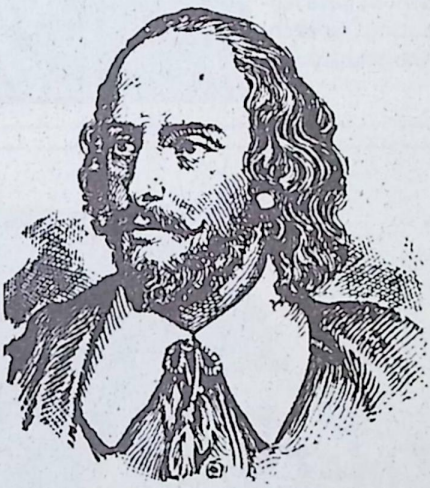
Looking for Shakespeare

Juthika Biswas

THOUGH Shakespearean creations have held a fascinating appeal for more than four hundred years, the playwright himself remains an enigma till now. The most important years of his life, (1585-1592), the very years he established himself as an actor and a playwright, remain undocumented. Even the correct spelling of his name remains debatable. Research continues to unearth the mystery of this cardinal figure of English literature.

"Globe education and cultural seminar for teachers 2010" in London by English Speaking Union (ESU) was another venture to look for Shakespeare. ESU is a charity that wants to promote dialogue and bring together different opinions and ideas of diverse cultures by using English as the common global language. Among the many educational programmes organised, the Shakespearean study courses are designed to draw the participants into the world of Shakespeare to shed light on his life and work. The emphasis is on understanding this archetypal figure from academic and theatrical point of views.



I was there to represent Bangladesh and it was an amazing experience to be a part of the melting pot where 30 delegates from 30 countries came up with ideas and views in understanding Shakespeare. The 7 day long (8-14 August) seminar was divided into different segments with some of the most resourceful persons like Dr. Andy Kesson (University of Kent), Heather Neill (Theatre and Journalist) and other distinguished instructors closely related to the Globe Theatre for many years.

On the very first day, the ever-cheerful Patrick, Director of Globe Education, welcomed us. He was quite successful in sharing his enthusiasm and in involving us with the mission of finding out remarkable monuments, sculptures and statues of Shakespeare following the map given to us, after which we were to prepare a group presentation. The journey around London was an adventure. We tried to make the best out of the six-zone Oyster travel cards. Tours to Buckingham Palace, Westminster Abbey, The London Eye, British Library, British Museum, and the impressive Tower Bridge were not missed.

Exploring the city, Shakespeare's presence was felt everywhere - from social places called Shakespeare Head Pub to the British Library.

Yolanda (Globe Education Practitioner) and Glynn's (Head of Movement) sessions on how to make Shakespeare interesting were resourceful for the teachers who teach Shakespeare in classrooms. Reading Shakespeare in translations was another significant part when all delegates had their chance to read out the first sonnet of "Romeo and Juliet" in their own language. I felt proud to read the Bengali translation by Mafiz Chowdhury. But the overwhelming interest of all delegates to analyse, interpret and compare Shakespeare from global as well as local perspectives was worth considering. Enjoying three historic plays in the Globe Theatre, whether sitting on the gallery or standing in the "pit" is unforgettable!

Certainly the English Speaking Union deserves appreciation for providing such an opportunity to come closer to Shakespeare's life and works. It was difficult to say goodbye to everyone we came across and the gorgeous Globe Theatre. We bid farewell with the hope of meeting again, with the promise of attending more such programmes in future. Hail to Shakespeare! Hail to ESU! Hail to my global friends!

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