

# The Adaptation of Shakespeare's Work in Indian Cinema

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**Abstract-** The ability to adjust one's behaviour to a new environment is called adaptation. To "adapt" a plot, idea, topic, or any other feature from another work of art and incorporate it into one's film is to "adapt" the work. It is a procedure that, by definition, involves adapting a literary work for the big screen. The Indian cinema industry has been using Shakespearean plays as a source of inspiration since 1938. Vishal Bhardwaj directed and wrote the Indian versions of three Shakespeare tragedies, *Maqbool* (2003) from *Macbeth*, *Omkara* (2006) from *Othello*, and *Haider* (2014) from *Hamlet* received broad appreciation for his work. Books and movies are two forms of art, each with its own strengths and weaknesses. Many items from the original source must be cut, while others must be added, and much trial and error must be undertaken in order to successfully adapt the source to the medium being used. Films based on Shakespearean works should be seen with an open mind.

**Index Terms-** Drama, Medium, Transformation, Audiovisual, Poetic license, Expression.

Within a decade of Dadasaheb Phalke's pioneering motion picture shows in 1913, cinema became the main popular entertainment medium of twentieth-century India. Among the early shows' topical and ancestral subjects, adaptations of literary works, notably theatre works, came quickly. There is a prolonged history of "texts" being reimagined by humans. Artwork, sculptures, dramas, written stories, stained-glass windows, and eventually novel-length fiction were all influenced by historical facts and oral folklore. The relationship between film and literature has endured for as long as the technique of the movie itself has been used to interpret literary works and theatre. Virginia Woolf blamed film and, in particular, movie adaptations of literary works for the moral decline and vulgarisation of society today. She used a biological analogy to describe movie as a "parasite" and literary works as its "predators." Leo Tolstoy finds the movie as a "direct assault on the methodologies of world literature." Robert Stam argues that class bias, iconophobia (phobias of a graphic), logophilia (presumption in the privileges of the actual source), and pro-government (absolutely despise of the aspects in which the material of cinema interacts with the audience) are all factors in the historical choice for literary works over films as well as other media forms. Translation, as defined by Linda

Hutcheon, is "the deliberate and comprehensive alteration of one or more works." It's the act of adapting a story for use in a different format. It might be an exact copy of the original work or a complete reworking of the structure and ideas therein. Seeing what a new creative mind does with a story we've enjoyed reading is part of the allure of adaptations. Possible implications include a shift in format or style and a new setting. Whereas an adapted work becomes a unique species as a response to the adjustments and invasive surgery, its quality can't be assessed without evaluating the original work, which is impossible since the two works will not be identical and will not be reviewed on content. A film adaptation is an art form that transfers a tale from one platform to another. The first cause for alteration is the specialisation and limitations of a medium, which affect the finished output. The adaptor's ingenuity is the second major cause. It is vital to understand both the source medium and the destination medium in order to successfully adapt literature. The adaptability of two different mediums is examined in this research. It has been discovered that a good adaptor should strive to preserve the soul of the source work while creating a masterpiece out of it. Another consideration is that when adapting a novel, much may have to be trimmed. However, when adapting a short story, much more may be added rather than cut. Because a short tale is often short, the length of a film requires addition and allows for extensive experimentation with the final output. According to the Bollywood business, many Bollywood films are based on works of literature. First, the Indian mythological figure Harishchandra serves as inspiration for the first feature-length Indian film by Raja Harishchandra. Premchand's collection of short stories "Shatranj Ke Khiladi" was the basis for a picture from Satyajit Ray in 1977, and then in 1938, Krishnaswami Subramaniam translated stories of Premchand's novel *Sevasadan*. The films *Pathar Panchali*, *Apur Sansar*, *Aprajito*, and *Ghare Baire*, are only a few of Satyajit Ray's interpretations. Vijay Anand helmed a movie version of R.K. Narayan's work *Guide* in 1965. Similarly, *Junoon*, *Blue Umbrella*, and *7 Khoon Maaf* are all adapted from works of fiction written by Ruskin Bond. Others on the list include works by Amit Sath (Parinati), Sanjay Leela Bhansali (*Devdas*), Anurag Kashyap (*Black Friday*), Amol Palekar (*Paheli*), and Aparna Sen (*The Japanese Wife*).

In the almost four hundred and fifty years following Shakespeare's death, he had left behind more than only his plays. By creating these dramatic works, he has served as an

inspiration to many generations of filmmakers all over the country. His concepts provide some of the best components for a successful film in any tongue and from any country. His stories have resonated with readers all around the world, despite being written in an archaic form of English and featuring people who live in a completely other era and culture. Shakespearean stories were adapted into films in India even before freedom. *Khoon Ka Khoon* (1935) is an Indian film adaptation of *Hamlet* produced by Shohrab Modi. Known as "the individual who brought Shakespeare to Bollywood cinema," Narendra Modi debut film earned him praise and a reputation as a filmmaker. The story and screenplay for this Urdu play based on Shakespeare's "*Hamlet*" were written by Mehdi Hassan Ahsan. In the film *Khoon Ka Khoon*, Naseem Banu made her first appearance on screen in the role of Ophelia against Shohrab Modi's *Hamlet*. There was also a talented cast, including Shamshadbai, Ghulam Hussain, Obali Mai, Fazal Karim, and Eruch Tarapore. After Modi Shohrab, in 1941, J. J. Madan translated *The Merchant of Venice* into the Hindi movie *Zalim Saudagar*. Sanjay Leela Bhansali's 2013 film *Goliyon Ki Raasleela Ram-Leela* is a Gujarati adaptation of *Romeo & Juliet*. The enmity between the Rajadi as well as the Sanera echoed that between the Montagu and the Capulet families. Because of Ram's (*Juliet*) & Leela's (*Romeo*) deaths, the feud between the two families has finally resolved. This was a dramatization that emphasised sexual aspects between both lovers rather than familial strife and was, therefore, highly glamorised, elaborately staged, celebrity, and exaggerated. The grandma engaged in some dramatic flourishes and pointed posturing of her own.

This adaptation trend took off after the release of *Angoor* (1982), written and directed by Sampooran Singh Kalra in the latter half of the 20th century (*Gulzar*). The Bengali comedy film *Angoor* (1963) was a carbon copy of *Vranti Bilas* (1963), itself a remake of Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar's play of the identical title. Shakespeare's *The Comedy of Errors* served as inspiration for Vidyasagar's work. Sajid Khan's adaptation of *Angoor*, titled *Humshakals*, was a disaster and flopped at the box office. Contrarily, the Bengali cinematic rendition of *Vranti Bilas* was commercially successful & remains popular amongst couch potatoes who waste time in front of the TV. Vishal Bhardwaj's reimaginings of *Macbeth* (2004), *Othello* (2006), and *Hamlet* (2014) as *Maqbool*, *Omkara*, and *Haider*, respectively, are earnest efforts to examine and understand how Shakespeare can, be and have been apportioned into the worldwide ethos, and how those who are able neatly to fit into an extremely typical Indian socioeconomic setting of North India, in all of its class distinctions and existing social strata, still can highlight as independent works of art.

In the annals of cinema, translations have a poor track record. "Creating a movie of a novel is like reheating food," said French filmmaker and author Alan Resnais. The belief that a copy must be faithful to the original material and authentically convey the movie's original context or time period is held by many filmmakers, authors, and viewers. It's a bad adaptation if it strays too far from the source material, and it's still a bad copy of the original, even if it stays true to the concept. In the

concluding paragraphs of several adaptation evaluations, the statement "not as excellent as the reference manual" appears. It's a ludicrous endeavour since no two people's interpretations or assertions about a tale are the same, but every viewer wants to see their own. Because each Indian audience perceives the characters and locations differently, these discrepancies are especially obvious in Shakespearean theatre. Vishal Bhardwaj's love of Shakespeare is well-documented. In 2003, he transformed *Macbeth* into the mega-hit *Maqbool*; in 2006, he came with *Omkara*, his version of *Othello*. His third film, *Haider*, based on the novels of the English author, is generating more media attention than his previous efforts due to its controversial subject matter. The events of the film occur in Kashmir Issue under Indian rule. Bhardwaj's film features Shahid Kapoor as *Hamlet* (*Haider*), Shraddha Kapoor as *Ophelia* (*Arshia*), Tabu as *Gertrude* (*Ghazala*), and K.k. Menon as *Khurram Meer* (*Claudius*). The plot changes and twists in the drama are set in the context of the armed insurgency in Srinagar in the 1990s. A writer named *Haider* comes back to Kashmir during the conflict to discover that his father has mysteriously vanished and his mother is having an affair with his uncle. *Shahid's* character, who is on a perilous quest to find his dad, becomes involved in political intrigue along the way. Bhardwaj's film is centred on Kashmir yet depicts *Hamlet's* strong emotions. The 1990s were the worst decade of the country's history, as separatist organisations clashed violently with the military to get freedom from "Indian oppression." Kashmir, a part of India that Pakistan claims, has served as a hotspot between the two South Asian rivals for over 60 years, resulting in two full-scale wars. Moreover, India has regularly accused Pakistan of interfering in its internal affairs and funding terrorist groups. But Bhardwaj's film doesn't centre on the rivalry between the neighbours; instead, it's on the government's alleged human rights abuses. The army has often refuted allegations made by activists that its members have abused and kidnapped local children and held them in unauthorised detention cells. It has been reported by Jason Burke of the *Guardian* that "*Haider* features terrible photographs of mistreatment in Indian army camps and other abuses of human rights by Indian officials." In other words, *Haider* is a modern retelling of "*Ophelia*" that also features an honest examination of political events in Kashmir. The public became outraged after the film's debut. Even though the film was a commercial success, some people who term themselves "*Shakespeare aficionados*" were offended by the film's modifications to the plot and the political undertones. These thoughts on the adapted work reveal a deep-seated faith in the superiority of books over the film. It's commonly assumed that any form of media aimed towards the mass market will lack the nuance and complexity seen in literary works. In spite of this, Shakespeare enjoyed enormous popularity during his lifetime. The original performances of Shakespeare's plays took place at London's *Globe Theatre*, subsequently rebuilt as Shakespeare's *Globe*. Those who wanted to watch the show from the *Globe's* outside "pit" section charged only a penny. Employees in the trade and business community were able to afford tickets to plays at the *Globes*, despite the fact that wealthier patrons were charged much more to sit in the galleries. Shakespeare's playing troupe, the *Lord Chamberlain's Men* (later the *King's Men*),

also performed at the Blackfriars theatre, a subterranean cinema with seats for the public. The Blackfriars was six pence more expensive than the Globe's cheapest entrance. Shakespeare has adapted various works by other writers for the stage. He always has defended creative independence in poetry. He used what we would now call "poetic licence." In a broader sense, the phrase refers to all aspects wherein poets and other scholarly writers are thought to be autonomous in order to offend normal norms not just of public consciousness but also of metaphorical and social truth, such as the use of metre and turns of phrase, the use of fiction writers, and the portrayal of completely fictitious individuals and things. When adapting Samuel Daniel's lyrical account of the Battles of Roses for use in Henry IV, Part 1, Shakespeare, for example, makes the valiant Hotspur appear much younger than he is in reality so that he can serve as a more successful foil to the purportedly dissolute Prince Hal. For the sake of clarity, let's define what we mean by "anachronism": an event, person, or thing that does not belong in the time frame in which it is set. Shakespeare heavily drew from Plutarch's Life of Antony, as produced by Sir Thomas Nashe, for both Antony and Cleopatra and Julius Caesar, and for the latter, which is similarly based on Plutarch's Life but is set in Roman times, Shakespeare even included a calendar that chimes the hour. So, as an artistic creation, crediting the original source of any adaptations is optional. "I read a novel once, and if I'm satisfied with the basic idea, I simply forget about the novel and start making movies," said British director Alfred Hitchcock. It's important for audiences to look past worries about the film's faithfulness to the original material and instead see the book as just one of many texts that inspired or interacted with the finished product. In addition to the script, the viewer should evaluate the film's use of images, camera work, mis-en-scene, sound design, and other elements to express its message. Audiences should not perceive adaptations as carbon copies but as fresh takes on the source material.

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