

A Study of film adaptation of *Hamlet* and *Disgrace*: Moving from Text to Screen

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A Study of film adaptation of *Hamlet* and *Disgrace*: Moving from Text to Screen

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Abstract

Literary adaptation has reached a new dimension in the postmodern era. Literary adaptations have gone through various technical and aesthetic changes over the last century and are done taking from the classical literary works to the contemporary literature as well. Almost all film industries around the world are interested in film adaptations nowadays. Because of the interest and innovation in adaptations as a film mode, it has become more of a vice-versa relation between the two forms of art. Not only films are being made taking the narrative from popular or classical literature, but literatures are also inspired and are being written based on films and Television sitcoms. These adaptations have dynamic impact on both the medium of art, cultural perception and the recipients. Since recreation and entertainment through TV and motion pictures are such a big part of postmodern life, the practice of adaptation demands cultural re-reading and research to establish the adaption as the new genre. This paper will look at the very art of film adaptation as a technique and also as a form of cultural transmission.

This paper takes “Politics of adaptation theory” by Basil and Hatim and William Shakespeares’ *Hamlet* and J.M. Coetzees’ novel *Disgrace* as the texts. With the analysis of these two books I will show the technicalities executed by the directors and how their interpretative powers influence films and interpretation of texts through the lens of camera.

As the film productions are from different times, from the 20th century and another is from 21st century, this paper will also focus on the visual differences and film culture of the centuries.

Introduction

With the end of my graduation, when it was the time for me to choose a thesis topic for my research, I was confused to decide and finalize my topic as I did not know which my utmost interest was. There were several things in my mind that I wanted to work on but I was not sure yet. As a requirement of my program I took a course called "Popular Media and Literature" and this course resolved all my confusions. This course helped me to think more seriously about the new cultural and art practices and the place that media holds our lives. With all these in mind, I decided to go for a study of literary adaptation as it meets both of my interests, literature and media. Since adaptation is a technology now I decided to take it as my research topic. I think, its importance will increase day by day as it's an important medium to merge literature and popular media together. During my classes on 'Popular Media and Literature', adaptation was always my first interest and I wanted to look at closely at the meeting point of classical literature and popular art.

From the very beginning, popular media is related to literature. The first association between literature and media which can be detected, dates back to Victorian England. At that time, newspaper was the most popular medium. With Enlightenment¹- and the progress of Industrial Revolution (1760) provided with technological support needed to transmit literature in newspapers. Victorian England also saw large group of educated readership who would spend money to buy novels and read them for recreational purposes. Novels ushered widely as more people could read. With the establishment of Queen's College, which was the first women

¹ In *International World History Project* Enlightenment is described as a movement that claimed the allegiance of a majority of thinkers during the 17th and 18th centuries, a period that Thomas Paine called the 'Age of Reason', because it triumphed reason over emotion and superstition.

college in 1848, helped to increase the number of female readers. During 18th century, the rise of the novels coincide with the rise of the middle class in Western Europe. Gradually, few types of novels became very popular among the people like, epistolary novel, realistic novel, philosophic novel, epic novel, experimental novel and bildungsroman novel. Along with the advancement of the printing technology, the publishers were able to supply ample books and newspaper supplements to the readers. Novelists like Charles Dickens, George Eliot, Thomas Hardy, Anthony Trollope and William Makepeace Thackeray started to publish their writings in the magazines and newspapers in a serial form. In April 1836, Dickens' *Pickwick Paper* was published, which was highly successful and after that he did not have to look back. His writings would mostly end with a cliff hanger², to hold the public interest for long time.

The next change in art and culture took place with the fostering of American cinema at the turn of Twentieth Century. This age, which is also known as **Roaring Twenties**¹, saw transmutation through the medium of film and then through television. When the form changes from written to audio visual, other changes come along with it too. When classical or any literature is taken as a source of manuscript, it gives the director a lot of choices. Writers and directors differ greatly in terms of how they want to sketch a particular story or narrative. As the genre changes, the entire work changes. For example, in case of TV sitcoms when they are taken from popular novels or plays, the director sometimes changes the language into more recent vernacular. S/he can also appropriate costumes and expression to minimize the cultural and age

²Cliff hanger is a dramatic and exciting ending to an episode of a serial, leaving the audience in suspense and anxious not to miss the next episode.

gap. The director can also make changes in the linear³-understanding of plot. S/he could tamper with storyline to keep with the interest of the audience. Directors are sometimes motivated by what people want to watch. We have also seen that when adapting a classical literature or a piece that dates back two or three hundred years ago, the directors and screen writers have to make radical adjustments to the story for it to fit our modern understanding.

For instance, Akira Kurosawa's *Throne of Blood*, which is Japanese adaptation of Shakespeare's *Macbeth*. Kurosawa chose 16th century setting for *Throne of Blood*, as he saw similarities between what was going on in Scotland at the time of *Macbeth* and what happened in his country in the 16th century. The film begins with a messenger, returning to his castle to bring news from the battlefield. When it looked like all was lost, commanders Washizu and Miki held the forces back and secured victory. While returning from the battle, the two men become lost in Spider's Web Forest. There they come across an evil spirit. Here Kurosawa replaces the three witches in *Macbeth* with a more traditional Japanese hag. The spirit tells Washizu that he will become leader of the North Garrison and eventually Great Lord of Spider's Web Castle. The spirit also tells Miki that he will become the leader of the First Castle and his son will eventually rule as Great Lord.

Moreover, adaptation is considered as a visual transliteration⁴. A novelist and a director meet in a common intention. A novelist see through his/her imagination and a director or an adaptor see visually through the eye. But there has always been a difference between a book and

³ A linear plot begins at point A, progresses through events which build towards climax, and finally reaching point B. On the other hand, a non-linear plot typically presents the audience with multiple paths from point A to point B.

⁴*Novel to Film: An Introduction to the Theory of Adaptation* is a book by Brian McFarlane, published in 1996.

an adaptation. The mental image, imagery, symbols, illusions, metaphors that are written by an author would be quite difficult for a director to express those aspects on the film screen. For example if we say that "he entered the room wearing a red shirt", it would be easy for a director to shoot it. On the other hand the condition of a mental state like memory, dream, and imagination cannot be represented so easily in the film, in the way the author has described it.

Generally, a book conveys message through words whereas a film does it through images. Adaptation is a medium, through which, the literary works can be made available to all the people. Shakespeare in his time transferred his cultural phenomenon into play to make it available for the people and to create new audiences as well. The young generation who are not familiar to those cultural stories might be acquainted through this adapted works.

In looking at the journey of film adaptation from 20th Century to the present and interpreting its cultural significance I will keep the following questions as my framework:

1. How did the literary adaptation start?
2. How has the art of adaptation changed through the time?
3. What are the recent trends seen in this practice of art today?
4. How is it affecting 'Art' as a medium?

1.1 Adaptation: Theoretical Premise

The word adaptation has emerged from the word "adapt". According to the dictionary meaning "adapt" means 'make suitable for a new use or purpose; modify'. In short, Linda

Hutcheon in her book *A Theory of Adaptation*⁵-describes ‘adaptation’ as, firstly, ‘acknowledged transposition of a recognizable other work or works’; secondly, ‘a creative and imperative act of appropriation/salvaging’; and thirdly, ‘an extended intertextual engagement with the adapted work.’ Therefore, she adds, ‘an adaptation is a derivation that is not derivative---a work that is second without being secondary.’ (9)

On this issue, Hutcheon has further given three points that, firstly, adaptation is ‘seen as a *formal entity or product*,’ an adaptation is as announced and extensive transposition of a particular work or works. This “transcoding” can involve a shift of medium (a poem to a film) or genre (an epic to a novel), or a change of frame and therefore context: telling the same story from a different point of view, for instance, it can create a different interpretation.’ Secondly, an adaptation is taken ‘as a process of creation’, which always contains ‘both (re-)interpretation and (re-)creation.’ According to Hutcheon, these two are the ‘salvaging, depending’ on our perspective. Last but not the least, she says that, an adaptation is perceived from the viewpoint of its ‘process of reception, adaptation is a form of intertextuality.’ (7)

In the book *Literature and Film: A Guide to the Theory and Practice of Film Adaptation* edited by Robert Stam⁶-and Alessandra Raengo⁷-mention that:

⁵The book *A Theory of Adaptation* explores the continuous development of creative adaptation, and argues that the practice of adapting is central to the story-telling imagination.

⁶ Robert P Stam is a University Professor of Cinema Studies at New York University. He is the author of *Film Theory: An Introduction*, published in January 1st, 1389 by Wiley-Blackwell.

⁷ Dr. Alessandra Raengo is an associate professor of Communication at Georgia State University.

In Freudian terms, film is seen in the terms of Bloom's "anxiety of influence," whereby the adaptation as Oedipal son symbolically slays the source-text as "father". (4)

In addition to this, Linda Hutcheon tries to give actual definition of adaptation, but she says that, this is quite difficult to define but as a product, a formal definition can be given but as "a process—of creation and of reception"—other aspects have to be considered. According to her, often adaptations can also be compared to translations. For example, when a text is translated from one language to another language, the literal translation of that particular text is not done. So, in the adaptation, the story can remain same but its themes, events, characters, motivations, point of view, consequences, contexts, symbols, imageries may get changed. She mentions about an argument of Walter Benjamin, in *The Task of the Translator*⁸,

That translation is not a rendering of some fixed nontextual meaning to be copied or paraphrased or reproduced; rather, it is an engagement with the original text that makes us see that text in different ways. (16)

Before the age of motion picture, the printing media was very popular. After printing media, lithography empowered the graphic art to show everyday life. Lithography is a Greek word. The word "lithos" means "stone" and "graphein" means "to write". It is a method of printing originally based on the principle that oil and water do not mix. Printing is from a stone or a metal plate with a smooth surface. This has begun to keep pace with printing and it was in the process

⁸*The Task of the Translator* is an essay about the appreciation of a work of art or an art form. In the essay, Walter Benjamin says that the translation does not exist for the sake of the reader who does not read the original language, rather translation as an art in its own right.

of pictorial reproduction. Gradually from this pictorial reproduction, people thought to capture the photographs with speech. The story of Hollywood films started through this. At the beginning, the films were consisted of photographs. In the essay of *Modern Art and Modernism A Critical Anthology* book named *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction*, Walter Benjamin⁹-mentions that,

Around 1900 technical reproduction had reached a standard that not only permitted it to reproduce all transmitted works of art and thus to cause the most profound change in their impact upon the public. (218)

If we look for the explanation of a question ‘What is a film?’ it might be: film is the combination of motion pictures, containing speeches and we watch those pictures in our leisure time. Regarding films, the critics consider the films as texts. According to them, a painting is also a text and so a television show is also a text. When we read any book, we see the literary terms, used by the authors like tone, setting, point of view, theme, plot and so on. In the same way a film can also be criticized from the physical, narrative, economic and cultural aspects and which includes production, distribution, exhibition and viewing. So, at the beginning of the motion picture or film, the producers looked for the stories and they took literary works to make their work reliable. Producers were also concerned about the market demands that, which film can grab the attention of the mass people and can earn money out of those films.

⁹Walter Benjamin (1892-1940) was a German Jewish Philosopher. *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction* is his one of the influential essays, where he defines the manual production of traditional work. He also focused on the technical reproduction of photography n film.

1.2 The Journey of Film adaptation:

The more years pass, the more films get modernized with the invention of technologies. They started to step forward with new technologies and the producers from the other film industries started to adapt the literary works from their own cultures, in fact they also started to adapt literary works from the other cultures as well. This has been called cultural globalization. As Romans adapted Greek theatre and in the change of time, occurred changes in languages, places or time periods. In 1957, Akira Kurosawa's *Throne of Blood* was a famous Japanese film adaptation, which was the adaptation of Shakespeare's one of the most famous plays *Macbeth* and Hollywood also adapted Kurosawa's *Seven Samurai* (1954) as *The Magnificent Seven* (1960).

For this transcultural adaptation, it has become global and people from all walks of life can get in touch with the literary works through the motion pictures. In the process of doing these adaptations, the producers cannot give any guarantees that, every single this of that particular literary work will match with the adapted work. There can be changes in plots, themes, characters and languages. The producer can even change the characteristics of the main protagonist according to the culture of that particular country or the settings to grab the attention of the audiences as we see in Kurosawa's *Throne of Blood*.

The first adaptation of Hollywood was Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventure in Wonderland* in short *Alice in Wonderland* in 1903. The adaptation of the novel came after 37 years of publication of the book and it was a silent film. The film ran 12 minutes and it was a 16 pictures film and directed by Cecil Hepworth in Great Britain. After that few more historical adaptations

came such as *The Birth of a Nation* (1915); *Nosferatu, Eine Symphonie des Grauens* (1922); *All Quiet on the Western Front* (1930); *Gone with The Wind* (1939); *The Body Snatcher* (1945); *Breakfast at Tiffany's* (1961); *The Exorcist* (1973); *Carrie* (1976); *Lady Chatterly's Lover* (1981); *The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King* (2003). With the time, the work of adaption of literary text has reached new levels.

So, through the politics of adaptation theory and the technicalities of camera works, I will try to focus on how directors imply their imaginative power in making the adaptation works. In addition to this, I will also try to show that, in this postmodern age, the literary works and film have become interconnected. Moreover, the focus will also be on the authentication of the adaptation and whether the value judgment is done to the work of literature through adaptation.

Chapter 2: A Study on *Hamlet* and *Disgrace*: From Text to Screen

David Mitchell in an article of *The New York Times* says “Any adaptation is a translation, and there is such a thing as an unreadably faithful translation; and I believe a degree of reinterpretation for the new language may be not only inevitable but desirable”. According to this statement given by Mitchell matches one of the important ideas that nowadays adaptation is considered as translation. Relating to these the adaptations of *Hamlet* and *Disgrace* is also translations. Undoubtedly, *Hamlet* is one of the most popular plays of Shakespeare. The play on which *Hamlet* is based was an ancient one; Versions of it are found in Byzantine, Greek, and Roman myth. The Danish story probably came to Shakespeare through an earlier play, now lost. Saxo Grammaticus ("Saxo the Literate", literally "the Grammarian") publishes his *Gesta Danorum* ("Deeds of the Danes"), a work of Danish history that comprises *Vita Amlethi* ("The Life of Amleth") which intertwines numerous older legends into a saga that bears, for the first time, some similarity to Shakespeare's *Hamlet* including a king being murdered by his brother, a prince that feigns madness, his queen mother's quick marriage to the expropriate, the prince killing a spy hidden in his mother's chamber, and the alteration of a letter by the prince in order to substitute the carrying out of two retainers for his own. However, the story also varies significantly from Shakespeare's version. Grammaticus' Amleth succeeds revenge without sacrificing his own life, becomes King of Denmark, marries the Queen of Scotland, and finally dies in battle.¹⁰ Shakespeare's *Hamlet* has much resemblance to *Amleth* with a little alteration.

In essence, Rorik a Viking, was King of Jutland. But Rorik's grandson, Amleth, was a figure of legend, a heroic avenger who overcame his rivals and ended up with two wives. Rorik's

¹⁰ *Looking for Hamlet*. Marvin W. Hunt. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007

daughter, Gerutha, was given in marriage to his favorite, Horwendil, whose son was Amleth (Hamlet) and the legend begins. Feng murders his brother out of jealousy and marries Gerutha (Amleth's mother); Amleth pretends to be witless to save himself; his sanity is tested by the suspicious Feng; he is sent to England guarded by two of Feng's retainers, who carry a death letter; Amleth alters the letter to order the deaths of the retainers and his own marriage to the King's daughter; he returns to Jutland and, after a celebratory feast, burns the Great Hall full of drunken nobles and murders his uncle, avenging his father.¹¹ It is clearly seen that *Vita Amlethi* has got much similarities with Shakespeare's *Hamlet*.

2.1. *Hamlet*: Performance from 'theatre' to 'Film'

1. Elizabethan stage and the 'Meta theatre':

Notably, the most famous Elizabethan play house (theater) was the Globe Theater (1599) built by the company which Shakespeare had a stake, now often referred to as the Shakespearean Globe. The theater that Cuthbert Burbage built for the Chamberlain's Men. The Shakespearean actors generally only get their lines as the play was in progress. Parts were often allocated on the day of performance. Many times the directors didn't even get their own lines. They did 'cue cutting'¹². This rapid turnover led to another technique called 'cue scripting'.¹³ The complete scene of the play was not explained to actors until it was actually being performed. This

¹¹A *New Look at the Old Sources of Hamlet is a book* by Taylor, Marion A

¹² Cue Cutting is a signal to an actor or stage technician that the next line or stage function is to occur. There is a person backstage who whispered the lines to the actor just before he was going to say them.

¹³ Cue scripting is the technique exposes humor and tragedy throughout all of his works, draws themes from the scripts rather than placing arbitrary themes upon them and creates spontaneous moments between the actors and with the crowd in every performance.

technique allowed for zero rehearsal time, thus enabling a fast turnover in terms of new productions at the Globe Theater and a huge portfolio of different roles. There were no actresses. Female characters had to be played by young boys. The acting profession was not a credible one and it was unthinkable that one woman would appear in a play. In John Madden's movie *Shakespeare in Love*¹⁴, these facts are shown very clearly.

As we know that before a playwright, Shakespeare used to be an actor in the stage performance. In the Elizabethan period Shakespeare was one of the managing partners of the Lord Chamberlain's Company (renamed the King's Company when James succeeded to the throne), whose actors included the famous Richard Burbage. The company acquired interests in two theatres in the Southwark area of London near the banks of the Thames - the Globe and the Blackfriars. In 1593 and 1594, Shakespeare's first poems, 'Venus and Adonis' and 'The Rape of Lucrece', were published and he dedicated them to his patron, Henry Wriothesley, the Earl of Southampton. It is thought Shakespeare also wrote most of his sonnets at this time.¹⁵

Additionally, during the Elizabethan period, in the stage the revenge tragedy was one of the most celebrated form of dramas. It is argued that the principal theatrical inspiration on Elizabethan revenge tragedy came from Lucius Annaeus Seneca, a Roman statesman, philosopher, orator, and dramatist who flourished in the first century a.d. Seneca's works were first translated into the English language in 1559, and by 1581 Senecan tragedies had circulated widely among the English literate. While Seneca wrote several kinds of tragedy, the Elizabethan playwrights were particularly attracted to his *Thyestes*, *Medea*, and *Agamemnon*, all of which

¹⁴*Shakespeare in Love is a movie by John Madden*

¹⁵*More Information about William Shakespeare. History. BBC*

dramatize murder and betrayal and the succeeding mission to exact blood revenge on the villain or villains.

Accordingly, these theatrical spectacles display all of the passions in excess, such as hate, jealousy, and love; they also contain sensational elements, such as supernatural phenomena, cruel torture, and bloody violence. Other critics have argued that in addition to Seneca's influence, the Italian *nouvelle* or novel provided another literary source for the revenge tragedy.

Moreover, the Elizabethan theatre had a very complicated free technique, the use of words were very sophisticated; its blank verse slides in and out of prose, producing texts that frequently change things. The actor as a man standing in the distance and his face is seen as well, which is very close to the audience, perhaps his profile and his back of his head at the same time. When Hamlet is doing any of his soliloquies, the background that Shakespeare can conjure in one line evaporates in the next and new images take over. On the contrary to stage directions, when there is a question of camera comes, what happens, a man being objectively recorded sitting in front of a camera does not constitute an objective reality. We have come to know that photography is not realistic, the reality of the cinema exists at the same time of projection, at the moment when an image is projected on the screen; if there is a spectator, and then the interplay of image and spectator is the only reality. The reality of six weeks or six months before a man sitting in a room is no longer real; there is no virtue in the so called 'naturalism' of the photographic process. It would be real if it gave us information, but simple recording cannot begin to do that (Cardullo 165). Regarding movies Mamet¹⁶-says, 'the movies are a momentary and beautiful aberration of a technological society in the last stages of decay.' By contrast, the

¹⁶David Alan Mamet is an American playwright, essayist, screen writer and film director.

theatre requires ‘no technology whatever’ and simply involves telling stories ‘in a formulized manner.’¹⁷ (quoted in Cardullo 230)

The way Mamet mentions the decay of stages in 20th century due to the motion pictures and moreover he says that the theatre requires ‘no technology whatever’. It can be said that the demand for the theatre works might have dimmed due to the motion pictures but compared to the stages of 19th century, the theatres have become more advanced in using technologies like stage decorations of plays, make ups, costumes and other stage crafts.

2. Technicalities of movie and camera works in Films:

In the movie there is a question of point of view also comes when a director directs a movie. As I have mentioned earlier in my paper that when the directors make film the point of view of that totally depends on the director, where the directors put their own imagination. The film is to be conceived of as representing most directly a creation of the director’s visual imagination. Film would represent the events and characters of its fictional world only in virtue of the fact that private premier in the imagination is itself about the fictional world. Such a diversion through the director’s imagination is obviously worthless. There is no clear general idea of film narrative being rendered by a kind of visual narrator in the required sense. It may be that we have a film concept of something corresponding to the implied author of a story. And there has been some use of personified camera; a use in which the camera takes on certain personal qualities of a type of human observer. A point of view is to be associated with a set of assumptions, which the film is said to express.

¹⁷ *Stage and Screen: Adaptation Theory from 1916 to 2000* is a book by Cardullo, Bert.

As I have mentioned earlier in my paper that the first movie of the Twentieth century was a silent film. According to Andre Bazin, in the cinema between 1920 and 1940, there were two broad and opposite trends; those directors who put their faith in the image and those who put their faith in reality. By 'image' Bazin means, 'very broadly speaking everything that the representation on the screen adds to the object there represented.'¹⁸(Bazin 24) Bazin also says that this is a complex inheritance, so it can be reduced into two categories; those that relate to the plastics¹⁹- of the image and those that relate to the resources of montage²⁰-which is simply the ordering of images in time. Bazin's idea of 'plastics' and 'montage' are very much vivid in the movies. Montage is invisible as it's done outside of the camera but the work of montage is seen through flashback and flash forward scenes and the plastics are very important for the movie as it gives the audience a complete production of a motion picture.

In this section I will discuss the difference of filming in Lawrence Olivier and Kenneth Branagh's *Hamlet* in terms of, 1. Language, 2. Plot 3. Make up 4. Characterization.

Consequently in viewing Olivier's film, I was impressed by the visual imageries that enriched the original literature. When Hamlet first encountered the ghost, both sound and visual effects intensified the moment. The heart-pounding sound along with the synchronized focusing and blurring of Hamlet's figure immediately allowed the viewers to feel the dizziness Hamlet experienced as the ghost approached. He was frightened and confused, and the inner conflict

¹⁸*What is Cinema?* Isa book by Andre Bazin.

¹⁹Under the heading, plastics is the style of sets, make-up, up to a point and the performance to which we naturally add the lighting and finally the framing of the shot which give us its composition.

²⁰ Montage: the technique of selecting, editing, and piecing together separate sections of film to form a continuous whole.

springing within him was certainly noticeable through these physical manifestations. In addition, the tearful eyes and sweat on his face also enhanced the distress Hamlet underwent as he learned about the murder. Lastly, Olivier's representation of the fog, which seemed to waver and glide at the command of the ghost, magnified the eerie presence of the ghost.

Additionally two things were very interesting where Hamlet meets the ghost of his father. First, when the ghostly figure comes and asks Hamlet to follow him, he positions his sword in a precise way with the blade pointing down. This symbolizes an internal message that there is an understanding between the father and son and why he chose only him to converse with. Hamlet responds by holding it in the same manner. This imagery enhances the original Shakespeare text because we can visualize it in a more descriptive and creative way while reading the play does not give us a recognition of the true meaning behind their relationship. Second is when the ghost describes how Claudius poisoned him, the camera focuses on Hamlet's mind, the way he is picturing the murder the poisoning? And the illusion does not show the face of the murderer, however King Hamlet has already seen it and nobody knows about this till he actually reveals it to his son. Claudius wants everyone to believe that it was a natural death, therefore all we are shown is the hand of the killer supporting the fact that it was a secretive act which was successful.

Moreover, the camera reinforces Hamlet's distressed mental state as it associates his thoughts. In the scene II which is famous for Hamlet's soliloquy of existential anguish, "to be or not to be", the camera takes the audience on a journey to tell Hamlet's story. Olivier uses dizzying cinematography to show Hamlet's inner turmoil and confusion. This is a good technique of illustration of the emotional into the physical. The spiraling staircase begins to spin is a visual

effect to show Hamlet's mind being twisted and spun out of control. The fog is a representation of confusion and cloudiness. It is interesting to notice when the camera aims directly at his brain and it slowly moves closer and closer. This gives the dramatic illusion of us entering Hamlet's mind. Upon entering, we see clouds and fog; which shows he is not in control of his thoughts, things are not clear, he does not know what to believe, he has mixed emotions, and he's contemplating suicide.

Besides these, the scene that interested me the most in Olivier's version is generally referred to as the closet scene, also known as the confrontation between Hamlet and Gertrude. One thing that really stood out in this scene was the age of the actors playing the roles. Olivier was in his forties when he filmed this movie, and the actress playing his mother was in her twenties. This definitely altered the dynamic between them from what was intended in the play, creating a sexual tension within this relationship. That, and the addition of a bed to the chamber in which the scene takes place, lends a distinct Freudian interpretation to it, as if Hamlet really desires his mother in an incestuous way.

In the movie, while director picturizes Act I of the play, Shakespeare uses foreshadowing to let the audience understand the unnatural activities taking place in the Kingdom of Denmark through what? We see Hamlet in the beginning of this act, who was about to discover the murder of his father, King Hamlet by Claudius and exploitation of Gertrude of the marital tradition. I have taken the adaptation of Hamlet of 1996, directed by Kenneth Branagh, starring Kenneth Branagh and Kate Winslet and initially released in 25th December of the same year. Branagh chooses to reinterpret the text in a different way.

While analyzing the difference of language between the text and the adaptation of *Hamlet*, what I have observed is there was not such change in the dialogues of the film in Kenneth Branagh version. The dialogue of the film was similar to the language of the play. Kenneth Branagh reprised the entire text drawing from the scholastically approved versions--the First Folio and Second Quarto²¹. On the other side, regarding the syuzhet, Branagh has shown everything in this movie from Hamlet's play-within-a-play to Ophelia's descent into madness.

Desson Howe, the staff reporter of *The Washington Post*, mentions some flaws of the movie *Hamlet* in the movie review of 24th January 1997 which is called Branagh's 'Hamlet': Not to Be. He says:

Brian Blessed's otherwise respectable turn as the ghost of Hamlet's slain father is destroyed by baby-size spotlights on his bright blue eyes. He looks like a bearded Chucky, the murderous doll from "Child's Play." His loudly recorded exhalations suggest the aqualung rasps of Darth Vader; and his ghostly apparition is attended by earth-cracking, smoking scenery that suggests a low-budget disaster.

(Branagh's 'Hamlet': Not to Be)

The critic has pointed out, one of the very important issues of the play, which is 'ghost'. While watching the movies, the appearance of the ghost was quite different. His appearance is almost like the Darth Vader, the character from *Star Wars*.

Furthermore, not only did the ghost insight rage in Hamlet, but it also calmed him. In all the scenes except one, the ghost appears in full armor. When the ghost appeared before Horatio,

²¹ "Branagh's 'Hamlet': Not to Be" is an article by Desson Howe published in *The Washington Post*.

Francisco, and Marcellus, it appeared in full armor. Again, when Hamlet and the ghost spoke privately in the forest it was dressed in full armor. The armored ghost sends a message of vigor and power, which encouraged Hamlet to be a man of physical strength and take action. But in the Closet Scene, the ghost appeared before Hamlet only (Gertrude was not able to see the ghost) and he was not dressed in a full body of armor. The ghost's visit this time did not represent action and anger and revenge. It appeared without armor to show a more peaceful visit to calm Hamlet and remind him of where he needs to express his anger. His revenge was not with Gertrude.

So, here one of the very important issue is the presence of ghost with armor and without armor. In the original work, at the beginning ghost appear before Hamlet with full armor but in Act III, scene IV, there were no description whether the ghost appeared with armor or not. In the Olivier's version, the director doesn't show the ghost, instead he uses sound effect and a husky voice to show the presence of the ghost. On the other hand, in Branagh's version, the director shows the presence of the ghost without armor. As I have said that the armored ghost send us the message of vigor and power, whereas the presence of non-armored ghost in the bedroom of Gertrude sends us the opposite message that Hamlet father King Hamlet is very much affectionate and kind towards his wife and it's cleared through his dialogues:

GHOST. Do not forget. This visitation

Is but to whet thy almost blunted purpose.

But look, amazement on thy mother sits.

O, step between her and her fighting soul.

Conceit in weakest bodies strongest works.

Speak to her, Hamlet. (3.4.63)

In addition to this, In Act II. Scene II, when the ambassadors come to meet King Claudius and gives information about what took place with the aged and ailing King of Norway the king rebuked Fortinbras for attempting to provoke war on Denmark and Fortinbras swore he would never again attack Danes Moreover, in Act II. Scene II, after welcoming the troupe of players, Hamlet entreats one of them to give him a speech about the fall of Troy and the death of Trojan king and queen, Priam and Hecuba. . In the Olivier's version of *Hamlet*, the director didn't use any flashback to show this scene, whereas in Branagh's version director has picturized the scene creating flashback.

Again in Act III. Scene I, when Hamlet was delivering his most popular aside, there was no stage description. In the movie, producer made Hamlet to deliver the aside in the main passageway of the palace in which this scene takes place is covered with full-length mirrors. When delivering the "To be or not to be" speech Hamlet (Branagh) looks directly into one of the full-length mirrors. His own image is reflected back to him, he can observe himself and this is perhaps symbolic that in this speech he tries to understand himself, see himself and make a decision. By looking in the mirror it is a physical manifestation of looking within himself. This is perhaps why he threatens his reflection with his knife and not himself. The mirrors were a

deliberate choice on the part of Branagh and have great symbolic meaning. Mirrors show us what we can't see, ourselves. One must only look in them to see the truth. Based on this idea, the palace has eyes, and the truth is constantly being reflected back to the main characters. They also lengthen the interiors because mirrors reflecting mirrors cause a never ending reflection. The mirrors cover covering the doors create a kind of equivalent atmosphere, the objects that reflect truth hiding the truth; they are dual-purposed just as many of the characters are two faced.

One thing I noticed in these two versions of Hamlet was the way in which the directors were able to visually underscore Hamlet's confusion and his inability to take action, particularly in the "To be, or not to be" scene. In Olivier's version, the indecisiveness was displayed through the use of the dagger, where first he threatened himself with it and then allowed it to fall into the sea. Branagh's version used the dagger to a similar effect in conjunction with the mirror, Hamlet threatening his own reflection with the blade rather than himself, as if he were contemplating the idea of taking his own life but not yet fully committed to the act.

As I have mentioned before that adaptation is considered as translation nowadays, so we can consider these two adaptations as the translation of *Hamlet*. Since the gap between these translations is forty eight years, so there are differences in technicalities of the camera work. Moreover, the techniques of capturing pictures got updated, the perspective of the people changed with years, so it's obvious to have changes in the translations. The change of mode is very vivid of the adaptation, one is black and white and another is color version. Without uncertainty I would sincerely recommend each adaptation of *Hamlet*. What makes each creation precious in its own right is that they are each separate and autonomous onto themselves. This is both a positive and a negative, each making goes wrong in some entities but each also goes right

in many ways. Branagh's Hamlet is fortunate because it's an unabridged account of Shakespeare's work. The play within a play is relegated to a mere dumb show in both previous incarnations, but in this version it is a complete spoken word piece.

Similarly, Charlton Heston shines as the King within the play, and from this angle we are able to more appreciate the prospective guilt of Claudius. I was not as enamored with Branagh's Hamlet though Winslet as Ophelia and Christie as Gertrude were good. Something I find interesting of this incarnation is the use of the flashback technique by Branagh, it's an inspired notion. Though the film is an unabridged version of the play, but Branagh makes use of voiceless flashbacks as we see happier times in Ellsinore with Claudius seeming to lurk in the shadows, all the while plotting. These scenes are especially profound and are a nice addition to the narrative, and despite the seemingly tedious length of the film already (nearing four hours) it is never superfluous. We even see Claudius murder his brother as the ghost speaks which unlike the other two incarnations is more startling. Though I do say that I do not find Branagh's interpretation appropriate for the role and his chemistry with Winslet to be feigned, the scene where he acknowledges her in the coffin is done so tastefully that I will single that particular moment out as handled the best.

I must single out Olivier's 1948 production as the best of the lot. Olivier is the best of the *Hamlets* even though he is not faultless. The thing about it is that Olivier's Hamlet is not a true representation of Shakespeare's play. Lines are cut, and the subplot of Fortinbras (who is plotting to overthrow Denmark) is filleted. Purists will call foul, but even though his is not the four hour epic that Branagh is it exists as a fulfilling incarnation of Shakespeare. A moment I appreciate greatly in his incarnation is the meeting of the ghost. In 1948 little special effects are available,

but as the ghost appears in a mist and his face is almost demolished by a helmet it is appropriately haunting and seems like such an appropriate way for a ghost to exist. Olivier's talent makes up for some shortcomings in his essential scenes with Simmons and it's possible that the mystique of the black and white palette make the film even more artistic, but as a film the talents of cinematography, and editing is utilized so effectively and despite condensation of lines, it's still particularly profound. It is not Shakespeare's "Hamlet" complete, but more of a compact Hamlet. Nevertheless, I feel it exists as the best of the lot, even though each is significant in their own rite.

2.2. Haider: Hamlet in Bollywood

Additionally the Bollywood adaptation of Hamlet has become very phenomenal in the Indian subcontinent. The movie was produced and directed by Vishal Bhardwaj. Kashmir is chosen as the setting of the movie. Shahid Kapoor has played the role of young Hamlet (Haider Meer), Shraddha Kapoor as Arshia (Ophelia), Tabu as Gertrude (Ghazala Meer), Kay Menon as Claudius (Khurram Meer) and Narendra Jha as King Hamlet (Dr. Hilal Meer).

The movie starts with a young man returning home receiving the news of his father's disappearance. Not only does he learn that security forces have detained his father for harboring militants, but that his mother is in a relationship with his very own uncle. Intense drama follows between mother and son as both struggle to come to terms with news of his father's death. Soon, Haider learns that his uncle is responsible for the gruesome murder, what follows is his journey to avenge his father's death. However, the readers, who have read the play can easily find out the differences between the text and this adaptation. The storyline is same as the play *Hamlet* but we

can see some changes in the adaptation in terms of setting, religion, costumes and culture. The movie begins with a political riot in Kashmir between India and Pakistan. Haider's (Hamlet) father is a doctor by profession in the movie and the movie starts with an operation of appendicitis on the leader of a pro-separatist group. As a consequence of this operation, military raid his house the very next day for harboring terrorist.²

Additionally, after nineteen days of his father's disappearance, when Haider returns from Aligarh, where he was studying on The Revolutionary Poets of British India and used to write poetry as well. When he comes back to Srenagar, he encounters the military check post at the entrance of Kashmir, where he was asked about his details. The time, he mentions that he lives in Islamabad, the military takes him under their custody. After some time of this incident, Arshia (Ophelia) comes to get Haider out from the custody saying that, she is a reporter and says that Haider and she is going to get married and they know each other well. The place, Haider lives, Anathnais also called Islamabad.

Afterward, Arshia heads to Haider's uncle's (Khurram Meer) house, who is an advocate and also stands for election in Kashmir, but Haider denies to there and asked her to take him to his own house. At that time, Arshia says that his house is no more, later she takes him to his house. When Haider reaches there, he was traumatized with his earlier memories from his childhood to teenage hood. He was trying to pretend that nothing has happened seeing his old stuffs lying on the ground. While Arshia was consoling Haider, Liyaqat (Laertes), who was supposed to go to Delhi for a service in a multinational company, he comes and see them together and got furious, because he was against their relationship and takes her home, as we

have read it in the original work *Hamlet*. Meanwhile, Haider reaches his uncle's house and he gets surprised to see his mother and uncle together, were enjoying time singing ghazal.

In fact, after going through this situation, Haider gets the impression of his mother and uncle's attachment, Haider reacts against the situation what he has seen and his mother gets furious and slaps him but Ghazala tries to make Haider understand that, she is still waiting for his father. Later Haider gets out of the house and starts his new journey to find out his father. In the meantime, director introduces Salman (Guildenstern) and Salman (Rosencrantz), two twin brothers who work for Pervez Lone (Polonius), serves as a SP of down town in Kashmir, asks them to find out Haider and to keep him inside of home. They get him at their home and he thinks to find out his father. He starts to check all the jails situated in Kashmir, gets the printouts of his father and circulates in all the places of Kashmir. Meanwhile, he doesn't go back to his house and keeps staying in Salman's video shop. After one day Haider's uncle goes to that shop to get him back for his mother, as she denies to have food until Haider gets back home.

For this reason, Haider gets back home only for his mother. While Khurram Meer triumphs the election in Kashmir. During that time Roohdaar (Ghost of Hamlet's Father) enters into the story, who has played the role of the envoy of Haider's father. He takes the help of Arshia to get in touch with Haider to give his father's message. Roohdaar asks Haider to meet at a place and he does. While he was meeting with Roohdaar, the twin brothers Salman and Salman was following them and taking snaps, as they were being said by the SP Pervez Lone. They were becoming confused whether to follow Haider and Roohdaar ahead and was saying the dialogue that 'To go or not to go.'

Moreover, Roohdaar takes Haider to his place. After going to a certain place, two men cover his face with black mask, put him inside of a car and takes him to a home beside a graveyard. Going to the place, they unmask Haider and then he asks Roohdaar that, where is his father? Roohdaar replies against his question that his father is not here. Next, Haider asks about the message from his father and Roohdaar responds saying the word 'revenge' by shooting on Khurram's eyes by which Haider's mother was touched and have made Haider an orphan and his mother should be left to Allah for the judgments of her deeds. Haider gets confused and asks about the details. Roohdaar starts saying the story that he and Haider's father was kept in the Detention Centre of the Security Forces. They are taken to a cinema hall in Bobo land, where the Indian Armies are getting entertained by movies. At that place Hilal Meer gets to know that Khurram Meer, his own brother is with the Indian Armies and his brother is responsible for his situation. Additionally, Roohdaar informs that, the militants who were in their house for treatment, it was not any coincident rather Haider's uncle was involved in that and Haider's mother was the messenger of Khurram Meer.

In this movie, we can see that, the director has totally changed the concept of ghost. There is no ghost in the movie, rather we see an appearance of a person, who acts as the messenger of Haider's father, named Roohdaar. The director might have used the name Roohdaar due to the meaning. In Hindi 'Rooh' means 'soul' and ghost in old English is also called 'soul'. The director has connected the idea of ghost with Roohdaar in a different way.

Here we can see that the director implants his own ideology and cultural understanding to the remaking of *Hamlet*. More or less he has tried to make cultural pluralism as India is a country where the majority of people are the followers of Hinduism and the characters' religion in the

movie is Muslim, the setting of the movie is Kashmir, which a dominant culture with strong elements of nationalism. Since Kashmir follows mixed cultures from Pakistan and India, so taking those altogether Bhardwaj has created a cultural pluralism. Since the director belongs to India he keeps the ideology of his culture in making the adaptation. According to Hatim and Mason, “Ideology encompasses ‘the tacit assumptions, beliefs and value system which are shared collectively by social groups’” (102). It depends mainly what the director relies on and so he can connote his belief in the adaptation. In this way, the adaptation sometimes distorts the meaning of the original or the source text. As the ideology of the adapter and the writer may not be the same, the adaptation may lose the uniqueness or originality.

As the adaptation is considered as a type of translation, so the adapter can also be considered as a translator. The adapter has the capability to use the ample power to exclude or include a particular group of audience “directly and consciously” (Hatim 95). After knowing that *Haider* is the Bollywood adaptation of *Hamlet*, when I sat to watch the movie, it took me far away from the original text. The director has used his full freedom and power to make this an individual text.

However, according to Vishal Bhardwaj, the dramas of Shakespeare are very juicy and all these can be found in every culture and relationships of human being. He also mentions that he has used his liberties in changing storyline, as in the text *Hamlet*, the ghost comes first but after half of the movie instead of ghost, a messenger from the Haider’s father comes. Moreover he also mentions that this movie is a rewrite for him and he considers *Haider* as his ‘completely own work at an exclusive London press conference .

Language is a means of constructing and expressing our identity and language has its own politics. Through using language a particular sort of audience, “a certain system of values, a set of beliefs or an entire culture” (Hatim 93) can be included or excluded. This is the power of language of excluding or including. While adapting in Hindi from an English text, the language changes. So, as language is changing meaning can also be changed.

Likewise, Mr. Bhardwaj has translated the most famous dialogue ‘To be or not to be’ to ‘Main hai ki main nehi’. When this translation is done, the meaning of the dialogue of Shakespeare has totally changed. The dialogue from Act III, scene II ‘To be or not to be’, is written on the basis of the situation but the translation of Mr. Bhardwaj expresses the personal dilemma of the protagonist, when Haider is completely puzzled with the death secret of his father. So to make the change from the text, the adapter has used his power in his adaptation.

2.4. *Disgrace*: From Text to Film

The movie *Disgrace* is an adaptation of J. M. Coetzee’s *Disgrace* novel. The film adaptation was released in September 6, 2008 in Canada. The movie is directed by Steve Jacobs. The main storyline of the novel and the adaptation was the same that David Lurie, middle aged and twice divorced, has an impulsive affair with a student. The affair sours, he is denounced and summoned before a committee of inquiry. Willing to admit his guilt, but refusing to yield to pressure to repent publicly, he resigns and retreats to his daughter Lucy’s isolated smallholding. For a time, his daughter’s influence and the natural rhythms of the farm promise to harmonize his discordant life. But the balance of power in the country is shifting. He and Lucy become

victim of savage and disturbing attack which brings into relief all the faultiness in their relationship.

Later David eventually finds out that Lucy is pregnant, he also learns that one of her rapists is living next door with Petrus. Petrus is now an independent man and even offers to marry Lucy in order to keep her safe. Lucy knows that he is only after her land, but thinks that this may be her only option. David keeps insisting that Lucy leave the farm immediately for her own safety, and this drives a deep wedge between father and daughter.

David is busy writing an opera that he has been contemplating for some time, and finds himself connecting to the character of the female lead. Returning to the city, he realizes that there is no place for him here anymore and that he is an outsider among his former peers. He returns to the country, lives in a small rented room, and tries to reconnect with his daughter. He continues helping out at the animal shelter.

In the adaptation, we see that the director Steve Jacob has not changed the plot of the movie, not even the story. Moreover, the author J. M. Coetzee himself is involved in script writing, so he hasn't changed much in the adaptation of the text. As my main motif is to find out the differences between the original and adapted one, so while I was watching movie, I had the feeling that I have gone through all of the scenes those are in adapted version.

Generally, at the beginning we will be able to notice very little changes, such as costumes. In Chapter Two of this book, the author describes the meeting scene of Professor Lurie and Melanie,

He is returning home one Friday evening, taking the long route through the old college gardens, when he notices one of his students on the path ahead of him. Her name is Melanie Issacs, from his Romantic course.....Today she wears a maroon miniskirt with a mustered coloured sweater and black tights; the gold baubles on her belt match the gold balls of her earrings. (11)

The change is visible here that Melanie was not wearing the same cloths in the adapted one, rather she was wearing a black miniskirt with a red colored sweater and black tights and she was not wearing any belt. Additionally, the conversation during dine between Professor and Melanie is skipped also. Unlike in Chapter Three, the author describes the situation of their meeting outside of the apartment and Melanie's costume again, "when he arrives, she is waiting on the sidewalk outside her apartment block. She is wearing black tights and a black sweater. Her hips are as slim as a twelve-year-old's. (18-19)

But in the adapted one, this meeting scene outside of the apartment block is missing and Melanie's costume was totally different. She was wearing a black miniskirt with black tights and a light pink shirt. After this scene, there is a long lecture of Professor Lurie regarding William Wordsworth, which is being skipped.

Another important issue in visual adaptation or translation is censorship. There are so many scenes which are not censored. As I have discussed before that, the mental state of a person is easy to describe with words but it's quite difficult to make audience understand with that mental state. The same thing has happened here. Coetzee has described the intimate scenes and the mental state of Professor Lurie in detail. When the reader will watch the movie after

reading the book, s/he might face this difference in the adaptation. Moreover, it depends on the adapter, which portion he will censor or will not. The adaptor or translator can use their power going against the author.

Though *Disgrace* is a postmodern text or film but there are few similarities between the text or film *Hamlet* and *Disgrace*. In the text *Disgrace* unfolds against the violent background of open racism in a country known for its apartheid and *Hamlet* on the other hand unfolds against the violent background of regicide. Another is the way *Disgrace* is heavily charged with sexual contacts, unforced and forced one in the same way *Hamlet* is also found to have sexual contacts. As in *Disgrace*, the main protagonist David Lurie who is a professor builds sexual relationship with one of his students named Melanie and on the contrary in *Hamlet* Claudius and Gertrude has got a sexual contact but most important thing is the oedipal complex between Hamlet and his mother.

Apart from these, there is a similarity between the protagonists and that is they both are the privileged and unprivileged within a flawed society, especially in the areas of race and patriarchy. In the text *Disgrace*, there is a change in status quo that David Lurie, once respected and powerful professor is left as ‘a mad old man who sits among the dogs singing to himself!’(212) whilst Petrus, the black ‘gardener and a dog-man’ (64) gains more and more control throughout the novel. Unlikely in *Hamlet* who is the Prince of Denmark without his kingdom and his uncle Claudius took over the power marrying his mother.

Another important issue in the film is point of view. The original text *Disgrace* is written from third person point of view, which makes the author omnipotent and can get inside of the

matter. In the adaptation the director has done the same thing. When the director Steve Jacobs was asked in an interview that, 'What is the visual style of the film?' In replies he says that, 'The visual style is quite objective. I have kept the camera back, so that you can see the people in the landscape, you can make judgments on the behavior what they do, instead of actually being quite a proactive star....so that, the audience can make their own decisions or judgements of what's happening which the book does. So I want people to get the information and then to make their minds up and instead of me manipulating in such a way that there's one way of interpreting or saying.'

Additionally, one of the most important questions regarding adaptation was asked to Mr. Jacobs that, 'How do you think the film will be received?' He replies that, 'I hope the audience will debate what's in the film and I take that with them when they leave they cinema.' He was also asked that, 'Will the film create controversy?' He says that, 'I think the film will create controversy.....But the whole purpose was to be faithful to the intent of the novel and controversy is in the novel and it's in movie as well. Further question was asked about the elements of the book that, 'What elements of the book did you want to achieve?' He answers the question, 'If one can portray, what happens realistically if the performances are true and sincere then you get a capability and what I think was essential for us to make sure the scenario, this action, these people were believable and could happen and if that happens then I think the audience will be moved by.'

Chapter3: Debate on Literature vs. Film mode

From the very beginning the debate on the issue of 'Book vs. Adaptation' has been strong. There are so many issues which the debate argues on. The issues on which the debates going on are many, e.g. contents, plots, characters, setting etc. Nowadays the films are also being considered as text in this postmodern era²². As we have discussed that, the adaptation differ from a literary work due to the changes, made by the producers and for this reason, the book lovers do not prefer the adaptation of the literary works. When we read any literary text, we look for the literary elements, that are used by the authors and later we analyze them. Reading books is not only reading lines, rather reading between the lines. Understanding the emotions of the characters, conflicts, ups and downs of life, etc. but when we watch movies, through the expression of the characters and the surrounding our imagination cannot open up the feathers to fly. The debate of 'Book vs. Adaptation' couldn't reach at any end till date and it is still continuing through time.

When a book is transferred into an adaptation, the narration technique is also changed. If an author describing some incidents from the past in a book, it might be quite difficult for the director to show each and everything in the film. So the narration is a very important aspect of a book and this can make a vast difference between a book and an adaptation. In the book *Rethinking the Novel/Film Debate* Kamilla Elliott²³ has brought some issues, on what the

²²*The Oxford Guide to Film Studies*

²³ Kamilla Elliott is a senior lecturer at Lancaster University, UK. She is the author of *Portraiture and British Gothic Fiction: The Rise of Picture Identification, 1764–1835*.

debates are going on. She mentions about Brian McFarlane's²⁴ -definition regarding narration. He says that____

“narrative” as “a series of events, casually linked, involving a continuing set of characters which influence and are influenced by the course of events.” (150)

She has also referred from other critics as well, to share different thoughts of them. In the chapter *Literary Cinema and the Form/Content Debate* she says that____

The genetic concept of adaptation, though it has not hitherto been so named, is well established in narratological approaches to adaptation. Narratologists figure what transfers between literature and film as an underlying “deep” narrative structure akin to genetic structure. (150)

The readers, who love to read books, they are mostly a critic towards the literary adaptation. Since they are very much attached to the book so, they always tend to read the new books as early as possible, whenever it is available in the market. When the adaptations of those books are made, the directors try to put their criticism through the incidents beyond the texts.

As we have read that the original play is set in Denmark, and focuses on Prince Hamlet who mourns the loss of his father and is infuriated by his mother's hasty marriage to his uncle Claudius. On the contrary to this, in Bollywood, the film is set in Kashmir during the conflicts of 1995, when an insurgency for Kashmir independence gained headway. Haider (Shahid Kapoor) the Hamlet character mourns the disappearance of his father, who has been taken to prison camp

²⁴ Brian McFarlane is the author of *Novel to Film: An Introduction to the Theory of Adaptation*

after performing surgery on a rebel. His mother Ghazala seeks refuge in the home of her brother-in-law, Khurram (Kay Kay Menon). Since nobody doesn't know whether Haider's father is still alive, Ghazala is considered a half widow, an unfortunately common term used to describe women at the time whose husbands were missing. However, they soon learn of his death and Ghazala marries Khurram.

Here the main differences between Haider and Hamlet are ones that serve to bring the story of Hamlet in an original realistic way possible for that setting. What really puts Bollywood Shakespeare over the top is the magic. In Haider, at the moment where Prince Hamlet is meant to put on a play in which Claudius kills his father, Haider celebrates the union of his mother and uncle with a Bollywood musical number (which is heightened by his unstable mental state) that tells how his uncle killed his father and seduced his mother. The song called 'Bismil' is sung by Sukhwinder Singh, whose voice offers a grittiness that matches with the conflict-ridden territory.

In addition to these, choreography and costumes all enhance the story and act as a sort of cherry on the top, creating a grandiose presentation absent in Hollywood's intimate attempts. Moreover, Vishal Bhardwaj's 2006 adaptation of Othello (Omkaara), protagonist Omkara (Ajay Devgan) confronts Kesu (Cassio) (Vivek Oberoi) as they both realize how they were manipulated by Langda (Lago) played by Saif Ali Khan. Omkara, gun in hand, moves so he is facing Kesu and the camera shifts, so that all we can see is Kesu's back and Omkara's face.

Moreover, we get glimpses of both of their bodies as the cot swings back and forth, with Dolly's (Kareena Kapoor) pale skin mirroring her innocence and Omkara's dark complexion mirroring his guilty conscious.

Comparatively, *Omkara* and *Haider* apart from being Bollywood adaptations, were and are also all extremely commercially successful, with *Omkara* even earning a spot on the UK's top ten list. Compared to the miniscule commercial success of Oliver Parker's *Othello* from 1995, Kenneth Brannagh's *Hamlet* in 1996, these are major blockbusters. Though *Othello* and *Hamlet* played on limited screens, *Haider* was also playing on limited screens, and it already made \$8 million, while *Hamlet* only grossed a little over \$4 million. Furthermore, *Omkara*, *Haider* and as well as *Maqbool* (*Macbeth*) have all earned immense critical acclaim.

Hence, Shakespeare is regarded as larger than life, and the Bollywood adaptations embody that extraordinary presence, which is why they triumph over Hollywood's attempts.

In the movie reviews the writers give feedback about the performances of the artists and compare the adapted work with the original work. Regarding Olivier's *Hamlet*, Bosley Crowther writes in a review entitled with *Hamlet* in *The New York Times* published on 30th September, 1948 that,

Actually, a lot of material which is in the conventional "Hamlet" text is missing from the picture--a lot of lines and some minor characters, notably those two fickle windbags, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern. And it is natural that some fond Shakespeareans are going to be distressed at the suddenly discovered omission of this or that memorable speech. But some highly judicious editing has not done damage to the fullness of the drama nor to any of its most familiar scenes. In fact, it has greatly speeded the unfolding of the plot and has given much greater clarity to its noted complexities.

On the other hand, in *Haider* (2014), a Bollywood adaptation of Shakespeare's Hamlet where the contents of the movie is quite different from the book, e.g. the setting of the movie is Kashmir, the names of the characters are given according to the cultural context like the name of the male protagonist is Haider instead of Hamlet and the female protagonist is Arshi as a replacement for Ophelia. The love relation between Ophelia and Hamlet was reformed, though the ending of their relation was same.

As BBC publishes an article with the title '*Haider: Why is 'Indian Hamlet' controversial?*' on 7th October, 2014. It says that *Haider* is getting the attention of the media due to its 'controversial backdrop', the set of the movie is in Indian-administrated Kashmir. The region has seen its worst and struggles throughout 1990s as nationalist groups violently fought with security forces, demanding freedom from "Indian rule". It adds,

Bhardwaj's film largely stays away from the rivalry of the neighbors, focusing instead on the alleged human rights abuses in the state. Activists often accuse security forces of torturing and kidnapping local youths in illegal detention camps - an allegation the army has always denied.

Furthermore, BBC refers to a review that published in *The Guardian* in the title *Bollywood Hamlet set in Kashmir likely to cause controversy in India*, which wrote on Haider that, "Haider includes graphic scenes of torture in Indian army camps and other human rights abuses by Indian officials." Another article in the *First Post* says "portraying the uncomfortable political reality of Kashmir" is a great challenge and "more so when the issue lies at the heart of tension between the people of Kashmir and India." At the same time Bhardwaj was also facing

some backlash over what many describe as his “unfair” portrayal of the armed forces. But he has defended the plot of his film. He says, “I’m also an Indian, I’m also a patriot, I also love my nation. So, I won’t do anything which is anti-national. But what is anti-human, I will definitely comment on it (*Haider: Why is 'Indian Hamlet' controversial?*).

Another important issue is transcultural adaptation. As we have discussed at the beginning of the paper, transcultural adaptation is basically the globalization of adaptation. Film industries of different cultures are taking literary texts for making films and the literary texts can be taken from any cultures. It doesn’t have to be from any particular culture. In this South Asian subcontinent Bollywood Film Industry is doing various kinds of film adaptations from the literary works.

At the beginning of the Bollywood film industry, the film stories were taken from different literary works. In 1913 the film *Raja Harishchandra* was adapted from the legend of Raja Harish Chandra narrated in Ramayana and Mahabharata. *Guide* is a 1965 romantic drama film starring Dev Anand and Waheeda Rehman, even his another film *Tere Mere Sapne* of 1971 was inspired by by A J Cronin's *The Citadel*. It was directed by Vijay Anand. *Kohraa* (The Fog) is a 1964 Indian thriller horror film directed by Biren Nag. The film was adapted from Daphne du Maurier's 1938 novel, *Rebecca*. *Saraswatichandra* is a 1968 film adaptation of the Gujarati novel of the same name written by Govardhanram Madhavram Tripathi. A 1973 super-hit *Daag: A Poem Of Love*, this movie laid the foundation of Yash Raj Films. The film was an adaptation of the novel, ‘The Mayor Of Caster bridge’ by British author Thomas Hardy. In 1982 *Angooran* adaptation of Shakespeare’s absurd comedy was made from *The Comedy of Errors*.

Later so many adaptations have done and the list is pretty long. Sanjay Leela Bhansali's *Devdas* (2002) was from a Bengali novel by Sharatchandra Chattopadhyay, of the same name. *Parineeta* (2005), an adaption of the 1914 novella of the same name by Sarat Chandra Chattopadhyay. *Saawariya* (2007) is based on Fyodor Dostoevsky's short story, *White Nights*. The film was produced and directed by Sanjay Leela Bhansali. *3 Idiots* (2009) is loosely based on Chetan Bhagat's *Five Point Someone*. The director Vishal Bhardwaj has gifted few virtuous adaptations of Shakespearean literary works e.g. *Omkara* (2006), an adaptation of *Othello*, *Maqbool* (2003), adapted from *Macbeth* and *Haider*(2014), based on *Hamlet*. Another director Mansoor Khan, made an adaptation of *Romeo and Juliet* in 1988, named *Qayamat Se Qayamat Tak*. Another by Vishal Bhardawaj project, *7 Khoon Maaf* (2011) is a black comedy based on Ruskin Bond's short story, *Susanna's Seven Husbands*. *Aisha* (2010), a movie adaptation of one of the Jane Austen classics *Emma*.

However in an interview with Akira Kurosawa, Gabriel Garcia Marquez said that, "The truth is that I know very few novelists who have been satisfied with the adaptation of their books on the screen." (Kurosawa147). The statement given by Marquez is more or less goes with this debate. If the authors were alive of the literary works of which the adaptations made by the directors, whether they would like the adaptations is still a question.

Conclusion

While the main purpose of this paper was to find out the politics in adaptations, the technicalities of camera work and other technologies being used, it probes the issues of the conflicting relation between art, originality and adaptation. Film adaptations are different and the directors use their own interpretations through the changes of dialogues, improvisation of scenes and expressions of characters. Other than technical sides, the directors expand and explore different psychological, social and cultural issues which may have remained covert in the canonical texts. As an illustration of this paper, the journey of *Hamlet* from the stage to screen shows us a huge transformation. The usage of camera makes the adaptation more spectacular. Adaptations can be more acceptable to the mass due to the changes of time and perception. Since the time of Greek theatre stage has been a popular medium to entertain the mass, a practice which is continued through modern theatres and films. Due to the flourish of technologies in modern day life, motion pictures have become strong purveyor of culture and art forms. The directors are also choosing to adapt the story from the classical and contemporary literature presenting the old in the new ways. However, the consumption and mercantile aspect of films put the very form in debate and disagreement.

The issue of transcultural adaptation has also been explored. It is considered as a great initiative to exchange the cultural history, ritual, norms and traditional stories amongst different countries. As it is said that people from all walks of life cannot read books but they can watch pictures, if it so, then the adaptations can be a great idea to reach them with cultural varieties, rituals, norms of other countries.

The debate between literature and adaptation is a complex one. There are advantages and disadvantage to both sides of the argument. The words of Gabriel Garcia Marquez that no authors can be satisfied with the adaptations of their original works expresses the ambivalent nature of this new 'form' or 'transition' of art.

Endnotes

¹ According to the book *Roaring Twenties Paper Dolls* by Tom Tierney, the Roaring Twenties began with an economic whimper. Economic boom and consumerism defined American society at the advent of 1920s. Major cities such as New York and Chicago grew rapidly and the skyscrapers like the Empire State Building, completed in 1931, seemed to show the self-confidence of the American society. At the same time recreational consumption reached new heights in America through the jazz music, new dance practices such as the Charleston and the Black bottom, alcoholism and the media. Crowds flocked to watch film stars like Charlie Chaplin and baseball stars like Babe Ruth. The emphasis on having fun and spending money led to the 1920s is known as the Roaring Twenties. The era ended with the economic depression of 1930s.

² According to the book *The Territorial Management of Ethnic Conflict* by John Coakley, at the beginning of the Kashmir conflict, the conflict was mostly between India and Pakistan on its claim on the land of Kashmir. Kashmir could either become the part of India or a part of Pakistan, a problem that remained even after the partition act of 1947. Since the mid-1980s, the issue has become far more complicated. The conflict in Kashmir has become increasingly violent in recent years owing to the Indian government's repressive policies, as well as Pakistan's involvement in supporting Kashmir 'nationalists', (India would use the term 'terrorist') activities in the Vale of Kashmir. Indian film industry has made a quite good number of films on this issue but the representation of Kashmir conflict in India media has always been controversial.

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