

Studies in Aesthetic Delight (*Parmananda*) in Hindi Film Adaptations

DEVIKA*

&

PIYUSH GUPTA**

Abstract

Film adaptations of literary works act as a foreground for contested discussions on evolving parameters to defining and approximating them as adaptations. Film theorists handy with technological aspects of filmmaking examine them from specifications of the cinematic art. Literary theorists take up available treatises from semiotics, psychology or art and dissect a film from subject-centered approaches. As film adaptations strive for a formal identity in the wake of multitude of perceptions, this paper looks at the adaptations in Bollywood from the Hindu concept of rasa. The paper contends that stages of action, characterization, motivations and above all the holy gaze of the audience all contribute to the building up of one prominent sentiment in a performance, the relish of which is experienced as a blissful state (parmananda) by the spectator.

Keywords: Bollywood, Film Adaptation Studies, Sanskrit Tradition, Natyasastra, *Permananda*

Humans have innumerable thoughts but limited words. At times, the available words fail to convey the meaning. The followers of Buddhism have also acknowledged this truism that words are incapable of rendering the implied or explicit significance of an idea... In a situation where words as tools for conveying information are seen as weak, there the advent of images have posed greater challenge to our understanding of the grammar and language of the films.

Kishore Vasvani, *The Language of Cinema*

* Dr. Devika is teaching English language and Literature in Birla Institute of Technology and Sciences (BITS), Pilani.

**Piyush Gupta is a classicist, theater theorist and a cultural analyst, presently pursuing Ph.D. at BITS from the Department of Humanities and Social Sciences.

Kishore Vasvani, a renowned scholar and film critic in his analysis of dialogues of some of the popular Hindi films, has written about challenges faced by screenplay writers in translating (words) of literature into (images) for cinema. His project on the language of cinema, funded by the National Film Museum and published by Hindi Book Centre in 1998, is a valuable repository of information for a student or a film scholar who intends to undertake a serious research in Indian film studies and wants to develop an avid interest in critically analyzing Hindi films. Vasvani writes that a film has been considered as the seventh art, an amalgamation of the earlier six arts namely painting, architecture, visual art, dance, drama, music and literature. On one hand, films have been analyzed on parameters adopted for performative arts (dance, drama) and representative arts (painting and literature) and on the other they are being evaluated on theories of image, sound and the recording art. Efforts are also on to evolve a new paradigm that looks for commonalties of the performative and representative arts in a film and to appreciate it not as 'medley' or an 'assemblage of arts' but as a pure and an individualistic art. Amidst a welter of propositions, it becomes a challenge for a screenwriter to properly hold a suitable image corresponding to an otherwise seemingly innocuous idea. Giving an example from Bimal Roy's *Devdas* (1955), Vasvani explains the inherent meaning of the dialogues between Devdas and Chandramukhi. The dialogues for the film were written by Navendu Ghosh and Rajender Singh Bedi. In one scene, Devdas visits Chandramukhi's house after a long time and says:

Devdas: *Tumhara yeh bahar ka kamra toh bilkul badal gaya hai* // This outer room of your house has completely changed //

Chandramukhi: *Sirf bahar hi nahi andar bhi (halke viraam ke baad) aao!* // Not **only outer** but **inner as well** (after a short pause) Please come //

Vaswani explains that Chandramukhi hint to Devdas that not only the room but even she has also changed with years have to be strengthened by powerful images (situational and environmental) that speaks volume for this change. Ghosh and Bedi had necessitated the inclusion of a short pause to show behavioral change in the character. Chandramukhi's dress, the manner of her speech, the inner prayer room, the incense sticks and the light sound of flute playing in the background should all attest a massive change in her. This one shot has so many arts, Chandramukhi's dress and manner of speech (dance and drama), the prayer room (architecture), incense sticks (meticulous details as in painting) and the sound of flute playing a classical

note (music). Moreover the *samvad* (dialogue) that happens between the characters can be explained through *abhida* (signification), *vyanjana* (rhetorical suggestion) and *lakshana* (the power of indication) of the mimansa school of thought. For the overall estimation of the scene, one has to be sensitive of various forces at work in the scene. Earlier screenwriters focused more on writing well meaningful dialogues that lay bare the psyche of the characters. They worked with a variety of men from different fields to compose a piece of art. This is because dialogue writing like drama followed a ‘syncretistic’¹ culture of development and film as an ‘amalgamated product’ was conceived at the script stage itself. These days the image has taken over to depict the change and dialogues have become simpler as if written in the manner of the primary level Hindi books. Conflict appears when the *samvad* stands at odds with the *mise-en-scene*. With the intervention of technology in films, what is trickier for a screenwriter is to convincingly *adapt* the script for modern directors. In a similar vein, Ritwik Ghatak opines that it is difficult to identify all the formal elements that actually make a film as all these come from different forms of representation.² In a film, these independent elements meet, influence each other and cultivate a new identity, a proper valuation of which is still pursued as an oracle in colleges and universities.

Translating an idea into a written word is an adaptation in itself. Every situation can be visualized in a different regime of perception and significance. In order to re-imagine a beautiful landscape as the interiors of a city, the script would have to develop the sophistication and urbanity of the city at par with the picturesque beauty of nature. Hence sketching a new typography of the original would warrant immense thinking and altering and at times accommodating what is beyond the scope of the thing imagined. Culture too plays an important role in shaping the identity of an adapted text. When we say ‘accommodating what is beyond’ we mean cultural diversity, social milieu, economic limitations and above all the perception of audience towards the piece of art as *an art*. As films in India have always been a medium of entertainment and knowledge, the theatergoers here have cultivated a *darshanic* (holy) gaze to appreciate the spectacle on the screen. Fallout of actions of the characters can be traced to the moral lessons enshrined in the Vedas. Unlike Shakespearean tragedies, which end in suffering and death, the melodrama in India ends with some sort of an instruction on the code of behavior to be followed that is considered right or acceptable in a particular society. If the principal character had to die, he would die for a cause that should bring happiness in the lives of other. If he

had to die for his sins, his death would look terrible checking people from falling into perverse influences. In dramatic composition our plots are crafted more in the fashion of *Cymbeline* and *Pericles* which have a 'happy ending' and are not classified as tragedies by Shakespearean scholars.

Now-a-days inclusion of the above mentioned particularities (culture, milieu, etc.) together with the formal elements (music, dance) in a script makes it highly vulnerable to criticism from semioticians, psychologists, rhetoricians and such others. In this paper, we would look at few screen adaptations of literary classics in the Indian cinema and see how characters, their motivations, point of view and actions were deliberately made to conform to the Hindu view of life, no matter what changes it sanctioned in the schemata of the film. The paper would argue that these inevitable changes reinforce theory and laws related to dramatic composition as mentioned in the Sanskrit poetics. While adapting a story the Hindu ideology is made to reign supreme irrespective of the form in which it is adapted. The close of the film have to be so drafted that it makes one principal sentiment (love, laughter, grief, anger, enthusiasm, fear, disgust, astonishment or renunciation) supreme which results in *rasa* or the *parmananda* (aesthetic delight) in the spectators.

Film adaptations have been defined in terms such as transpositioning, transcoding and appropriations, but the last of the three terms best defines Indian adaptation. We call it appropriation because the screenwriter adapts the story for specific use. Transpositioning is cosmos/medium oriented, transcoding is linguistic and appropriation is more hermeneutical in scope. Transposition in adaptation studies refers to the formulation of the same story in a different landscape, culture, setting, time-period or even background. For example Shyam Benegal's *Kalyug* (1981) is a modern day adaptation of the century old Indian epic Mahabharata. Though the screenplay and plot are quite different but the characterization and critical events have a striking similarity with the epic. Here a big manufacturing unit replaces the wealthy estate of Hastnapur. Jealousy and ambitions are mixed with plots of intrigues and backstabbing and it leads to the destruction of the two business families. Transcoding deals with the formation of new code to define a text. A code is defined as a minimal set of symbols capable of conveying a meaning. Every language has well defined codes, which helps in meaning formation. Hence, transcoding is the conversion of meaning in one language into a similar meaning in another language. It is different from translation in the sense that it provides more cultural flexibility to an adapter. For example the infant baptism in Catholics can be transcoded as '*mundan*'

(shaving of the hair) or ‘wearing of *janeu* (sacred thread)’ among Hindus. But code also defines how meaning is constructed. The codes of a prose are different from the codes of a verse. Christian Metz acknowledges the presence of grammar and the language of films. Many centuries before Metz, sage Markandeya had written a holy book *Chitrasutkam* where he describes the grammar of the pictures and artwork. This is written in the form of *samvad* (dialogues) between him and King Vajra. A mention of this holy book is also found in the third chapter of *Vishnudharmotarpuranam*, the Hindi translation of which was rendered by Tarinish Jha.³ When it comes to films, transcoding can also be defined as looking at a meaning offered by minimum set of moving shots per second. An appropriation simply seeks the knowledge/moral or the crux of the text and presents it in a new form.

We have just seen that there has been varying usage of the term ‘film adaptation’ in cinema studies. Richard Dawkins has coined the term ‘*memes*’ to refer to the cultural capital of a project that gets adapted following the process. He has theoretically explained the process of ‘*genes*’ adaptation in plants as similar to film adaptations. Films do not get adapted on their own as plants adapt themselves to the new environment. In case of plants, the internal setup conditions itself in response to an external environment. The continuum of the process runs from acclimatizing, conditioning and accustoming to a final adaptation that comes over with years. But in films an external agency is involved in changing the constitutional setup; the film itself being the product does not resist the change from within. Given this fact, there is no acclimatizing or conditioning but directly accustoming of the original text or production. Moreover, the change is instant as opposed to an incessant yearly activity.

Some critics⁴ have argued that with films ‘change’ also comes with years. Rafique has written about the changing face of Mumbai in Indian cinema. From earliest productions like *Shri 420* (Dir. Raj Kapoor 1955) to films like *Bombay* (Dir. Mani Ratnam 1995) the depiction of Mumbai has changed from a city of dreams and fulfillment to a city of crime and disillusionment. If we were to chart the evolutionary history of Mumbai through the lens of cinema all the films with Mumbai as a subject between *Shri 420* and *Bombay* would represent a peculiar phase of Mumbai’s existence. With new developments in cinematography, editing and sound mixing, the film as a product progresses towards maturity and perfection. Various movements in literature and arts exert their influence in establishing a distinct pattern of performance. This change in the script and its evolution over the years in response to external stimuli have to be pursued as

‘augmentation studies’ under the broader umbrella of film studies. These critics contend that scripts too change slowly and steadily configuring itself into a new form. Similarly if *Hamlet* has been made today as *Haider* (Dir. Vishal Bhardwaj 2014) the earlier films like Sohrab Modi’s *Khoon Ka Khoon* (1935) and Kishore Sahu’s *Hamlet* (1954) represent a unique phase of existence in the evolutionary chart of *Hamlet*. Docudramas and war films influences on *Haider* such as *The Battle of Algiers* (Dir. Gillo Pontecorvo 1966) and *The Road to Guantanamo* (Dir. Michael Winterbottom)⁵ serve to make it a typical ‘moslemxploitation’⁶ film. But the crassly depiction of unrest and violence in the Kashmir valley itself establishes a new convention in *Haider*; a baton that has to be carried forward for further adaptations of *Hamlet*.

Julia Kristeva’s *Intertextuality* (the shaping of text meaning by another text) articulated within ‘augmentation studies’ hints at retaining archetypal representations of characters and situations in an adaptation. This contention seems befitting, as commercialization of the visual entertainment has made directors to play it more defensively. There is no harm in watching the earlier productions to visualize changes in the production in hand. Moreover, it is the director’s choice to determine in which way he wants to *adapt*. He may adapt a work as faithful as he can or may extract the essence of the text and develop it in a new setting. For example if Premchand’s classic *Shatranj Ke Khiladi* had to be adapted to the modern times, plot development should run on similar lines as Satyajit Ray had directed in 1977. This can be shown as the story of two connoisseur industrialists whose businesses are taken over by a multinational company because they neglected it over their passion for playing chess together on the chess board, on computer, internet, mobile application or remote access. Playing of the chess through technology with heightened music, animation and sound effect creates a multisensory visceral interaction (Ryan 2004c: 338) twice more addictive than playing the board game hence justifying the passion towards the game by the players. The point here is that adaptations are guided by situations, circumstances, time, era, culture and the six arts (painting, architecture, etc.) as explained earlier in this paper. If readers/viewers can find a different meaning in a scene as against the one found in the original text, it is their individual perception of the subject and a streak of their appropriation index.

Film Adaptation Studies: A Review

Adaptations are ubiquitous; they are on television channels, at PVR cinemas, at theatres, on the Internet, in novels and comic books, and in the nearest

theme park or video arcade. The popularity of film adaptations can be gauged from the fact that 'Adaptation Studies' has now been recognized as a potential area of cinema and literary studies, with scores of journals inviting scholarly articles on various aspects of this art as *an adaptation*. Deborah Cartmell, Timothy Corrigan and Imelda Whelehan, while defending the exigency of establishing *Adaptation* (published by Oxford Journals in 2008) as a formal playground to address the underrepresented field of literature on screen studies have contended that this journal will bridge the gap between literature and cinema.⁷

We are not new to literature-to-screen adaptations; since our childhood, we have keenly followed them on VCRs to *Doordarshan* and now on private TV channels. We have seen Shakespeare transfer his cultural capital in the form of stories full of hyperbole and melodramatic appurtenance across all media and forms. The ideas, views and opinions travel and cross boundaries; they actuate thinkers, writers and scholars to modify them in new forms and resuscitate a debilitated intellectual activity. In that sense, every writer, be it Goethe or Somdev Bhatt, Aesop or Sheikh Chilli, has narrated the same stories in new forms.

Linda Hutcheon regards adaptation as an acknowledged transposition of other work/s, a creative act of appropriation and an intertextual engagement (Hutcheon 2006: 8). She has suggested the need for a theoretical perspective to view adaptation as a product, a process of creation and reception. This is her description and understanding of adaptations. Murray writes about the descriptive feature of adaptations. 'Adaptation as a freewheeling cultural process: flagrantly transgressing cultural and media hierarchies, wilfully cross-cultural, and more web like than straightforwardly linear in its creative dynamic' (Murray 2012: 2). Here again we have a theory attempting to describe and understand the concept of adaptation.

During the formative years of film adaptation studies, 'Fidelity Criticism' reigned supreme in the academic debates around films especially the ones that have adapted the works of Pushkin or Dante. The degree of proximity to the original text has generated many typologies of the adaptation processes, like Andrew's borrowing/intersection/transformation (1980: 10-12), Wagner's analogy/commentary/transposition (1975: 222-31) or Klein and Parker's literal translation /core narrative structure/ source as raw material (1981: 10). Dudley Andrew explains 'borrowing' by referring to miracle or mystery plays that employed the 'material, idea or form' from stories of The Bible. Vijay Sharma's *Jai Santoshi Maa* (1975) borrows and

expands a sketchy tale printed on inexpensive pamphlets explaining Hindu women how to observe the ritual of *vrat* (fast) to achieve a state goal. Intersection refers to the retaining of the *specificity* of original within the *specificity* of the cinema. Giving the example of Robert Bresson's *Diary of a Country Priest*, Andrew claims that Bresson preserves the literary genre of the novel so that film tends to become a cinematic representation of Bernanos novel itself. Sohrab Modi's 1955 film *Kundan* based on Victor Hugos *Les Miserables* is the finest example of cinematic novel and an example of intersection as defined by Andrew. Transformation is that adaption that employs all the movie-making conventions in cinema at the same time remaining faithful to the original text. Kishore Sahu's *Hamlet* 1954, an adaptation of Shakespearean text, retains most of the original in dialogues, dress and location at the same time utilizing movie making-conventions (songs etc) of Indian cinema. Geoffrey Wagner's analogy is similar to Andrew's concept of borrowing which is a 'considerable departure for the sake of making another work of art' (1975: 227). Commentary adapts the text (Wagner specifically talks about novels) with new emphasis and structure whereas a transformation follows it closely. Similarly, corresponding to Andrew's nomenclature Klein and Parker propose their terms with more or less same explanation of literal translation, adaptation of the core narrative and source as raw material as simply the occasion for an original work. Now, when film scholars have opened their eyes to other aspects of adaption studies, like the modification of theme, genre, viewership, advertizing, commercialization etc, Bluestone's theory has been strongly contested against (e.g. McFarlane 1996: 194; Cardwell 2002: 19) with new observations and results.

Our way of looking at an adaption is of a different kind. It implies that the generation of *rasa* in a performance which in turn generates 'empathy' in a spectator culminating in the generation of same *rasa* in him. This leads to increased *tadatmah* (self-realization) and *parmananda* (delight). This is like making a matchstick glow by bringing it closer to lighted matchstick. The heat generated by the lighted matchstick will cause the other matchstick to explode in light so that there is no difference between the two matchsticks. Fortunately, over the past 30 years, a considerable body of knowledge has emerged to help us understand the reception process – how receivers decode messages. The *darshnic* or the holy gaze of the Hindus interprets the message on *updeshas* (sermons) in Hindu religious texts. By understanding this decoding process, adapters can employ strategies to make the audience work easier and reach an aesthetic delight. The holy gaze of

the audience is the primary concern with the screenwriters throughout the history of film adaptations in India. The most important ingredients in the process of creating an adaptation are the emotions. Just as different spices in a recipe mix to create a particular flavour so, do different emotions play among each other in a performance and generate a characteristic flavour called *rasa*. Sage Bharata enumerates eight permanent, eight involuntary and thirty-three transitory emotions present in the human beings. In a performance, some of these emotions mix with one another and makes one emotion principle and all others dormant. The one emotion, which carries itself as a 'flavour' or *rasa* of the performance, must be one from the permanent emotions only. The *Rasa* theory puts the viewer's needs at the forefront of the adapter's professional commitment. It creates for adapters a clearest possible image and understanding of the audience; the ways they watch the performance; their familiarity with the subject; their role as a spectator; and their attitudes towards subject and performance itself. With such knowledge, an adapter can predict and reduce barriers between a performance and the audience and reach a momentary common ground. This goal is challenging, especially for scriptwriters who adapt their skills and experience to a widely different audience during their carriers. Before we explain how it happens we will have to look at the different elements of the story and see how a meaning is generated when it is dramatized.

Story and its Elements

Cambridge Advance Learner's Dictionary defines a story as a description either true or imagined or mixed of a connect series of events. Sage Bharata uses the terminology of legendary, invented or mixed to refer to events. Every story will have characters (major and minor) and incidents. Incidents revolving around the major character form the principle subject and other incidents involving minor characters are secondary. The secondary incidents may be long running parallel to the main incident like a sub-plot (called Episode) or they can be short (Episodical incident). These incidents good or bad will result from either the character's behavior or his fate. The character's behavior will guide his point of view and motivation for action. With each incident the major character of the story is shown progressing towards an orderly state that is destabilized at some point in the beginning. In other words, series of events make a major character move steadily towards the 'fruit', which seemed lost somewhere at the beginning of the play. For example if the hero loses his love at the beginning of the story, he will get her back towards the end. Here the attainment of his ladylove is the attainment

of the fruit. The various stages of his progression until the attainment of the fruit can be divided into beginning, effort, prospect of success, certainty of success and attainment of the result. Apart from the elements discussed, form, genre and medium are also very important to the story.

Kamilla Elliott makes an interesting observation while studying on adaptations. She opines that that forms can be extracted from ideas – a contention denied in regular aesthetic and semiotic theories (2003: 133). She contends that by merely visualizing the idea of a story, an adapter can think of a suitable form to serve the story better. What Elliot suggests as same content can exist in many different forms. Every story idea is fluid when it is conceived and can be shaped into any form (book, radio play, comic etc) as per the adapter's choice. The elements of the story (events, imagery, world etc) can be considered in isolation by the adapters. It happens when the technical limitations of different media serve to prioritize one aspect of the story over the others (Gaudreault and Marion 1998: 45).

Adapting the Theme of the Story

Of all the elements of the story, the theme is the most usual element taken for an adaption. Short stores often have one theme but as they are stretched longer with more characters, actions and motivations, it begins to reflect more than one theme. That is why novels are generally evaluated on many thematic lines than a short story. Themes carry the central idea of the story but they are not to be confused with moral of the story. Various events of the story will illustrate the theme of the story whereas moral of the story is the lesson, which the director wants the main character (and by extension the audience) learn from his actions/behavior towards other characters. For example in Rajinder Bhatia's *Pavita Paapi* (1970) Kedarnath's actions are motivated by the prick of the conscience so the main theme of the film and of Nanak Singh's novel on which the film was based is acknowledgement of guilt. The moral of the story on the other hand teaches one to sacrifice one's happiness for the good of others. *Bambai Ka Babu* (1960) directed by Raj Khosla and based on O Henry's *The Double Dyed Deceiver*, portrayed the growing moral dilemma and sexual affinity between a posing brother and sister to an extraordinary degree. Had Rajinder Singh Bedi, the writer of the story, cast the character of Maya (played by Suchitra Sen) as Shahji's neighbor, Kundan's love for Maya and his marriage with her would have been a predictable plot. Kundan grew up in Bombay also called *Mayanagri* (City of Illusion). When he meets another Maya (Sen), as his sister, audience

wondered if Maya would ever marry him if he told her that he was a swindler and he was planted as her brother in Shahji's house only to rob them of their money. On the contrary the film ends with Maya's marriage and Kundan performing *kanyadaan* rites⁸. Khosla's treatment of the theme of 'fallacy' and 'deception' was ahead of his times. The moral of the story was that whatever a man may do he will never be able overturn the events of his fate. Thus, themes are the most crucial element of any performative art, as they "reinforce or dimensionalize" the action of the story (Serger 1992: 14).

Adapting the Characters of the Story

Sage Bharata has devoted the entire chapter XXXIV of *Natyasastra* for explaining the characters. An *uttama* is a superior character who is wise, honest, skilled in arts and *sastras* (Holy verses). A *madhyama* type of character is also well mannered, sweet and courteous but lacking of one or more qualities than the *uttama*. An *adhama* character is harsh, ill mannered and low who takes delight in quarrel and insulting people. Gods, kings royal priests belong to the *uttama* type, commander of an army, businessman and *amatya* (family priest) are of *madhyama* and *shudra* (low caste) rogues and criminals belong to *adhama* type of heroes. Characters can also be *divya* (divine), *adivya* (mortal) or *divyadivya* (incarnation). For example Chandrakant's film *Hari Darshan* (1972) based on the story of Vishnu devotee Prahlad has all the three type of characters. *Brhitharishatakam* defines *uttama*, *madhyama* and *adhama* types of hero but in a different way. The poet says in *Bhratharishatakam* that people of the low level do not begin any work because of the fear of failure, of the mid level do begin the work but leave it half done anticipating the failure, but people of the elevated level begin the work and do not leave it until they have accomplished the task.⁹ Bharata also enumerates the qualities of female characters as *uttama* (superior, bashful, beauty and nobility), *madhya* (she has some qualities less than *uttama*) and *adhama* (she possesses many qualities of an inferior male character). The principle character can either be *lalita* (wise and pleasure seeking), *datta* (serious and resolute) *dhata* (cunning and scheming) or *shanta* (calm and reclusive). The delineation of characters is based on characterization employed for composing Sanskrit dramas. Since these dramas were romantic and often dealt with love affairs of kings, their queens and concubines, the focal principle on which all these dramas were based was of *Rasa* or sentiment. A *lalita* hero who is carefree and moves around singing and dancing will generate *shringar* (erotic) or *hasya* (laughter) *rasa* in the performance. Similarly a *datta* hero may serve to aid *veer* (heroic) or

adbhudha (marvelous) sentiment, a *dhatta* hero would facilitate the development of *raudra* (furious) or *karuna* (pathetic) *rasa*. At times the same character is given different treatments in different adaptations that they lead to different sentiments in the play. For example Ramanand Sagar's treatment of Ravana in television series *Ramayana* aired on *Doordarshan* during 1987-88 was of *dhatta* type. Sanjay Khan changed the fortyish looking pot bellied image of Ravana which people had carried since 80s into well built, young and enthusiastic sage in *Jai Hanuman* also aired on *Doordarshan* as series in 1997. Here Ravana appealed to audience more as a *lalita* than a *dhatta* type of character. Though, different scholars have interpreted the *rasa* theory differently, but all agree on two main goals of any literary piece: to provide aesthetic delight to the reader, hearer or viewer and to remove ignorance (*avidya*).

When independent segments of the story are transmediated just as they exist in abridged versions, as summaries in film magazines or as translations into other languages (Hamon 1977: 264) the process involves irresistible changes to characterization, the scheme of events and their frequency of occurrence in a narrative. Bapu's 1980 film *Hum Paanch* (We five) illustrates this view. As an adaptation of *Mahabharata* set in a rural scenario, the film recreates independent stories from the life of *Pandavas* and *Kauravas* leading upto a legendary battle between the two. Massive changes in the script were done. Five people who stand as one against Vir Pratap Singh are not brothers and *Krishna* (played by Sanjeev Kumar) is one of the victims of Vir Pratap. These changes appeared too disconnected from the main epic *Mahabharata*. These independent stories though strengthened, as a unit look nonetheless a pastiche piece of a script.

At times, there is an omnipresent voice that pervades the scenes and informs the audience about future events or episodes. This voice may or may not bear a physical identity in a performance. This bears much from the Sanskrit tradition where a *Sutradhar* serves to bridge the communication gap between the character and the audience. This *Sutradhar* like a storyteller, is also made to move into or out of the frame at times, as seen in many crime-related serials on air these days (e.g. *Crime Patrol* on Sony Entertainment, which dramatizes real-life crime stories has Anoop Soni serving at times a connecting link between the scenes) but he cannot be called a character unless he is associated with story itself. In Rajkumar Hirani's *Three Idiots* (2009) based on Chetan Bhagat's 'Five Point Someone', the *Sutradhar* Farhan Quereshi (role played by Mahadavan), who unfolds the story to the audience becomes one of the characters of the story. One

might not be able to see the face of this voice in some cases as in the case of Gulzar's *Angoor* (1982) which begins with a background voice claiming Gulzar's work as an adaptation of *Comedy of Errors*.

At times too much on screen time of a character itself changes the message of the film. Scenes around even minor characters are so detailed (especially in television serials) that the entire focus of the serial or shifts seems to a new paradigm or perspective. Ismail Merchant's film *In Custody* has been discussed as an example to support this view. While adapting a popular work some directors change the way an information is to be presented. This results in the shifting of the point of view of the 'author' to the point of view of the 'director' and hence, leading to changed narrative. When Anita Desai wrote the screenplay for the cinematic adaptation of her novel *In Custody* in 1993, her focus was on the fading Urdu language and culture within India and Deven's desire to preserve the rich heritage of poems by interviewing an aged poet, Nur. The film, however, tells Deven's story. It builds up his character as one who is disillusioned about the idealized image of his idol. Poetic verses that are attributed to Nur (used to create an aesthetic ambience) were actually written by an eminent Urdu poet, Faiz Ahmed Faiz, who died in 1984; this further depreciates the cultural capital of the narrative as the verses lose their aura in translation of the film. Anita Desai, in an interview with Magda Costa, expressed her anguish over the film version of her book:

[I was] very shocked because in my imagination it was all very grey, very dark and dirty, and I just couldn't believe my eyes when I saw it in gorgeous Technicolor, and everyone beautifully dressed looking handsome... That's the world of Ismail Merchant; he makes everything look so beautiful, gorgeous. I had to distance myself from it; I had to detach myself and accept that fact that it is his version of the book. He is very happy with it. It is not my vision: I would have preferred it in black and white more in the school of New Realism¹⁰.

The reason for this changed narrative is because of the greater onscreen time Deven takes in a film or even if he is not there in the video frame, he is being talked about or his importance highlighted in the scene. *In Custody* begins with Deven (Om Prakash) a college teacher who is somehow managing his life in home and office. He likes Urdu poetry and can recite couplets of many famous Urdu poets. When he is contacted by an Editor to interview poet Nur (Sashi Kapoor) he accepts the offer. He regards Nur as one of the few doyens of Urdu poetry and interviewing or recording him

live was something Deven would do at all cost. Unfortunately, he is not able to do that and the film ends with Nur's death and Deven holding a collection of Nur's verses. The film might have given the message (by showing Nur's verses in Deven's custody) that as long as there are zealots of Urdu *shayari* in India, this art will live forever, but the manner in which Ismail Merchant depicts the fading Urdu language and culture in the film, drew criticism from the elite Urdu speaking class. Merchant had thought that a Hindi teacher's fascination for an Urdu poet and poetry would make an interesting project than a commentary on cultural degradation. Thus film makers take the challenge if they deem it fit. At times novelists themselves also allowed changes in the script if they believe that such changes would make the story look more meaningful on screen. Govind Nihlani recalls Mahashweta Devi's response to the modification of scenes in the film adaptation of her novel *Hazar Chaurashir Maa* (1974):

She had no reservations at all about her novel being made into a film. She told me, my novel and play have their place in the literary world, but cinema is a different medium, you do whatever you want to, and I will help any way you want me to. That was good. It made it easy that she realized certain things will have to be changed. For instance, while the novel ends in the seventies, for the film version we have brought the story up to the present time – we did this with her support, her consent and her contribution.¹¹

What Nihlani tells us about his film adaptation is not just the change in the time period but also the addition of scenes, voices, sound, music, props etc. So you would see that at times this is done rather deliberately and at times in agreement with the novelist.

Adapting the End of the Story

'All is well that ends well' is a dictum which is followed as a thumb rule to write the concluding or an end scene/s in Bollywood. Care is taken in assembling various stages of the plot that lay scattered throughout the substance of the script. End of a story can be happy, funny, optimistic or dolorous but never sullen or disgusting. Most of the films here have a 'happy ending' where all the characters are made to stand as a group as if posing happily for the last shot and thanking the audience for watching the performance. Films based on religious subjects would generally begin and end on an *arti* (song in praise of a particular God), *bhajan* (devotional song) or a blessing. You would find such words as '*shubham*' (*Bhakt Prahlad*, Dir NC Rao 1967), '*om*' (*Shri Krishna Leela*, Dir. Homi Wadia 1971), *Jai Jai*

Bajrangbali (Bajrangbali, Dir. Chandrakant 1976) coming on screen to signal the end of the performance. Films showing *shringar* (love) as the principle sentiment would usually end on a marriage scene (*Aisha*¹² Dir. Rajshree Ojha 2010 or *Two States*¹³ Dir. Abhishek Varman 2014) or a song usually filmed at a garden, hills or any exotic location where the hero and the heroine celebrate the success of their love. Films ending on *karuna rasa* would end on a sad song (*Godan*¹⁴ Dir. Trilok Jetley 1963, *Kati Patang*¹⁵, Dir. Shakti Samantha 1970 or *Main Tulsi Tere Angan Ki*¹⁶ Dir. Raj Khosla 1978). Prior to making the principle sentiment supreme in the end, *adhbuta rasa* should be employed just before it (in the stage of ‘prospects of success’) to heighten the tension in the story. This is referred to as the ‘climax scene’ where all the forces/prospects of the ‘bad’ match in equal opposition with the might of ‘good’ and no one knows what would happen next. Indian directors usually make it a chase and a fight scene. There is a practice of keeping a scope for a song here. A lyricist is expected to write one happy, one sad, one situational, one climax and one title song for the movie. These days one raunchy/item number is also included in the film especially towards the close of the film, which bears no connection with the story whatsoever. The purpose is to generate the ‘feel happy’ mood among the audience so that they leave the cinema hall with a ‘smile’ and not a ‘frown’.

Directors/scriptwriters following the convention of filmmaking at times offer ‘reorganized’ material; a different construction; an alternative in consonance with one’s own perception of the phenomenon as opposed to the one that the original author had offered. For example, in providing an overly dolorous ending in the film version of RK Narayan’s *The Guide*, Vijay Anand has Raju die, in contrast to his unclear fate when he ‘sagged down’ in the novel. In other words, a metaphysical existence was made to replace the temporal one. Narayan was hurt by this decision

The most outrageous part of it [*Guide* 1965] was the last scene, in which an elaborate funeral and prolonged lamentation were added at short notice in order to placate eleven financiers who saw the final copy of the film tightly clutching the money-bags on their laps, and who would not part with cash unless a satisfactory mourning scene was added¹⁷

There are other conventions, which are followed by all the directors. A son would never kill his erring father or vice versa. If at all he had to kill he would be gripped with all the tenderly sentiments towards his father and would repent the pulling the trigger on him and the dying father would ask for the forgiveness from God and from whose lives he had destroyed. A

hero can kill his uncle who would die an unrepentant death. This is because ‘uncles’ are used as ‘archetypes’ in film scripts owing to a notion deeply rooted in religious Hindus.¹⁸ Bhardwaj’s *Haider* (2014) an adaptation of Shakespeare classic *Hamlet* does show Haider’s uncle Khurram as an archetype but as a repentant in the end. Haider does not kill him as Khurram is already mortally wounded by the explosion of the grenades. Whether Haider pardons his uncle when he begs him to kill him and ‘liberate his soul’ or whether Haider wants him to suffer the pangs of death is an open question. But, there a similarity between the ending of *Omkara* (2006) and *Haider* (2014). In both the films, the hero does not kill the man who ruins his life. ‘Shoot me in the head and release me’ says Langda Tyagi to Omkara but he does not kill him. Omkara says, ‘Death will only help free your body but your soul will be damned forever’. Pushing him out of the room Omkara shuts the door on him. The *darshnic* gaze reads the message that a conscience smitten man is twice hurt. Killing him will liberate him from the moral turpitude which he must endure through the rest of his life. Similarly, in *Haider*, Khurram is not killed as he must live a handicapped life and reflect on his doings. Killing him now would be like killing him when he was in his prayers and this would take him straightway to God. The actions of the hero is also motivated by the *gambhīrya* (poise) one of the manly qualities of the character as mentioned by Bharata. It means that because of strength of character, no change of demeanor whatsoever is observed (even in very great agitation).

Conclusions

Film adaptations of literary works have always been a subject of academic research among scholars. Academic discussion on representation of characters and situations in an adaptation has moved away from ‘faithful discourses’ of Bluestone to ‘Intertextuality’ and ‘cultural studies’. Film theorists have taken an array of perspectives to examine an adaptation coining new words to describe a phenomena. Wagner’s, Dudley and Parker’s typology of words do offer significant contribution to our understanding of the process of adaptation. Linda Hutcheon defines adaptations taking up all that has been said before her. This paper has examined adaptations at script writing level. Various elements that make a story were discussed first and then a discussion was done to identify different stages of action. Themes, states of action and ending of the story were carefully analyzed for the generation of aesthetic delight called *rasa*. Sage Bharata view of characters as mentioned in the *Natyasastra* was taken as starting point to understand Indian

adaptations. The motivations and actions of characters (*uttama*, *madhyama* and *adhama*) resulted from their behavior types, which were further discussed as *lalita*, *datta*, *dhatta* and *shanta* types. The examination of film adaptations revolved around strengthening the concept of *rasa* which elevates the audience to a blissful state *parmananda*. An underlying concept of *darshnic* gaze was also followed parallel to our discussion on the sentiment generation. This gaze helps the audience to enjoy the performance and acts as a catalyst to experience the aesthetic delight.

Notes

1. From Esha Nyogi De, Modern Shakespeares in popular Bombay Cinema: Translation, Subjectivity and Community. *Screen*. 43 (1) Spring 2002. P 19.
2. Ritwik Ghatak, *Film is a collective Art*, Cinema and I. Ritwik Memorial Trust with support from Federation of Film Societies of India, 1987. p 13.
3. Quoted in Keshav Vasvani's *The Language of Cinema*, Hindi Book Centre, New Delhi 1998. p 35.
4. Rafique Bhagdadi (Film Critic and Historian), Shubhra Gupta (The Indian Express) and M K Raghavendra (Film Critic and a Scholar).
5. Vaibhav Vats, *Bollywood Takes on the Agony of Kashmir*. The New York Times e edition (24 October 2014). Accessed 28 February 2015, http://www.nytimes.com/2014/10/28/arts/international/in-haider-vishal-bhardwaj-draws-from-hamlet.html?_r=0
6. A film genre that shows the exploitation of Muslims especially with regard to stereotypical characterization and glorification of violence. The term emerges from the morphing of the two words 'moslem' and 'exploitation.'
7. Cartmell, Corrigan and Whelehan. *Introduction to Adaption*, Adaptation, Oxford Journals. 2008. P 1
8. Hindu marriage ceremony of offering one's daughter or sister as a charity (*daan*) to the groom.
9. *prarabhya te na khalu vighbabbhayena nichaihi*
prarabhya vighna vihata viramanti madhyaha |
vighnai punaha punarapi pratihanyamanaha
prarabdha uttama janaha na parityajanti ||
 (Bhartrihari *Neeti Shatakam*: 26)
 There are three types of men, lower, medium and noble depending upon the three types of actions they do. People, who are mean and inferior, fear the ensuring difficulties and do not work at all, people who are of the medium type start their

work, but if any adversity befalls on them they give up that work. But people who are noble despite adversities before and afterwards work continually and accomplish their work.

10. Desai interviewed on 30 Jan, 2001. Retrieved from www.sawnet.org
11. The Rediff Special/Govind Nihalani, 28th July, 1997.
12. The movie was based on Jane Austen's *Emma*.
13. The movie was based on Chetan Bhagat's novel *Two States*.
14. The movie was based on the Premchand's novel of the same name.
15. *Kati Patang* was based on Gulshan Nanda's adaptation of *I Married a Dead Man* by Cornell Woolrich.
16. This movie was based on the Marathi novel *Aishi Tujhi Preet* by Chandrakant Kakodhar.
17. Quoted in Krishna Sen's *Critical Essays on R K Narayan's The Guide* (Kolkata: Orient Longman 2004).
18. Lord *Krishna* killed his maternal uncle *Kansa*, the ruler of Yadava Kingdom with its capital at Mathura.

References

- Andrew. J. Dudley. 1980. *The Well Worn Muse: Adaptation in Film and Theory*. In *Narrative Strategies*. Macomb: Western Illinois Press.
- Cardwell, Sarah. 2002. *Adaptation Revisited: Television and the Classic Novel*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- Elliott, Kamilla. 2003. *Rethinking the Novel/film Debate*. Cambridge: CUP.
- Gaudreault, Andre and Marion, Phillippe. 1998. Transecture and Narrative Mediaties. In Groensteen 1998a. *La Transecriture*. Colloque de Cerisy, 14-21 Aug 1993. Quebec Editions Nota Bene.
- Hamon, Phillippe. 1977. Text Litteraire and Metalanguage. *Poetique* (31)
- Hutcheon, Linda. 2006. *A Theory of Adaptation*. Rutledge: London and New York. 8.
- Kavi Maravalli, Ramakrishna. 1959-69. Bharata's *Natyasastra*. edited in several volumes. Baroda: Gaekwak Oriental Institution.
- Klein. Michael, and Parker, Gillian. Eds. 1981. *The English Novel and the Movies*. New York: Frederick Ungar.
- McFarlane, Brain. 1996. *Novel to Film: An Introduction to the Theory of Adaptation*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

- Marcus, Millicent. 1993. *Filmmaking by the Book: Italian Cinema and Literary Adaptation*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Murray, Simone. 2012. *The Adaptation Industry: The Cultural Economy of Contemporary Literary Adaptation*. Rutledge: Oxon. 2.
- Ryan, Marie-Laure. 2004c. Will New Media Produce New Narratives? In Ryan 2004a, Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.
- Serger, Linda. 1992. *The Art of Adaptation: Turning Fact and Fiction into Film*. New York: Henry Holt and Co.
- Wagner, Geoffrey. 1975. *The Novel and the Cinema*. Rutherford, NJ: Farleigh Dickinson University Press.

Filmography

- Anand, Vijay. 1965. *Guide*. Navketan International Films
- Bapu. 1980. *Hum Paanch*. S K Films Enterprises.
- Benegal, Shyam. 1981. *Kalyug*. Film Valas.
- 2003. *Maqbool*. Kaleidoscope Entertainment and Vishal Bhardwaj Pictures.
- Bhardwaj, Vishal. 2006. *Omkaara*. Big Screen Entertainment and Shemaroo Video Pvt Ltd.
- 2014 *Haider*. UTV Motion Pictures and VB Pictures.
- Bhatia, Rajendra, 1970. *Pavitra Papi*. Kiron Productions.
- Chandrakant, 1972. *Hari Darshan*. Joy Films.
- 1976. *Bajrangbali*. Joy Films
- Gulzar. 1982. *Angoor*. A R Movies.
- Hirani, Rajkumar, 2009. *3 Idiots*. Vinod Chopra Productions.
- Jetley, Trilok. 1963. *Godaan*. Jetley Films.
- Kapoor, Raj. 1955. *Shri 420*. RK Films.
- Kashyap, Anurag. 2009. *Dev D*. Anurag Kashyap Films (line producer), UTV Motion Pictures and UTV Spotboy.
- Khosla, Raj. 1960. *Bambai Ka Babu*. Naya Films.
- 1978. *Mein Tulsi Tere Aangan Ki*. Raj Khosla Films
- Merchant, Ismail. 1994. *In Custody*. Merchant Ivory Productions and Channel Four Films.

Modi, Sohrab. 1935. *Khoon Ka Khoon*. Minerva Movie Stone, Stage Film Company Bombay.

————— 1955. *Kundan*. Minerva Movie Stone.

Nihlani, Govind. 1998. *Hazaar Chaurasi Ki Maa*. Udbhav Productions.

Ojha, Rajshri. 2010. *Aisha*. Anil Kapoor Film Company, PVR Pictures.

Rao, Chitrapu Narayan. 1967. *Bhakt Prahlad*. AVM Productions.

Ratnam, Mani. 1995. *Bombay*. Aalayam Productions, Ayangarn International.

Ray, Satyajit. 1977. *Shatranj Ke Khiladi*. Devki Chitra.

Roy, Bimal. 1955. *Devdas*. Mehboob Studios and Filmistan.

Sahu, Kishore. 1954. *Hamlet*. Hindustan Chitra.

Samantha Shakti. 1970. *Kati Patang*. Shakti Films, United Producers.

Sharma Vijay, 1975. *Jai Santoshi Maa*. Bhagyalakashmi Chitra Mandir.

Varman, Abhishek. 2014. *Two States*. Dharma Productions.

Wadia, Homi, 1971. *Shri Krishna Leela*. Basant Pictures.

Television Series

Iyer, Subramaniam. 2003. *Crime Patrol*. Cinevistas.

Khan, Sanjay. 1997. *Jai Hanuman*. Sanjay Khan Productions.

Sagar, Ramanand. 1986. *Ramayan*. Sagar Enterprises.