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Othello 1848: Performances of Love in Nineteenth Century Kolkata

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Abstract: The Paper deals with the various performative complexities associated with an 1848 Kolkata performance of Shakespeare's Othello. This performance was especially remarkable as it included Baishnavcharan Adhya, a Bengali, playing Shakespeare's Moor along with British actors. To think of the 1848 performance of Othello as a monolithic exercise of colonial surveillance would, however, be simplistic. Rather the performance brought into focus a nexus of overlapping differences, produced by polyvalent interactions of South Asian/ colonial caste and class hierarchies. When Baishnavcharan Adhya performed as Shakespeare's Moor on 16th August, 1848, he was engaging with discourses of 'love' that had polyvalent associations.

Index Terms **- Colonialism, Shakespeare, Adaptation, Surveillance, Caste.**

Shakespearean plays are famed for their rich, insightful explorations of 'love'. What is often elided in discussions on romance depicted in Shakespearean texts is the critical role of self-fashioning that shapes its contours. Shakespeare's *Othello* is popular in performance since its very inception. It has been severally translated and adapted, from opera to films and even manga. Yet, as Stephen Greenblatt points out, such apparent universality often obscures how its 'violence, sexual anxiety and improvisation' evolve out of specific interactions of Renaissance humanism, scepticism, Christian doctrine and colonial ideology.[1] As revealed in Othello's Apology (1.3:127-169), Desdemona's love for Othello develops through listening to his exotic narratives of travel and war. Greenblatt emphasises upon the intimate relationship of love and selfhood in the play where 'there is no realm where the subject and object can merge in the unproblematic accord affirmed by the theorists of empathy.'[2] This overtly political understanding of 'love' dispenses with the essentialist, humanist formulation in which the individual engenders truth and meaning. Rather, the dominant ideology acts through the mechanisms of state as the most powerful scriptor, eventually shaping continual performances of 'love' in a play where, to use Alan Sinfield's words, 'all the characters…are telling stories, and to convince others even more than themselves.'[3] This raises complex questions about the translatability of the Shakespearean ideations of 'love', emphasizing upon the political nature of such an appropriation. Yet, Graham Bradshaw critiques Greenblatt's 'partial sampling' of the text, commenting that he *misreads* Othello's ambivalent, unmitigated dilemma through reductionist lenses and disregards the 'dramatic situation'[4]. How do these debates on 'love' and selfhood relate to a performance of Othello in nineteenth

century Kolkata? What do such explorations tell us about the performances of 'love' in Shakespeare's tragedy?

The contours of *Othello*, shaped by the expanding colonial world of Renaissance England, outlined topographies of human *difference* which engendered new significations about personal and social identities. Ania Loomba states that these identities are internalised and sustained by the characters of the play.[5] Othello is thus not only a victim of racial discrimination, he half apprehends that his tragic fate is a result of his 'sooty bosom' which loves 'not wisely but too well'(5.2:340). Similarly, both Desdemona and Othello internalise the supposed consequences of their 'unnatural' union – Iago incites suspicions which were already buttressed by the normative discourse. Loomba's framing is Foucauldian; it rehearses Greenblatt's arguments about the political nature of 'love' in Othello. Such an 'ironic fatalism'[6] has important ramifications while studying a performance of Othello in nineteenth century Kolkata. Does the troubled dread of ethnic intermixing and yet its eventual inevitability shape a Foucauldian discourse of 'ocular proof' (3.3:361), in which subversions of 'love' are subsumed by normative ideology? Or do the subversions of 'love'— in continual, textual flux— defy the structures of colonial ideology? Do the characters 'fall in love with what [they] fail to look on' (1.3:98)? The 1848 performance of *Othello* by the actors of Sans Souci Theatre, Kolkata is a significant vortex of these myriad framings and ambivalances, especially because a native Bengali, Baishnavcharan Adhya (Bustomchurn Addy), acted as Othello in a production which otherwise comprised of British actors and was meant for primarily British audience.

There have been considerable differences in opinion among Shakespearean scholars about the politics of colonial and post-colonial adaptations of Shakespearean plays in India. Loomba outlines how many nuances of polyvalence is skirted in these adaptations as 'questions of histories and difference' in the original text are often avoided.[7] Poonam Trivedi, on the other hand, stresses how South Asian adaptations of *Othello* have evolved out of complex, polyvalent realities, interweaving intricate philosophical and social ideas which have intensified the hybrid resonances of Shakespeare's play.[8] Paramita Kapadia focuses on the 'performed hybridity' of South Asian adaptations of *Othello*.[9] Nandi Bhatia notes the 'complexities attached to the meanings of Shakespearean drama for Indian audiences and critic.'[10] Bhatia's comments seem to reaffirm the ambivalences in *Othello* which Joel B. Altman delineates in his seminal work on rhetorical tensions in the Shakespearean text. Altman elucidates on the antithetical structures in the play and reveals Shakespeare's manipulation of audience response through a continual, Protean shift between ideological positions. Responding to the claims of Greenblatt and Sinfield who had earlier detected in *Othello* a language of persuasion centred on probability, Altman points out:[11]

> Hence the most intriguing paradox emerging from Othello concerns its author. If Shakespeare's play absorbs in its representation – indeed reproduces – the analytic, descriptive, and persuasive languages of probability that have come to inform actual behavior in the world outside the theater as well as represented behavior inside the theater; and if Shakespeare interrogates this very representation by means of a poetics that is itself embedded in the phenomenon he seeks to examine and whose decorums he so frequently violates, where is the practitioner of this poetics, of this representation, to be located? … How was it possible for him both to assume as his medium the practices and also to deracinate them – to perform an internal critique of a way of being in which he himself participated?

Sudipto Chatterjee and Jyotsna G.Singh outline the Foucauldian discourse of surveillance and gaze that shaped the 1848 Kolkata performance of *Othello*.[12] Their elaboration fails to recognise the doubly ambivalent terrain of the performance. The difference emphasised and subverted is not merely between the Coloniser and the Colonised and hence cannot be reduced to a simplified Saidian dichotomy. Rather the performance brought into focus a nexus of overlapping differences, produced by polyvalent interactions of South Asian/ colonial caste and class hierarchies. When Baishnavcharan Adhya performed as Shakespeare's Moor on 16th August, 1848, he was engaging with discourses of 'love' that had polyvalent associations.

Performances of Shakespeare's plays were an integral part of the early colonial experience in India. The construction of the Old Playhouse in 1750s and the New Playhouse or the Calcutta Theatre in 1775 led to several performances of Shakespeare's plays. Earliest performances of *Othello*, *Macbeth*, *Hamlet* and *The Merchant of Venice* were staged at the Calcutta Theatre in late eighteenth century.[13] David Garrick, the eminent Shakespearean actor, had helped in the design and construction of the Calcutta Theatre.[14] As more British residents poured into the bustling metropolis, Shakespearean performances became more frequent. After Chowringhee Theatre was destroyed by fire in 1839, Esther Leach – the prima donna of the Calcutta Stage– set up a theatre named Sans Souci, initially at her residence, and then at a newly constructed auditorium at No.10, Park Street, along with Mr. Stocqueler, the editor of *Englishman*. It is at this hall that Leach was fatally injured while playing Nerissa on 2nd November, 1843 when her dress accidentally caught fire during a performance of *The Merchant of Venice*.[15] The performances continued, though Sans Souci soon suffered financial difficulties. Famous actors like James Vining and the Ormands, who had joined Sans Souci, performed no more and James Barry became its new manager.[16] The hall was eventually sold but the troupe continued to perform occasionally at James Barry's private residence at 14, Wellington Square. It was here, during the waning days of Sans Souci (Barry eventually left India on 21st May, 1849), that Baishnavcharan Adhya performed as Othello during two performances on 17th August and 12th September, 1848. Mrs. Anderson, Esther Leach's daughter, played Desdemona.[17]

To think of the 1848 performance of Othello as a monolithic exercise of colonial surveillance would be simplistic. It is true, as Chatterjee and Singh points out, that we cannot extricate the tragic resonances of the play from 'the racialized body of the Shakespearean actor'.[18] However, there were other resonances to the interracial sexuality depicted on stage – resonances that cannot be simply categorised as ritualised colonial surveillance. For example, Dwarkanath Tagore – who had died just a year earlier – had reportedly indulged in an infamous, illicit relationship with Mrs. Anderson, the Desdemona of the 1848 production. Rajaram Roy, Rammohan Roy's foster son, informs Janet, David Hare's daughter, in a letter about the scandalous affair. Captain Anderson was married to Esther Leach's sixteen year old daughter and asked permission from the owner of his ship to take his wife aboard. Dwarkanath, pretending to pursue the case on the Captain's behalf, made arrangements so that the women are kept ashore. He voluntarily offered to take care of both Mrs. Anderson and Mrs. Leach while the captain was at sea. Rajaram remarks:[19]

> Dwarkanath Tagore is taking care of the late Mrs. Leach and the Captain's wife with vengeance; he has the lady brought to his house every night.

In fact, Dwarkanath's involvement with the Chowringhee Theatre and his friendship with Esther Leach are well known. He had bought the theatre in 1835 for thirty thousand rupees and handed it over to the troupe. His role in setting up Sans Souci Theatre is also documented. The death of Esther Leach was a matter of profound grief for him.[20] Mrs. Anderson's portrayal of Desdemona was buffeted by these problematic associations of interracial, extra marital liaison, which cannot be merely defined through ideations of colonial control and hegemony. Moreover, Dwarkanath's donning of the garb of the lover as well as the conspirer blurs the differences between Cinthio's Moor and Ensign.

Adhya's performance, however, almost nearly did not take place. A letter published in *Calcutta Star* on 12th August, 1848 reveals how a previously scheduled performance on 10th August was cancelled due to intervention by military commander of the Dumdum Cantonment, who withdrew the army amateurs from acting in the play. The real reason for the sudden withdrawal seems to be a matter of speculation. The crowd gathered was considerable and police piled in to arrest the players if they tried to be on stage; even the letter writer smirked, 'Barry and the Nigger will make a fortune.'[21] It is possible that the colonial authorities were threatened by a potential law and order problem, though Chatterjee and Singh conclude that no direct evidence can be found for the link between 'the Native Othello on stage and the military-police action'.[22]

Adhya's performance elicited a complex reception. The review published in *The Bengal Harkaru* of the first performance points out [23]:

> …all expectations were, of course, centred in the young aspirant for dramatic fame, who has gallantly flung down the gauntlet to the rest of the members of the Native community. For in England, it is well known, the poetry of the mind has long given way to the poetry of motion, and Shakespeare, exiled from the country he honours so much, seeks an asylum on the Calcutta boards… Othello's entry was greeted with a hearty welcome, and the first speech… evidenced considerable study and an absence of that timidity so constantly the concomitant of a first appearance. Slim, but symmetrical in person, his delivery was somewhat cramped, but, under the circumstances, his pronunciation of English was for a Native remarkably good…

The evident ambivalence in the reviewer's tone continues as he criticises Baishnavcharan for being inexperienced and lacking the ability to portray the 'the ravages of the whirlwind of jealousy' and yet, at the same time, praised his 'vitality' and 'energetic full-toned declaration'. Othello's soliloquy at the bed chamber in Act 5, Scene 2 was delivered by Baishnavcharan with his back turned towards the audience:

> It is the cause, it is the cause, my soul:
> Let me not name it to you, you chaste stars.
> It is the cause. Yet I'll not shed her blood,
> Nor scar that whiter skin of hers than snow
> And smooth as monumental alabaster -
> Yet she must die, else she'll betray more men.
> Put out the light, and then put out the light:
> If I quench thee, thou flaming minister,
> I can again thy former light restore,
> Should I repent me; but once put out thy light,
> Thou cunning'st pattern of excelling nature,
> I know not where is that Promethean heat
> That can thy light relume.

Chatterjee and Singh point out the critically subversive nature of the scene as Othello kisses sleeping Desdemona. They elucidate upon the possible necessity of avoiding the presentation of a native actor (Baishnavcharan) kissing the wife of a British army officer (Mrs. Anderson) on stage.[24] Moreover, Shakespeare's text itself focuses on putting out the light, hence obscuring the working of gaze and a descent into the world of olfactory, primitive sensibilities as Othello smells Desdemona's 'balmy breath'. Edward Pechter delineates how smell for Othello has been 'the most important register of erotic interest'.[25] Chatterjee and Singh stress upon the Foucauldian surveillance that was brought into play in colonial Kolkata where a native Bengali, though not quite an African, was not a European either. Categorised by pseudo-scientific theories of racial differences, Baishnavcharan doubly becomes the Other in Shakespeare's play – not only a Moor, but a Bengali ineptly portraying the European constructions of the Moor. The reviews published in *Englishman* for the first and second performances criticised Adhya's thespian skills. The second review, published on 14th September, 1848, was especially damning and concluded 'that he failed, in every sense of the word, both in conception and execution…'[26] Yet this continual note of insecurity in the colonial discourses of surveillance should not rob us of a perceptive understanding of how both Baishnavcharan and Mrs. Anderson were both performers in discourses of 'love' that were not merely shaped by the panopticonic gaze of the Coloniser.

Baishnavcharan's Otherness – like Othello's in the play – is a product of polyphonic constructions of identity and ethnicity. This has not been amply stressed in previous discussions of his performance. As his name suggests, Baishnavcharan belonged to the *Suvarna-banik sampradaya*, a caste group which indulged in commercial pursuits and who were identified as lowly in the Kulin hierarchy propagated during the rule of Lakshmansena in thirteenth century Bengal and further reaffirmed in the Smriti digests of Raghunandan (16th

century CE) and Bachaspati Mishra.[27] As Kolkata blossomed as a metropolis, many of these groups forged commercial relationship with the East India Company and became extremely prosperous. Desirous to secure positions of prestige, these families indulged in various social movements in Kolkata and debated intensely about the appropriate course of reform. The Mallicks of Pathuriaghata, Badabazar and Chorabagan; the Debs of Shobhabazar; the descendants of Raja Sukhamoy of Posta; the Singhas of Paikpara; the Seals of Kolutola; the Lahas of Thanthania and Adhyas of Amratala were some of the prominent Suvarna-banik families who gained prominence in the early decades of the nineteenth century. [28] Many of these migrating families did not severe their links with indigenous cultural forms. As they settled in distinct neighbourhoods in Kolkata, the city bustled with notes of carnivalesque in which the older norms of caste hierarchy were negotiated and sometimes, reformulated. Sumanta Banerjee explains that the frankly erotic content of many of these performances were looked down upon by some reformists who considered these as reflective of gross, decadent sensibilities.[29] *Panchali, kheur, kabigan, akhrai, half-akhrai, sang* developed as distinct forms of collective, social entertainment.

Radharaman Mitra informs us that Baishnavcharan Adhya's son, Binodbihari Adhya, lived at Jelletollah Street in 1893.[30] Directory entries from the last quarter of nineteenth century and the early years of the twentieth century reveal that several Adhya families lived there. The 1915 Street Directory demarcates 34/1, Jelletollah Street as the residence of Binodbihari Adhya.[31] Jelletollah Street and the adjoining Kansaripara (Baranasi Ghosh Street) had been settled by Suvarna banik families and developed as the chief centre of *sang* performances in nineteenth century Kolkata.[32] These performances, often held during festive occasions like Chaitra sankranti or Saraswati puja, consisted of street plays and tableaus in which performers commented on social issues and tumults. From early nineteenth century newspaper reports, it becomes evident that *sang* performances were popular not only in Kolkata but also in other urban centres like Chinsurah. Some of these performances also involved cross-cultural dressing and apprehensions of caste intermixing and pollution, as is evident from the report of 'Haji saheber sang' in *Samachar Darpan* on 29th January, 1829.[33] Taraknath Pramanik (1816-1884), one of the prominent Suvarna-baniks of Kansaripara, sponsored the groups which performed in Kansaripara. His biographer describes the huge crowds that such performances inevitably drew[34]:

> … on every Chaitra sankranti, the famed *sang* processions were seen in Kansaripara; these processions were organised by Taraknath and Krishna Das Pal. People were so inquisitive to watch the performance that the spectators filled the balconies of the houses along the street much before the procession came out. The owners of these houses used to profit heftily by renting these [balconies]…

Krishna Das Pal (1838-1884), popularly known as Kristo Das Pal, the eminent editor of *Hindoo Patriot*, also lived on Baranasi Ghosh Street. His popularity was to a large extent sustained by his philanthropic work as well as for organising Durga Pujas.[35] Mahendranath Dutta reminisces how he had watched the *sang* performances in 1881 from balcony of Krishna Das Paul's house during the Chaitra sankranti festivities.[36] In all probability, Baishnavcharan lived in this area and was surely influenced by the *sang* performances which he witnessed. Ahindra Chaudhuri (1896-1974), a twentieth century thespian and film actor, has recounted the influence of *sang* performances on the development of his theatrical sensibilities.[37] It is quite natural for young Baishnavcharan to have been influenced by the traditions of *sang* performances and to imbibe some of its idioms of subversive eroticism in his Shakespearean act. This would have added another dimension to the discourses of 'love' in the 1848 performance.

The Hindu College was set up in 1817, largely through the efforts of some of the Suvarna banik families. Gopimohan Deb of Shobhabazar and Joykrishna Singh of Paikpara were among the founding directors of the

institution.[38] Many of these *nouveau riche* were spurred by conflicting impulses – to acquire modern Western education and yet, to secure positions of prestige in the orthodox Brahminical social hierarchy. Soon, they grew apprehensive of the curriculum pursued in Hindu College. Henry Louis Vivian Derozio (1809-31), a charismatic Anglo-Portuguese English teacher in the College, inspired students to challenge social conventions and pursue subversive rational predelictions. Derozio's interest in Shakespearean performances can be traced back to his school days at Drummond's 'Dhurrumtollah Academy'. On 20th July, 1824, Derozio would recite a self-composed poem on the occasion of a dramatic performance at his school which would contrast the adaptations of Shakespeare's plays by his school fellows with the performances of great British actors, John Phillip Kemble (1757-1823) and Sara Siddons (1755-1831)[39]:

> No mighty Kemble here stalks o'er the stage
> No Siddons all your feelings to engage,
> But a small band of young aspirant boys
> In faintest miniature the hour employs.

Although the Young Bengal movement – inspired by Derozio after he joined Hindu College in 1826 – developed into a powerful stream of the Bengal Renaissance, Derozio was expelled from the college in 1831 by its conservative administrators.[40] The Hindu College blossomed into a veritable centre for learning English language and literature, especially after the famed Shakespearean, David Lester Richardson, joined as a Professor in 1837. Shakespearean tragedies, including *Othello*, were taught in the college curriculum and there are several testimonies of the excellent proficiency of the students in English literature.[41] As the contradictions of liberal pursuits under the auspices of colonial rule became more prominent, the schism between the Anglophile urban liberal (recently morphed from his less hallowed, often Subarna banik predecessor) and the conservatives from mercantile lineages (who sought to acquire proficiency in English solely for the purpose of securing a job) became more pronounced.[42]

For many of the orthodox members of the Hindu society, the college had deviated from its course and many of them were reluctant to send their students to the institution. The opening of private seminaries by native Bengalis which would propagate a system of English education but would adhere to conventional values of Hindu society was felt. These private schools included Gaurmohan Adhya's Oriental Seminary (established in 1829), Nityananda Sen's school at Kolutola, Jagmohan Ghosh's Bhavanipur Seminary and David Hare Academy of Battala (established 1851).[43] Although it is uncertain where Baishnavcharan had actually studied, it is evident that his literary abilities were buffeted by these conflicting impulses. Schools like Oriental Seminary organised oral Annual Examinations at the Town Hall, where passages from Shakespeare's plays were performed by examinees. For example, on 2nd March 1853-4, Public Examination of Oriental Seminary was held at the Town Hall. This was attended by Government representatives, dignitaries and eminent educationists.[44] An excerpt from *Citizen* evidently brings out the importance of *Othello* at such public examinations[45]:

> The proceedings commenced precisely at half past ten o' clock, when the first class was called up and examined in their readings from Shakspere [*sic*]. The portion first selected for examination was 'Othello's Apology,' which was gone through very creditably.

The two senior classes of the institution were taught Shakespeare's tragedies, including *Othello*. The French lawyer Hermann Jeffroy, who could hardly live up to his expectations at bar due to rampant alcoholism, became the English teacher at Oriental Seminary and eventually its Headmaster. He encouraged his students in their explorations of Shakespeare.[46] Similar reports may be cited about the students of Hindu college in

which they performed Shakespeare during Annual Prize distribution ceremony.[47] In 1853, the students of the David Hare Academy staged *The Merchant of Venice* which spurred their rivals from the Oriental Seminary to establish The Oriental Theatre and to stage their own production on 2nd March, 1854.[48] Even before they had staged *The Merchant of Venice*, the students of Oriental Theatre staged *Othello* on 26th September, 1853. This was the first performance of a Shakespearean play, performed entirely by Indian actors. *The Bengal Harkaru* (28th September, 1853) describes the performance of *Othello* staged by the Oriental Theatre.[49] It is interesting to note that the students of David Hare Academy as well as those of Oriental Seminary were trained for their performances by Mr. Clinker, an associate of the erstwhile Sans Souci Theatre.[50] Clinker, who taught English at The Calcutta Madrasa, thus becomes a critical link between the 1848 and 1853 performances of *Othello*. The prominent actors of Oriental Theatre – Keshavchandra Gangopadhyay, Priyanath Dutta, Sitaram De and others – would eventually perform seminal Bengali plays at the Belgachhia Theatre, hence paving the way for indigenous theatrical performances in Bengal. Thus, Baishnavcharan's 1848 performances as Othello is a part of a larger nexus of developments which led to the engendering of the romantic idiom in modern theatrical traditions in Bengal.

Baishnavcharan's link with Gaurmohan Adhya's Oriental Seminary might be a conjecture, but it is evident that his sensibilities were shaped by influences in which the pedagogical ideals upheld by Gaurmohan surely played a part. Radharaman Mitra has traced him as one of the founding patrons of Calcutta Training School in 1859,[51] an institution for secular Western education in Bengal which was moulded by the progressive ideas of Ishwarchandra Vidyasagar and eventually morphed into the Metropolitan College. Biharilal Sarkar also mentions him in this connection. The patrons decided to give Vidyasagar considerable freedom in deciding the educational affairs of the institution.[52] Vidyasagar's ideals of education stood in considerable contrast with the models of classical South Asian pedagogy (Sanskrit College), liberal Anglicised education (Hindu College) and Christian missionary curriculum (General Assembly's Institution). By aligning with Vidyasagar's pedagogical vision, Baishnavcharan reveals his association with specific strands of educational developments which links his 1848 performance with distinct assertions of selfhood.[53] It should hardly surprise us that Gaurmohan Adhya lived in Baranasi Ghosh Street, in the same locality where we can trace the Kansaripara *sang* performances.[54] Directory entries from the last quarter of nineteenth century reveal that his family members Harekrishna Adhya and Bhairav Adhya, who became the Secretary of the Governing Body of Oriental Seminary after his death, lived at 73, Baranasi Ghosh street.[55] On 3rd April, 1848, *Sambad Prabhakar* glowingly describes the educational standards of Oriental Seminary and compares it with that of the Hindu College.[56] It is important for us to read Baishnavcharan's performance in the light of its subversive and liberating potency in the context of the popular urban culture of Kolkata.

The disillusionment about redemption which shatters Othello would assume a new meaning when analysed from this vantage point. The reformist sensibilities of the Brahmos and the educated elite often looked down upon the upwardly mobile presumptions of the Subarna baniks. This was often an ironic exercise of self-criticism, an exercise immersed in apprehensions about corruption and cultural degradation. Kaliprasanna Singha – a neighbor of Gourmohan, Taraknath, Krishna Das and possibly Baishnavcharan – offers us one of the scathing portrayals of *sang* performances in *Hutom pyanchar naksha*.[57] The reformers established the Society for Suppression of Public Obscenity in 1873 which led to the enactment of the Dramatic Performances Control Act (1876).[58] This eventually led to the cessation of the *sang* performances of Kansaripara. In 1848, it was still possible for Baishnavcharan to negotiate between these diverse codes of erotic signifiers. Yet, his tentative success presaged an era of schismatic divisions of identity; an era in which 'love' as colonial exchange will increasingly develop into a Foucauldian game of surveillance.

Ishwarchandra Gupta's *Samvad Prabhakar* reviewed Baishnavcharan's 1848 act as an empowering performance[59]:

> The magicient arrangements that we had in Sans Souci theatre last Thursday has not been witnessed for quite some time, the Sahibs and their wives from Kolkata and other places as well as the native gentlemen exquisitely adorned the theatre… a native actor Baishnavchand [Baishnavcharan] Adhya has pleased all by putting up the manners and speech of Othello, he was not intimidated nor was he careless, he heard wild cries [of approval] from all quarters and his enthusiasm and courage was further strengthened….

Baishnavcharan Adhya's critical engagement with the polyvalent contours of urban identity and his subsequent marginalisation and erasure from history echoes with the poignancy of Othello's tale. Mingling inextricably in the nexus of streets with changed names, reconstructed houses and reshaped contours – Baishnavcharan Adhya still lives in his city as the unmitigated excess of 'love' beyond the 'ocoular proof' of surveillance and gaze.

Notes

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4. Graham Bradshaw, *Misrepresentations: Shakespeare and the Materialists* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1993), 200.
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6. Scott McMillin, introduction to *Othello*, ed. Norman Sanders (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 54.
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10. Nandi Bhatia, "Different Othello(s) and Contentious Spectators: Changing Responses in India," *Gramma* 15(2007):171.
11. Joel B. Altman, *The Improbability of Othello: Rhetorical Anthropology and Shakespearean Selfhood* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2010), 14.
12. Sudipto Chatterjee and Jyotsna G. Singh, "Moor or less? The Surveillance of *Othello*, Calcutta 1848," in *Shakespeare and Appropriation*, edited by Christy Desmet and Robert Sawyer (London and New York: Routledge, 1999), 65-84.
13. Darshan Chaudhuri, *Bangla theatre-er itihash* (Kolkata: Pustak Vipani, 2003[1995]), 43.
14. Sushil Kumar Mukherjee, *The Story of the Calcutta Theatres: 1753-1980* (Kolkata and New Delhi: K.P. Bagchi, 1982), 13.
15. Hemendranath Dasgupta, *The English Stage*, vol.i (Kolkata: Metropolitan Printing and Publishing House, 1934), 272.
16. Darshan Chaudhuri, *Bangla theatre-er itihash*, 53.
17. Hemendranath Dasgupta, *The English Stage*, Vol.i, 275.
18. Chatterjee and Singh, "Moor or less? The Surveillance of *Othello*, Calcutta 1848", 66.

19. Letter from Rajaram Roy to Janet Hare, 6 June 1844, in " 120 Years Ago – Janet Hare to Raja Rai", *Behala*, Autumn Number (1964): 24 ff.
20. Blair B. Kling, *Partner in Empire: Dwarkanath Tagore and the Age of Enterprise in Eastern India* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 1976), 160.
21. Cited in Amal Mitra, *Kolkatay bideshi rangalay* (Kolkata: Prakash Bhavan, 1967), 199.
22. Chatterjee and Singh, "Moor or Less? The Surveillance of Othello," 76.
23. Cited in Amal Mitra, *Kolkatay bideshi rangalay*, 205-6.
24. Chatterjee and Singh, "Moor or Less? The Surveillance of Othello," 76.
25. Edward Pechter, *Othello and Interpretative Traditions* (Iowa: University of Iowa Press, 1999), 143.
26. Cited in Amal Mitra, *Kolkatay bideshi rangalay*, 211.
27. Nagenderanath Basu, *Banger jatiya itihas*, Vaishya Khanda, Vol.1 (Kolkata: Visvakosha Press, 1913), 237-9.
28. See Soumitra Shrimani, "Unabingsha shatake Kolikatar deshi abhijata varga," in *Uttaradhikar*, edited by Chandikaprasad Ghoshal (Kolkata: Oriental Seminary, 2016), 33-6.
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