

**Refashioning Canon: William Shakespeare in Bengali Cinema**

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**Abstract:**

Shakespeare's timeless works have transcended cultural boundaries, influencing artistic expressions worldwide. Bengal, with its rich cultural heritage, has been no exception. This paper explores the adaptation of Shakespeare's plays in Bengali cinema, examining the unique ways in which filmmakers have reinterpreted the Bard's works in the Indian scenario. From the iconic *Saptapadi* (1961), a partial rendition of the murder scene of *Othello* within the film, to the critically acclaimed *Arshinagar* (2015), a modern retelling of *Romeo and Juliet*, Bengali cinema has consistently drawn inspiration from Shakespeare's works. Other notable adaptations include *Bhranti Bilas* (1963), a comedic take on *A Comedy of Errors*; *Hrid Majharey* (2014), a classic adaptation of *Othello* with some elements of *Macbeth* and *Julius Caesar*; *Zulfiqar* (2016), a contemporary adaptation of *Julius Caesar* and *Antony and Cleopatra*; *Hemanta* (2016), based on *Hamlet*; and the recent OTT adaptation of *Macbeth* as *Mandaar*. Through a critical analysis of these films, this paper investigates how Shakespeare's themes, characters, and plot structures have been reimagined in the Bengali context. It also examines the ways in which these adaptations reflect the social, cultural, and political nuances of Bengal. By exploring the intersection of Shakespeare and Bengali cinema, this paper sheds light on the dynamic process of cultural exchange and adaptation that has enriched the artistic landscape of Bengal.

**Keywords:** Shakespeare, Cinema, Adaptation, Bengal

**Introduction:**

There is no doubting the fact that the British Empire exploited Shakespeare to promote the English language through education in schools and universities. By doing this, they tried to propagate the agenda of British imperialism. Shakespeare has affected Indian literature, particularly Bengali literature, both directly and indirectly. However, the most evident

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representation of Shakespeare has been seen in numerous translations and adaptations. The historical practice of adaptation illustrates the dynamic relationship between tradition and innovation, characterized by the reinterpretation of narratives and legends across various cultures. The 19th and 20th centuries experienced a notable expansion of literary adaptations across multiple media formats, including novels, plays, and films, as classic literary works were reimagined to align with the evolving cultural and artistic contexts of the time. The 21st century has introduced a new media paradigm through television series, which affords filmmakers greater flexibility in terms of duration and creative expression.

Adaptation refers to the process of modifying or transforming content to align with a new context. In the realm of cinema, adaptation entails the complete or partial appropriation of narratives, concepts, themes, and other elements from an existing artistic work into a film format. This process is particularly evident in the conversion of literary texts into cinematic representations. The process of adapting source material to fit the constraints and attributes of the target medium often necessitates the omission of certain elements, the incorporation of new components, and a degree of experimentation. Consequently, audiences are encouraged to approach film adaptations of Shakespearean literature with an open and receptive mindset.

Putting aside the early theatre or Jatra performance of Shakespearean plays in Bengal, Bengali cinema first adapted Shakespeare with the adaptation of the murder scene of *Othello* in *Shaptapadi* (1961). The story is based on a 1958 eponymous novel by Tarasankar Bandyopadhyay, directed by Ajoy Kar and starring Uttam Kumar and Suchitra Sen. In Hinduism, saptapadi refers to the seven steps (literally, saptapadi) that the bride and groom perform to make their marriage holy. Set against the backdrop of colonial India during World War II, this Bengali-language film centres on the seemingly unlikely interfaith love story between a Christian woman and a Bengali Hindu man. As part of a college function, initially, the character of Othello is said to be played by Clayton. Dissatisfied with the uninspired rehearsal of Clayton as Othello, Krishnendu steps in as Othello. Unable to perform the scene with enraged Rina, Krishnendu stoops down to his male friend and speaks Othello's lines, putting more life into it.

Krishnendu must step in for Clayton on the day of the performance due to his absence as informed through a letter. Krishnendu strangely believes that being Othello also means being English, or at the very least, establishing a voice in the upper echelons of the colonizer's society. By accepting a job that was intended for Clayton, he is more interested in joining the limited, privileged, and enchanted circle of white people than he is in identifying with an alienated Black consciousness. In the social realm of colonial India, it seemed unthinkable

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for Krishnendu and the white Desdemona to share a stage bed, but in *Othello*, they are able to do so. Therefore, a play's performance offers a chance for people who would otherwise be separated by political and historical conditions to witness a close physical interaction.

The murder scene features sharp black and white contrasts and is performed in a Wellesian melodramatic style. The vocals, especially Desdemona's, have a distinctively British tone. Rina and Krishnendu have a special bond on stage. However, before the enactment of the scene, she forbids Krishnendu to keep distance because she is initially disgusted by the idea of a "native" touching her. This warning manifests in his missed kisses of Desdemona. Despite Rina's concerns, art, not nature, is what performs its magic on stage. She falls for Krishnendu as Othello because of the performance and the intimacy it creates. The stage offers a secular setting free from Rina's biases against "heathen blackies" and Krishnendu's father's traditional Hinduism. Thus, racial preconceptions are challenged by the physical realities of performance.

Though the film is not a full-fledged adaptation, through the enactment of the famous murder scene of Othello, directed by Utpal Dutta, the first romantic love-lost relationship of Krishnendu and Rina enacted by Uttam Kumar and Suchitra Sen is revealed. Additionally, they are shown making physical contact for the first time during the play-acting, with Krishnendu putting his bare hands around Rina's neck in an attempt to strangle her to death. Despite the sadomasochistic overtones, they quickly declare their love for one another. Following their brief period of joy, a number of challenges, ranging from Rina's father to Krishnendu's father, cause the lovers to split up. In the end, the two parallel routes conclude with Krishnendu and Rina coming together in spite of all obstacles.

Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar's 1869 play of the same name, which was based on William Shakespeare's *The Comedy of Errors*, served as the inspiration for the 1963 Bengali comedy film *Bhranti Bilas* by filmmaker Manu Sen. For the first time, a complete theatrical work was translated and adapted to align with Bengali cultural norms and preferences by the prominent social reformer Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar. This adaptation was subsequently transitioned from written form to a cinematic presentation. In this process, Vidyasagar localized the names of both the settings and the characters; thus, Ephesus and Syracuse were reimagined as Hemkut and Jayasthul, while the Antipholus brothers were renamed Chiranjeev and Chiranjeet, with the esteemed actor Uttam Kumar portraying dual roles. The character Dromio was transformed into Kinkar, played by Bhanu Bandyopadhyay. The dual roles provided the actors with the opportunity to showcase their skills, as they endeavoured to convey the distinct attitudes and personalities of the twin characters.

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The film *Bhranti Bilas*, which translates to "Bilas' Error," effectively illustrates the misjudgement of Bilas, the sister-in-law of Antipholus, who mistakenly identifies her brother-in-law's twin as her sister's spouse. This misunderstanding compels her to insist that he returns home, thereby catalysing the romantic entanglement. Bilas is depicted as a contemporary New Woman, donning a saree in a modern fashion, in contrast to her elder sister, who is portrayed in a more traditional style. Skilful blending of the elements of tradition and modernity, as well as urban and rural settings, facilitates the audience's comprehension of the distinctions between the twins and their respective families. Bilas encounters the unmarried Chiranjeet, the younger Antipholus, at a fair or 'mela,' a conventional trope in Indian cinema where characters, particularly lovers or siblings, either become separated or reunite. The tumult and disarray of the fair serve as a metaphor for the confusion and disorder experienced by the characters as the twins are mistaken for one another and inadvertently exchanged.

There are a lot of performances for the public at the fair, which include puppet shows, animal acts, and flute music. The puppet show, in which Bilas seizes Chiranjeet and persuades him to return home, serves as an allegorical representation of the narrative of Ahalya, which bears similarities to the experiences of the characters in the movie. Drawing from the Ramayana, the puppet show relates the tale of Ahalya, who wrongly identifies Lord Indra as her husband. Similarly, in the film, Bilas' sister fails to identify her spouse and confuses his twin brother for him. Notably, the Ahalya puppet is depicted wearing a saree in a manner similar to that of Bilas' sister. As the narrative rolls on, the confusion ramps up, compelling Chiranjeet to reside in Chiranjeev's house. The comedic elements escalate when the twin masters and their respective servants are mistakenly interchanged, leading to a situation where Chiranjeev's family fails to identify Chiranjeet as the lawful master of the house. Instead, they report to the police station, assuming that Chiranjeet has absconded. Eventually, clarity is restored within the police station, an institution for upholding law and order and establishing societal stability. At this location, the twin brothers encounter one another for the first time in the presence of their entire family, prompting the sisters to admit their earlier misunderstanding. Subsequently, they return to Charanjeet's abode in the city to uncover the narrative of their dissociation from their mother who is still alive. Ultimately, to prevent further doubt, it is suggested that the brothers and their servants don distinct costumes, thereby reducing the risk of repeating previous errors.

Celebrating 450 years of Shakespeare's influence in literature, Ranjan Ghosh's film *Hrid Majhare* (2014) is an adaptation of Shakespeare's *Othello*. Ghosh's portrayal of the leading character, Abhijit, reflects the complex psyche of Othello, with Abhijit's troubled mind resembling Othello's dark complexion. Rather than serving as an exact translation of

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Shakespeare's text, *Hrid Majhare* (Live in my heart) presents a reimagined narrative that mingles elements from the original play with contemporary contexts and settings. In the movie, Abhijit (Othello), a mathematics professor at a prestigious college in Calcutta, is in love with Debjani (Desdemona), a cardiologist. Their lives get all tangled when a scandal pops up and the scandal falsely accuses Abhijit of sexual harassment, prompting him to relocate from Calcutta to Port Blair. In Port Blair, they met an elderly man, who appears to be mentally unstable and who continuously urges them to return to Bengal. The situation gets convoluted when Debjani reconnects with her friend Subhojit, who serves as a modern-day Cassio, stirring up jealousy in Abhijit. As Abhijit gets more jealous, it ultimately leads to tragic consequences, culminating in the murder of Debjani.

Ghosh shrewdly examines the underlying factors, such as doubt, jealousy, and superstition, that contribute to Abhijit's tragic fall, stressing these themes throughout the film. For example, Desdemona's father at the start cautions Othello about the potential for betrayal from her, thereby inculcating doubt in Othello's mind. In a similar way, Abhijit's college scandal serves as a stimulant for his ensuing instability regarding his relationship with Debjani. His continuous doubts about Debjani's loyalty escalate into jealousy, particularly when he observes her continuing interactions with a friend. This emotional confusion adversely affects his professional performance, leading to a perception of him as an indecisive educator. Despite Debjani's continuous attempts to reassure him, Abhijit remains unconvinced. His rationality is further compromised as he fixates on the prophecy delivered by the Anglo-Indian proprietor of the Chinese restaurant, which bears resemblance to the Egyptian sorceress in *Othello*. The audience, particularly those familiar with Shakespeare, is captivated by the restaurant owner's invocation of Hamlet's famous line: "There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio, / Than are dreamt of in your philosophy." This character admits Abhijit's propensity towards rationality while warning him about the myriad mysteries that evade human understanding. She suggests he exercise caution in matters of love, admonishing him of the emotional complications that often lead to suffering rather than solace.

Although he initially ignored her words, they continued to echo in his subconscious. The director appears to equate jealousy with Othello's superstitious temperament as contributing factors to the Moor's eventual demise. As Abhijit's suspicions regarding Debjani intensify, his reliance on superstitions increases, leading to a decline in his logical reasoning, which subsequently impacts his professional efficacy. He begins to embrace the notions presented in the prophecy, progressively alienating Debjani from his life. Even following the tragic death of her friend, Abhijit remains unable to quell his mistrust of Debjani; this time, his motivations stem not from jealousy but from an overwhelming fear of the prophecy and

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superstition. The transformation of emotions in a character previously characterized by rationality is adeptly portrayed by the actor embodying Abhijit.

Eventually, Abhijit yields to his emotions and fatally wounds Debjani with a sharp hair clip during a moment of rage. In the aftermath of this act, he is momentarily disoriented and flees the scene, only to discover the lifeless body of the elderly man on the ground. This disclosure permits the audience to draw connections between the elderly man's presence and the unfurling events of the narrative. From a critical viewpoint, the elderly man may symbolize Abhijit's inner self, which longs for a return to Bengal. The act of killing Debjani signifies the destruction of his inner essence - his passion, love, and humanity- effectively resulting in the death of the elderly man as well. Unlike the portrayal of Othello's death in the play, the director refrains from depicting Abhijit's physical death; rather, it extends the narrative to a greater extent. Abhijit feels the guilt of not only murdering his beloved but also extinguishing the life of their expecting child. This act of violence shut out the light over his existence, wiping out his desire and the possibility for a joyful future. While Abhijit remains corporeally alive, the elimination of his desires, passions, love, hope, and future renders him devoid of true life, reducing his life to mere survival.

*Arshinagar* (2015), by noted award-winning director Aparna Sen, is a star-studded modern adaptation of Shakespeare's romantic tragedy *Romeo and Juliet*. The movie displays the current social, economic, and political conditions in Bengal, highlighting the destruction of slum areas to facilitate urban development, the occurrence of Hindu-Muslim riots stemming from religious sensitivities, and the significant decay of legal order. The film commences with the narrator recounting the story of two lovers while at the same time presenting a puppet show on stage, aimed at entertaining the audience at a local fair. Drawing a parallel with the two families of Montague and Capulet of Shakespeare's classic, the movie centres around the Mitra and Khan families. Rawnojoy (Romeo), enacted by Dev, is the offspring of a prosperous Hindu family whose father manages a real estate enterprise involved in illicit drug trafficking. Zulekha (Rittika Sen), on the other hand, is the daughter of a distinguished Muslim family of considerable wealth, whose father oversees a long-established real estate business that similarly engages in unlawful activities. Transcending the longstanding rivalry between their families, Rawnojoy and Zulekha develop a romantic relationship. The narrative, reminiscent of Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*, unfolds before the audience, culminating in the tragic deaths of the lovers, which ultimately resolves the animosity between their families. The term *Arshinagar* which translates to "Mirrorsville," signifies an exact projection of the socio-cultural and human realities depicted in the film. Notably, even the modest slum portrayed in the film features mirrors attached to the walls of the residences, thereby mirroring the faces and actions of the dwellers.

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Director Aparna Sen's oeuvre demonstrates a significant influence from Shakespeare while also drawing inspiration from the renowned Bengali filmmaker Satyajit Ray. The integration of conversational dialogue with rhythmic verse is a stylistic approach that has not been observed on screen since the time of Ray. The distinct delivery and composition of the dialogues are quintessentially Shakespearean, highlighting Sen's skill in utilizing verse and addressing numerous subjects and themes. The director excellently uses colour in her film, adeptly handling lighting to reflect the evolving events and emotions, a technique similar to theatrical practices. Sen has deftly built a colour coding system, assigning definite colours to the two rival families as well as to the two protagonists, Rawnojoy (Romeo) and Zulekha (Juliet). The Muslim family is assigned the colour black, while the Hindu family is represented by the colour red; both the colours symbolize themes of malevolence, conflict, and violence. On the other hand, the lovers are continuously depicted in pastel hues or white, which serve as symbols of peace and purity, while also reflecting their commitment to the unity of the two families.

The art of disguise, a prevailing motif in many of Shakespeare's works, is successfully employed by Sen in the film. The cross-dressing of the protagonists serves to hide their identities and enhance their romantic connection. Zulekha's desperate character is symbolized by the tattooed wings on her back, symbolizing her desire to escape the restrictions imposed by an aristocratic Muslim family. Her stubborn and rebellious traits, often connected with masculinity, are literally demonstrated when she dons male attire and a moustache on two instances: first, while getting ready to perform in a play, and second, when she elopes from her home to reunite with her beloved, eventually confronting death. Contrarily, Rawnojoy is depicted as the more effeminate and romantic figure, immersing himself in music to distance himself from his father's illegal activities. He is frequently seen wearing a burqa, a garment generally worn by Muslim women to hide their faces and bodies, while exhibiting his love for Zulekha or during his escape. This interplay involves the juxtaposition of gender-specific dressing as well as encompasses religious identities. In disguise, Zulekha takes the role of a Hindu man, while Rawnojoy assumes the role of a Muslim woman. This subtle portrayal by the director addresses the themes of gender and religious fluidity, imparting the inherent humanity that lies underneath the strictly defined dress code associated with gender and religious identity.

The film addresses the contentious issue of the rivalry between the Hindu and Muslim communities, a conflict that has persisted since prior to India's independence. The turmoil and riots are being planned, initiated, and controlled by the upper-class businessmen with the intention of emptying the slums of Arshinagar and constructing a shopping mall in its place, paving the way for western civilization through black money. The two songs, "Kala paisa"

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(black money) and “Percentageer khela” (the play of percentages), are in line with the theme of the movie. The inhabitants of Arshinagar have historically coexisted peacefully, with the Hindu priest and the Muslim educator maintaining a cordial relationship. However, their harmonious existence is disrupted as they become embroiled in a conflict between two wealthy families, which is further exacerbated by governmental involvement. The culmination of hostilities between the religious groups is ignited when, due to a conspiracy, the temple is set ablaze, provoking significant outrage among the Hindu community towards the Muslim population, which subsequently results in a riot. The movie ends with the message of unity between the two families.

Anjan Dutta's film, *Hemanta* (2016), employs metafilmic techniques to explore the processes of perception, memory, and meaning-making in relation to Shakespeare's text. The modernization depicted in *Hemanta* is both innovative and aesthetically polished. *Hemanta* aligns itself with the traditions of Bengali art and literature, displaying its rich cultural heritage amidst the challenges posed by a corrupting modernity. In the film, *Hemanta*, the character of Gayatri, portrayed by Gargee Roy Chowdhury, serves as an aging actress and the romantic interest of Kalyan, enacted by Saswata Chatterjee, who is analogous to Claudius. Additionally, Gayatri is depicted as the mother of Hemanta. The intricate psychosexual dynamics between Gayatri and Hemanta frequently occupy a central position in the narrative, evoking parallels to the relationship dynamics between Mel Gibson and Glenn Close in Franco Zeffirelli's adaptation of *Hamlet*. While homoerotic themes are prominently featured in *Hemanta*, the Oedipal relationship between mother and son is given precedence, ensuring that the interactions between Gayatri and Hemanta, as well as those between Olipriya and Hemanta, are neither marginalized nor relegated to the periphery of the storyline.

The narrative of the film focuses on the competitive dynamics between Bollywood and Tollywood, especially emphasizing the challenges faced by Tollywood. The character Hemanta is frequently depicted living in his father's home, which is characterized by an array of nostalgic artifacts, including a gramophone, leather-bound books, a toy cannon, and taxidermized animal heads. His residence embodies the decline of the once-vibrant culture and aesthetic sensibilities associated with Bengali cinema. In contrast, Kalyan's home symbolizes the modernity of Bengal and reflects an adaptation to the westernization prevalent in Bollywood. The film portrays a period during which the Bengali film industry is grappling with a significant crisis. Nevertheless, Anjan Dutt could have employed more profound cinematic techniques to explore Hemanta's internal conflict regarding moral ambiguity, his psychological turmoil, and his complex relationship with his mother.

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Srijit Mukherjee's film *Zulfiqar* (2016) presents a distinct adaptation that intertwines elements from William Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar* and *Antony and Cleopatra*. The film is arranged in two separate halves, with the first half drawing from *Julius Caesar* and the latter half from *Antony and Cleopatra*, skilfully connecting the two narratives rather than intermingling them throughout the film. In this film, the setting of Rome is relocated to the politically tense dock area of Kolkata, where the traditional Senate is replaced by a Syndicate, operating within the Muslim-dominated area. All kinds of illegal activities, including smuggling, illegal real estate transactions, and extortion, are controlled by the Syndicate. The organization confirms equal status and power for all members and enforces a rigid code to remove members who attract immense popularity. This dynamic eventually leads to the death of Zulfiqar, portrayed as Julius Caesar by Prosenjit Chatterjee. Kassinath (Cassius) is portrayed as an illicit promoter who devised a conspiracy against Zulfiqar and caused his death. Bashir Khan (Brutus), a loyal friend of Zulfiqar whom he affectionately refers to as Zulfi, has consistently supported him. In a manner reminiscent of Cassius's manipulation of Brutus in the original play, Kassinath deceives Bashir by alleging that Zulfiqar has permitted terrorists to infiltrate their ranks, thereby appealing to Bashir's sense of patriotism. Consequently, Bashir becomes complicit in the plot to assassinate Zulfiqar. During a meeting, the conspirators take turns shooting Zulfiqar from behind, culminating in Bashir delivering the fatal shot that results in Zulfiqar's death.

In the narrative, Zulfiqar's steadfast and loyal associates, Marcus and Tony, alongside Laltu (Lepidus), a corrupt police officer, seek retribution for his demise, aided by Zulfiqar's nephew, Akhtar (Octavius, portrayed by Ankush Hazra). When the Syndicate is defeated, Akhtar takes the seat of power previously owned by Zulfiqar. Then, he eliminates his friends to secure his newly minted dictatorial power. This is the film that highlights Srijit Mukherjee's trademark approach towards portraying morally ambiguous characters, which, as in the case of Mark Antony, tends to dissect his character into two complementary parts: the romantic and pejorative one of Marcus and the cynical financier of Tony. Differentiation between the character and personality of Mark Antony as a cunning soldier in *Julius Caesar* and as a hopeless romantic in *Antony and Cleopatra* is effectively shown by the director. Both Mark Antony incarnations, Marcus and Tony, are shown making a speech in honour of Bashir Khan, where he is described as an "honourable" man, while seeking to recompense Zulfiqar for his public service and weltering in his death.

The movie portrays a fragmented story between the two versions, and some characters do not have enough depth. In particular, the speed of the film slows down drastically after most of the main characters die, which makes the parts with *Antony and Cleopatra* overly long and sluggish. Although there are several badly composed scenes and disjointed events,

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a number of actors, including Dev, Parambrata, Jisshu, Koushik, and Prosenjit, have managed to portray *Zulfiqar* as a unique adaptation of Shakespeare's stories in the context of a marginalized community in Kolkata.

*Mandaar* (2021) is a crime thriller drama series in the Bengali language, developed for streaming by Anirban Bhattacharya and Pratik Dutta. It is a loose adaptation of William Shakespeare's *Macbeth*. The series, with its 5 episodes, takes place in a fishing village named Geilpur, providing director Anirban Bhattacharya with the opportunity to heighten the drama through the portrayal of vacant-eyed, dead fish, corpses impaled, and ominous fishing boats, creating an ideal setting for malevolence to thrive. In addition to the adaptation of Shakespeare's source material, another remarkable aspect of *Mandaar* is its outstanding cast. The series is bolstered by a number of notable actors, including Sohini Sarkar as Laili (Lady Macbeth), Debasish Mondal as Mandaar (Macbeth), Debesh Roy Chowdhury as Dablu Bhai (King Duncan), Anirban Bhattacharya as Muqaddar Mukherjee, Sankar Debnath as Bonka (Banquo), Lokenath Dey as Modon (Macduff), Diganta as Moncha (Malcolm), and Korak Samanta as Fontus (Fleance), among many others. And, of course, *Mandaar* also features the three witches of Macbeth: Sajal Mondal and Sudeep Dhara as Mojnu Buri and Pedo, respectively, with the third witch personified as a cat named Kala.

The episode revolves around an old witch, Mojnu Buri, who makes prophecies while dancing. Mandaar, Dablu Bhai's henchman, is ordered to remove Mokka, his childhood friend, from the local fishermen's group. Mandaar and Bonka fulfil a prophecy and hide under Dablu Bhai's orders. Mandaar dreams of Mojnu Buri and a car driving on its own. He sees a doctor specializing in sex-related problems and takes his number. Dablu Bhai gives control of the group to Fontus, who informs his father Bonka. Mandaar returns to Geilpur and becomes the head of the local fish business. Fontus secretly returns to Geilpur, and Mandaar sends a henchman to have Fontus killed. Mandaar kills his henchman, and Moncha vows revenge. Mandaar and Laili discuss their future plans, and their guilt takes over them. Laili hangs herself, and Mandaar is captured and tortured. Mandaar is assaulted by Moncha and Fontus while distracted by the delusion, but he defeats them. When the furious Mandaar shouts, Mojnu Buri prods a spear through his neck. Moncha, Fontus, and Lakumoni leave the scene when Modon calls them to a meeting. Mojnu Buri says goodbye to Pedo, gazes at Mandaar's corpse one last time, calls her cat, and leaves the place.

The joy of witnessing a rewriting stems from being startled, despite the familiarity, by how closely it follows the original content and how far it may yet go. The series mainly relies on the screenplay, coercing rather than directing it, since the five-part series painstakingly adheres to its original text. It's also because of this that such light-hearted ingenuity rarely

works, such as Laili (Mandaar's wife) being Dablu's lover, to effectively undercut Lady Macbeth and Duncan's chaste relationship. The greatest fault in this rigidity is that it does not allow Laili the richness that a character like hers deserves so easily. Still, *Mandaar* is entertaining in many ways. The transitional state of Macbeth before his awakening has been depicted so skilfully. Anirban showcases this as a discovery for him, recognizing power as a form of masculinity. His Macbeth's complete deformity is explicable here in a way that leaves him more emasculated than any of his contemporaries; this "redressal" is the price of his ambition. It is an invitation that also contains critique on the horrors of hypermasculinity.

Interpretation of Shakespeare's plays using Indian aesthetic principles offers a distinctive viewpoint on these classic works of art. By juxtaposing Eastern philosophical viewpoints with Western theatrical traditions, a rich tapestry of artistic and cultural exchange is created, reinforcing universal themes found in many cultural paradigms. The Indian aesthetics is an elaborate entity that deftly weaves into its fabric universal aspects of human experience, be it love and envy, ambition and its manifestations, or simply the aftermath of unrestrained power. Interrogating Shakespearean plays through the framework of Indian aesthetics validates the idea of universality and timelessness of Shakespearean studies. It challenges us to recognize the connections between various cultural relics and the enduring value of Shakespeare's insights into human nature. This intercultural conversation greatly enhances both cultural traditions by promoting a deeper understanding of the traits that people have in common despite differences in their historical and geographic backgrounds.

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