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Relocating Desire: Historical Fantasy in Transnational Films

This session investigates the making of historical fantasy in transnational films with Asian themes and settings. The panel members assess the various approaches adopted by filmmakers who relocate the cultural past in the desires of the present through globalized cinematic fantasy. When traditional and local performance themes are translated into cinematic images in the dissemination across national boundaries, the semiotic prowess and aesthetic judgments of self-globalizing audiences are severely challenged by the subversion of conventions in film, as well as in culture. One paper analyzes the manipulation of the transcultural in the symbols and scenes of Chen Kaige's *The Promise* while another paper reports on focus-group research carried out on international audiences for Chen Kaige's film. The third paper examines the problem of cultural translation in Peter Brook's production of the Hindu *Mahabharata*.