ABSTRACT

The present study is an attempt to discuss and analyze critically and comparatively the literature–film interface and interdependence worldwide. This study tries to enlighten the psychology of different writers and film–directors while making their respective films (inspired from the same text) for their target respondents.

Since Shakespeare is the most adapted playwright in the world, there are more than thousand film/theatrical adaptations of his plays across the globe; the present study is focused only on selected film adaptations of his celebrated play *Macbeth* to achieve the objectives like what is the dynamic involved in transferring a work of literature to the screen; to find out how and why literature and film share this close relationship; how are the political circumstances and/or political convictions reflected in the films of individual film directors; what is the relationship (in national as well as international milieus) between political histories and historic of Shakespearean filmic translation; how are intercultural and intra–cultural politics reflected in visual translations; what is the relationship between political and aesthetic strategies in such translations; what is the philosophy or strategy behind editing, behind inserting own arguments, or for redrafting or reorganizing acts/scenes; to explore how far can the filmmaker be a legitimate creator; to what extent is he obliged to confine himself to being an interpreter and; to find out what kind of impact lies of films on literature and vice–versa?

All the above objectives are achieved through a comparative analysis of selected films adapted from Shakespeare’s *Macbeth*. The emphasis during this comparative study is laid upon to explore how different cross–cultural film adapters take the key elements of the source play into their respective film – the
characterization; portrayal of the witches; the socio–political–cultural setup and location; filming of key scenes like – the opening scene, the banquet Scene (appearance of Banquo’s ghost), Lady Macbeth’s sleepwalking scene, the ending scene (killing of Macbeth); and where and how (if) an adapter inserts his personal touch or the autobiographical note into his respective film.

This study is divided into five chapters. The first chapter “Introduction” tries to analyze the interrelation of Cinema and Literature finding out the factors that sets a bridge between literary works and films throughout the world focusing on the previous and latest theory and practice in film adaptations and mechanism or methodology involved while adapting a text into film. Starting from defining the term film adaptation, its co–relation with translation studies is provided. The difference as well as the similarities amid literature and film is also discussed. This chapter also consists of the brief history of film adaptation scholarship and criticism. The narrative discourse and technological aspects of film adaptation are also discussed.

The second chapter, “From Words to Images: Shakespeare on Screen” is an effort to list the noted films inspired from Shakespearean literature throughout the world from then to now. This chapter also highlights the socio–political–cultural fabric and other striking entities involved in those films simultaneously focusing on the selected film makers. This chapter also states why Shakespeare is still pertinent among readers, film directors and, spectators. A categorization of film adaptation on the basis of treatment of source plays is also made. The productions of the Shakespeare and the BBC project are also listed. The film Shakespeare in Love is also discussed in this chapter.

The third chapter, “The Asian Shakespeare”, reveals the depiction of socio–political–cultural ethics and aesthetics, and national identity factors posited in
Japanese and Indian film–adaptations of *Macbeth* as *Throne of Blood* and *Maqbool* comparing with the source text on the theoretical and technical aspects.

With the use of Japanese arty styles, Akira Kurosawa recounts *Macbeth* in his *Throne of Blood* in a way that has much to do with Western critical canons than native Japanese social customs. Since Japanese viewers who are well familiar to the shades of Noh theatre, Akira’s treatment of Noh treatise might appear to depart from convention. Kurosawa, working on the *Macbeth* narrative for his *Throne of Blood*, was allowed to separate the rationality of external action from the rigorous theatrical discipline of his interior scenes; because a Japanese audience would find acceptable a film comprising so compound a style.

In Vishal Bhardwaj’s *Maqbool*, the Shakespeare’s plot and characters, much reshaped and reordered, are translated to the upper reaches of Mumbai/Bombay’s underworld. *Maqbool* reveals brilliantly how the wicked trio politicians–gangsters–police is ruling over people. This film is an acute satire on law and order in India. The gender discourse is also has a significant role to play in this film. *Maqbool* is considered as a ‘cross–over’ film because it demonstrates not only an Elizabethan Shakespearean play but also a self–assured postmodernist reworking of literary inheritance, strongly spinning the devastated Scotland of *Macbeth* into Mumbai’s immoralities’ lands. It establishes an archetype move in the Indian overhaul of Shakespeare on big screen thereby revealing a noteworthy advancement.

The fourth chapter, “*Macbeth* in Euro–Australian Experiences”, like the third one, is based upon the comparative study of the films of the selected directors belong to Europe and Australia to seek out the taken objectives. The British adaptations discussed in this chapter are – Roman Polanski’s *Macbeth* (1971), Trevor Nunn’s *Macbeth* (1978), Jeremy Freeston’s *Macbeth* (1997) and, Rupert Goold’s

Roman Polanski in his *Macbeth* transforms the Shakespeare’s tragedy into a cruel and absurd nightmare that perpetually repeats itself. Like his countryman Jan Kott, Polanski presents the world as a never–ending cycle of gratuitous violence and murder determined by an inscrutable ‘Grand Mechanism’ of whose central metaphor is blood and whose agents are demons in human form.

In his *Macbeth* film, Jeremy Freeston’s focus is on representation of the source text in interesting and realistic way. Since his film is a low–budget film, he has not glamorized any character and nowhere over–interpreted any scene. This film is ‘authentically set in 11th century Scotland’ which tells that there is narrative realism in the film.

Rupert Goold’s adaptation of *Macbeth* is the most successful out of the other films at helping a modern audience understand Shakespeare’s work. While portraying the leitmotifs imbedded in Shakespeare’s original play, Goold uses the elements of cinematography like lighting, music, editing and acting in such a way that it engages the audience till the end.

Orson Welles, in his *Macbeth* film, introduces the Christian stance both in spoken prologue and visually. Welles connects Shakespeare and popular culture in general and applied connection inserting a lot of close–ups. His *Macbeth* is, in significant respects, a turning point in the development of Shakespearean cinematic adaptation.

In his film *Scotland PA*, Billy Morrissette transforms one of the most bloodiest and gruesome tragedy of Shakespeare into a parody representing the bourgeois
desires. The effect of postmodernism on this film has transformed the whole process as there can be seen discrepancies between “high” and “low” culture in a new style. In order to insert ‘parody’ in *Macbeth*, Morrissette shifts plot from medieval Scotland to contemporary Pennsylvania and thereby juxtaposes the two dissimilar set of cultural and chronological milieus.

Geoffrey Wright, in his *Macbeth*, makes enough use of modern technology. As one can expect from a drug–dealer, Macbeth’s house is equipped with CCTV cameras and screens for tight security. Wright shows that a man who is indulged in such kind of business cannot enjoy a sound sleep. He fills his film with nudity, sex, violence for what he was highly criticized. Wright’s film is an ultra–modernized version of an Elizabethan play into contemporary world.

In the fifth chapter of the thesis, “Conclusion”, the findings of the thesis are presented collected after the comparative study of all analyzed films focusing on certain key scenes and other significant factors as all the directors have interpreted and represented them according to their socio–political–cultural milieus.

This study suggests that among all the conceivable art forms in which Shakespeare plays have been transformed, the film seems to be significantly prominent. It is, however, difficult to give exact number of adaptations that have been produced, and the figure is increasing amazingly almost every year. It could be an idea to make it easier for people to understand Shakespeare’s plays.

Each performance is built from a series of specific material and ideological factors: the choice of script, the arena for performance, the hiring of casting production team and actors and, the pre–analysis of the focused audience. All this shape and decide what Shakespeare can mean and how meaning is shaped. All these are the essentials that help the viewers to understand in order to examine how
Shakespeare enters in their lives. They also assist in clarifying why Shakespeare’s plays are so actable overwhelming the problems of style and interpretation and the confusions due to change in taste and conditions of performance and why their artistry is so assured that debate about the extent of Shakespeare’s achievement becomes unnecessary.

The present analysis of the selected film versions of Macbeth made in this thesis endorses that the political, artistic, and personal intensions of the different adapters are feasibly pertinent to the audience’s interpretation. They are frequently recoverable, and their traces are evident in the text. The adapters generally feel some specific kinship or some connections with the creative disposition or obsessions of the author of the source text they pick to adapt; then they choose a certain medium in which to disclose that fluke of purpose.

The cross-cultural adaptations of Macbeth are solid social and political response to Macbeth for they use it as an apparatus through which popular cultures are conceived globally and broadly understood. Since Macbeth is a tragedy about how power destroys people who don’t deserve it, in almost all the film versions of Macbeth a link between power and gender is retained though portrayed differently in order to cater to a contemporary audience. In all of the films studied, the message is the same but the medium of production is changed according to the respective set of the audience. The reality of ‘target audiences’ influencing the rendering in the target culture is thus a dominant factor behind this meditation. Profitmaking impulses force a director to present an ‘experimented’ Shakespeare in many ways. It is nonetheless an attempt to liberate him from a single language and culture, thereby lengthening the scope of his virtuoso far behind his own text and cinematic exercise.