to get pampered in." (Chowdhury, 2010). The cards cannot realize the value of freedom. They live in complete imprisonment.

Colonial Outlook in Working Class Characters

Again, Shakespeare presents two working class people from the civilized world – Stephano and Trinculo. Through their ridiculous behaviour the claim of their being civilized is put into further question. By pouring wine down Caliban's throat, Stephano and Trinculo try to reduce him to a worshiping slave. It shows the worst form of exploitation:-

At the lowest level of this traditional cosmic and moral framework, ... are Stephano and Trinculo. They are juxtaposed with Caliban, for he represents untutored nature, whereas they represent the unnatural depths to which human beings brought up in civilized society can fall. In this they resemble Sebastian and Antonio, who have learned in supposedly civilized Italy art of intrigue and political murder (Frey, 2004).

The clowns articulate their longing to exploit the natural wonders of the isle by taking Caliban back to civilized world to be shown in the fairs. They try to sharpen his bitterness against the authority by plying him with strong drink. The clowns instigate Caliban to cry out for "freedom" (II.ii.184) by it they only mean license for doing as one pleases. They presume to be better. But Shakespeare exposes their ridiculous evil nature and invents for them a revelation that is mortifying and satirical.

In sharp contrast with these Europeans, Caliban is a sympathetic character. His "sensitivity to natural beauty", as in his descriptions of the "nimble mamoset", or the fantasizing music he so frequently hears (II.ii.168; III.ii.137-45), is

exclusively suitable to this “child of nature”. He is called by Miranda and Prospero the “child of a witch” and by many harsh names, such as “Abhorred slave” and “a born devil, on whose nature / Nurture can never stick” (I.ii.354; IV.i.188-9). From Prospero’s Eurocentric perspective, Caliban is not human being. The differentness of his shape, language and culture makes the colonizer consider him as not being human. It reveals their strong Eurocentric racial attitude. Here Shakespeare depicts the natural gap between the colonizer and the colonized. They assume the role of humanising him. In this way colonizers legitimize their colonial endeavour. But Shakespeare opts for a quite different way to deal with Caliban.

Shakespeare presented Caliban as the exploited victim of the oppression of Prospero. He is of natural human origin and is capable of resisting Prospero’s oppression by vigorous and violent opposition. Caliban’s resistance against Prospero ensnares him in the system of the colonizer. The situation between Caliban and Prospero generates a third space. Prospero justifies taking Caliban into forced servitude defining him as a probable rapist of his daughter Miranda, “... till thou didst seek to violet / The honour of my child.” (I.ii.347-8). Here Caliban’s remark “O ho, O ho! Would’t had been done. / Thou didst prevent me – I had peopled else / this isle with Calibans” is very significant. The hint of copulation between Caliban and Miranda, which might have resulted in Miranda’s pregnancy, indicates that Caliban is of human descent; or else, he should not be capable of begetting children with a human being (Singh, 2016).

Shakespeare gives Caliban voice to claim with very strong reasoning that the island belongs to him in the first place, but Prospero and Miranda are here simply intruders and usurpers. Their very presence calls drastically the worth of civilization into question and it has shown itself capable of boundless depravity. Prospero and Miranda claim that they taught him language. But what returns has Caliban obtained from learning the language of Prospero other than, to “know how to curse” (I.ii.367)? With natural cunning, he comprehends that books are his topmost enemy and plans to destroy them first in his attempt at revolt.

Radical perspective of this kind invites consideration of many unsettling questions about exploration, colonialist empire building, and sexual imperialism. It at least questions some assumptions – economic, political, and social – common in western societies. The fleeting comparison of Caliban to an indigenous native (II.ii.33) suggests a discourse on colonialism in *The Tempest* that anticipates to a remarkable degree a doleful history of exploitation, of providing rum and guns to the natives, and of taking away land through violent expropriation in the name of bringing civilization and God to the New World (Frey, 2004).

Shakespeare dramatizes the encounter between the colonized and the colonizer impartially. He keeps the debate open about the justification of Prospero’s endeavour to contain Caliban’s otherness. It produces a mix result in which the seeming victory of colonialism and restriction does not wholly hide the opposing struggle through which those values are enforced.

Yearning for Freedom

In *Tasher Desh*, with the arrival of two “human beings”, two foreigners- the Prince and the merchant’s son created a new feeling in this country of cards. The new comers sing and dance, and utter: “we are the harbingers of new youth, / we are impatient, / we are bizarre” (scene II, 166-8). They show spontaneity in their attitude, and it exerts a very strong influence upon the natives. The natives - the cards along with their Queen and King - now want to demolish the rules with a view to becoming “human beings”. First of all, the woman folk move forward and break rules. They utterly reject the life as cards, and become humans. They even start forgetting their own language. The native King gradually loses his control over the country; even the Queen is no longer with him. Finally the King also follows the Queen to get rid of the kingdom of the cards. He also wants to transform into a human being from a card. At last, the King understands the first step of becoming human is to achieve freedom. The play ends with a chorus – all people of the country singing together- “Break the dam, / Break the dam, / Break the dam”. It indicates the natives are now welcoming the new ideas, new language and new culture disapproving their own ones.

In *Achalayatan*, a strong longing for freedom is felt by the natives. As the natives started growing impatient with the existing disgusting atmosphere, the arrival of the Guru brings there great changes. Windows to the north are opened. Even the King is disheartened at the impending scenario. At the end of the drama, Shonpangshus – a community of ordinary people led by Guru or Grandfather drill a hole on the wall. Finally, the wall is diametrically destroyed removing suffocating confinement and ensuring the arrival of better days of free thinking, advancement and enlightenment. Shonpangshus who love to do work without which they are restless start reconstruction with their leader Panchak. Thus, Tagore compares the condition of the Indians with that of the medieval period in Europe. Europe succeeded in terminating the age of darkness through the Renaissance. In the same way, Tagore wishes to have such positive change in India.

In *The Tempest*, both in Ariel and in Caliban we see a very strong thirst for freedom. Although Ariel is submissive to Prospero and carries his commands in exact details, he also realizes the value of freedom. After performing the assigned tasks, Ariel demands his freedom. At this Prospero rebukes him and threatens him with harsh and painful punishments. But, Prospero senses the acute desire for freedom in Ariel. To encourage Ariel for sincere service, Prospero tempts him with repeated promise of freedom in return for his services. On the other hand, Caliban is never friendly with Prospero. Although he finds himself miserably helpless against the power of Prospero, he is always aware that the colonizer, robbing his freedom and making him slave, is exploiting the natural resources of the island. Caliban desperately tries to get Prospero killed to liberate the island from his rule. He feels that only he has the genuine right to own the island.

In *The Tempest*, for Caliban and Ariel freedom denotes liberating their island from the colonial rule of Prospero, and establishing their own authority. But, in *Achalayatan* and *Tasher Desh*, ironically freedom connotes different things. Although, with the arrival of the Guru and the Prince respectively, the natives are hopeful that they are going to get rid

of their barren tradition, backward culture, meaningless superstition and monotonous social atmosphere, ultimately they are going to welcome foreign authority, language and culture to dominate them. This attitude of the natives suggests that they are to invite colonial rule in the hope of achieving so called civilization.

DISCUSSION

The setting of *The Tempest* is characteristically a colonial setting. It exposes the political culture of the colonial power, and their false and evil nature. *Achalayatan* is set at an imaginative educational institution which suggests the miserable condition of India and indicates the necessity of the arrival of a rescuer. In other words, it invites colonial power to rescue the people from their misery. The setting of *Tasher Desh* also shows the necessity for colonization. In both of Tagore's plays the inhabitants are bored with their own culture, ideology and values, and they feel an expectation for the arrival of colonial power to liberate them. The arrival of the Guru in *Achalayatan*, and the arrival of the Prince in *Tasher Desh* symbolize it. But, Shakespeare's play shows that the natives under colonial rule are fed up with the ruthless behaviour of the colonizer. They are desperately looking for the end of the colonial rule. They are yearning for freedom. On the other hand, the natives of Tagore's plays assume that some rescuers will come from outside to eliminate their misery.

Usurpation is an integral part of the political culture of the colonizers. They are devoid of conscience. They have no sense of guilt for their illegal seizing of others' country. They even go for killing to silence any criticism. They use whatever trick they need to suppress criticism. Tempting people is one of such trick. By tempting, they make people follow any of their instructions 'as a cat is eager to drink milk'. Stigmatizing and tormenting the native for every trivial offence is a much applied trick of the colonizer. *The Tempest* exposes rebellions, treachery, mutinies and conspiracies that are integral to the political culture of the colonizers. But, with the natives, as *The Tempest* presents, the picture is just the opposite. Caliban whole-heartedly puts his trust on Stephano, as he did earlier on Prospero; but he was betrayed by Prospero. Now, also, Stephano and Trinculo, two people from colonizing country, think about how they can make profit out of Caliban. Expressing these thoughts through the minds of two minor characters, Shakespeare actually exposes the profit-making attitudes of the colonizers to the natives.

After investigating the three selected plays, we observe that the social and cultural conventions and traditions are ambivalently affected because of the encounter between the colonizer and the colonized. By examining different incidents and situations from the selected plays of Shakespeare and Rabindranath Tagore that deal with colonial thoughts and feelings, we see the treatment of the colonial theme at the hand of these two writers is from opposite points of views. In spite of being from a colonizing country, Shakespeare exposes some remarkably negative aspects of colonialism that adversely affect the social and cultural traditions of the natives. In contrast, Tagore tended to ignore the negative side of colonialism, rather, presented colonial invasion as a notable opportunity for the natives to achieve social and cultural development, enlightenment, and new civilization.

In the three texts we observe that because of the arrival of the foreign people, and because of their exercising power over the natives in different forms, the native racial identity and equality suffer a serious setback. The natives are exploited, marginalized and most pathetically stigmatized. The native cannot uphold and maintain their social and cultural identity and traditions. Rather a new culture emerges out of the interactions between the colonizer and the colonized. In constructing this shared culture, the colonizer and the colonized appear to be mutually interdependent.

Again, in the plays of Tagore, we observe more attraction towards the conventions brought by the out-siders. On the other hand, in the play of Shakespeare, we see more repulsion towards the out-siders. Rather, a continuous thought of resistance is felt in the native against the subversive behaviour of the colonizer. It brings and encourages the ideas of liberty, identity, and individuality. Thus, in the plays we studied, we experience a complex feeling of fascination and loathing in the encounter between the colonized and the colonizer. One thing is clear that the cultural superiority of the colonizer is not always justified. We can construe the same event from different point of view depending on the values and perspectives.

CONCLUSION

As Shakespeare is from a European colonizing country, and Rabindranath Tagore is from a colonized country - India, our expectation from these two writers are totally different. From a playwright of a colonized country normal expectation is that he would uphold the native interest by exposing the negative aspects of colonization. On the contrary, writers from colonizing country usually depict the positive sides of colonization. But in the three plays studied here, we find ambivalent picture. In *The Tempest* Shakespeare goes against the interest of the Europeans at least in two ways, first, by putting the claim of superiority of the colonizer into question, and second, by allowing Caliban to raise voice demanding his ownership of the island which Prospero usurped from him by force and by deception. Shakespeare even allows Caliban to use language charged with a revolutionary spirit, which indicates the probability of regaining his lost identity (Alqaryouti & Ismail, 2018). On the other hand, in *Achalayatan* and *Tasher Desh*, the Guru and the Prince respectively, although they came from outsiders, are presented as rescuers for the natives.

Comparing the role of Prospero and Miranda in *The Tempest*, with that of the Guru in *Achalayatan*, and the Prince and the merchant's son in the *Tasher Desh*, we see that in both the cases they are outsiders - intruders. With their arrival the native culture, language and tradition have undergone a great change. A new hybrid culture developed. Native language lost its position and the language of the intruders takes the dominance.

Shakespeare never shows Prospero as the owner of the island, rather he is a usurper here. Though we appreciate him for overcoming the vengeful impulses towards the people who wronged him, the authority of Prospero, here, is

problematic to us. He appears too patriarchal, pitiless colonist and even racist. He shows an ever inclination of claiming to himself the right and obligation to govern others in the name of ideals they never share. Our compassion for Prospero is highest when we observe that he is prepared to lay aside his demanding and arrogant role as creative moral intelligence. Though he will lay aside it with mixed spirits of sincere relief and melancholy, he enjoys our sympathy.

To Tagore freedom is an integral human characteristic. By showcasing the country of cards and their imprisonment, Tagore allegorically represents the colonized India (Chowdhury, 2010). But here we find an ambivalent attitude towards colonialism. In his play the natives realize the need for freedom. But in their longing to achieve freedom, they actually sacrifice their own language, culture, and tradition, and merge themselves with the foreigners in the name of becoming “human beings”. Are the colonizers human beings only? They are “human beings” only according to their Eurocentric point of view. Shakespeare puts their overgeneralized claim in question.

In Tagore’s other works also we see such attitudes towards colonization. In his essay “Praiccho O Proticcho” (The East and The West), Tagore expresses the outburst of his admiration for England and the English, terming them as quite the nation of the king. By mentioning the English “as the nation of the king”, Tagore praises the ideals that help England to be the king of most of the colonized territory of the world. As India is one of the colonized territories, Tagore is giving validity to their colonization in his country. To Tagore, India is extremely shabby. Therefore he indicates, India should follow those ideals of superior England, otherwise it would remain behind the development. By following them the Indians should be united with the British colonizers and uphold a universal truth. Tagore hints at the necessity of the unity with the colonizers in his essay “Nabajugh” (The New Era) also. Tagore wants that colonized Indians will stop marking the British as colonizers that eventually gives birth to freedom movement. He wants that they will consider the colonizers as human beings, and be united with them for the formation of needful civilization.

Tagore, considering the Western ideas superior and the native ones inferior, turns different from his nation, as an individual becomes intimate with the colonizers and his view has negative impact on the nation’s identity issue. This discrimination justifies Bhabha et al. (1995) view - “the exercise of colonialist authority, however, requires the production of differentiations, individuations, identity effects through which discriminatory practices can map out subject populations that are tarred with the visible and transparent mark of power” (p. 42).

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