

ABSTRACTS

Thursday, 15 November 2012

Section 1: Transnational Aspects of European Drama

Session A

M A KATRITZKY (The Open University, Milton Keynes, UK):

Stafanelo Botarga and Pickelherring: Fishy Italian and English Stage Clowns in Spain and Germany

Fish represent one of the most significant of several shared themes in the stage names chosen by early modern Italian and English travelling players. The most celebrated fishy stage name of the commedia dell'arte, Stafanelo Botarga, refers to a mediterranean seafood speciality; Pickelherring, the most popular English stage clown in the early modern German-speaking regions, took his name from North Sea pickled herring. The impetus for these stage names clearly came neither directly nor solely from the fish itself. Rather than simply reflecting vague late medieval pan-European links between foolery and carnivalesque foods, early modern fishy stage names complicate culinary connotations with darker and more recent ethnographical and religious associations. Focusing on some of these associations, this paper suggests that the choice of fish featured in stage names reflected regional considerations of the players' home and host nations, and that transnational perspectives are relevant to their understanding at many levels.

Session B

TATIANA KORNEEVA (Freie Universität Berlin):

Carlo Gozzi's La Principessa filosofa, o sia Il controveleno and his Comic Actors

After the success of the *Fiabe teatrali*, Carlo Gozzi found not only a new source of inspiration in the Spanish theatre of the *Siglo de Oro*, but also a way to renew and revitalise the practice of the Italian theatre. Between 1767 and 1801, Gozzi wrote more than twenty comedies based on the Spanish plays by Pedro Calderón, Tirso de Molina, Juan De Matos Frago, Francisco De Rojas Zorrilla, José De Cañizares and Augustín Moreto. The playwright considered this part of his dramatic production no less important than his theatrical fairy tales and even claimed in the preface to one of his Spanish comedies that "who would decide to write the true history of our theatres, should make a mention of my new genre based on Spanish arguments".

However, Gozzi's *teatro spagnolesco* has so far attracted only a scant critical attention. The theoretical conceptualisation of the metaphor of culture as a net that enables the multi-directional circulation of conceptual forms and cultural artefacts, can thus be particularly productive for the re-evaluation of Gozzi's Spanish adaptations and, in a broader sense, for the investigation of the extent of the wide-ranging Spanish cultural influences on the late eighteenth-century Italian theatre.

Taking as a case study Gozzi's *La principessa filosofa, o sia Il controveleno* (The Princess Philosopher, 1772) and its source text, *Desdén con el desdén* (Disdain with Disdain, 1654) by Augustín Moreto y Cabaña, I will explore the following questions: how the diffusion of the material within the cultural net was enabled? What is transferred with the dramatic text and what becomes different in the process of circulation and why? Another issue that is to be considered is whether the concepts of

intellectual property for dramatic literature developed in a different way than they did for non-dramatic forms. Ultimately, I will investigate the impact of the authorial agency on the circulation of the cultural artefacts.

Session C

ROBERT HENKE (Washington University, St. Louis):

Transnational Theatergrams of Poverty in Early Modern English, Spanish, and Italian Theaters

This paper analyzes transnationally circulating theatergrams of poverty, hunger, and degradation in early modern English, Spanish, and Italian theaters as functions of the contradictions of early modern capitalism. The new institutional theaters of England, Spain, and Italy, whether centered on national capitals and fixed stages (England, Spain) or based on a system of diffused patronage and itinerancy (Italy) were largely made possible by new capitalist forms of accumulation, entrepreneurship, and marketing. Two kinds of contradictions may be identified in each of these theaters: those resulting from the incomplete and partial assimilation of capitalist structures (i.e., the lingering notion of the professional actor as a liveried servant to an aristocrat), and the contradictions of capitalism itself, beginning with the structural relationship between the creation of new wealth and the generation of a new class of the dispossessed. Structured by transnational economic homologues characteristic of early capitalism, these three theaters exhibit striking similarities in their representations of poverty, which generally tend to be *de-centered* in relationship to the rest of the scripted or performance text. The de-centering of poverty, however, whether by repression, marginalization, distortion, or exaggeration, does not make it any less important or powerful in these theaters, whether primarily viewed as drama (the scripted text) or in theatrical performance.

Section 2: Intercultural Connections between English and Spanish Drama

Session A

LEONIE PAWLITA (Freie Universität Berlin/DramaNet):

Dream and Doubt: Scepticism in Shakespeare's Hamlet and Calderón's La vida es sueño

One of the striking phenomena of the early modern period was the highly influential revival of ancient Scepticism in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. When the first Latin translation of the *Outlines of Pyrrhonism*, written by the Greek physician and philosopher Sextus Empiricus (2nd century CE), was published in 1562, the ideas of the ancient Sceptics began to rapidly spread across Europe. In my paper, which draws on DramaNet's theoretical conceptualisation of culture as a net, I will consider this specific example of the withdrawal and usage of floating cultural material available in the cultural net of early modern Europe in relation to contemporary drama: I hope to demonstrate how, among the plays' other similarities, both Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, as well as Calderón's 'comedia' *La vida es sueño*, written about thirty-five years after Shakespeare's famous tragedy came into being, have incorporated elements deriving from Scepticism. Considering the cultural-ideological background of the two dramas, I will investigate the different ways in which they respond to the challenges of Scepticism. Further emphasis of my analysis will be on aspects of the topic of dream present in both plays, a nearly ubiquitous topic in early modern literature, particularly in drama, which I will consider in connection with the elements of Scepticism thematized in the texts.

Session B

MADÉLINE RÜEGG (Freie Universität Berlin/DramaNet):

The Patient Griselda Myth and Marriage Anxieties on Early Modern English and Spanish Stages

As the DramaNet research project aims to demonstrate, culture can be considered as a net in which ideas float without a necessary clear starting point and circulate beyond national borders or within countries. In early modern Europe, a good example of the floating material available in this cultural net and from which playwrights took inspiration is the myth of Patient Griselda. Originally the last novella of Boccaccio's *Decameron* (1353), the Patient Griselda figure and her story have fascinated Europe ever since Petrarch translated Boccaccio's text into Latin in 1373.

When the tale reached the stages of the institutionalised English and Spanish theatres, it underwent great changes. Although they wrote from countries distant from one another and have left no trace of personal contact with each other, Lope de Vega in Spain and Dekker, Chettle, and Haughton in England, produced two plays adapting the Griselda story which attest to similarities between English Elizabethan drama and Spanish *comedia nueva*. This paper hopes to demonstrate that Lope's *Ejemplo de casadas o prueba de la paciencia* (1601-4) and Dekker, Chettle and Haughton's *Comedy of Patient and Meek Grissil* (ca. 1599) dramatize and attempt at exorcising anxieties and concerns regarding marriage employing similar devices or kinds of floating material they could draw from the European cultural net: the creative adaptation of their common source (the myth of Patient Griselda); a rhetoric of the monstrous or grotesque; new characters; additional plots or episodes.

Session C

MICHAEL ARMSTRONG-ROCHE (Wesleyan University, Connecticut):

Lope de Vega, John Webster, and the Duchess of (A)malfi: Revisiting Comparative Narratives

The Duchess of Amalfi that Lope de Vega (*El mayordomo de la duquesa de Amalfi* [The Steward of the Duchess of Amalfi], 1599/1617) and John Webster (*The Duchess of Malfi*, 1613/1623) wrote about was Giovanna d'Aragona, a young widow of the royal line that governed 15th-century Naples. In 1504, fearing the wrath of her brothers over the succession, she married the steward of her household (Antonio) in secret and bore him three children before their marriage was discovered in 1511. They attempted to flee but they, their two youngest children and a lady-in-waiting disappeared or were killed by 1513. Given the archetypal potency of this taboo-shattering story, it is no surprise that successive versions would criss-cross Europe over the course of the 16th century (a *novella* by Matteo Bandello, an *Histoire tragique* by Belleforest, and a translation of Belleforest by Painter), that they would disagree about what was more scandalous, and that Lope's and Webster's dramatizations – shaped among other ways by the peculiarly heterogeneous audiences of the Madrid and London theaters – should diverge significantly from their sources. Although Lope's and Webster's plays share a sympathy for the Duchess against her vengeful brothers, the similarities end there. Webster seems primarily interested in offering a nightmare vision of the court, associated with sexual aberration, infected bodies, madness, tainted blood, and revenge. Lope, on the other hand, gives us a pastoral idyll, an affirmation of female sexuality, a rare vision of domesticity on the stage, humor, the Icarus trope, and romantic intrigue. In significant ways these plays usefully cut against the grain of common broad-brush narratives about their respective national traditions: regarding, say, the prevalence of

honor drama (particularly, wife-murder plays); the presence of a subjectivity defined by interiority and a bourgeois individualism shaped by an expanding market economy; or the subversive potential of comedy, tragedy, and tragicomedy. I review a number of possible explanations, but look especially at the ways in which local conditions such as the extraordinary commercial and legal innovations and institutional peculiarities of the Spanish stage (particularly the prominence of actresses) could have shaped Lope's choices; I suggest they might also encourage us to rethink the comparative stories we tell about the larger theatrical tradition.

Session D

SUSANNE WOFFORD (New York University):

Freedom and Constraint in Courtship across the Boundary of Rank: The "Jest Unseen" of Love Letters in Two Gentlemen of Verona and Lope de Vega's El Perro del Hortelano (Dog in a Manger)

Both *Two Gentlemen of Verona* and Lope de Vega's *El Perro del Hortelano (Dog in a Manger)* take up a condition of subjection and explore its effects on those above and below on the ladder of service. Each play looks at the "servant" of the high-ranking woman as dominated, willing to turn and twist according to the will of their mistress, but also expose the high ranking lady herself suffering substantial constraint. In Shakespeare's *Two Gentleman*, the fantasy of escape from this hierarchy becomes more important than the courtly scenes illustrating the problems of status hierarchy and difference, especially in love, although this fantasy is sharply qualified in the final scene.

The implication of both these plays is that the ladder of service is a ladder of domination, and that there is no liberty at the top of the ladder, and especially not for women, where the rulers and their heirs are shown to be also constrained and lacking in freedom. The social order itself in both plays is represented as dominating (in Pettit's sense) individuals within it, and comedy as a genre participates in both representing that degree of domination, and also imagining an escape from it. This double domination – the domination of the servant by the master or mistress, and the constraints imposed by the social hierarchy on the individual of high rank – are vividly dramatized by the theatergram (to use Louise Clubb's term) of the lover made to write a love letter to himself. Thus both plays dramatize the need for liberty while suggesting that comic compromises that appear to reconcile desire and the social order do not in fact allow the protagonists to escape from social dilemma created by a reliance on domination to create order.

Both Silvia in Shakespeare's *Two Gentlemen of Verona* and Diana in Lope's play *Dog in a Manger* (1613-1615) use a device that tricks the male "servants" whom they love, and use this ruse to get around the limitations placed to prevent them, as women of a high rank, from courting men of lower standing. Each of them causes the man she loves to write a love letter to himself, avoiding having it marked as being from the high born lady herself. Silvia in Shakespeare's comedy is the daughter of the Duke of Milan, though, perhaps to convey the extent to which this social position stands far above that of the two gentlemen of the play, both Proteus and Panthino in I.3 refer to the Duke as "the Emperor". Diana is the Countess (Condesa) of Belflor, an heiress who rules her household. Silvia, as the daughter to the Duke, is not free to woo Valentine, her "servant," who is a gentleman, but nonetheless significantly below Silvia in rank, and below her on the ladder of service and prestige. He is not an example of the kind of match her father would accept. Both women are severely constrained in their freedom to marry, and both plays include the ridiculous but class-appropriate lovers who must be avoided. The extent of the limitations placed on each are symbolized by key plot elements: in *Two Gentleman*, Silvia and Valentine must escape the court entirely by running away to the woods, while in *Dog in a Manger*, the two acceptable suitors, who are also rivals and one of whom is a relative, team up to try to kill the secretary who is receiving the favor of Diana [rather more like the reaction of the relatives in *Duchess of Malfi*].

These two scenes and situations suggest that notions of liberty and freedom from domination must include understanding of bondage of both literal and figurative kinds. I hope to explore the different uses to which each play puts this theatergram by focusing in part on the kinds of constraint that prevail in the highly ranked society of the imaginary aristocracies of the plays. Each play is concerned to show that the character with the most power (Diana) or most likely to inherit positions of wealth and rule (Silvia) is as much disempowered by rank as liberated by it; while the parallel sense of constraint on the part of the “servants” shown to be, especially in the Spanish play, even more potentially destructive. How the “danger” and threat represented by seeking free choice in marriage across the boundaries of rank and status are negotiated in these comedies, and with what effect, will contribute to understanding how drama represents and enacts constraint while using wit, fiction, ruses and deceit to trick the audience and the characters into believing briefly in a world where these constraints can be evaded if not abolished entirely.

In addition to exploring this theatergram in the two plays, I will also briefly explore its origins in pastoral romance, especially in Jorge de Montemayor’s *Diana*, already identified as a Spanish source for *Two Gentlemen of Verona*.

Friday, 16 November 2012

Section 3: Images of Spain on the English Stage

Session A

RALF HAEKEL (Georg-August-Universität Göttingen):

The Image of Spain in the Early Modern English Revenge Tragedy

Thomas Kyd’s *The Spanish Tragedy* is the first English Revenge Tragedy and thus the role model for one of the most successful Elizabethan and Jacobean dramatic sub-genres. When exactly the play was written is a matter of scholarly debate, but nevertheless crucial to an understanding of its politics. First published in 1592, the play could not have been composed earlier than 1585. Furthermore, it is highly unlikely that the play was written after 1588, since there is no mention of the Armada in the tragedy.

The *Spanish Tragedy* reflects the transition of the political image of Spain in England during the 1580s. By the beginning of the decade, Spain had become England’s most important rival, by its close the conflict ended in open war and the seemingly miraculous scattering of the Spanish Armada. Andrew Gurr claims that the unification of the Iberian Peninsula in 1580 is the background for the play’s gruesome plot. The play reflects the fear of political consequences of the unification of Spain and Portugal, yet at the same time it is also the first dramatic indicator of the general political change – the transition from a medieval feudal world to a contingent Early Modern world in which different models of political legitimacy compete. In my talk I want to take a look at the *Spanish Tragedy* in the light of the political circumstances of the late 16th century, but I will also ask why the play, detached from these immediate political circumstances, stayed to be one of the most popular stage plays for half a century throughout Europe.

Session B

MARINA S. BROWNLEE (Princeton University):

Cervantine Curiosity and the English Stage

- My paper will take as its point of departure the tale of the *Curioso Impertinente* from *Don Quijote I*, 33-35, a text that has not only given rise to an intriguing diversity of conflicting interpretations, to numerous Spanish plays as well, but in addition, to at least six English works for the stage in the 17th-century alone.
- Benjamin's concept of allegory, developed from *The Origins of German Tragic Drama*, will serve to analyze the Cervantine prose text as well as to illuminate my discussion of three English theatrical adaptations of it ranging from tragedy to comedy.
- An attempt will be made to account for the generic shift from the prose text designed to be read aloud by one narrator to the multimedial nature of theater, as well as to determine whether the theatrical appropriations conform to a consistently English set of cultural values and controversies.

Session C

SAUGATA BHADURI (Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi):

Representations of Spain in Early Modern English Drama: A Study in Polycolonial Angst

Though an English expedition sanctioned by Henry VII is reported to have reached Newfoundland and parts of East Asia as early as 1497, it was only in 1577 that England had its first formal colony on Baffin Island, to be followed by settlements in the Americas throughout the 1580s and 90s, the establishment of the East India Company in 1600, and intense colonial activities in the Caribbean in the first decade of the 17th century. It is interesting to note that the Anglo-Spanish War (1585-1604) broke out exactly during these years, leading to a spurt of representation of Spain in the drama of the period. While the War as well as the concomitant depiction of Spain in these twenty years are often credited to intra-European and even internecine Catholic-Protestant conflicts, my argument in this paper, on the basis of a reading of representative plays of the period, is that it could be more rightfully traced to what I call a 'polycolonial angst', or the mutual anxiety of multiple European powers – inclusive of the Dutch, the Danish and the French too, but primarily involving the English and the Spanish (Portugal was a part of the Spanish empire between 1580 and 1680) – in their bid to carve the colonial pie amongst themselves.

Section 4: Between Europe and the Colonies

Session A

BARBARA VENTAROLA (Julius-Maximilians-Universität Würzburg):

Multi-Didaxis in the Drama of Lope de Vega, Calderón de la Barca and Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz

- The aim of my paper is twofold:
 1. To give proposals for a new theorization of culture as a dynamic net which allows crucial problems of existing theories, in particular the system theory of Niklas Luhmann and the postcolonial theory of Homi Bhabha, to be remedied.

 2. To show that this new theoretical framework is capable of giving new insights into the theatre culture of the Spanish *siglo de oro* as well as into the impact it had upon the dramatic culture of the Spanish colonies in Hispanic America.

- My basic premises are as follows:
 1. In order to grasp the complexity of worldwide cultural networking, it is necessary to conceive of the cultural net as a universal structure consisting of *several* interacting, overlapping nets, as a world of worlds or – as Gotthard Günther said – as a polycontextural structure of structures. The recourse to polycontextural theory allows the multi-directional circulation of conceptual and material forms to be taken into account without neglecting the “location of culture” (Bhabha) which should be borne in mind since it plays a particularly important role in the hierarchical colonial interactions of cultures.

 2. The same complexity governs dramatic texts, which can be re-conceived of as systems that model and evoke a (potentially) polycontextural world: Stemming from polycontextural subjects (their authors) and consisting themselves of a network of several sub-systems (the semiotic structures constituting the text), the dramas are able to refer to a plurality of cultural contexts at any time. One of the aspects of this textual multi-directionality, which until now has mostly been neglected, is its capacity to pursue several pragmatic aims at the same time by spreading them over diverse textual layers or ‘stages’.

 3. Dramatic texts become even more fascinating when they are performed: A single performance is always bound to a concrete (cultural) *hic et nunc* but can, at the same time, depart from this in various ways by means of sheer textuality. This potential superposition enables the creation of a wide range of combinations of propaganda and critical transgression. The drama can address a present diversified audience (social class, cultural background, gender, etc) and extend its range into imagined universal contexts concurrently. As the genre can be seen as an institutionalized social mass medium, I propose to refer to this potential to reach several audiences in a different way as its multi-didaxis.

 4. The dramatists whose works I will analyze make use of this complexity. By recognizing this, it is possible to shed new light on the ambiguities of their texts which have provoked so many diverse and even opposing interpretations. The two main approaches, in particular, (perceiving the texts as counter-reformational propaganda on the one hand and as a subversion of this propaganda on the other) can be reconciled in an interpretation that takes into account aspects of both interpretations. It can be shown that the playwrights use – each one in her/his own particular way – a multi-didaxis in order to realize both a propagandistic affirmation and a critical analysis of the

central tenets of their respective (religious and social) contexts. It might further be suggested that the dramatists hint at possible new social orders which can remedy the contemporary shortcomings. All three of them reveal internal conflicts: Lope de Vega because of his social provenance, Calderón in a more philosophical way, and Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz because of her gender and her cultural and historical situation.

5. Against this backdrop, a comparison of selected dramas by these authors makes it possible to redefine the relationships they have with each other as well as the relationships between the Spanish and the colonial Hispano American theatre cultures of their time. The simplifying logic of *actio* and *reactio*, of cultural grafting and ‘writing back’ can be substituted by a more complex model which emphasizes the existing entanglements of analogies and differences. The texts of Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz in particular reveal an independent and constructive *aemulatio*, which announces and anticipates – amid the colonial ‘periphery’ – the early enlightenment.

- For the purposes of this project, I will focus on the following dramas:
 - Lope de Vega: *Fuente Ovejuna*
 - Calderón de la Barca: *La vida es sueño* and *Los empeños de un acaso*
 - Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz: *El divino Narciso* and *Los empeños de una casa*.

Session B

JONATHAN GIL HARRIS (George Washington University, Washington DC):

Tamburlaine in Hindustan

In the paper, I will consider two transnational journeys of Timur-E-Lang/Tamburlaine to India: first, the historical Timur’s original conquest of Tughlaq Hindustan in 1398; and then his more figurative return to Mughal Hindustan two centuries later in the imaginations of two early seventeenth-century English travelers, King James I’s ambassador to the Mughal court, Sir Thomas Roe, and the eccentric global perambulator Thomas Coryate. Both men brought with them (different) memories of Christopher Marlowe’s stage-Tamburlaine, made famous in the late 1580s and early 1590s thanks to the inimitable histrionic excess of Edward Alleyn. Whereas Roe used Tamburlaine as a negative figure for a despotic theatricalism with which he associated Timur-E-Lang’s Mughal descendants, Coryate regarded Tamburlaine altogether more positively, as the prototype of a rhetorically versatile global wanderer. From Roe’s and Coryate’s divergent imaginings of Tamburlaine, then, we can tease out two very different templates for Western understandings of trans-cultural contact and globalization.

Session C

GAUTAM CHAKRABARTI (Freie Universität Berlin/DramaNet):

‘Eating the Yaban’s Rice’¹: Socio-Cultural Transactions on the Mid-Colonial Bengali Stage

One of the most interesting socio-cultural traits in late-eighteenth-century South Asia was the interstitially-polysemic manner in which constitutive identities and “fields of belonging”² were fused, in an osmotically-creative and reflexive churning of literary-cultural texts, tropes, floating theatre-material and transactions. Beginning in 1795, when Gerasim Lebedev founded the Hindu Theatre in Calcutta, and had Jodrell’s *The Disguise* and Molière’s *Love is the Best Medicine* translated

into Bengali and performed “in the Bengalee style”, one gets to see a growing percolation of Anglo-European dramaturgical and performative ideas and devices onto the Indian stage, which, in the early-nineteenth century, was heavily-dependent on logistical and financial support from the so-called “absentee landlord” gentry of Bengal. This deployment of socio-cultural networks in the furthering of early/mid-colonial theatre in Bengal and, by extension, the rest of India, is a phenomenon that needs to be studied in greater detail than it has hitherto been; and, in this context, through his translation of the *Nil Darpan* and his own plays, Michael Madhusudan Datta provides us with a prominent example of the transcultural affinities of Bengal’s early-modern proto-*Bhadralok* intellectual, who was the quintessential product of early/mid-colonial Bengal’s immersion in the Reason-discourse of the Enlightenment, as mediated through an intrinsically-Indic cultural socialisation. Initially, figures like him sought their discursive orientation in the texts and tropes of the various Anglo-European early modernities; however, as in the case of Datta, this led, after an initially-exuberant creative euphoria expressed in Anglophone terms, more often than not, to a renewed and somewhat zealous engagement with Indic tropes, as in Datta’s signal play, *Śarmiṣṭhā* (spelt *Sermista* in English), which was based on a Sanskrit epic-narrative and was also the first Bengali text to use blank verse. The proposed paper will look at the cultural polysemy between a “local” Indic epic-narrative tradition, along with its socio-cultural affects, and the “cosmopolitan” acculturation of an Indo-European intersectional figure like Datta, through a comparativist analysis of *Śarmiṣṭhā* and *Nil Darpan* and the search for archival sources; the attempt will be to theorise a possible narrative of intercultural liminality on the mid-colonial Indian stage.

End-Notes

- 1 Mitra, Dinabandhu, *Nil Darpan, or The Indigo Planting Mirror*, Calcutta: C. H. Manuel, 1861, p. 7.
- 2 Offord, Baden, “Mapping the Rainbow Region: Fields of Belonging and Sites of Confluence”, *Transformations* No. 2 (March 2002), p.1; <www.transformationsjournal.org/journal/issue_02/pdf/offord.pdf>, retrieved on 02.07.2012.

Session D

RAJNISH KUMAR MISHRA (Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Dehli):

Indian Theatrical Experience in Globalising Empires: Recognition of Shakuntala in the Early Modern Europe

Indian theatrical experience has been nurtured and structured through an overall sustained, cumulative and continuous traditions of attested texts and thinkers. This experience is essentially universal and has been presented in a cosmic theatre house. The *Shivasutra*, a text of Kashmir Shaivism, presents a beautiful analogue to the external theatre where the self is the dancer or actor, the inner self is the stage and the knowing senses (*indriya*-s) are the viewers. This ‘inner theatre’ takes place in the space of *cit* or universal consciousness. There are certain pre-conditions and qualifications on the part of both the viewers and the actors as laid down by the canonical texts in the Indian intellectual traditions.

This has been the theatre and nature of theatrical experience when the Europe came in contact with Indian literature through the translation of Kalidasa’s *Abhijanashakuntalam* by Sir William Jones (1789). Drama, in the Indian literary tradition is said to be the most charming and pleasant among the various literary genres and the *Shakuntala* is the most charming of all the dramas. The paper explores the intellectual settings of early modern Europe (particularly 18th C) and contemporary India which was then the part of the global empire. As it is evident that the translation of *Shakuntala* into European languages, thrice in Britain and then in German, French and Italian, introduced the literary East to the West, it is worth to examine and explicate the embedded

conceptual structures and elements of drama in this text which were presented to the Western literary traditions. The paper also records and assesses the interactions and interfaces in this inter-culture space.