Abstract

In this capstone, I want to discuss the influence that Shakespeare’s work has had upon Chinese drama and, furthermore, its influence on society more broadly. By situating the reception of Shakespeare in the context of Chinese history, I want to show the historical and political influence Shakespeare has had upon China’s drama. After this analysis of Shakespeare in Chinese culture, I provide as a short case-study a close reading of portions from Shakespeare’s *Romeo and Juliet* and Cao Yu’s play *Thunderstorm*. Comparing and contrasting *Romeo and Juliet* and *Thunderstorm*, I argue that Cao Yu was the first person who wrote with Shakespeare’s writing style and methods for expressing conflict in mind, a process that helped contribute to making *Thunderstorm* a well-known Chinese drama masterpiece.

Introduction

The world of literature boasts of several iconic and renowned poets and authors, the likes of which are Dante, Tolstoy, Homer, and countless more. However, there is perhaps no writer whose reputation can rival that of the legendary William Shakespeare. The Bard of Avon, William Shakespeare has been hailed as the world’s greatest writer, poet, and dramatist, with his birth nation of England, even hailing him as the country’s national poet. In his lifespan of fifty-two years, he went from being a small-town glove maker’s son to a brilliant playwright of such skill that even Queen Elizabeth and King James were in awe of his talent. William Shakespeare began writing plays in the late sixteenth early seventeenth centuries, during the Renaissance era, and his plays are still performed and read today in numerous countries across the whole world. It