

SAA (Portland, 2024) Seminar Abstracts – Asian Shakespeares: Translation, Adaptation, Interpretation

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Rewriting South Korean Politics Through Shakespeare in NTCK's *Hamlet* (2021)

GeonLyung Kim (University of Minnesota)

The National Theater Company of Korea's 2021 online performance of *Hamlet* rewrites Shakespeare's *Hamlet* in the intersection of the global pandemic and the political aftermaths of previous South Korean government administrations, as well as #MeToo revelations that lingered as both global and local influences in 2020. While Lee Bong-Ryeon's Princess Hamlet and the overall gender-free casting of the production was welcomed among theatergoing women as a feminist statement, interviews about the performance never explicitly mention #MeToo or feminism, and instead appeal to 'universal human emotions and conflicts' 'regardless of gender.' This claim to universal humanity is conjured again in the description of the rewriting process: director Bu SaeRom and playwright Jung JinSae explain that cultural-specific or obsolete elements (such as Hamlet's misogynistic tantrums toward Gertrude and Ophelia) were removed to better reveal the 'essence' of the work without alienating the audience. This paper analyzes NTCK's *Hamlet* (2021) focusing on the tensions between narratives of universality that surround the rewriting, and the lived experience as an audience member who watched and made sense of the performance within particular material realities that helped shape it. I grapple with the utility of 'essence' as a point of reference and strategy for rewriters in Asia, and explore the possibilities that desires for and belief in universality (however fictional or insidious) present in expanding and decentralizing authorship in the study of rewritings.

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Shakespearean Codes in *Hallyu* (Korean Wave) TV Dramas

Hyon-u Lee (Soon Chun Hyang University)

The emergence of the first Korean wave, known as Hallyu 1.0, marked a surge in popularity across Asian nations during the early 2000s, driven by iconic Korean TV dramas like *Winter Sonata* (2000) and *Dae Jang Geum* (2003-04). In contrast, Hallyu 2.0, the subsequent wave, has expanded its cultural impact globally since around 2010, encompassing diverse cultural products such as games, TV dramas, movies, food, fashion, and K-pop. At the heart of Hallyu 2.0's global outreach is the strategic use of 'cultural hybridity,' fostering the creation of innovative cultural products through interchange and convergence rather than a unilateral export of Korean culture.

This paper explores the incorporation of Shakespearean elements in several Korean TV dramas, including *You're Beautiful* (2009), *The Princess's Man* (2011), *The Moon Embracing the Sun* (2012), *My Love from the Star* (2013-14), *Love in the Moonlight* (2016), *My Sassy Girl* (2017), *Forced Landing of Love* (2019-20), and *It's Ok to Not Be Ok* (2020). These

dramas draw inspiration from Shakespearean works, notably *Romeo and Juliet*, *Twelfth Night*, *As You Like It*, and *The Taming of the Shrew*, integrating storylines, specific scenes, or lines. The infusion of Shakespearean elements serves as a bridge, enhancing the global appeal of Korean TV dramas by creating content that is more familiar and accessible to a diverse audience. Deliberately and intricately embedded, various Shakespearean codes, akin to *The Taming of the Shrew* on the bookshop shelf in *My Sassy Girl*, play a pivotal role in the narrative fabric of Korean TV dramas.

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Shakespeare's Techno-cultural Mobility in the Hong Kong Context

Jason Eng Hun Lee (Hong Kong Baptist University)

In this short paper, I discuss recent collaborative productions and creative film adaptations by local theatre studies professionals and students who deploy Shakespeare's cultural mobility to document their own reception to postcolonial Hong Kong as a culturally contested site. In reviewing a number of performative and pedagogical practices that focus specifically on Shakespeare's global contemporaneity, I explore how these co-created productions and amateur film adaptations not only interpret Shakespeare's work through Hong Kong and the wider Asian context, but also help their creators and audiences to navigate their own technological world by first understanding the confines of the physical stage before moving beyond it.

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'Take him and cut him out': Censoring *Romeo and Juliet* in *Ambikapathy* (1937)

Thea Buckley (Queen's University Belfast)

An Asian Shakespearean work of translation, adaptation or interpretation may incur censorship for its creatively intercultural approach or content, if it makes available interpretive possibilities that are not yet mainstream for its home audience. As have others, India's cinematic Shakespeares have faced government censorship. Most recently, Sanjay Leela Bhansali's 2013 adapted *Romeo and Juliet* (*Ram-Leela*) was temporarily banned pre-release, due to petitions that its title profaned the Hindu religion; the next year, *Haider*, Vishal Bhardwaj's *Hamlet* remake set in a highly volatile and violent socio-political Kashmiri context, incurred 41 cuts by the Censor Board.

Amid the snowballing growth of Asian Shakespeares, this essay looks back at such early challenges, using fresh archival evidence – namely, a newly digitised, uncut version – to revisit my chapter on the Tamil film *Ambikapathy* in *Shakespeare and Indian Cinemas* (Routledge, 2017). Ellis R. Dungan's 1937 film grafts scenes from *Romeo and Juliet* into the tragic Tamil love legend of poet Ambikapathy and princess Amaravathi. Due to its suggestive kissing scenes, his film was a smash hit. Until recently, however, only a heavily edited digital version was available. This censors much of the original's transgressive content – scenes of women singing, dancing, and bathing, or the titillating romantic 'wink' recollected by audiences. My essay looks at these excised scenes, including those that fundamentally advance plot or character and even those that showcase Indian art and

scripture. Ultimately, I explore whether it is truly possible, or even desirable, to sanitise the original text's provocative elements while producing richly creative Asian Shakespeares.

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Mirroring the “Other”: Intertextuality in Aparna Sen’s *Arshinagar* (2015)

Melissa Croteau (California Baptist University)

Intertextuality, the presence of ‘other’ texts within a given piece of work, functions differently in Indian films adapted from literary sources than in most Western adaptations. Filmmakers in India are more likely to emulate and allude to other films, from inside and outside their borders, rather than pay obeisance to a written text. This primacy of films as cinematic intertexts is particularly important when analyzing Indian adaptations of Shakespeare, which are always already transtextual, extant in countless performances (some recorded on video or audio but many more ephemeral pageants) and in numerous written forms, including multiple translations in various Indian languages as well as differently edited English editions. Venerated Bengali director Aparna Sen released an adaptation of *Romeo and Juliet*, titled *Arshinagar*, meaning *Mirrorsville*, in 2015, in which she mirrors several other films. While Sen engages in many significant types of intertextuality, she privileges allusions to *West Side Story* (1961), as a musical about street gangs, and Baz Luhrmann’s postmodern *Romeo + Juliet*, which are identifiable to international audiences. However, *Arshinagar* is also in meaningful dialogue with Bollywood’s *Qayamat se Qayamat Tak* (Mansoor Khan 1988), *Bombay* (Mani Ratnam 1995), *Ishaqzade* (Habib Faisal 2012), *Ram-Leela* (Sanjay Leela Bhansali 2013), and *Issaq* (Manish Tiwary 2013). Each of these Indian films uses the basic outline of the plot of Shakespeare’s *Romeo and Juliet* to address consequential, and sometimes deadly, divisions between religions, castes, and families within India. This paper will focus on the significance of these intertexts in the context of this Bengali musical directed by a rare individual, a female Indian filmmaker and one with roots in Indian art cinema stretching back directly to luminary Satyajit Ray. While Sen’s use of intertexts is often focused on her Indian audiences, she also uses Indian references to communicate her message to global audiences: Mirrorsville is a reflection of cities and towns all over the world where ancient and recent grudges lead to fatal new mutiny. Sen’s depictions of and allusions to Sufi and Bhakti traditions of mystical transcendence throughout *Arshinagar* express a fervent hope that people can rise above differences by recognizing their spiritual unity with all ‘others,’ even while its references to other *Romeo and Juliets* reveal the never-ending need for retelling stories of violence, heartrending loss, and, finally, a fragile, nascent hope for a more peaceful future.

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Rewriting Early Modern Skepticism into 21st Century Existentialism in *Hamlet, the Walking Man* (2023)

Yehrim Han (Korea National Open University)

This study delves into the existential implications of the recent Korean adaptation of Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, titled *Hamlet, the Walking Man* (hereafter, *Walking Man*), directed by Jin-hwan Na in 2023. In contrast to conventional Korean adaptations of Western works, this production does not represent ‘traditional’ Korean or Asian influences but is more interested

in refiguring Western existentialism within the contemporary Korean context. In *Walking Man*, one of the standout features is the newly inserted Hamlet's dream scene where the director's endeavor to address unresolved questions within Shakespeare's play: How can Hamlet's violent madness towards Ophelia be comprehended? Why was Ophelia inevitably fated to die? What role does Ophelia play in *Hamlet*? What distinguishes Claudius from Hamlet? To explore these questions, this study argues that the director presents Hamlet's dream as an existentialist 'play-within-the-play' that features three main characters—Hamlet, a devil figure (who also acts as Claudius), and Ophelia. In the dream, Ophelia and Goethe's Gretchen intertwine, introducing complexity to the narrative. Additionally, Ophelia repeatedly asks Hamlet, 'Did you ever love me?' which intersects with the biblical motif of Peter denying Jesus three times, making Ophelia as a sacrificial, Christ figure. Unlike the original play, which does not fully explain Hamlet's incomprehensible violence towards Ophelia more than his 'madness', Na's adaptation delves more persistently into the intricacies of this aspect. Through the dialogue between the devil (Claudius) and Hamlet, *Walking Man* challenges the inherent violence within Hamlet's madness, extending this issue into the context of human will and desire, drawing connections to the director's previous adaptations such as *The Brothers Karamazov* and *Faust*. My study seeks to uncover the implications of the questions raised within this newly constructed narrative and to explore how this reinterpretation reflects 21st century existentialism. The ultimate investigation delves into the broader intellectual landscape encompassing skepticism and existentialism, which serves as the conceptual framework for Shakespeare's original play and Na's adaptation, respectively. Of particular interest is Na's nuanced transformation of early modern skepticism, into the grammar of 21st century existentialism.

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'The New Romantics,' or Korean Shakespeares

Taylor Yoonji Kang (Yale University)

Through this seminar, I plan to further develop some thinking around Global Shakespeares, examining how Korean television programming, in particular K-Drama, has negotiated representations of South Korea's long and painful democratization process through invocations of Shakespeare. In this paper, I focus on *설강화*, or *Snowdrop*, a 2021 K-Drama that drew great criticism and ire from netizens for its depiction of the June Struggle. Using the Korean critic Kim Ki-jin's argument that 'romance,' or *yōnae*, was a cultural import from the West through Japan, I plan to think about how these Shakespearean paratexts are complicated through often-unstable genealogies of the genre, from Heliodorus to Shakespeare. In the process, I consider the genre of K-Drama as a blend of both Euro-American melodrama and Japanese *shinpa* theater, a combination that brings to the fore questions of serialization, modernization, and dramatic reception.

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Shakespeare's Afterlife: Fan Culture in Japanese Media

Ashley-Marie Maxwell (Université de Montréal)

Fan culture can either be a positive part of the media consumption experience, or it can be a destructive force. For example, the 2019 hit Chinese TV series *The Untamed* (陈情令 *chén qíng lìng*) generated intense fan wars that placed actors against one another and even resulted in bans of popular fan websites such as *Archive of Our Own*, a hub for fan fiction writers. Similarly, Amazon Prime's Tolkienverse-inspired *The Rings of Power* (2022) was met with backlash from fans and Tolkien scholars alike. We see with Shakespeare a similar phenomenon; from Bardolaters to anti-Stratfordians, everyone has an opinion about him and his plays. When it comes to Shakespeare, he is not only a figure that attracts constant scholarly examinations, but he is also someone who creates a sense of community and a strong following amongst theatregoers and media consumers.

As Jonathan H. Pope writes in *Shakespeare's Fans* (2020), people can become fans of everything and anything, including literature, media, videogames, clothing, etc. However, Shakespeare 'tends to remain on the margins of our conception of fandom in spite of—or, perhaps, partly because of—his cultural and educational pride of place as *the* canonical author' (Pope 2). That being said, Shakespeare fans do exist, both in and out of academia even though they may not always be forthcoming about this fact. As some scholars argue, fandoms tend to be feminine spheres, and '[w]omen and children are more likely to turn their interests into infatuations, to lose sight of the distinction between fantasy and reality, to become so emotionally invested in a narrative or character that they are moved to tears' (Pope 5). While this may be true for fans around the world, the phenomenon is especially observable in Japan where the different forms of media promote intense fan culture. For example, anime and manga create huge fanbases by selling merchandise related to the characters, lotteries for special items, and even music concerts or live events with voice actors. Anime and manga culture is so central to Japanese popular culture that there is even an entire section of the city of Tokyo that is dedicated to it where streets are lined with goods stores and thematic cafés. Fans display a strong affect for the book, tv show, or videogame that they enjoy, which sometimes results in the destructive behaviour described earlier. Kristy Sedgman writes that '[w]hen audiences *do* engage in fannish behaviours, the media response reveals broader social anxieties around arts-fandom as a cultural phenomenon' (194); however, Japanese media treats fans, known as *otaku*, differently by encouraging and promoting fannish behaviour for capital gain.

While at first glance anime, manga, and Shakespeare do not have much in common, the opposite effect is observed by examining the relationship between popular culture and high culture. When Shakespeare is adapted into popular media in Japan, he is more often than not labelled as *shōjo* (少女), a subgenre known for its feminine aesthetic. Even though Shakespeare is also adapted into more masculine spheres, such as in Kurosawa Akira's films or Ninagawa Yukio's stage productions, Shakespeare generates a predominantly feminine fanbase when adapted into anime and manga. When combining Shakespeare with Japanese popular culture, we see how the two forms of fandom combine to create an interesting mix of audience as monetary and media consumers. Through this observation we can learn more about Shakespeare's 'afterlife' as a canonical writer but also as a popular icon. With this in mind, this paper therefore addresses the juxtaposition of the Shakespeare fandom with popular culture fandoms and how the two combine to create a uniquely feminine space in Japanese media and theatre.

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Fish, Flesh, and Blood: Adapting Shakespeare's *Macbeth* to *Mandaar*

Taarini Mookherjee (Queen's University Belfast)

Through the play, Shakespeare's *Macbeth* transforms from 'Bellona's bridegroom' to a 'butcher,' his prowess at taking life reframed in context from sanctioned slaughter on the battlefield to indiscriminate bloodshed that sees him betray all he holds dear. In *Mandaar*, a 2021 Bengali webseries, the Scottish play is adapted and set in Geilput, a small fictional fishing village in West Bengal where the police, politicians, and residents are all seemingly controlled by Dablu Bhai (Duncan), the owner of the local fishery. The show underscores Mandaar's (*Macbeth*'s) transformation, devoting the first episode to the bloodless murder of his childhood friend Mokai (*Macdonwald*), one amongst a series of actions he is compelled to perform on behalf of his boss, Dablu Bhai, while using the end of the series to reveal that Mandaar is the prophesied monster of the show's opening scene, no longer the compliant puppet of his boss or his wife. In adapting this play to the audio-visually dense long-form medium of television, *Mandaar* releases and transforms the linguistic image clusters that haunt the Shakespeare play (e.g., birds, clothing, blood, babies, food) into a culturally specific filmscape (e.g., fish, food, alcohol), saturating the screen with references, echoes, and reflections of a series of repeated motifs. This essay traces the most prominent among these: the motif of fish—as prey, as flesh, as food, and as phallic symbol. From episode titles that deploy idiomatic Bengali phrases involving fish, to prominent aerial shots dominated by fishing boats positioned to look like a monstrous beached sea monster, to fishing implements as tools of murder, to closeups of everyday meals of fried fish, this paper suggests that fish function as a coded visual, aural, and gustatory language for the show, providing a frame for reading its exploration of greed, desire, and excessive consumption.

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Asian Shakespeares: Translation, Adaptation, Interpretation

Tanya Schmidt Morstein (Stanford University)

Scholarship on *The Banquet* (dir. Xiaogang Feng, 2006), a Chinese adaptation of *Hamlet*, has powerfully shown how the film repositions Empress Wan/Gertrude at the center of the narrative (see work by Mark Thornton Burnett and Rebecca Chapman, among others). In general, less attention has been given to the film's secondary female character, Qing Nü/Ophelia. At first, Qing/Ophelia seems like a simple foil for Empress Wan/Gertrude. Whereas Empress Wan/Gertrude models how to make her face into a mask, Qing/Ophelia is described as innocent and sincere, unwilling to make her face into that which she is not. And yet, as this paper argues, Qing's earnestness emerges in theatrical ways, and this theatricality propels and ultimately cements the adaptation as a tragedy. Two times she bursts onto the screen, interrupting and necessitating a redirection of otherwise carefully maneuvered royal puppeteering. Each dramatic interjection, which occurs on the court's stage-space, tragically leads to the escalation and extension of violence. If Empress Wan/Gertrude and Qing/Ophelia both act as kinds of players whose performances aim to carve out space for their desires in the male-dominated state, they also end up disrupting each other's plans, as the film shows that the court has not enough room for both of their agency.

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Expressing Fear in the *Kunqu Macbeth*: Intercultural Shakespeare and the Language of Gesture

David Nee (Harvard University)

This essay poses the question of how Shakespeare's plays encode the language of gesture, and how that gestural language is transmitted and transformed in intercultural adaptation in general and Chinese opera Shakespeare in particular. Western critics responding to the first wave of Chinese opera Shakespeare adaptations praised Chinese opera's use of a highly codified language of gesture to translate, in the form of visual spectacle, Shakespeare's verbal characterization and psychological observation. A frequent assumption was that Shakespeare provided the words and Chinese opera the spectacle: that, in one critic's formulation, "Western theater verbalizes; East Asian theater visualizes." More recently, such responses have been criticized for reducing Chinese opera to visuality as such, and neglecting Chinese opera's equally complex verbal and musical dimensions. Yet one circumstance missing from critical discussion on the topic is that Shakespeare's theater employed its own forms of highly codified gesture—a topic subjected to close study decades ago by scholars like David Bevington and Joseph Roach—and that Chinese opera Shakespeare thus involves interaction between at least two systems of gestural language, each with their own complex transmission histories. This essay focuses on how the text of *Macbeth* encodes the gestural language of fear, and how one Chinese opera Shakespeare rendition, Huang Zuolin's *The Story of Bloody Hands* (1987/2008) reactivates Shakespeare's gestural language in a manner that sheds new light on how Shakespeare's plays serve as conduits for the global circulation of gestural forms.

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'All China will ring of it': The translation and adaptation of Lamb's *Tales from Shakespeare*

Shuo Niu (University of York)

In 1806, hard at work on his portion of the *Tales from Shakespeare*, Charles Lamb wrote to his friend Thomas Manning, humorously boasting that 'All China will ring of it by and by' (Lamb 228). Lamb's wish was not realised until a century later. In 1903, a Shanghai-based publisher translated a few of the plays from Lamb's *Tales from Shakespeare*. This made Lamb's book the first 'Shakespearean' book to be introduced to China, under the title *Xie Wai Qi Tan* (《解外奇譚》), which can be roughly translated as 'Fantastic Stories from Abroad'. A year later, Lin Shu and Wei Yi completed a full, and better-known translation of the *Tales* under the name *Yin Bian Yan Yu* (《吟边燕语》; roughly 'Beautiful poetry and lyrics from frontier borders'), which became a significant phenomenon in modern Chinese literature. This paper explores the translation, publication and circulation of the *Tales from Shakespeare* in the early twentieth century. It asks why Lamb's text was translated at this moment and draws on the paratexts and histories of both volumes to better understand the reception of the *Tales* and their relation to ideas of 'Shakespeare' and Western literary culture more broadly. I argue that the translations, and especially *Yin Bian Yan Yu*, served as a foundation for the promotion and development of Shakespeare, leading to the creation of

‘Civilised Drama’ (文明戏), which continues to have a lasting influence. In conclusion, I offer a brief reading of a key Shakespearean scene, showing how Lamb adapted Shakespeare and how Lin Shu and Wei Yi, in turn, translated Lamb, creating a Chinese ‘Shakespeare’ with an enduring legacy.

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Anti-representation, Anti-consumerism and Theatre Identity: Tang Shu Wing and his *Macbeth* (2015)

Bin Brittany Tang (Chinese University of Hong Kong)

This essay explores the innovative theatrical identity of Hong Kong director Tang Shu Wing, particularly focusing on his production of *The Tragedy of Macbeth* premiered in 2015 at London’s Globe Theatre and rerun in Europe and Asia. Tang’s distinctive artistic style, characterized by physical theatre and minimalistic aesthetics, challenges the mainstream of realistic representation of Shakespearean works and confronts issues of consumerism.

Through an analysis of the background of Tang Shu Wing’s theatre style, including his study and training in France where he received profound influence from Vsevolod Meyerhold and Jerzy Grotowski, this essay examines how Eastern and European theatrical principles converge in Tang’s unique artistic vision. Tang’s theatre integrates Eastern physical practices such as Tai Chi and Yoga, Asian theatres, namely Chinese Xiqu and Japanese Kabuki/Noh theatre and European avant-garde theatre theories, resulting in a hybrid theatrical language that creates double alienation for both cultures when performed back in Hong Kong.

Macbeth exemplifies Tang’s commitment to anti-consumerism and anti-representation in theatre. Departing from commodified depictions of violence and bloodshed, Tang employs minimalist staging and physical storytelling to convey the essence of Shakespeare’s tragedy. By eschewing sensationalism, Tang offers a thought-provoking critique of the commodification of Shakespearean works and naturalist theatre as well.

In conclusion, Tang Shu Wing’s production of *Macbeth* serves as a testament to the transformative power of physical theatre in transcending cultural boundaries and interrogating social norms. By forging a path of artistic innovation rooted in both Eastern and European traditions, Tang offers a compelling alternative to consumeristic commentaries of Shakespeare and theatre, advocating for a deeper engagement with the theatrical experience beyond mere spectacle and commodification.

It is perplexing and disturbing that Hong Kong, ‘the world city of Asia’, a place with a long history of East-Western cultural encounters, is continuously found sidelined in the discourse of Asian Shakespeare. This paper thrusts Hong Kong Shakespeare onto the forefront by spotlighting Tang Shu Wing’s production of *Macbeth* (2015). A local Hong Kong theatre director, Tang Shu Wing staged twice his works at the Globe Theatre and earned international acclaim in the most recent decade with his inventive physical and minimalistic theatre. This study analyzes how his *Macbeth* is informed by and channels the theatre philosophy of Meyerhold and Grotowski, and theatricality in Asian theatres, aiming to investigate how the Hong Kong director bridges the gap between Shakespeare, Hong Kong’s local concerns and global/Asian Shakespeare with his theatrical language. While many reimaginations of the Scottish play rival to stage lifelike scenes of bloodshed, murders, shrieking and horror to elicit the audience’s adrenaline, Tang Shu Wing’s approach disrupts the norm. His *Macbeth* presents a remarkable departure with anti-naturalistic and anti-illusionistic elements, offering

a refrained, poeticized, minimalist portrayal of violence, murder and superstition. This alternative perspective challenges the commodification of Shakespeare, urging a reconsideration of the artistic innovation in the Shakespearean industrial line.

This paper also argues that ascribing the enduring and global appeal of Shakespeare to universalism finds only a convenient rationale for the bard's complicated interaction with the global. The process of discerning the nuances means to demystify universalism. Tang Shu Wing, a devoted advocate of Shakespeare's universalism, actually aims to seek an 'empty space' from classics for his theatrical experimentation. This empty space, a de-individualized, de-geographicalized, dehistoricized realm wherein actors concentrate on performing common humanity to reveal their most intrinsic selves, becomes a canvas for Tang's exploration of Grotowski's proposition—'theatre as encounter' with inspiration drawn from global performance cultures. Underpinned by a humanist philosophy that places emphasis on examining themes related to anticonsumerism, gender issues, and social matters, Tang Shu Wing's *Macbeth* is coupled with an invigorating theatrical style marked by physical expression and a minimalist aesthetic, and is inspired by the theatre philosophy of Meyerhold, Grotowski, and Asian theatrical traditions. This unique fusion not only marks an innovative theatre identity for Hong Kong Shakespeare but also provides a distinctive contribution to the evolving landscape of Asian and global Shakespeare.

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Transforming *Macbeth*'s Scotland to *Maqbool*'s Underworld in Mumbai

Pankhuri Singh (University of Exeter)

Maqbool which is the first of the films in the Bhardwaj Trilogy was released on 30 January 2004 in India. It instantly caught the attention of Shakespeare scholars in India, as the film was an acknowledged adaptation of *Macbeth*¹. In my paper I am discussing about the ways in which Vishal Bhardwaj, the filmmaker, has indigenised the Shakespearean play in the Indian setting. The paper will be examining *Maqbool* as an example of Mumbai Noir films, as stated by Poonam Trivedi who writes about *Maqbool* as being: 'a literally dark (noir) film'.

In the paper, I am also analysing how Bhardwaj seeks inspiration from historical events in Indian medieval history, making the film a modern take on the historical drama. *Maqbool* is heavily influenced from historical facts and Bhardwaj models his characters in the film along the historical figures from the medieval times. I will be investigating the use of motifs like the *navamsam* chart², pistol, drums and cauldron in the film. Bhardwaj has used these motifs to indigenise the play and adapt to the modern retelling of the play.

An in-depth analysis of the songs and dance sequence and how they add to the progression of the plot forward will be made, along with focusing on the complexities of characters in the

¹ After the name of the film: *Maqbool*, the text on the screen reads 'Based on William Shakespeare's *Macbeth*' (00:03:54).

² *Navamsam* or D9 Chart is a divisional chart which is of immense importance in Vedic astrology. It is used for predicting aspects related to especially career, future, marriage, destiny and health among other things. The findings of the chart depend on the planetary positions and their effect (Radhakrishnan, Sundarjee, Swamy).

adapted work. In *Maqbool* Bhardwaj employs a unique narrative approach by introducing adapted characters that blend elements from the original play while also imbuing in them distinctive features, which in turn indigenises the play in the Indian setting. For example, in *Macbeth*, Fleance is a minor character, appearing in certain scenes and having just two lines for himself. He is also unheard of after he escapes from the site where he and Banquo were planned to be assassinated by Macbeth (3.1.135), even when he is instructed by his father to take 'revenge' (3.3.18) for the betrayal they faced at the hands of Macbeth. Bhardwaj combines the characters of Fleance and Malcolm in Guddu and ensures that Maqbool is accounted for the crimes he did.

Finally coming back to the theme of the seminar I will be drawing parallels and showcasing the similarities and commonalities between two Asian adaptations of Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, *Maqbool* and *Throne of Blood* (*Kumonosu Jo*), by Akira Kurosawa (1957).

Tripti Pillai (Coastal Carolina University) will be joining as a discussant