Call for Seminar Papers

Seminars are always exciting and enlightening academic occasions. They give participants opportunities for close analysis and profitable discussion of their papers.

Seminar papers, which need to be focused but not too long (3000 words approx.), will be circulated in advance and commented upon among all seminar members. Each participant will have 10 minutes to summarize and expound their papers so as to open up a fruitful discussion among seminar members, initiated by the proposer of the seminar.

Now we would like to invite you to join the Seminars given below. Even if you have already had your paper proposal accepted, you can still join the seminar instead by withdrawing the proposal. If you are interested in one of the seminars below, please submit a new abstract for the seminar of your choice by **15 July 2016**.

Please send a 250-word abstract and brief bio-data to the seminar leader and the administration office at <admin@asianshakespeare.org>. The deadline for abstracts is **15 July 2016**.

Seminars Proposed for ASA New Delhi

**1. Shakespeare and Today’s Technology**

In today’s world, technology affects every single aspect of our lives, including the teaching, studying, performing, and enjoying of Shakespeare. Searchable and downloadable online texts, images, and videos have made Shakespeare more accessible and affordable. In the democratic world of the Internet, everyone is free to contribute, to create and to comment, to interpret and to parody. New methodologies have also been proposed. Other than small conveniences (such as YouTube videos) and small annoyances (such as student plagiarism), is technology changing, improving, or endangering the Shakespeare as we have always known it in any fundamental ways? Are there any measures that we should take? You are invited to share your experience, analyze its pros and cons, and theorize the phenomenon. Topics may include, but are not limited to:

--performances involving cutting-edge technology
--study tools
--research tools
--teaching tools and platforms
Bi-qi Beatrice Lei is Founder of the Asian Shakespeare Association. She is currently a researcher at the Research Center for Digital Humanities, National Taiwan University. She is a co-editor of *Shakespeare in Culture* (with Perng Ching-Hsi) and *Shakespeare’s Asian Journeys* (with Judy Celine Ick and Poonam Trivedi).

2. Shakespeare is pop ---is he?

We have a large variety of pop adaptations / rip-offs / second order re-creations of Shakespeare: some faithful transmedial translation, others outrageous pirating, still others that have almost nothing to do with Shakespeare (e.g. David Bowie’s Thin White Duke, King Stefan of *Maleficent*, possibly a caricature of Macbeth), and the ultimate, ‘Shakespeare’ rubber ducks. Analysis of such Shakespeare-made-pop has gained a certain academic respectability, now that adaptation studies are one of the hip fields in the age of the decline of humanities and English studies.

This seminar aims to contextualize the complex negotiations, struggles and challenges between high culture and pop culture, between authoritative cultural products and consumer products for dummies on global scale. Are pop Shakespeares simply sycophantic to the Bard’s authority? Or are they butchering the immortal swan of Avon? Or, would it be more profitable to think of the power game between Shakespeare the original and the Shakespop as having “reciprocal legitimation” (Lanier)?

Let us investigate the cultural politics of making Shakespeare pop. After sharing our geeky knowledge about pop Shakespeares, let us work together to think whether it is possible (or desirable) to theorize this phenomenon within the framework of the glocalization of Shakespeare’s works. Topics may include, but are not limited to:

- Shakespeare as a popular writer /icon
- Pop Stage performance (including opera and musicals)
- Fashion
- Memes
- Computer games
- Comics/ anime/ manga
- Films

Proposer / Leader Yukari Yoshihara  yukariyoshihara@gmail.com

3. ‘Documents in Madness’: Representing Shakespearean Madness in Asia

Scholars have commented on the Renaissance preoccupation with unusual, heightened and aberrant mental states of different kinds and also on their varied representations and interpretations. Expressions of madness, folly, delusions, possession and melancholy proliferate in early modern literature, particularly in drama. Madmen, witches, melancholics and fools crowd Shakespeare’s stage too and bring in different registers of language and performance. The representation and enactment of madness becomes a site for philosophical, moral, religious, mystical and political debates as in the case of Lady Macbeth, Lear, Ophelia, Hamlet as well as the wise fools in the comedies and tragedy. There is also a particular interest in examining the interface between forms of insanity and the theatre—madness is seen as a performed and performable state, making it difficult to understand the difference between authentic and pretended madness as in Hamlet.

This seminar will focus on Asian recreations (and others as comparative contrasts) of Shakespearean madness in translations, adaptations, stage and screen versions with a specific focus on exploring the cultural codes through which madness is understood, represented and interpreted in different Asian cultures. The contributions should attempt to discuss how these representations initiate conversations between early modern and Asian modes of understanding and reading madness, and underline the importance of culture in constructing the discursive context of madness which is so much more than a medical or psychiatric condition.

**Proposer / Leader Paromita Chakravarti** chakravarti6@gmail.com

Paromita Chakravarti is a professor in the Department of English, Jadavpur University, Kolkata and has been the Director of the School of Women's Studies, Jadavpur University. Her doctoral work at the University of Oxford has been on early modern discourses of madness and folly and she has written extensively on the historiography of folly, mad women on the Elizabethan stage and the medical discourses of madness. She teaches in the areas of early modern drama, Shakespearean adaptations on stage and screen, Women's writing, Queer studies, Film and literature and education and sexuality. She has been a visiting fellow at the universities of Delhi, Hyderabad, Oxford, Liverpool and Birmingham. Her book, *Women Contesting Culture*, co-edited with Kavita Panjabi was published in 2012. She is currently co-editing a volume on Shakespeare and Indian cinemas with Poonam Trivedi for Routledge.
4. ‘For they are the abstract and brief chronicles of the time’: Negotiating Shakespearean Characters in Performance from Past to Present

In criticism, relying on character study or treating Shakespearean characters as real people, has often been censured. But, in performance, where actors especially need to get under the skin of the characters they portray, Shakespearean personae do exhibit some kind of biographical reality.

Representations of the Shakespearean characters in performance in the last 400 years, both globally and locally, have been various and multiple, not only influenced by the actor’s and director’s interpretations but also by the geographical location of where the performance is taking place and its historical specificity, socio-political climate and unique and often indigenous performative traditions. That is why although the lines that characters speak in Shakespeare’s play-texts are the same (even if translated in another language), in performance over the times, the ‘idea’ of the character changes, so much so that for example, today, the three witches of Macbeth have been transformed to a spirit in the guise of an old woman in Kurosawa’s Throne of Blood and to two policemen in Vishal Bharadwaj’s Maqbool, all influenced by the above-mentioned conditions.

This seminar proposes to look at the characters in Shakespeare’s plays that have in the world of performance, be it theatre, cinema, and mass media, evolved with time and exhibited a life of their own especially in Asia and the implications this has on the metaphors of the world and stage in Shakespeare’s time and now. Their stories reveal the interpretative and performative trends which have led to the popularization of Shakespeare in Asia.

Papers may include, but are not limited to, how Shakespeare’s characters have been used to generate meaning in Asian culture at different points of time, and whether or not the various spin-offs tell us something new both about Shakespeare’s characters and plays as well as the culture which is performing it.

Proposer / Leader Paramita Dutta paramita.dutta@gmail.com

Paramita Dutta, M Phil, Ph D, is currently working as Assistant Professor in the Department of English at Rammohan College, Kolkata. She has also taught English literature at the post graduate level in Lady Brabourne College and Maulana Azad College, Kolkata. A student of Jadavpur University she received her doctorate from the same on ‘Marriage and its Portrayal in the Drama of Early Modern England’ in 2013.

She has presented papers nationally and internationally and her recent publications include an article on Tagore’s *Bidaay Abhisheap* and a short story ‘The First Time.’ An article on *Shakespeare Wallah* is forthcoming in collection of essays by SAGE. She is a member of The Shakespeare Society of India.