

## Othello in India

### Author's Statement

The 76-245 Shakespeare: Tragedies & Histories course with Professor Stephen Wittek allowed me to take a deep dive into Shakespearean scripts and performances and demystified the reasons and downfalls of Shakespeare's impact on literary culture. The "Maker Project" at the end of the course intended to give students the freedom to write either a paper or creative project that dove into themes we discussed in class in relation to a specific Shakespearean play. It allowed me to explore some of the questions percolating in my mind from discussions that I did not get a chance to expound on.

The inspiration for the topic of "*Othello* in India" was sparked from seeing a significant number of ethnically South Asian actors and actresses in Shakespearean productions and wondering Shakespeare's influence in India and the Indian diaspora. Digging deeper, I learned about British colonialism, the Indian Independence movement, and India's extensive evolution of performing art. I felt especially drawn to the ways *Othello* would be portrayed because of its topics of race and marriage.

I, as an Asian American and immigrant from South Korea, have a very limited understanding of South Asian culture, especially in the cultural significance of theatrical and filmic performance. This project was an opportunity for me to identify that area of ignorance and learn more about a very niche subject I may otherwise not have come across. I also had a desire to put Shakespeare in a context outside of Europe. Learning more about Shakespearean performances in India has in turn deepened my understanding of Sanskrit and Parsi theater and changed the way I perceive Shakespeare's global influence. In some ways, it has also challenged me to think about the cause for the prominence of certain authors over others in my own Korean culture as well.

Approaching this paper again after two years allowed me to fill in areas with newfound knowledge from a course on South Asian Cinema about Bombay cinema and the Bollywood industry. My greatest excitement while writing this paper was within the dichotomy of English theater's invasive and inspirational effect in India, overshadowing traditional practices and bringing about new ways of storytelling that are uniquely Indian.

-Arrim Jung