



Shakespeare in Hindi Films: Reading Vishal Bhardwaj's Cinematic Interpretations

*Anchal Dhara ** Neelima Kanwar

Article Information

Article History:

Received: 20-1-2022

Accepted: 23-03-2022

Published: 20-04-2022

This article is an open access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) license



This article is published with open access at
<http://theachieversjournal.com>

Abstract

The traces of Shakespeare's works are found in Indian cinema since the beginning of films in the country. However, there are only a few directors who acknowledge the borrowing from the Bard. Vishal Bhardwaj, the writer and director of three Shakespearean Hindi film adaptations, is one such film maker as he credits Macbeth, Othello, and Hamlet as source plays for Maqbool, Omkara, and Haider, respectively. All the three movies by Bhardwaj are embedded in local culture of the communities they represent. For instance, Maqbool showcases the lavish but unpredictable lifestyle of gangsters in Mumbai, Omkara depicts prevalent casteism in Indian society (through Western Uttar Pradesh milieu), and Haider foregrounds the volatile political conditions of Kashmir. This paper studies three Shakespearean adaptations by Bhardwaj to deliberate on his unique perspective in each cinematic transportation. This research also explores the exposition of female portrayals in Bhardwaj's Shakespearean transpositions. In the films, where women characters like Nimmi (Lady Macbeth), Dolly (Desdemona), Arshia (Ophelia) and Ghazala (Gertrude) follow the trajectory of their source personas, a part like Indu (Emilia) showcases new alterations. Bhardwaj has even introduced a new woman character as Jahangir's (Duncan) daughter – Sameera, in Maqbool.

Keywords: hindi Shakespearean adaptations, politics, cultural adaptation, sexual conflict

The Achievers Journal: Journal of English Language, Literature, and Culture (2022), 8(1), 1-16

Copyright © 2022, Anchal Dhara and Neelima Kanwar

*Anchal Dhara, Department of English, University of Himachal Pradesh, Shimla, India, E-Mail: anchaldhara@gmail.com, Contact: 09805546352

**Neelima Kanwar, Department of English, ICDEOL, University of Himachal Pradesh, Shimla, India



Introduction

Film adaptations have often been seen with the sense of doubt, especially if the transpositions renewed a piece from the canonical literature. Even after the initial criticism which was designated by the concerns over the fidelity discourse, adaptation studies have emerged as a prolific area for research. Theorists like Linda Hutcheon (2013), Gordon E. Slethaug (2014), Robert Stam and Alessandra Raengo (2004) have debated in favour of the film adaptations. They expertly introduced the endless possibilities; an adapted work can offer to literature (Bortolotti & Hutcheon 447). One of the prospects being the wide reach of films, that has made a version of an adapted text available to a comparatively large number of audiences. In addition, film theorists and film makers like Sergei Eisenstein (1949), Satyajit Ray (1976), and André Bazin (translated by Hugh Gray 1967) have elaborated on the creative process of a film adaptation and have established the artistic genuineness of the transpositions. Furthermore, scholarly researchers like Poonam Trivedi (2005), Shormishtha Panja (2016), and Russell Jackson (2020) too have provided a comprehensive analysis of the adapted works of William Shakespeare. All these studies not only reveal the ceaseless enlargement in the existence of the screen adaptations, but also assist in tracing the changes in techniques of the film production.

The cinematic adaptations of William Shakespeare are the most frequent productions in the film industry since the beginning of the world cinema. In Indian cinema the big screen transpositions of the Bard mark through the silent era to the contemporary period. Initially Shakespeare's works find a way into Indian Silent movie scripts with the aid of Parsi theatre translations (Verma 241-246). Subsequently, as the awareness through educational programs and access to western cinema expanded this timeless playwright seeped deep into the structure of India cinema. Especially, on Hindi silver screen the concepts appropriated from Shakespeare's plays register a potent presence. Two of the frequently used plots in Hindi cinema indicate identifiable Shakespearean stamp, first, a comedy where confusion is created by a pair of twins in the story, and second, a forbidden romance that sprung between young individuals belonging to the rival



families/faiths/social status/states. Both ideas loosely draw inspiration from Shakespeare's plays like *The Comedy of Errors*, *Twelfth Night*, *The Taming of the Shrew*, and *Romeo and Juliet*. Though a few Hindi adaptations of Shakespeare's works are exclusive, countless do not credit him. Some of the motion pictures, directly or indirectly inspired from Shakespeare's works are – *Do Dooni Chaar* [Two Twos are Four] (1968) and *Angoor* [Grapes] (1981) both film a version of *The Comedy of Errors*; *Junglee* [Wild] (1966), *Naukar Biwi Ka* [In Service of the Wife] (1983), and *Mard* [The Man] are inspired by *The Taming of the Shrew*; *Ek Dujhe ke Liye* [For Each Other] (1981), *Qyamat se Qyamat Tak* [From Doomsday till Doomsday] (1988), *Goliyon ki Rasleela Ram-Leela* [A Dance of Bullets: Ram-Leela] (2013) all three are the renditions of *Romeo and Juliet*. Nearly, all mainstream movies with Shakespearean traces thrive and perform well on the box office.

The film adaptations – *Maqbool* (2004), *Omkaara* (2006), and *Haider* (2014) by Vishal Bhardwaj are more than just direct cinematic translations of Shakespeare's tragedies, *Macbeth*, *Othello*, and *Hamlet*, respectively. However, Vishal Bhardwaj, a director celebrated for his unique style of cinema, has reimagined Shakespeare unconventionally. His renditions have garnered acclaim not only in India, but also at the international cinema platforms. The films that brought accolades as well as global recognition to Bhardwaj are film adaptations *Maqbool* (2003), *Omkaara* (2006), and *Haider* (2014) of Shakespeare's plays *Macbeth*, *Othello*, and *Hamlet*, respectively. Bhardwaj's adaptations not only appear modern Indian, but also speak in native language and dialects. All three movies are set in the time-period of late twentieth century and initial twenty-first century, India. Each film exhibits Shakespearean characters in evident cultural settings attributed to three distinct Indian states. The films are distinctive renditions that showcase diverse cultures and aesthetics of India. Bhardwaj seamlessly integrates the local flavour of language as well as tradition that gives his adaptations a global expression as Trivedi exclaims, "Bhardwaj's films simultaneously straddle the global and the local. They remain close to the original in plot and detail while ringing true to his relocations" (238). Noticeably, the theme of sexual conflict connects all transpositions to each other making them versions of an intimacy



dispute. Bhardwaj claims the narrative of each adaptation by not only the application of Indian vernacular, but also by shifting the plot to the deglamourized settings in Mumbai, Meerut, and Kashmir. The director chooses to display the socio-cultural and political aspects of the communities, wherein he highlights persistent corruption in the system, position of women in the Indian setup, and a continuous struggle for the right to personal choice. The three cinematic reimaginings are potent examples of intertextuality achieved by making Shakespeare reachable to Indian viewers so that they can observe him and interact with him.

Maqbool is set in Mumbai, *Othello* has depicted Western Uttar Pradesh, and *Haider* is rooted in insurgents ridden Kashmir valley. Out of three interpolations, Bhardwaj has creatively altered two – *Maqbool* and *Haider* the most. Although *Omkaara* comprises significant modifications, but predominantly his version proclaims a meticulous fidelity to *Othello*. In *Maqbool*, Bhardwaj has introduced substantial changes, which may overwhelm the faithful readers of Shakespeare. However, if these alterations are studied in relation to the settings of Bhardwaj's narration, they are justified. Other than the primary change of Nimmi (Lady Macbeth) as a mistress to Jahangir Khan (Duncan) and a lover to Maqbool (Macbeth), Bhardwaj has interposed few changes by restructuring the characterisation of *Macbeth*. Firstly, Duncan's two sons are transformed into Jahangir's daughter Sameera. This change in the plot generates a subplot – Maqbool and Nimmi to conspire against Jahangir Khan. Secondly, Bhardwaj's witches are two policemen – Inspector Pandit and Inspector Purohit. Bhardwaj has expertly played with the superstition attached with the practice of horoscope reading, an integral part of Indian culture. It depicts the desperate yearning of people to get a glimpse of the future.

As unconventional as the making of *Maqbool* is, the film still has many similarities which connect it with its source, *Macbeth*. Firstly, Jahangir's blind trust in Maqbool aligns with the affinity Duncan has for Macbeth. Accordingly, the disloyalty of Maqbool and Macbeth is also identical. Secondly, framing of the bodyguard(s) for the murder of Jahangir also echoes the similar set up in *Macbeth*. In the modern settings, placing the gun in a drunk, passed out



bodyguard's hand follows the play-script's smudging of blood on the sleeping guards. Thirdly, the sequence where the assassins sent by Maqbool succeed in killing Kaka, but Guddu escapes their trap resembles the scene where Macbeth dispatches murderers to eliminate Banquo and Fleance, where Banquo is slayed and Fleance gets away. Finally, Lady Macbeth's desperate efforts of cleaning invisible blood off her hands and walls has also translated into Nimmi's frantic attempt at doing the same.

In *Omkaara*, the film-script consists of more similarities with the play-script in terms of plot. Omkara is as indispensable for the political scenario in the film as Othello is in the play. A soldier (*Othello*) and a strongman (*Omkaara*), both sweat to provide protection for their political leaders. Omkara and Othello are highly regarded in their social circles and yet (Omkara for being a half-caste and Othello for being a Moor) both are looked down upon by some people around them. In *Othello*, Brabantio, Iago, and Roderigo and in *Omkaara*, Raghunath, Langda Tyagi, and Rajju Tiwari, believe that Othello and Omkara, do not deserve the commanding social status that they enjoy in their respective societies. In the play Desdemona is attracted towards Othello after hearing to his stories of bravery and fights. In the film, however, the foundation of Dolly's infatuation is not as shallow as only listening to the stories of Omkara's valour. Dolly develops a connection with him when she cares for the injured Omkara. She lives within a proximity with him for a definite time and observes him closely. Her access to him and his way of life sparks affection in her for Omkara. Bhardwaj has put thought and reason into Dolly's desire for Omkara to make it more believable. Further, in the play, the circumstances in which Desdemona approached Othello are undisclosed. But in *Omkaara*, the situation that leads Dolly to make advances towards Omkara is elaborated. In the film, Dolly is engaged to Rajju (Roderigo), which her unhappy, so much so, that she contemplates suicide. Again, instead of senseless authority Roderigo wishes to exercise over Desdemona's life, Bhardwaj has provided Rajju with a potent reason to get Dolly back, as she was initially promised to him in marriage.



Haider, third film in the trilogy by Bhardwaj, is based on *Hamlet*. In the scripting of *Haider*, however, the writers have taken numerous artistic liberties, yet have managed to follow the source play thoroughly. In *Hamlet*, there are few sections which are considered as essential and paramount to the plot of the play. These characteristics are – King Hamlet’s Ghost, play within a play or mousetrap, and Hamlet’s “to do or not to do” soliloquy. Hamlet’s father – King Hamlet, only appears in the play as a ghost, whereas *Haider*’s father – Doctor Hilaal Meer, is alive in the substantial portion of the film. It is so because for a considerable time in the film, Hilaal has just disappeared and is not dead. Vishal Bhardwaj has cleverly transformed the apparition (Father’s ghost) by personifying the ghost as an extremist character Roohdaar. The ‘play within a play’ has been transferred to *Haider* in the form of a musical, which is a Kashmiri folk ‘Bhand Pather,’ where the story is narrated through singing and dancing. In Act III Scene I, Hamlet delivers his legendary soliloquy:

To be, or not to be? That is the question –
Whether ’tis nobler in the mind to suffer
The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune,
Or to take arms against a sea of troubles,
And, by opposing, end them? To die, to sleep—
No more—and by a sleep to say we end
The heartache and the thousand natural shocks
That flesh is heir to—’tis a consummation
Devoutly to be wished! To die, to sleep.
To sleep, perchance to dream—ay, there’s the rub,
For in that sleep of death what dreams may come
When we have shuffled off this mortal coil,



Must give us pause. There's the respect

That makes calamity of so long life" (*Ham.* 57-70).

The above lines, through which readers/spectators become aware of Hamlet's uncertainties, have been illustrated in the film twice – firstly, as a political speech of Haider, that he delivers at Lal Chowk in Srinagar, the capital of Kashmir, "According to the UN council resolution number 47 of 1948... Article 2 of the Geneva Convention and article 370 of the Indian Constitution... There is but one question! Do we exist or do we not? If we do... then who are we? If we don't... then where are we?" (Bhardwaj and Peer 143). The second rendition of Hamlet's monologue is in the form of Haider's verbal musing in an answer to Arshia's attempt at warning him about the suspicion of his madness. He says:

If what I suspect is to be believed, I suspect what I believe....

Is there truth in Roohdaar's tale? Or is uncle's story all a lie? Whose lie is a lie? And whose truth lacks the truth? Does it exist or does it not? That is the question... The answer to that is also a question...

If I listen to my heart... then yes... If I listen to my head... then no... Murder... or suicide? Should I live or should I not? (Bhardwaj and Peer 156)

Consequently, *Haider* not only elaborates the perplexed psychological state of Haider (Prince Hamlet's equivalent), but also the ambiguity persistent in the atmosphere of Kashmir.

Bhardwaj's Shakespearean trilogy is embedded in local culture and language. The triad of *Maqbool*, *Omkaara*, and *Haider*, has distinct impressions of Indian society and vernacular. Hints of Urdu and Mumbai's Street slang is perceptible in *Maqbool*. *Omkaara*, on the other hand has heavy influence of Khariboli dialect. The language in *Omkaara* is also full of abusive words and



phrases, which makes it relatable to a section of viewership that either practices a comparable tongue or has witnessed people speaking in such a manner. In addition, it is indirect in expression, which is also a trait of Shakespearean script. In *Haider*, the influence of local Kashmiri speech is apparent. Since, the films are regional transformations, the director has not retained any of Shakespearean language. In few scenes, however, one may find direct translations of Shakespearean dialogues, especially in *Omkaara*. For instance, Raghunath's remark on Dolly's leaving him (her father) for Omkara, "may you never forget the two-faced monster a woman is... she who can dupe her own father will never be anyone's to claim" resonate Brabantio's warning to Othello, "Look to her, Moor, if thou hast eyes to see. She has deceived her father, and may thee" (Bhardwaj et al. 29; *Oth.* 1.3. 288-289). Another example is Othello's demand for proving Iago's claims of Desdemona's infidelity, "Villian, be sure thou prove my love a whore, Be sure of it. Give me the ocular proof Or by the worth of mine eternal soul Thou hadst been better have been born a dog Than answer my waked wrath" (*Oth.* 3.1. 369-373). This statement of Othello, in the movie loosely translates to Omkara's inquiry for evidence from Langda,

When you see a dream... you see it alone... when you hear a dream... you hear it alone... when I look into Dolly's eyes, your entire bible sounds crooked... now go get some proof by the day of the wedding... understood... If by your bad luck, I don't get any evidence, I'll trample over your limp corpse before going in for my first night... (Bhardwaj et al. 133)

Since the adaptations are primarily produced for the Indian Hindi viewership, familiar language fashions an instant relationship between the audiences and the films (Panja and Saraf 02).

In the medium of cinema, elements like camera angles, light, sound, and music also constitute language. It is because film makers use these devices to describe situation without having to use words. In addition to the above-mentioned elements, Bhardwaj uses music as a second language in his films. Another reason for infusing songs in the movies is the popularity of music in India.



Predominantly, Indian cinema is laden with all types of songs. As per general commercial opinion films are forgotten but songs (once accepted by audience) live forever (“Decoding Shakespeare: Vishal Bhardwaj on Haider at NYIFF”). Consequently, Bhardwaj’s Shakespearean trilogy is also filled with various genres of music. Where in most Indian films, songs are either used as a break from the intense pace of the film or exclusively as entertainment, in Bhardwaj’s trilogy, songs are an integral part of the script and appear as an extension of the screenplay. Bhardwaj’s expertise as a music composer assists in his interpretations of the rhythms in Shakespearean plays. His transpositions are unique to the Western attempts as he identifies the significance of lyrical, rhythmic, and rhyming aspect of his source plays. For example, Witches chants in *Macbeth*, “Fair is foul, foul is fair” (*Mac.* 1.1.12) and “Double, double toil and trouble” (*Mac.* 4.1.10) have equivalent in inspectors’ mantra “power is a game of exquisite balance...You need water to balance out the fire” (Bhardwaj and Tyrewala 21). Furthermore, he chooses to retain the musical aspect of Shakespeare’s works in his recreations. A background tune ‘Laakad’ in *Omkaara* is a rendition of the ‘willow’ song in *Othello*. Both tracks essay the pain of Desdemona and Dolly, at the unexpected hostility from Othello and Omkara, respectively. Likewise, blues of Ophelia from *Hamlet* finds its equivalent in a Kashmiri folk ballad sung by Arshia in *Haider*. The two melodies depict the disoriented state of mind of Ophelia (*Hamlet*) and Arshia (*Hamlet*).

Passion and Politics

Bhardwaj’s *Macbeth* (*Maqbool*) is a ruthless, lawless, but loyal to kingpin Jahangir Khan (Duncan), gangster. *Maqbool*’s devotion for Jahangir is with the understanding to take his place as the ruler of the syndicate in the future. *Maqbool*’s belief in Jahangir is challenged on two occasions, firstly, when Guddu threatens his claim to the throne by aspiring to marry Sameera (Jahangir’s Daughter) and secondly, when Nimmi (Lady Macbeth) asks him to choose between herself and Jahangir. By turning Lady Macbeth (Nimmi) into *Maqbool*’s desire, Bhardwaj elevates the theme of greed to sexual tension. Sexual conflict is the element in Bhardwaj’s creation that makes his storyline relatable to its settings. Bhardwaj takes the greed of dominion from *Macbeth* and incorporates the thirst of sensual encroachment, which results in an inevitable



bloodbath. Sameera's love affair and then engagement with Guddu (Fleance) is the reason for Maqbool's insecurity. He is warned by Nimmi time and again in the movie about his insecure status in the gang.

The two-man team of inspector Pandit and inspector Purohit is not only a culture appropriate transition of Shakespeare's witches, but also an inspiration from Quentin Tarantino's philosophical assassins. In the iconic film *Pulp Fiction* (1994), characters' conversations showcase their perspective about various subjects. Bhardwaj's film does not delve deep into worldly discussion, but the two inspectors repeatedly talk about the balance of universe and importance of maintaining the balance (You need water to balance out the fire) (Bhardwaj & Tyrewala 21). Their constant involvement in the actions and decisions of the people around them reflects the measures of control the inspectors exercise on the lives of other characters in the film. Bhardwaj's Maqbool is dependent on the inspectors for guidance like Macbeth always looked to witches for reassurance of his fate. Other than the creators of delusion about future in the psyche of Maqbool, the two inspectors also represent corruption and manipulation. They reciprocate favours with the outlaws and politicians. Both inspectors work only for their own benefit and are answerable to neither government nor criminals. They exploit all sides to obtain results only favourable to them. The union of the opposition leader and Guddu orchestrated by the inspectors topple the existing state government which swiftly reflects them as devoted to the newly formed partnership. In another instance, the inspectors deliberately release Boti:

Boti runs for his life. We stay on Boti's back, which is wet with sweat. Suddenly Boti falls but he quickly gets up and starts running harder than ever. We can hear Pandit shouting 'Bhag Bhag' (run... run) at a distance. Boti gets out of sight but no shots are fired.

INSP. PUROHIT

Why the hell did you let him go?

INSP. PANDIT



(smiles)

Power is game of exquisite balance... You need water to balance out the fire...

(Bhardwaj and Tyrewala 102)

Boti, whose life is spared in the above scene eventually fatally shoots Maqbool in the climax of the film. The characterisation of two policemen is a comment on the social fabric of the Indian society, where it not only highlights the corruption in the police department, but also features the superstition of horoscope readings born from the human urge to know the future. Both practices of corruption and superstition are prevalent in India which have frequently been a focal point in Hindi cinema. Movies like *Dabangg* (Fearless 2010), *Drishyam* (Visual 2013), *Raman Raghav* (2016), and *Akira* (2016) depict the corrupt, blackmailing, manipulative, and irresponsible policemen. Hindi films like, *Janam Kundali* (Birth Horoscope 1995), *Kuch Kuch Hota hai* (Something Happens 1998), *Lage Raho Munna Bhai* (Keep at it, Munna Bro! 2006), *OMG: Oh My God* (2012), *PK* (2014) explore and exploit the importance of horoscope readings for Indians without an exception of a religion. Vishal Bhardwaj combined the two above mentioned problematic facets of Indian community and equalized these with erratic witches of Shakespeare. Two inspectors as witches are acceptable because they are equally unpredictable.

In *Omkaara*, Dolly is as romantically devoted as her counterpart Desdemona and Omkara is as gullible as his equivalent Othello. Most characters reflect the journeys and destinies of their source characters in the film with the exceptions of Indu (Emily) and Langda Tyagi (Iago). Indu in the film is not an attendant to Dolly as Emily was to Desdemona. Her relationship with Omkara is also more defined and happier. Indu is like a younger sister to Omkara, and both enjoy a fun nagging back-and-forth. Indu is the one who steals the cummerbund (the family heirloom, handkerchief in the play) and gives it to her husband Langda. In the climax of the movie, when Indu realises that Langda has led Omkara to smother Dolly for his petty revenge, she is unable to forgive him. Langda's unapologetic stance on the death of innocent Dolly, fills



Indu with rage and her fury drives her to slit Langda's throat. Unlike, in the play, where Iago's future is uncertain and he is taken away from the scene with an injury inflicted by Othello, in the film, viewers watch Langda receiving an instant justice (Bhardwaj et al. 165).

In bringing *Hamlet* to Kashmir, Bhardwaj has not compromised with customs and traditions of the target location. The delay in wedding of Ghazala (Gertrude) and Khurram (Claudius) is due to the disappearance of Hilaal (King Hamlet). Since, in Kashmir a woman must wait for four (increased to seven in 2015) years before remarrying in case of her husband's disappearance (Nabi). Ghazala could marry Khurram, only after Haider locates the grave of his father with the help of Roohdaar. Bhardwaj's re-imagination has kept the political precariousness of Kashmir at the centre. It also invokes the helplessness of the people of Kashmir, who are torn between Indian army and militants. In Kashmir, Haider is not the only one who has lost his father, and like Ghazala there are many Half-widows living with either false hope or no hope. *Haider* is also a political commentary in which director strives to communicate aspects like corruption of police, prevalent militancy, and inhumane acts of Army. Bhardwaj was criticised for editing out the stories of Kashmiri Pandits from the film. There is only one reference in relation to the mistreatment of the Kashmiri Pandit community in the movie. Although, the director may have accommodated his understanding of Kashmiri Pandits through a conversation between the characters in the film, yet the picture suggests that where Kashmiri Hindus are targeted by militants, common Muslim Kashmiris are under fire from both the militants and army.

Indian Women in Film Adaptations

In contemporary settings, although the journeys of Bhardwaj's women come to the similar conclusions (Lady Macbeth/Nimmi, Desdemona/Dolly, Gertrude/Ghazala all die), yet they succeed to carve individual images. Nimmi embraces her femininity unlike her counterpart Lady Macbeth, who desires to shun all feminine attributes, "Come, you spirits That tend on mortal thoughts, unsex me here, And fill me from the crown to the toe top-full Of direst cruelty" (*Mac.* 1.5.30-33). Nimmi's approach in persuading Maqbool to kill Jahangir is also less aggressive in comparison to her source character. Instead of throwing insults at Maqbool (Macbeth), Nimmi



appeals to his sexual inclination towards herself as well as his ambition of ruling the gang. In a scene where she demands an 'I love you' from Maqbool on a gun point and even fires an air shot, Maqbool slaps her and asks, "Why don't you just go back to where you came from? You whore.." (Bhardwaj and Tyrewala 68). Nimmi laughs, hugs him and claims, "If you'er coming, I'm ready to go anywhere... even to the great beyond" (Bhardwaj and Tyrewala 68). Nimmi is vulnerable as even after her position of a mistress to a kingpin, she possesses no power. Her aspiration of becoming a mother can only be fulfilled with Maqbool, to achieve that she engages all the tricks. Second woman character in *Maqbool*, Sameera, daughter of Jahangir represents naivety and kindness in a contrast to Nimmi's cleverness and cunning. In *Omkara*, where Dolly is roughly a reincarnation of Desdemona, Indu is a better version of Emily. Indu not only is a keeper of a sharp tongue like her equivalent Emily, but also becomes a model of rectitude by punishing her husband (Langda/Iago) for his sins. Women in *Haider* are passionate and vocal in comparison to their counterparts. For instance, Arshia and Ghazala confront Khurram and Parvez, respectively, for their unjust attitudes towards Haider (Bhardwaj and Peer. 169 and 190). Ghazala is a fierce mother, who is invested completely into saving her son's life. Arshia on the hand is an honest beloved but not strong enough to absorb the blow of betrayal from her father as well as her lover.

The sexual conflict is one of the dominating factors in Bhardwaj's transpositions, where his leading women characters are of sexual interest to more than one person. In *Maqbool*, Nimmi a mistress of Jahangir, is also desired by Maqbool. In *Omkara*, Dolly is fancied by Rajju, and her sexual appeal is exploited by Langda to make Omkara believe that she has sexual relations with Kesu. In *Hamlet*, Bhardwaj has retained Hamlet's obsession with his mother's sex life in the film, although subtle sexuality of Ghazala is of a crucial influence. Haider evidently has a physical attraction towards his mother, which is not necessarily sexual but authoritative. Consequently, he does not want to share his mother physically or emotionally with anyone. Films also comprise of intimate scene between Maqbool – Nimmi, Omkara – Dolly, and Haider



– Arshia. The sexual attraction between characters has been depicted through the love making scenes on the screen.

Irrefutably, Shakespeare's ladies are an integral part of his narratives, yet, the length of their portrayals in Bard's plots is underwhelming. Bhardwaj has provided his women an elaborate background and substantial time on screen, which elevates the significance of their presence in the plots. Bhardwaj displays relatable female characters in his Shakespearean adaptations. His women are resolute in chasing after their aspirations. He has broken the putative mould of Hindi cinema, where women could only be either good or bad. Nimmi, Sameera, Dolly, Indu, Billo, Ghazala, and Arshia are layered characters, emitting ambitions, emotions, passion, integrity, strength, and grit.

Conclusion

The theory of adaptation encourages to look at film adaptations with an alternate perspective, that is, a film transportation of the text is bound to be a unique viewpoint. It cannot be the same as its source and if viewers intend to find uniformity between the source and the adaptation, the purpose of innovative interpretation is jeopardised. Therefore, Vishal Bhardwaj's film adaptations depict Shakespeare in Indian settings, where characters although meet the same fate as their respective source characters yet follow individual personal journeys. Also, if audience of adapted narratives desire to know about the source text through the extrapolation of it, they are doing injustice to both the source text and its interpretation. Nevertheless, cultural adaptations like *Maqbool*, *Omkaara*, and *Haider* not only supplies new depth to Shakespearean texts, but also rekindle interest in the respective source plays. Theorist like Linda Hutcheon and Robert Stam attempt to explain the continuous popularity of adaptations (88; xiv-xv). They have also debunked the constant criticism that is channelled towards the various media reincarnations. Hutcheon and Stam confront the denunciation that all forms of re-imaginings encounter, which says that an adaptation can never be as good as its 'original'. This study advocates acceptance of adaptation as a version of the original and not a competition. In addition, this research also



propounds that cinematic reimaginations accord a literary text with a fresh, experimental, and creative space to thrive.

Works Cited

- Bhardwaj, Vishal, and Abbas Tyrewala. *Maqbool: The Original Screenplay with English Translation*. New Delhi, Harper Collins, 2014.
- , and Basharat Peer. *Haider: The Original Screenplay with English Translation*. New Delhi, Harper Collins, 2014.
- , Robin Bhatt and Abhishek Chaubey. *Omkaara: The Original Screenplay with English Translation*. New Delhi, Harper Collins, 2014.
- Bortolotti, Gary R. and Linda Hutcheon. "Rethinking Fidelity Discourse and "Success" – Biologically." *New Literary History* 38.3 (2007), pp. 443-458.
<https://doi.org/10.1353/nlh.2007.0038>
- "Decoding Shakespeare: Vishal Bhardwaj on Haider at NYIFF." The Review Monk, 17 May 2017, <http://thereviewmonk.com/article/decoding-shakespeare-vishal-bhardwaj-haidernyiff/>. Accessed 14 July 2021.
- Hutcheon, Linda, and Siobhan O'Flynn. *The Theory of Adaptation*. 2nd ed. London, Routledge, 2013.
- Nabi, S. "How Kashmir's half-widows are denied their basic property rights." Scroll.In, 26 Jan. 2022, <https://scroll.in/article/1015849/how-kashmirs-half-widows-are-denied-their-basic-property-rights>. Accessed 29 Jan 2022.
- Panja, Shormishtha, and Babli Moitra Saraf. "Introduction." *Performing Shakespeare in India: Exploring Indianness, Literatures and Cultures*, First, New Delhi, SAGE Publications Pvt. Ltd, 2016, pp. 1–21.



The Achievers Journal

Journal of English Language, Literature and Culture

- Shakespeare, William. "Hamlet, Prince of Denmark." In *The Complete Works of William Shakespeare*. Glasgow: Geddes and Grosset, 2010, pp. 378-403. 49
- . "Othello, the Moor of Venice." In *The Complete Works of William Shakespeare*. Glasgow: Geddes and Grosset, 2010, pp. 477-498.
- . "Macbeth." In *The Complete Works of William Shakespeare*. Glasgow: Geddes and Grosset, 2010, pp. 521-536.
- Stam, Robert, and Alessandra Rasngo. *Literature and Film: A Guide to the Theory and Practice of Film Adaptation*. Malden, Blackwell, 2005.
- Trivedi, Poonam. "Remaking Shakespeare in India: Vishal Bhardwaj's Films." *The Cambridge Companion to Shakespeare on Screen*, edited by Russell Jackson, Cambridge University Press, 2020, pp. 237-48.
- Verma, Rajiva. "Shakespeare in Hindi Cinema." *India's Shakespeare: Translation, Interpretation and Performance*, edited by Poonam Trivedi and Dennis Bartholomeusz, Pearson, 2005, pp. 240-259.