

Film Studies

Feature Article



CAESURAE: POETICS OF CULTURAL TRANSLATION
Combined Volumes (3:2 & 4: 1)
(ISSN 2454 -9495)

2019-2020

Adaptation as Cultural Appropriation: Transnational Frames and Local Flavors

****Swarnavel Eswaran***

The discourse surrounding adaptation and remakes in the context of films foreground the critique of the stereotypical analysis of a text for its similarities with and differences from the original. The fidelity criticism, particularly in the context of adapting from literature seems to have run its course.¹

Th[e] common determination to judge an adaptation's "success" only in relation to its faithfulness or closeness to the "original" or "source" text threatens to reinforce the current low estimation (in terms of cultural capital) of what is, in fact, a common and persistent way humans have always told and retold stories. Shakespeare transferred his culture's narratives from page to stage and made them available to a whole new audience; we did not begrudge him his creative borrowing. Baz Luhrmann transferred one of these, *Romeo and Juliet*, from page to screen, updating it in the process and arguably making it available to a whole new teen audience; the critics excoriated him for his irreverence and nerve. His film, *Shakespeare's Romeo & Juliet*, was deemed unfaithful to its source, despite using most of the text and action. Our starting point, therefore, is the question: how useful is this kind of reductive judgmental discourse in determining either the artistic significance of a work or its cultural impact or even its vitality?

This essay uses the above interrogative stance of Gary R. Bortolotti and Linda Hutcheon as its point of departure and attempts to shed light on the specificity of the local in the choice of the

Film Studies

Feature Article



CAESURAE: POETICS OF CULTURAL TRANSLATION
Combined Volumes (3:2 & 4: 1)
(ISSN 2454 -9495)

2019-2020

material (film/literature) to be adapted. The appeal of the primary source is predicated on its presumed/anticipated resonance with the audiences for whom it is made. But equally significant is the possibilities it offers for modification or revision. For instance, a genre like the melodrama centered on family and its appeal to audiences across demographics has had greater appeal to filmmakers from Tamilnadu looking for subjects to be recycled for its audience, especially in South India. For instance, Gemini Studios remade Chaplin's *City Lights* (dir. Charlie Chaplin, 1931) as *Rajee En Kanmani/Rajee my darling* (dir. K.J. Mahadevan, 1954). Whereas, the Westerns from Hollywood are not on top of the list among A filmmakers as they are among some of the B-movie icons.² Similarly, gangster films have also had limited appeal to the producers from Tamilnadu, except in the case of films like *The Godfather* (dir. Francis Ford Coppola, 1972) where family plays a central role and its genre could be argued to be at the intersection of the gangster and the melodrama. Nonetheless, very rarely we see a film being remade where the entire story is retold as in the original. In most cases the seduction is only toward specific ingredient(s) in the original, to invoke the masala paradigm of the Indian mainstream cinema, that lends itself to the flavor of the local when retooled for a regional audience. In Mani Ratnam's *Nayagan* (The Hero, 1987), the immigrant gangster patriarch is imported from *The Godfather* for its resonance but other flavors like his encounter with a prostitute and the later twist like his son-in-law being a police officer are added to deviate from the existential crisis of the don's family entering into an abyss of darkness due to the unavoidable violence it is caught in.

Film Studies

Feature Article



CAESURAE: POETICS OF CULTURAL TRANSLATION
Combined Volumes (3:2 & 4: 1)
(ISSN 2454 -9495)

2019-2020

The perceived cultural inclinations and the ethos of an audience are also not static as they keep changing with times and the sociopolitical conditions of the times of production. Of course, the reception has its bearing as per the time of a film's release. For instance, the genre of horror which was in the lesser frequent category has become the dominant genre along with comedy in contemporary Tamil cinema, particularly of the last decade. Indian cinema scholar Sangeeta Gopal has convincingly argued for the post-liberalization nuclear families as a major cause for such a trend in contemporary Hindi cinema or the New Bollywood cinema: ‘the genre’s basic dynamic - need for the victims to be isolated – enables the couples to be fully nucleated.’³ In the case of Tamil cinema too, nuclear families and the urban spaces have become the spaces inhabited by ghost figures and paranormal beings in recent times. More importantly, one could think of the Tamil genocide in Sri Lanka in 2009 and the indifference/helplessness of the Tamil populace in South India and its silent witnessing of the ethnic cleansing of a civilian population in the neighboring state as the marker of the shift in the paradigm when anxieties and fear had to be given a shape to confront the ghosts inside. Nonetheless, recent Tamil films blur the line and many of them are often (poorly made) comedies in the name of/marketed as horror flicks. Contemporary Tamil cinema picks ingredients from films across the world and creates its own masala that it becomes difficult to tie the ultimate product to a singular source.



In the context of such tendencies of the Tamil cinema, this

Film Studies

Feature Article



CAESURAE: POETICS OF CULTURAL TRANSLATION
Combined Volumes (3:2 & 4: 1)
(ISSN 2454 -9495)

2019-2020

essay tries to interrogate (trans)nationally and regionally the investment in particular kind of tropes to be reinvented or ingredients to be recycled or as in the case of *King Lear* and the Japanese director Akira Kurosawa's magnum opus *Ran* (1985), recreated. Such a premise, in my opinion, would enable the discourse on adaptation/remakes to move forward, from the inertia of the fidelity discourse where by default the original film/literature is the superior one, or the quantitative figures-driven franchise discourse of the corporate-consumer industry nexus, as it draws attention to the aesthetic desire for the original due to the possibilities it offers for reinventing/recycling. Its unique narrative or imagery provides the space to address the pragmatic/presumed demand among the targeted audiences, predicated on their investment in authorship and genre preferences. More importantly, through such a less traveled path, this essay provides a meditative space for enabling our understanding of the way an idea or a narrative move across diverse cultures as it gets reconfigured by the pulls and specificity of the local industry and the regional audiences.

However, before getting into Tamil cinema and transnational/regional adaptation/ remake, I would like to analyze in detail *Ran*, a loose adaptation of Shakespeare's *King Lear*, by Akira Kurosawa, the iconic global auteur from the East, along with illustrious filmmakers like Kenji Mizoguchi, Yasujiro Ozu, and Satyajit Ray, among others. *Ran* is different from the other mainstream film, *Gunasundari* (1955), which I discuss in my paper as it is not focusing on catering to a local audience alone. It is a film by a transnational auteur for a global audience as we can infer from the name of its French producer, Serge Silberman, one of the regular producers of Luis Bunuel, another great master of the cinema. Then the question arises what has

Film Studies

Feature Article



CAESURAE: POETICS OF CULTURAL TRANSLATION
Combined Volumes (3:2 & 4: 1)
(ISSN 2454 -9495)

2019-2020

Ran to do with *Gunasundari*, which is my object of inquiry in the later part of my essay. My answer would be the similarity in their objectives to borrow the narrative framework and the broad structure from the original to tell their own stories within a specific/local cultural milieu and their disavowal of the fidelity discourse, through their loose adaptation, surrounding the original text. One could argue that the films I am analyzing were looking out for frames to fill in their local form and content. In case of Kurosawa, it was the search for an ideal canvas to paint the nuanced hues of his philosophical meditation on life and death, and power and destruction, through a period drama involving a daimyo - a Japanese warlord - and his family. Whereas in the case of *Gunasundari*, a loose adaption of *King Lear*, Shakespeare's skeletal frame of a possessive father's need for an acknowledgment from his three daughters is used to mount a mythical search for a precious stone that would cure the ailment of the protagonist King.

Ran: King Lear and His Sons

Kurosawa made *Ran*, arguably his last critically acclaimed film to match the glory of his earlier iconic achievements like *Rashomon* (1950) and *Seven Samurai* (1954). *Ran*, an adaptation of Shakespeare's *King Lear* is also inspired by the Japanese legend *Mori Motonari*. Christopher Hoile's detailed analysis of the complex relationship between *King Lear* and *Ran* focuses on the characterizations of Shakespeare and Kurosawa. In the Japanese source of the film, "the story of Mori Motonari (1497-1571), a daimyo [- a Japanese feudal lord -] of the late Muromachi period, and his three sons," Takamoto, Motoharu, and Takakage, there is an anecdote in which "Mori demonstrates the strength of a family who fight as a unit by having each son break a single arrow. But when each tries to break three arrows held together, they cannot."⁴ However, in *Ran*,

Film Studies

Feature Article



CAESURAE: POETICS OF CULTURAL TRANSLATION
Combined Volumes (3:2 & 4: 1)
(ISSN 2454 -9495)

2019-2020

Kurosawa subverts this classical theme of unity as strength: “when it is the turn of the third son, [Saburo,] the Cordelia figure, he breaks the three over his knee-thus making a mockery of his father's demonstration of unity” (p. 30). Hoile points to how in *Ran* such a subversion of the anecdote’s intention, through its juxtaposition with the *King Lear* narrative, parallels Kurosawa’s appropriation/subversion of the *King Lear*’s characters for his revenge theme.

The test of the three arrows replaces the love-test in *King Lear*, but it is not equivalent to it. It emphasizes the breaking of a bond not between the father and his sons but the bond among the sons themselves. Since primogeniture had already been established by the period Kurosawa has chosen, his Lear's folly seems to be in dividing his kingdom and expecting harmony rather than in expecting the continued love of his children for him. By this point, it is already clear that the emphasis in this half of Kurosawa's plot is on strife in this world. ... Kurosawa emphasizes the supernatural aspect of strife in his integration of the Gloucester plot with the Lear plot (Ibid).

One could argue the complexity of the revenge theme framed through a period narrative to reflect on our contemporary life and interrogate the issues of power and justice are central to Kurosawa’s authorship. For instance, *Rashomon*, *Seven Samurai*, *Red Beard*, *Hidden Fortress*, *Yojimbo* among others. The landscape of war associated with an aging king is undoubtedly attractive to Kurosawa, but the patrilinear society and his investment in Samurai genre lead to the replacement of *King Lear*’s daughters with Hidetora’s sons in *Ran*. More important, it is not the yearning for love but the elusive peace which marks Hidetora as different from King Lear and sheds light on the reason why Kurosawa wanted to revise and reinvent *King Lear* in the 1980s. Besides, Kurosawa’s investment in the Buddhist philosophy of *karma* and rebirth also points to his dissatisfaction with Shakespeare’s *King Lear*:

Film Studies

Feature Article



CAESURAE: POETICS OF CULTURAL TRANSLATION
Combined Volumes (3:2 & 4: 1)
(ISSN 2454 -9495)

2019-2020



“What has always troubled me about 'King Lear' is that Shakespeare gives his characters no past. We are plunged directly into the agonies of their present dilemmas without knowing how they came to this point. ... How did Lear acquire the power that, as an old man, he abuses with such disastrous effects? Without knowing his past, I've never really understood the ferocity of his

daughters' response to Lear's feeble attempts to shed his royal power. In 'Ran' I've tried to give Lear a history. I try to make clear that his power must rest upon a lifetime of bloodthirsty savagery. Forced to confront the consequences of his misdeeds, he is driven mad. But only by confronting his evil head on can he transcend it and begin to struggle again toward virtue.”⁵

Ran becomes an original creation due to the specificity of this cultural search for the reasons behind the “ferocity ... bloodthirsty savagery ... [and Hidetora’s] misdeeds” (Ibid). More important, the focus on causes in the narrative might enable our coming to terms with our predicament in an otherwise illogical world. As Joan Pong Linton points out “[t]his lifetime of savagery spans five decades of fighting and treacherous domestic alliances. Specifically, Hidetora married his two older sons, Taro and Jiro, to daughters from rivals clans, the ferocious Kaede and [the gentle] Su” (p. 341).⁶ Linton also quotes Ann Thompson’s claim regarding the emphasis “on social network and relationships” in *Ran*, wherein “the personal is replaced by the domestic and the historical,” and suggests “that the personal is not replaced but located within

Film Studies

Feature Article



CAESURAE: POETICS OF CULTURAL TRANSLATION
Combined Volumes (3:2 & 4: 1)
(ISSN 2454 -9495)

2019-2020

the family as the institution that mediates societal violence, and this mediation ensures that the personal is inevitably political and historical, even as the inheritance of land and power is inextricable from a legacy of socialized violence” (Ibid). Kurosawa’s investment in the domestic sphere, as the mirror of the bleak landscape outside wherein the unending power struggle is going on in a spectacle of burning castles and falling bodies/corpses, is predicated on the figure of Kaede: After marrying his first two sons into the rival clans, Hitedora takes “advantage of their relaxed vigilance” (Ibid), and violently murders their families in their very castles.

Samuel Crowl in his illuminating essay on *Ran* details the significance of gender reversal in *Ran*:

[Kurosawa] makes sons of Shakespeare's daughters partly in response to Japanese Samurai tradition but also to make an even more daring gender reversal ... by collapsing Cornwall and Edmund into a single female character, Kaede, [who] burns with a desire for revenge for being born a woman and made a victim of patriarchal power ... Taro' s castle was once her father's, and she means to make it hers by the same bold means Edmund employs to move himself from the margins to the center of masculine power in Shakespeare's play: brazen sexuality and self-assurance. [Whereas| Lady Sue’s] mild, religious manner links her with Albany. In each instance Kurosawa creates in these two women richer and more central figures than either Cornwall or Albany (p. 112) ... In creating these gender reversals from his Shakespearean source Kurosawa may have succumbed to Samurai culture's historic exclusion of women from public life, but in creating sisters-in-law rather than brothers-in-law and by merging Cornwall with Edmund in his

Film Studies

Feature Article



CAESURAE: POETICS OF CULTURAL TRANSLATION
Combined Volumes (3:2 & 4: 1)
(ISSN 2454 -9495)

2019-2020

creation of Kaede he managed to raise issues of female power and legitimacy that extend and transcend Shakespeare's text (p. 115).⁷

In this context, Anthony Davies has insightfully delineated the earthly and spiritual plane associated with gender in *Ran*:

Kurosawa has layered the conflicts on two levels so that the masculine consanguineous level of strife involves the sons – more evidently in war among themselves rather than with their father ... The feminine, non-consanguineous relations – of whom the Lady Kaede is the essential dynamic source of hostility to Hidetora ... – operate on a spiritual level. On the one hand, Lady Sue and her brother Tsurumaru bring an infusion of Buddhism into the drama while on the other, Lady Kaede has pledged to the ancestral spirits her undertaking to bring about the fall of the Ichimonji clan.⁸



Kaede tells her husband Taro, "My family was murdered by your father ... And now, I am back in the castle seized from my family ... How impatiently I have longed for this day." Though the characterization of Kaede recalls that of Edmund, as observed by scholars like Cowl, she also differs from him as she is preoccupied with revenge on Hidetora for her past rather than seeking power. We come to know of the many people whose lives have been ruined by Hidetora Ichimonji

Film Studies

Feature Article



CAESURAE: POETICS OF CULTURAL TRANSLATION
Combined Volumes (3:2 & 4: 1)
(ISSN 2454 -9495)

2019-2020

throughout *Ran* including Tsurumaru, the brother of the tender Su, whose eyes have been gouged out by him due to “the imagined threat he posed for his power.” Thus Hidetora, though having certain significant similarities, is vastly different from Lear and his lamentations regarding his being "more sinned against than sinning." If *Mori Motonari* preceded *King Lear* while Kurosawa was writing the screenplay of *Ran*, the archetypes of Shakuni/Kaikeyi figure from the epics Mahabharatha/Ramayana would haunt most Indian psyche as presaging the unquenchable thirst for revenge on the part of Kaede. Culture, therefore, precedes adaptation, not only during the process of adapting/remaking but also during the reception/interpretation.

The meaning, therefore, could be argued to be constantly shifting like the Lacanian signifier, according to the culture and the narratives it is embedded in. The Lacanian point de capitane where the unbuttoning leads from the sliding metonymical signifiers to the glimpse of the signified underneath occurs during the closure when we see the lonely and forlorn Tsurumaru perilously tottering on the mountaintop near the edges of the cliff. The scroll of Buddha too has fallen off from his hand. Amidst Kurosawa’s compassionate advice, during his later years that we have to learn to live in a world without the Buddha, which silently reverberates from the mountains, suddenly it dawns on us that the vulnerable Tsurumaru’s condition of stepping into/anticipating the impending doom is reflexive of our own predicament and existential crisis in this inhumane and unimaginably violent world. It is relevant to note that Kurosawa was deeply concerned about the power struggle in the backdrop of nuclear weapons in contemporary times. He was deeply affected by and could not forget the heartless devastation due to the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.⁹ Retroactively, the end of the film leads us to the beginning of *Ran* and

Film Studies

Feature Article



CAESURAE: POETICS OF CULTURAL TRANSLATION
Combined Volumes (3:2 & 4: 1)
(ISSN 2454 -9495)

2019-2020

gives us an insight into the provenance of *Ran*. Kurosawa wanted to layer his despair regarding the disunity of people in the backdrop of an aging king and the bleak landscape of war and destruction, predicated on the hunger for power, patriarchy, and revenge. Thus, *Ran* is far removed Kurosawa's signature imagery of the sun shining through the leaves despite the gloom, during the key moments as in *Rashomon* and *Seven Samurai*.

Later Kurosawa and *Ran*

As Micheal Wilmington points out, “[w]here Kurosawa loves the seven samurai[s] led by the wise old Kambei (Takashi Shimura), glorying in their raffish camaraderie and rough-hewn courage, he is unsparing toward *Ran*'s self-destroying old emperor, Hidetora (Tatsuya Nakadai), whose ceding of his empire to his sons, Taro (Akira Terao), Jiro (Jinpachi Nezu), and Saburo (Daisuke Ryu), is followed by an avalanche of betrayal and bloodshed.”¹⁰ He also notes how Kurosawa's worldview grew more pessimistic from *Red Beard* onward, and how the darker subtexts in films like *Drunken Angel* (1948), *Stray Dog* (1949), and *Rashomon* (1950) came to the fore, especially in *Ran*. More importantly, “[t]hat pessimistic view of human nature and justice, which he shared with the great Russian novelists ... began, in some cases, to swallow up his fictional world” (ibid).

Film Studies

Feature Article



CAESURAE: POETICS OF CULTURAL TRANSLATION
Combined Volumes (3:2 & 4: 1)
(ISSN 2454 -9495)

2019-2020

“Instead, *Ran*’s tide of events is as pitiless toward [the last son] Saburo as it is toward everyone else, the wicked—Kaede [the elder daughter-in-law], Taro, Jiro—as well as the good: Jiro’s Buddhist wife, Lady Sue (the younger daughter-in-law); the epicene fool, Kyoami, a girlish jester (played by the drag entertainer Peter, in a striking departure from Kurosawa’s usual machismo) who goads and binds himself to his master, Hidetora; Sue’s blind flutist brother, Tsurumaru (Takeshi Nomura), who, in the film’s terrifying last image, is seen teetering on the edge of a cliff, and an abyss ... That resolution has a contemporary edge ... The secret subject of *Ran*—as Kurosawa explained to me in a 1985 interview—is

the threat of nuclear apocalypse” (Ibid).



The image of the lonely Tsurumaru standing close at the edge of the cliff, with “a bloodred sunset flaming behind him” (Ibid), with the scroll of Buddha that had fallen from his hands

hanging on the mountainside below recall Kurosawa’s philosophical investment in *Ran*: “What I was trying to get at in *Ran* – and this was there from the script stage – was that the gods or God or whoever it is observing human events is feeling sadness about how human beings destroy

Film Studies

Feature Article



CAESURAE: POETICS OF CULTURAL TRANSLATION
Combined Volumes (3:2 & 4: 1)
(ISSN 2454 -9495)

2019-2020

each other, and powerlessness to affect human beings' behaviour" (As told to Michael Sragow, 1986).¹¹

Thus, *Ran* sheds light on Kurosawa's authorship in the context of his pessimistic worldview and the samurai genre, which enables him to set his narrative in the medieval period to address contemporary issues. More important, is the history, sociopolitics and the Japanese culture and Buddhist philosophy, which inspired *Ran* right from the beginning, when Kurosawa was contemplating the narrative content for the form he had in mind: Kurosawa was known for his paintings and in the decade prior to the shooting of *Ran*, he had meticulously hand-painted the detailed storyboard of the film. Kurosawa's famous storyboard paintings were showcased during the Cannes Film Festival (Wilmington, Ibid). In the last three decades since its release, *Ran* has grown in its stature, as many iconic critics ranked it as one among Kurosawa's masterpieces, along with *Rashomon* and *Seven Samurai*. One of the reasons for the appeal of *Ran* is the contemporary proliferation of nuclear power, the horror of which Kurosawa could poignantly forebode, despite our awareness of its devastating effects after the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Its resonance is also because of the way images can be interpreted according to times and the dexterous intertextuality of *Ran* which demands multiple viewing and reveals its cultural specificity as well as universally topicality every time you watch it. In the case of *Ran*, the fidelity weighing scale regarding adaptation could be applied only to the spirit of Kurosawa and the way he could transfer it on screen, rather than the copious text of Shakespeare's *King Lear*, as exemplified by the many versions of the BBC. One of the reasons for our investment in adaptations is in its potential for interpretation/meaning.

Film Studies

Feature Article



CAESURAE: POETICS OF CULTURAL TRANSLATION **Combined Volumes (3:2 & 4: 1)** **(ISSN 2454 -9495)**

2019-2020

According to Roman Jakobson, “the meaning of any linguistic sign is its translation into some further, alternative sign”¹² (1959/2012: 127). The meaning is therefore constantly in flux as it keeps getting produced by the way signs are interpreted. As Anthony Pym notes, "rather than represent a previous meaning, translation would be the active production of meaning." Drawing from Jacobson's three kinds of translation, “‘intralingual’ (i.e. any rewording within one language), ‘interlingual’(rewording between languages), or ‘intersemiotic’ (interpretation between different sign systems, as when a piece of music interprets a poem),” as a consequence of semiosis, Pym argues for all language use as translation:

Once you decide that translation is a process rather than a product, you can find evidence of that process virtually everywhere. Any use of language (or semiotic system) that rewords or reworks any other piece of language (or semiotic system) can be seen as the result of a translational process. And since languages are based precisely on the repetition of utterances in different situations, producing different but related meanings, just as all texts are made meaningful by intertextuality, all language use can be seen as translation.¹³



Jacobson's theorization of the intersemiotic translation as the interpretation between different sign systems has

Film Studies

Feature Article



CAESURAE: POETICS OF CULTURAL TRANSLATION
Combined Volumes (3:2 & 4: 1)
(ISSN 2454 -9495)

2019-2020

relevance for Kurosawa's adaptation of Shakespeare's *King Lear* as *Ran* (1985). *Ran* is a classic example of the eclectic borrowing of sources that is at the heart of the *mélange* called cinema. Consider for instance, the Gustav Mahler-inspired musical compositions for the film by Taru Takemitsu which enables the contemplation of the horror surrounding the darkness of power and ego. Such an assemblage certainly waits for its meaning through interpretation. *Ran* is a classic example of "repetition without replication" (to borrow Linda Hutcheon's terminology) as well not only through the unique way it was conceived and created as a film but also in the way it is constantly remade through reception. In 2000, after fifteen years of its initial release it was rereleased in a big way all over the world. *Ran* exemplifies Jacobson's claim regarding "the repetition of utterances in different situations, producing different but related meanings" (Ibid, p. 150). Here I would also like to emphasize the significance of the language of Kurosawa's cinema in the translation of his written/adapted screenplay on screen. His use of color in *Ran*, like in his later films after the 1960s, was

"more self-consciously picturesque, somewhat less spontaneous and real than a *Rashomon* or a *Seven Samurai* ... His filmmaking technique began to seem more painterly, more classical, and even sober. But if he no longer sought infallibly to rouse and entertain us in the way of his fifties films, he still aimed to strike to the core of existence and the world's greatest fear." ... The battles are often shown from a vast distance, whereas in the fifties films, we are in the middle of the action ... His signature had been the use of simultaneous three-camera setups and furious editing; in *Ran*, he shows everything mostly from a single angle, often in continuous takes, with the editing so discreet and inevitable that we barely notice it—save for such poetic devices as the first great battle scene at Saburo's castle, shown in ritualistic tableaux that eliminate spontaneity" (Wilmington, Ibid).

Film Studies

Feature Article



CAESURAE: POETICS OF CULTURAL TRANSLATION
Combined Volumes (3:2 & 4: 1)
(ISSN 2454 -9495)

2019-2020

Nonetheless, all along his career, Kurosawa was known for his penchant for long shots and mid-long shots and his disdain for closeups. *Ran* too is marked by such an aesthetic. Kurosawa is also known for his mise-en-scene wherein many of his moving shots are long takes with a distinct beginning, middle and end. He is also known for often bookending his scenes with static painting-like shots and then often, as opposed to the classical Hollywood dictum of seamless editing, cutting into movement to segue into the next scene. While such an aesthetic enables Kurosawa's investment in the aesthetics of Japanese Noh theater, as exemplified by the body language and masks used in *Ran*, particularly by its lead actor Tatsuya Nakadai, as well as Buddhist iconography, it also marks him as a filmmaker who is informed about and proficient in painting. The striking primary colors he uses in the film reflect the colors he imagined during the storyboarding itself. The multiple translations in *Ran* across parable, play, painting, canonical literature, music and during its final realization on screen opens up spaces for meanings/interpretations through its multivocality. More important, every instance of such an interpretation illumines us on the specificity of culture and the way it gets translated. For instance, "Hidetora's final agony in being deprived of his son [Saburo] closes with 'It grows dark.' Hidetora's words are a commentary on the draining away of color from the closing sequence of the film" (Anthony Davies, *Ibid*).

In *King Lear*, Edmund orders Cordelia to be hanged and wants to intervene and prevent her death but it is too late. Later, Lear enters with her corpse, and dies in mourning. Finally, the play ends with a suggestion that Albany (and/or Edgar) will be the King. In *Ran*, the tragic

Film Studies

Feature Article



CAESURAE: POETICS OF CULTURAL TRANSLATION
Combined Volumes (3:2 & 4: 1)
(ISSN 2454 -9495)

2019-2020

catastrophe surrounding Hidetora Ichimonji and the ruins brought forth by war and violence are complete. The film ends with the lone and blind Tsurumaru in a long shot, enabling us to meditate on our own precarious existence in this world. Therefore, the draining away of color which parallels the distance offered through long shots is driven by the Buddhist axiom of “Samsara is Dukka/To live is to suffer,” and the invitation to contemplate/meditate on the futility of war and violence and the ephemerality of our existence.

The predicament of Tsurumaru also recalls Hidetora's words earlier in the film to Lady Su: When he asks her not to smile at but hate him for destroying her family, she says, "I don't hate you.



Everything is decided in our previous lives. The heart of Buddha embraces all things." Hidetora responds sternly, "Buddha, again. He is gone from this evil world." Tsurumaru's lonely image at the end is a

cultural translation of Kurosawa's bleak view of a world that is at the edge of a nuclear disaster. Kurosawa draws from the specificity of Noh aesthetics, wherein the form and content become one, to showcase the predicament of Tsurumaru who is left alone in a desolate world without a

Film Studies

Feature Article



CAESURAE: POETICS OF CULTURAL TRANSLATION
Combined Volumes (3:2 & 4: 1)
(ISSN 2454 -9495)

2019-2020

savior. Kurosawa acknowledges the influence of Noh: "*Essentially I am very Japanese. I like Japanese ceramics, Japanese painting—but I like the Noh best of all. ... I like it because it is the real heart, the core of all Japanese drama. Its degree of compression is extreme, and it is full of symbols, full of subtlety. ... in the Noh, style and story are one.*"¹⁴ Thus, even as *Ran* emblemizes Jacobson's inter-semiotic translation, it is also "a metaphor for understanding how the foreign and the familiar are inter-related in every form of cultural production," through the convergence of its story and style.¹⁵

King Lear* and Vijaya-Vauhini's *Gunasundari

According to M.L. Narasimham, the Telugu film critic, "folklore subjects" were popular since the time of the talkies. They were generally big hits. When K.V. Reddi (Kadiri Venkata Reddi), who had already given hits like *Bhakta Potana* (1942) and *Yogi Vemana* (1947), wanted to make a "folklore" film for Vauhini Studios, he drew "inspiration from Shakespeare's, 'King Lear,' ... while the English bard had made it a great tragedy, K.V. Reddi, [with his team of writers reinvented it] into a full-length entertainer and succeeded in making the movie an astounding success."¹⁶ S.V. Srinivas, the eminent scholar on Telugu cinema, cautions us:

[T]he folklore film has very little to do with 'folk tales' which are supposedly timeless, of indigenous origin and transmitted orally ... The popular press in Telugu has generated a large volume of 'folklore' which like the folklore film is a modern product and is not directly linked to 'authentic' folk tales. For example, *Chandamama*, packed with 'inauthentic' folktales, was started in July 1947 by B. Nagireddy and Chakrapani who later established Vijaya Pictures, the makers *Patala Bhairavi* (K. V. Reddy, 1951). But popular 'folklore' in the printed form also had a significant adult readership for a while and seemed

Film Studies

Feature Article



CAESURAE: POETICS OF CULTURAL TRANSLATION
Combined Volumes (3:2 & 4: 1)
(ISSN 2454 -9495)

2019-2020

to have grown in tandem with the detective novel as is evident from the advertisements for folklore novels in detective novels in the seventies.¹⁷



Nagireddy, the publisher of Chandamama was also one of the partners in Vauhini Studios, the producers of *Gunasundarai Katha*/The Tale of Gunasundari (dir. K.V. Reddy, 1949) in Telugu. The film was made two years after the launching of Chandamama, which was known for its “inauthentic” folktales. In fact, Nagireddy and Vauhini Studios’ investment in the folklore genre in cinema began with Gunasundari Katha. Later,

Nagireddy’s Vijaya Vauhini Studios became famous for its “folklore” hits, with the highly successful *Patala Bhiravi* and the iconic *Maya Bazaar* (dir. K.V. Reddy, 1957). Unlike in the case of Kurosawa and his *Ran*, where the text of *King Lear* provided the space for meditating on the futility of violence and man’s greed for power, *Gunasundari Katha* borrowed King Lear’s structure of a King with three daughters, wherein the last daughter loses the favor of her father due to her honesty and refusal of flattery, only to use it as a canvas for its investment in

Film Studies

Feature Article



CAESURAE: POETICS OF CULTURAL TRANSLATION
Combined Volumes (3:2 & 4: 1)
(ISSN 2454 -9495)

2019-2020

melodrama, fantasy, and special effects. *Gunasundari Katha* was later remade in Tamil by the same producers as *Gunasundari* (dir. K. Kameswara Rao, 1955), though it was not a success at the box office like its Telugu version. The Tamil version remained true to its original in Telugu except for the finesse in special effects as it was made six years after the original.

The narrative of the film revolves around its eponymous character Gunasundari (Savithri) rather than her father, King Ugrasena (S.V. Rangarao). The focus was, thus, shifted to Cordelia from King Lear after setting up the initial conflict between the father and daughter, regarding (false) expression of love, leading to the King's anger and her banishment from his kingdom. King Ugrasena had singlehandedly brought up and nurtured his daughters from their childhood due to the untimely passing away of his wife, after the delivery of their third daughter. On his sixtieth birthday, he asks his three daughters - Rupasundari, Hemasundari and Gunasundari – to reveal their love for him in his court filled with his ministers and the people. While the elder two daughters flatter their father by feeding to his need for the quantification of love, Gunasundari is honest and says that though she loves him and acknowledges his contributions as a father, her primary duty is to love and serve her (future) husband. Despite the demands of exclusive affection from a possessive father, she refuses to declare her unconditional and absolute love for him.

Consequently, the king is infuriated as he expected his favorite daughter to supersede his other daughters in flattering him. He vents his rage against Gunasundari by getting her married to an aged man, Deivadheenam, while simultaneously marrying of his other two daughters to his

Film Studies

Feature Article



CAESURAE: POETICS OF CULTURAL TRANSLATION
Combined Volumes (3:2 & 4: 1)
(ISSN 2454 -9495)

2019-2020

nephews, Haramathi and Kalamathi. When the king comes to know that Daivadheenam is not blind and deaf as he had thought and tries to beat him, he falls from the stairs and gravely injures himself. The king is advised that he can be cured only by the rays of the precious stone Mahendra Mani that is in Mahendra Hill. The three sons-in-law undertake the journey, Deivadheenam, in response to his wife's plea to save her father's life, the other two for their selfish interest in the throne, as the king has promised his kingdom to the one returning with the precious stone. Deivadheenam gets the stone but the other two cunningly snatch it from him only to be punished in the court by Deivadheenam who is disguised as a bear. Eventually, Deivadheenam true identity is revealed as he morphs from Bear-man to Devadheenam and, finally, a beautiful prince in the presence of the gypsies who, too, reveal their identity as Lord Shiva and his consort Goddess Parvathi.

The film ends with the recovered King with his entire family singing the praise of the heavenly beings.

As the brief synopsis indicates *King Lear*'s framework is limited to the early segment of the film till the point the King gets angry and throws Gunasundari and her husband out of his palace after her marriage. Thereafter, the film is invested in revealing through special effects the transformation of the prince due to the curse of his guru into Deivadheenam and later, a bear, and its reversal. The climax, based on a special effect, is predicated on the fluorescence of the precious stone which gets lit up through a secret mantra. On Deivadheenam the arrival of Deivadheenam, Gunasundari changes its gear from King Lear narrative to the familiar terrain of the special effects' wizardry of its producer Nagireddy and his Vijaya-Vauhini Studios. More

Film Studies

Feature Article



CAESURAE: POETICS OF CULTURAL TRANSLATION
Combined Volumes (3:2 & 4: 1)
(ISSN 2454 -9495)

2019-2020

important, the director Kadiri Venkata Reddy's collaboration with Vauhini Studios and their productions was instrumental in marking them as the providers of spectacular entertainment in the folkloric/fantasy genre apart from their regular staple of family socials, like all other studios of that period. It resulted in highly successful films like *Gunasundari Katha*, and the bilinguals *Patala Bhairavi*/ (and its Tamil version) *Pathala Bhairavi* in 1951, and *Maya Bazaar*, in Tamil and Telugu, in 1957. In 1955, when the studio wanted to remake *Gunasundari Katha* in Tamil, the title was shortened to just *Gunasundari*, and K. Kameswara Rao, who was the associate director in the Telugu version, was hired to direct the film. The Tamil film closely followed the screenplay of the original which was made six years ago. However, the finesse in the special effects and the sets during the various mythical locales as Deivadheenam travels in search of the precious stone, Mahendra Mani, mark the difference.

Deivadheenam's journey to the Mahendra Hill recalls the sequence in *Pathala Bhairavi* where the hero Raman along with his friend Anji go in search of the statuette.

“One of the highlights of *Pathala Bhairavi* is the climactic sequence wherein Anji, after having snatched the statuette back from the sorcerer, asks Pathala Bhairavi to transport the magical palace back again, along with its occupants, to Ujjayini.” The transportation of the magical palace was one of the highlights of the film.¹⁸

“The reason for its popularity is easy to understand, as the miniature work of the Mayamaligai (magical palace) flying over the mountains is matched aptly with the back projection technique used to showcase the fleeting snowclad mountains in the backdrop as

Film Studies

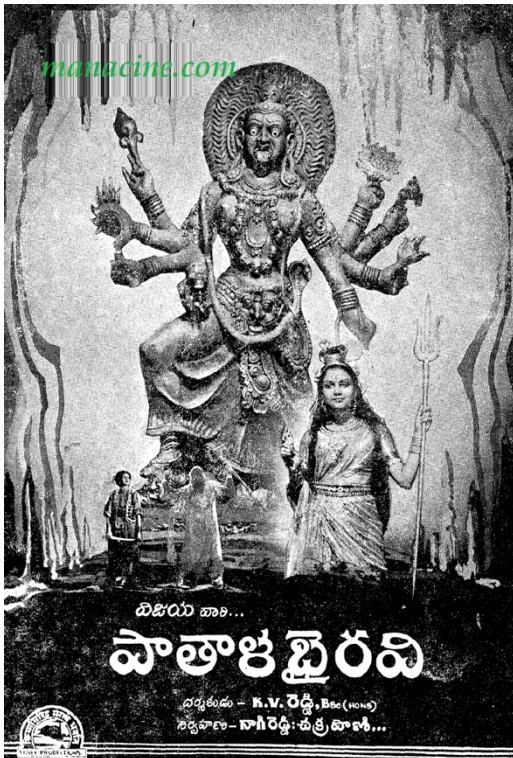
Feature Article



CAESURAE: POETICS OF CULTURAL TRANSLATION
Combined Volumes (3:2 & 4: 1)
(ISSN 2454 -9495)

2019-2020

Raman and the sorcerer intensify their attacks on each other inside the [moving/flying] palace with a huge ornamental window” (Ibid, p. 206).



One of the reasons for the failure of the Tamil version, therefore, could be reasoned to the lack of such special effects driven action sequence in *Gunasundari*. One could argue that the Telugu original was a success as it was made two years before the huge success of the bilingual *Pat(h)ala Bhairavi*. After such a phenomenal success, the increasing expectation of the audience from an in-house production of Vijaya-Vauhini, claiming itself to be a folkloric fantasy predicated on special effects could be argued to be one of the main reasons for the dismal failure of the Tamil version. Thus, the specificity of the audience and their expectation and the studio and the style

associated with it play a significant role when it comes to the failed remake of a highly successful original. The fidelity discourse regarding the faithfulness to the original, *King Lear* in this context, is not of much relevance here. What is significant here is that the skeletal framework of a canonical Shakespearean tragedy is appropriated by one of the major studios

Film Studies

Feature Article



CAESURAE: POETICS OF CULTURAL TRANSLATION
Combined Volumes (3:2 & 4: 1)
(ISSN 2454 -9495)

2019-2020

of South India to retool its filmic folklore, based on the morphing of characters and in-camera special effects, to invoke the mythos of the local.

The epics, like the *Ramayana*, offer space for the reimagining of their main characters in contemporary times. The parallels between the protagonists and the mythic characters from the past enable the resonance with the target audiences, besides providing the space for fantasy and action. Consider for instance, the protagonist Raman and his lover Indumathi in *Pathala Bhairavi*.

Pathala Bhairavi's analogy with the *Ramayana*, culminate in the penultimate sequence to the climax, wherein the sorcerer steals the statuette and transports both the magical palace of Raman, and the princess Indumathi: She is served and watched over by a number of women, whose behavior recalls the female demons who kept guard over Sita when she was abducted and kept captive in Ashokavanam (Ashoka Grove) in Lanka (Sri Lanka) by Ravana. Like Ravana, the sorcerer keeps tempting the princess with his wealth and power, but like Sita she doesn't budge, and keeps lamenting her separation from Raman and hurls abuses at the sorcerer (Ibid, p. 205).

In *Gunasundari*, too, there is the separation between the couple during the latter half when Deivadheenam goes in search of Mahendra Mani. The melodramatic trope of the separation of couple and the husband going in search of his abducted wife, as in the *Ramayana*, or the wife going after Yama, the lord of death, to bring her dead husband back to life, resonates not only with the themes of classical films like *Gunasundari* but also with the narratives of contemporary directors like Mani Ratnam, for instance, *Roja* (1992). In *Gunasundari*,

Film Studies

Feature Article



CAESURAE: POETICS OF CULTURAL TRANSLATION
Combined Volumes (3:2 & 4: 1)
(ISSN 2454 -9495)

2019-2020

however, the trope is inverted as the wife remains at home waiting for the precious stone to be brought by her husband to save her (reformed) father's life. By rendering the husband as deformed and cursed, the film suggests the Electra-like relationship of Gunasundari's deeper bond with her father even if she had tried to disavow it in the beginning. Such mythic searches offer a space for Vijaya-Vauhini Studios' and their in-house productions to showcase their strength as spacious studios, which specialize in special effects with the collaboration of technicians like Marcus Bartley, known for his investment and finesse in effects created through cameras like Mitchell -- lauded as the "miracle" Mitchell Camera in the initial credits -- and the visual effects like back projection, and meticulous transitions like dissolves in the processing laboratory inside the studio.

Four years earlier, *Pathala Bhairavi* had effectively retooled folk elements like the magical powers in the villain/sorcerer's beard and the way he was lured to shave off his beard by the Hero's confidant Anji, who could instantaneously morph into the sorcerer's assistant, and convince him that Indumathi will find him attractive without the beard. "The bewitched sorcerer contemplates for a moment and then decides to shave off his beard as he has the more powerful statuette with him. However, when he goes to meet Indumathi, he encounters Raman, who had been waiting for him and in the ensuing fight he loses his statuette as well as gets thrown off the palace from a good height." Thus, the folkloric element of the statuette with magical powers and the special effect of the body being thrown out of the moving palace are juxtaposed in a key sequence which is central to the narrative. In *Gunasundari*, too, Deivadheenam transforms into an old unattractive skinny man and then into a bear before revealing his identity as a charming

Film Studies

Feature Article



CAESURAE: POETICS OF CULTURAL TRANSLATION
Combined Volumes (3:2 & 4: 1)
(ISSN 2454 -9495)

2019-2020

prince. But the morphing remains as attractions by themselves as he showcases his abilities to the audience inside the diegesis and us before he gets into action or after his objective is achieved. *Pathala Bhairavi* freely borrowed from folk elements as it announced itself as a folkloric fantasy whereas *Gunasundari*'s screenplay is weighed down by its narrative frame borrowed from Shakespeare's *King Lear* that is used to bookend the film. For instance, Deivadheenam's retransformation from the old man to the bear, and the prince has to be staged in front of the king inside the palace. The static space where the meticulous in-camera dissolves are staged does not invoke the degree of wonder and awe at the special effects as during the climactic flying-palace sequence with back projection in *Pathala Bhairavi*, detailed above.

To conclude, if Kurosawa's authorship embedded in Japanese and Buddhist culture drives *Ran*, it is the Vijaya-Vauhini Studios' predilection for fantasy and special effects that dictates how Shakespeare's *King Lear* will be appropriated by one of the major studios of Madras in the 1950s for a local audience. Thus, more than remaining true to the original regarding its content, it is the possibilities to effectively invoke the local mythos that is the objective here. The singularity of style, both in terms of the finesse of the cinematic language of Kurosawa and the possibility of the unique in-camera effects and the meticulous laboratory processes of Vijaya-Vauhini Studios, is a significant factor which drives these adaptations/appropriations.

I am grateful to the responses I got from the participants at the Caesurae Conference, 2017, particularly from the doctoral students and Professors Nikhila H., Vijay Kumar, Jayati Sengupta, and Tharakeshwar V.B.

Film Studies

Feature Article



CAESURAE: POETICS OF CULTURAL TRANSLATION
Combined Volumes (3:2 & 4: 1)
(ISSN 2454 -9495)

2019-2020

End Notes

¹ Gary R. Bortolotti and Linda Hutcheon, "On the Origin of Adaptations: Rethinking Fidelity Discourse and "Success"-Biologically*," *New Literary History* 38.3 (2007): 443-458. *ProQuest*. Web. 24 Sep. 2018.

² Swarnavel Eswaran Pillai, "Tamil B Movie Westerns: The Global South and Genre Subversion," In Mary Ellen Higgins, Rita Keresztesi, and Dayna Oscherwitz eds., *The Western in the Global South*. Abingdon, UK and New York: Routledge, 2015, pp. 165-179.

³ Sangita Gopal, *Conjugations: Marriage and Form in New Bollywood Cinema*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011, p. 190.

⁴ Christopher Hoile, "'King Lear' and Kurosawa's 'Ran': Splitting, Doubling, Distancing," *Pacific Coast Philology*, vol. 22, no. 1/2, 1987, pp. 29-34.

⁵ Peter Grilli, "Kurosawa Directs a Cinematic 'Lear'," *Nytimes.com*, 15 Dec. 1985, Web 24 Sep. 2018. <https://www.nytimes.com/1985/12/15/movies/kurosawa-directs-a-cinematic-lear.html>

⁶ Joan Pong Linton, "Kurosawa's *Ran* (1985) and *King Lear*: Towards a Conversation on Historical Responsibility," *Quarterly Review of Film and Video*, 23:4, 341-351, 2006.

⁷ Samuel Crowl, "The Bow is Bent and Drawn: Kurosawa's *Ran* and the Shakespearean Arrow of Desire," *Literature Film Quarterly* 22.2 (1994), p. 115.

⁸ Anthony Davies, "Exploring the relation of Kurosawa's *Ran* to Shakespeare's *King Lear*," *Shakespeare.edel.univ-poitiers.fr/*, 28 Jan. 2010, Web. 24 Sep. 2018. <http://shakespeare.edel.univ-poitiers.fr/index.php?id=116>

Film Studies

Feature Article



CAESURAE: POETICS OF CULTURAL TRANSLATION
Combined Volumes (3:2 & 4: 1)
(ISSN 2454 -9495)

2019-2020

⁹ Jonathan Crow, "Akira Kurosawa and Gabriel Garcia Marquez Talk About Filmmaking (and Nuclear Bombs) in Six Hour Interview," *Openculture.com*, 18 July 2014, Web. 24 Sep. 2018. <http://www.openculture.com/2014/07/akira-kurosawa-gabriel-garcia-marquez-talk-about-filmmaking.html>

¹⁰ Michael Wilmington, "Ran: Apocalypse Song," *Criterion.com*, 22 Nov.2015, Web. 24 Sep. 2018, <https://www.criterion.com/current/posts/402-ran-apocalypse-song>

¹¹ BFI: Film Forever, "Kurosawa on Kurosawa," *Old.bfi.org.uk*, 10 Feb. 2012, Web. 24 Sep. 2018. <http://old.bfi.org.uk/sightandsound/feature/49625>

¹² Roman Jakobson, "On Linguistics Aspects of Translation," In *Theories of Translation: An Anthology of Essays from Dryden to Derrida*, eds. John Biguenet and Rainer Schulte, Chicago: The Univ. of Chicago Press, 1992, p. 145.

¹³ Anthony Pym, *Exploring Translation Theories*, Oxford, UK and New York: Routledge, 2014, pp. 145-6.

¹⁴ Donald Richie, *The Films of Akira Kurosawa*. Berkley: University of California Press, 1965, p. 117.

¹⁵ Nikos Papastergiadis, *The Turbulence of Migration: Globalization, Deterritorialization, and Hybridity*. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2000, p. 124.

¹⁶ M. L. Narasimham, "Blast from the Past: Gunasundari Katha (1949)," *Thehindu.com*, 29 Sep. 2012, Web. 24 Sep. 2018. <https://www.thehindu.com/features/cinema/gunasundari-katha-1949/article3948788.ece>

¹⁷ S.V. Srinivas, "Telugu Folklore Films: The Case of Patala Bhairavi." *Deep Focus*, IX, no. 9 (2009).

Film Studies

Feature Article



CAESURAE: POETICS OF CULTURAL TRANSLATION
Combined Volumes (3:2 & 4: 1)
(ISSN 2454 -9495)

2019-2020

¹⁸ Swarnavel Eswaran Pillai, *Madras Studios: narrative, Genre, and Ideology in Tamil Cinema*, New Delhi: Sage Publications, 2015, p. 205.

References

BFI: Film Forever. "Kurosawa on Kurosawa." *Old.bfi.org.uk*. 10 Feb. 2012. Web. 24 Sep. 2018.
<http://old.bfi.org.uk/sightandsound/feature/49625>

Bortolotti, Gary R., and Linda Hutcheon. "On the Origin of Adaptations: Rethinking Fidelity Discourse and "Success"-Biologically*." *New Literary History* 38: 3 (2007): 443-458. *ProQuest*. Web. 24 Sep. 2018.

Crow, Jonathan. "Akira Kurosawa and Gabriel Garcia Marquez Talk About Filmmaking (and Nuclear Bombs) in Six Hour Interview," *Openculture.com*. 18 July 2014. Web. 24 Sep. 2018.
<http://www.openculture.com/2014/07/akira-kurosawa-gabriel-garcia-marquez-talk-about-filmmaking.html>

Crowl, Samuel. "The Bow is Bent and Drawn: Kurosawa's *Ran* and the Shakespearean Arrow of Desire." *Literature Film Quarterly* 22.2 (1994).

Film Studies

Feature Article



CAESURAE: POETICS OF CULTURAL TRANSLATION
Combined Volumes (3:2 & 4: 1)
(ISSN 2454 -9495)

2019-2020

Davies, Anthony. "Exploring the relation of Kurosawa's *Ran* to Shakespeare's *King Lear*." *Shakespeare.edel.univ-poitiers.fr/*. 28 Jan. 2010. Web. 24 Sep. 2018.
<http://shakespeare.edel.univ-poitiers.fr/index.php?id=116>

Eswaran Pillai, Swarnavel. *Madras Studios: narrative, Genre, and Ideology in Tamil Cinema*.
New Delhi: Sage Publications, 2015, p. 205.

_____. "Tamil B Movie Westerns: The Global South and Genre Subversion," In Mary Ellen Higgins, Rita Keresztesi, and Dayna Oscherwitz eds. *The Western in the Global South*. Abingdon, UK and New York: Routledge, 2015, pp. 165-179.

Gopal, Sangita. *Conjugations: Marriage and Form in New Bollywood Cinema*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011

Grilli, Peter. "Kurosawa Directs a Cinematic 'Lear'," *Nytimes.com*, 15 Dec. 1985. Web 24 Sep. 2018. <https://www.nytimes.com/1985/12/15/movies/kurosawa-directs-a-cinematic-lear.html>

Hoile, Christopher. "'King Lear' and Kurosawa's 'Ran': Splitting, Doubling, Distancing." *Pacific Coast Philology*, 22: 1/2 (1987), pp. 29–34. *JSTOR*. Web. 24 Sep. 2018.

Film Studies

Feature Article



CAESURAE: POETICS OF CULTURAL TRANSLATION
Combined Volumes (3:2 & 4: 1)
(ISSN 2454 -9495)

2019-2020

-
- Jacobson, Roman. "On Linguistic Aspects of Translation." In *Theories of Translation: An Anthology of Essays from Dryden to Derrida*, John Biguenet and Rainer Schulte eds. Chicago: The Univ. of Chicago Press, 1992, pp. 144-151.
- Linton, Joan Pong. "Kurosawa's *Ran* (1985) and *King Lear: Towards a Conversation on Historical Responsibility*." *Quarterly Review of Film and Video*, 23: 4, pp. 341-351, 2006.
- Narasimham, M. L. "Blast from the Past: Gunasundari Katha (1949)." *Thehindu.com*. 29 Sep. 2012. Web. 24 Sep. 2018. <https://www.thehindu.com/features/cinema/gunasundari-katha-1949/article3948788.ece>
- Papastergiadis, Nikos. *The Turbulence of Migration: Globalization, Deterritorialization, and Hybridity*. Cambridge. UK: Polity Press, 2000.
- Pym, Anthony. *Exploring Translation Theories*. Oxford, UK and New York: Routledge, 2014.
- Richie, Donald. *The Films of Akira Kurosawa*. Berkley: University of California Press, 1965.
- Srinivas, S.V. "Telugu Folklore Films: The Case of Patala Bhairavi." *Deep Focus*, IX: 9 (2009).

Film Studies

Feature Article



CAESURAE: POETICS OF CULTURAL TRANSLATION
Combined Volumes (3:2 & 4: 1)
(ISSN 2454 -9495)

2019-2020

Wilmington, Michael. "Ran: Apocalypse Song." *Criterion.com*. 22 Nov. 2015. Web. 24 Sep. 2018. <https://www.criterion.com/current/posts/402-ran-apocalypse-song>

About the author

*Dr. Swarnavel Eswaran is a graduate of the Film and Television Institute of India, the premier film school in Asia, and the prestigious film studies program at the University of Iowa. He is an accomplished filmmaker, and his recent documentaries include *Tsunami: Waves from the Deep* (2018), *Hmong Memories at the Crossroad* (2016), *Migrations of Islam* (2014), and *Unfinished Journey: A City in Transition* (2012). He is currently a professor in film studies and film production in the English and MI (Media and Information) Departments at Michigan State University and his research focuses on the history, theory, and production of documentaries, and the specificity of Tamil cinema, and its intricate/complex relationship with Hollywood as well as popular Hindi films. His recent books are *Cinema: Sattagamum Saalaramum* (Nizhal, 2013), an anthology of essays on documentaries and experimental films in Tamil and *Madras Studios: Narrative, Genre, and Ideology in Tamil Cinema* (Sage Publications, 2015). His fiction feature *Kattumaram* (Catamaran, 2019), a collaboration with Tamil's cinema's leading director Mysskin, is currently on the film festival circuit.