

SHAKESPEARE CRITICISM IN BENGAL: HOW IDEOLOGY DETERMINES CRITICAL PERSPECTIVES

Samik Sen

*Assistant Professor, Department of English, Naba Barrackpur Prafulla Chandra Mahavidyalaya, West Bengal State
University, West Bengal, India*

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ABSTRACT

The objective of the present essay is to investigate the critical assumptions and presuppositions about the function of criticism and the role of critic, to look at the political affiliations and theoretical orientations of the critics and to regard the other cultural, social and intellectual factors that determined the formation of the bulk of Shakespeare criticism in Bengal, India. According to a recent critic, 'in constructing the history of criticism we are not tracing the exfoliation through history of a linear, if irregular process: it is history of criticisms which is at issue. We are seeking the determinants of the particular historical spaces which make the emergence of such an object possible in the first place, and which determine its relations to other synchronous discourses. The science of the history of criticisms is the science of the historical forms which produce those criticisms' (Eagleton, Criticism 17). In keeping with this view, this essay, instead of dwelling on the surface of the Shakespeare criticism produced in Bengal, has tried to attempt a thorough examination of the historical forms and ideological motivations that made possible the production of such criticism. Along with examining the ideology, methodology and the purpose of such criticism, some attention has been also paid to the language employed by the critics and this study in fact attempts to demonstrate how preference for one particular kind of linguistic configuration over another reveals the critic's perception of his own task and a specific view of the world and writing.

KEYWORDS: *Ideology, Shakespeare Criticism, Politics of Criticism, Academic Criticism, Marxist Criticism*