The dramatic form encourages persistent reworking and imagining. Performance is an inherently adaptive art . . .

Julie Sanders, *Adaptation and Appropriation*

**Introduction**

It is said that the number of basic human emotions and passions is limited but at the same time the variety of situations, from which they originate, is infinite (Boulton 66). This ‘variety’ can be ascribed to the diversity of social structures found in the world. Every geographical locale has its unique structure deeply rooted in its customs, manners and political attitude as well as position. Therefore, every time a text travels, it acquires a new flavour. It adapts itself to the needs of the audience as perceived by the director, thereby, providing a new version of the old ‘story’. This argument can be further developed by referring to J.M. Coetzee’s Nobel lecture in which he states that there are just a “handful of stories in the world.” These are worked and re-worked repeatedly, thus, presenting us with new perspectives and possibilities of treatment. This also affirms Walter Benjamin’s insight that “storytelling is always the art of repeating stories” (“The task” 90). My present study attempts to examine the process of adaptation while concentrating upon the adaptation of western plays in Indian context. Even though the medium of presentation remains the same, i.e., the stage, the stories are transmuted to fit new times and different places. In this comparative study, I endeavour to illustrate that an adaptation does not kill the “original” or the “source” work; but instead keeps it alive in an ‘after-life’. At the same time, an adaptation is not paler than nor secondary to the source work by any standard of comparison. The study further explicates how stories
evolve by means of cultural selection, travelling from one place to another, and yet remain recognisable.

Roland Barthes emphasises that a literary piece should not be referred to as a “work”, but a “text” which would be beneficial in highlighting its inherent plurality because, for him, a “text” is a plural “stereophony of echoes, citations, references” (160). A text is influenced by a number of other texts. No single work is groundbreaking; it is the variations in the work which makes it appear experimental. A literary text cannot be studied in isolation. It is a product of multiple influences and counter-influences. The postcolonial concept of ‘hybridity’ can be linked with this intertextual impulse manifest in the interspersing of various texts. Homi Bhabha defends ‘hybridity’ and emphasises that ideas are “repeated, relocated and translated in the name of tradition” (207). But he draws a line between hybridity that pronounces essential differences among various cultures and hybridity that results in absolute cultural synthesis. Bhabha declares that where the former enables innovation, the latter proves stifling. This is particularly true in the case of postcolonial cultures where the imperial tradition tends to dominate or suppress the indigenous in a hybridized form. Therefore, hybridization is justified and advantageous only if it can stimulate fresh utterances and creativity. In the literary field, a study of dominant and suppressed factors also becomes a crucial consideration in any intertextual relationship.

Here, it would be relevant to refer to Aristotle’s theory of Mimesis or Imitation. Aristotle saw imitation as a part of instinctive human behaviour which, in turn, serves as one of the sources of the pleasure derived from art. It has been argued that, unlike the common belief, canonical works were imitated not merely to capitalize on their prestige and authority. Imitation, in a more literary sense, is a form of creative process. Creativity lies in making the adapted text one’s own. It is not the same thing as plagiarism or idle copying. Plagiarism is not an announced appropriation of a previously established text whereas adaptation, as a rule, is an acknowledged revisitation of prior work(s). Therefore, the ‘new’ work is an autonomous entity born out of repetition without replication.

Adapting a piece of work is just one of the numerous ways of ‘re-creating’ a ‘source-text’; others being formations of sequels, prequels, preludes, counter or parallel-narratives and other revisionist texts that pay a tribute to the original work. Parallel-
narratives include a vast array of works ranging from *Chandrabati Ramayana* to Coetzee’s re-working of *Robinson Crusoe* in *Foe*. *Chandrabati Ramayana* is “the Rama-story retold by a Bengali Hindu village woman, a woman who had known suffering” and “who had the courage to choose the lonely intellectual life of a poet, in sixteenth century rural East Bengal” (Sen 170). It is primarily a tale devoted to Sita, her supernatural birth, her childhood, marriage, pregnancy, exile, humiliation; and, contrary to the common practice, Rama is “hardly visible except in relation to Sita” (171). Coetzee’s *Foe* provides a female perspective that was entirely absent from the source work. It narrates the story of a Susan Barton who, in search of her kidnapped daughter, finds herself ashore on the island where Cruso and Friday live a life of newly-acquired complacency. The novel tells the story of Barton’s adventures with them on the island, their journey back and her relation with Daniel Foe, a novelist.

A work that deserves special mention is a play titled *Lear’s Daughters*. This devised play forms a prelude, “a beginning to Shakespeare’s play” with its focus on the three daughters rather than the father (Fuchs 190). It is a keen metatheatrical study of their psychology, their childhood and their power struggle. In this manner, the play asserts a relationship and association with an already existing play i.e. *King Lear* (in this case) and substantially deviates from the original plot to create a new piece with fresh points of view, focal points and perspectives. In drama, the “textual origin” can also be referred to by using excerpts from the source work or by introducing an inner play bound up with the outer or frame play, a method much followed by Stoppard (Boireau 137). But, again, these revisionist texts differ widely from adaptations. Their brief allusion to other work(s) does not qualify as extended engagements. These texts attempt to recontextualize only small fragments of other work or works which is not the case in adaptations. Another method of recreating a text is to write a sequel or, for that matter, even a prequel. Not surprisingly, these are found in abundance in the market but they are not even remotely related to adaptations. Marjorie Garber says that the reason behind the mass production of sequels and prequels is the desire for not wanting to end a story ever (73-4). Adaptations, on the other hand, can be simplified as wanting to retell the same story again and again in many different ways.

Simple translation is also one of the techniques adopted to work on a text. Miles Malleson successfully translated Moliere for the British stage and so did Henry Fielding.
Christopher Fry’s translations of Giraudoux are very popular. Translations, undoubtedly, allow ideas to travel across the globe but the characters born in a particular culture with a different cultural history remain remote to a later audience. To overcome this hazard, a piece of art is given local flavour so as to enable the ‘new’ audience to identify with the characters and to understand their emotions and situations in the realm of their own experience.

Linda Hutcheon, in *A Theory of Adaptation*, gives a continuum of relationships between prior works and their later revisitations (171). On one end of the continuum are literary translations which aim at delivering an authentic translation of the given work by capturing the finer nuances and cultural details of the text and re-producing them in a new language. Nevertheless, in literal translations, fidelity to the prior work is reduced to a mere theoretical ideal than a practical possibility. Many words and ideas seeped in a particular culture fail to produce apposite counterparts in the language of its translation. It would be interesting to mention here that there are no less than seventeen words available for the word “stench” in a North-eastern Indian language, Kumaoni. Every kind of odour is assigned a different word. The stench of a damp towel is differentiated by the stench of a dirty washroom in this regional tongue. “Certain words are non-translatable”, says Neelam Man Singh. She elaborates that language is not only words but a combination and consequence of myth, cultural history and imagery. Translation, therefore, can be termed as a facilitating device and it is the responsibility of the editor to distinguish a good translation from a variety of choices available. The objective of translation is not to “re-create” but to “re-produce” a literary work.

In Hutcheon’s continuum, translation is followed by forms like condensations and censorings. The term censoring implies that the changes are deliberate and restrictive in nature. Next, along the continuum is the realm of adaptation proper which includes “re-interpretation” and “re-creation” of familiar tales. According to Hutcheon, parodies are also included in this category in the form of ironic adaptations because of their overt relationship to a prior text. At the far end of this continuum, she places a whole series of, what she calls, “spin-offs” (171). This is the space of sequels and prequels; and also of works which offer critical commentary on some prior work. The continuum not only shows the relation between a text and its later revisitation but also helps us to understand as to what adaptation is not.
Contrarily, Julie Sanders indulges in providing a galaxy of terms which shows that adaptation overlaps and is almost synonymous with other forms of re-creation that have been so neatly compartmentalised by Hutcheon in her continuum:

The vocabulary of adaptation is highly labile: Adrian Poole has offered an extensive list of terms to represent the Victorian era’s interest in reworking the artistic past: [...] borrowing, stealing, appropriating, inheriting, assimilating . . . being influenced, inspired, dependent, indebted, haunted, possessed . . . homage, mimicry, travesty, echo, allusion, and intertextuality [...] We could continue the linguistic riff, adding into the mix: variation, version, interpretation, imitation, proximation, supplement, increment, improvisation, prequel, sequel, continuation, addition, paratext, hypertext, palimpsest, graft, rewriting, reworking, refashioning, re-vision, re-evaluation (3)

Sanders opines that all the above mentioned categories engage in the process of intertextuality, albeit in varied degrees and are, consequently, considered as some or the other form of adaptation. Adaptation, according to her, is a rich idiom and is related to parallel disciplines of music and fine art which, apparently, accounts for most of the terms in the list given above.

ADAPTATION

The literal meaning of ‘adapt’ is ‘to adjust’ or ‘to make suitable’. To study adaptation as a literary theory requires an understanding of the “double vision” of adaptation (Hutcheon 15). Adaptation is the term used for the product as well as the process. As a product, it refers to the formal entity that is an announced and overt transcoding of a particular work. As a process, it points towards the process of creating a new and independent work by reinterpreting another’s story and filtering it according to one’s own sensibilities. This is, in fact, also one of the appeals of adaptation. It is a fine mixture of repetition and difference, of familiarity and novelty. There is repetition but not slavish copying. Like a ritual, this sort of repetition brings comfort, understanding and confidence. The audience or the reader is able to derive a fuller understanding of the story by approaching it from a fresh perspective in an adaptation; and encountering a familiar tale also escalates their confidence because of the prior knowledge as to what is going to come next. Therefore,
an adaptation blends together the comfort of ritual and recognition with the delight of surprise and innovation. The “double nature” of adaptation involves memory along with change; persistence along with variation.

Since adaptations are deliberate and acknowledged revisitations of prior work(s), their fidelity to the source work is not the criterion for judging its merit. Thus, the debate of its faithfulness to the source text becomes irrelevant. Furthermore, this debate becomes totally redundant when the source work is experienced after the adaptation. In the fidelity issue, adaptations differ significantly from translations. In general concepts of translation, the relationship between the source text and its translation is that of faithfulness and proximity. In contrast, the success of adaptations depends upon and is measured in terms of the creativity and skill with which it is given an autonomous status rather than its fidelity to the source-text. Fidelity criticism also grants primacy and authority to the source-text and implies that adapters merely reproduce works. This argument is enfeebled by the fact that adapters do not simply reproduce. They reinterpret and re-relate popular stories from different perspectives. Adaptations, just because they come second, are not inferior or secondary to the source work.

Michael Alexander, a Scottish poet, appropriately describes adaptations as “palimpsestuous” works, which are always haunted by and examined in relation to their adapted texts (Hutcheon 6). Their relationship to another work(s) is overt and announced. This also explains why adaptation studies are predominantly comparative studies. The adaptation is critically compared with the source work in terms of the areas which have been magnified, underplayed, modified, added or even completely deleted. Such comparative studies involve a minute inspection of the method adopted by the adapter, his ideology and the techniques used in the process of adaptation. Also, the transcoding of a particular text involves a shift in its medium, genre, frame or/and context which demands attention and a detailed examination.

Gerard Genette, while commenting on the palimpsestuous nature of texts, gives two terms that are indispensable for understanding the relationship between the source text and the palimpsest: “Any text is a hypertext, grafted itself onto a hypotext, an earlier text that it imitates or transforms” (qtd. in Sanders 12; emphasis added). It implies that every text is a hypertext as well as a hypotext, that is, it is a literary “off-spring” of a
previous text and, in turn, is also a literary antecedent that inspires other texts, therefore, underscoring that adaptation is a continuous and an on-going process.

The whole exercise in adaptation has a vast scope for inter-media and inter-generic play. Drama, itself, is adapted in many different ways. Film adaptations, animations of classics for the benefit of the younger audience, radio-plays and television screenings are not uncommon. Shakespeare remains a favourite even today with screen versions of almost all the major plays in Hollywood and adaptations like *Angoor* (*The Comedy of Errors*), *Maqbool* (*Macbeth*) and *Omkara* (*Othello*) in Indian cinema. In addition, his themes have been a source of inspiration for many screenplays. Dramatization of novels and short stories for the purpose of stage productions and films is a frequent phenomenon but it is to be carried out with great care in order to conform to the needs of the stage. Irrespective of the pressures and demands of procedure, dramatization is a regular practice that has given us a priceless collection of plays. Writers like Anne Radcliffe, Jane Austen and Somerset Maugham have been successfully adapted to various forms of media available in the twentieth century. Rick Altman goes to the extent of saying, “The last half of the nineteenth century and the first quarter of the twentieth century was so fertile in theatrical adaptations that it is not safe to bet against the existence of any adaptation of any novel, however unlikely” (qtd. in Garcha, “Classical”).

Furthermore, films are themselves open to “novelization” in the twenty first century. Once in a while we come across a novel that is based on a film. These ventures are undertaken with the principal motive of capitalising on successful movies, like the novel versions of the popular *Star Wars* series; but in such cases the probability of the loss of artistic control on the part of the author is higher as he/she has to work within the confines of an already structured story. Needless to say there are exceptions to the rule when a “novelization” not only complements the film on which it is based but also stand as an independent work of quality and conviction. Filmmaker Deepa Mehta based her 1998 film *Earth 1947* on *Cracking India* (1991, U.S.), a book written by Bapsi Sidhwa which was originally published as *Ice Candy Man* in England in 1988. When Deepa Mehta’s *Water* released in the U.S. in 2005, Bapsi Sidhwa wrote a novel based on Mehta’s script which was published by the same title in 2006.
Inter-generic adaptation includes reworking of classical plays into closet plays or also into musicals, novels into poems and epics into novels. G.B. Shaw's *Pygmalion* was refashioned into a musical, *My Fair Lady*, by Alan Jay Lerner in 1956 which led to a marked compression of story necessary to the genre of operas. James Joyce's novel *Ulysses* (1922) is an archetypal text in this field. As the title indicates, the text bears a strong relationship with *The Odyssey*, an ancient Greek epic written by Homer based on an account of the travels undertaken by Ulysses. In spite of the self proclaimed adaptive status, Joyce's novel can be read and appreciated as an autonomous text as well. James Joyce narrates the events occurring in the lives of Dubliners during the span of a single day in the year 1922. The novel breaks away from its hypotext in terms of its spatial and temporal context and offers us immortal characters like Leopold Bloom and Stephen Daedalus. Undoubtedly, a comparison with the Homeric epic enriches the experience of *Ulysses* and enables the reader to unearth a number of additional meanings.

Framing of an adaptation can consist of a shift in focalization or the point of view. The protagonist of Jean Rhys' *Wide Sargasso Sea* is Antoinette Mason who is actually a re-vision of a minor character in Charlotte Bronte's *Jane Eyre*. Antoinette Mason can be recognised as Bertha Rochester, the first wife of Mr. Rochester in *Jane Eyre*. She was formerly Bertha Antoinette Mason from Jamaica. Bertha, who is kept under strict vigilance of the trusted servant Grace Poole in *Jane Eyre*, is little more than sounds of madness which are emanated by her at regular intervals. It is revealed that she is suffering from a hereditary form of insanity and is considered a repulsive figure that should be constantly kept in chains and not heeded at all. This marginalized character is transported to the centre by Rhys and is given not only a voice but a history as well. Rhys' *Letters* discloses her intentions behind the composition of *Wide Sargasso Sea*:

> The Creole in Charlotte Bronte’s novel is a lay figure – repulsive, which does not matter, and not once alive, which does. She’s necessary to the plot, but always she shrieks, howls and laughs horribly, attacks all and sundry – *off stage*. For me (and for you I hope) she must be right *on stage*. (156)

Such an alteration in focalization can lead to significant differences between the hypotext and hypertext. One of the recurring interests of adaptation is to bring the silenced characters and the suppressed events of canonical literature to the centre. The Jamaican status of Bronte’s Bertha and the delimited description accorded to her by Mr Rochester...
reveals the latent racism and the gender prejudices of the novel and, maybe, the author. In her novel, Rhys attempts to emancipate not only a suppressed character but also brings to the forefront the dormant stories of English literary canon. Helen Carr rightly calls *Wide Sargasso Sea* “a ground breaking analysis of the imperialism at the heart of British culture” (20). However, ironically, a novel like Rhys’ acquires canonical status as a representative of revisionist texts with a feminist and postcolonial impulse.

As stated earlier, a text does not exist in vacuum. It has a spatial and a temporal context within a particular society and a given culture. A shift in national setting or time period can radically alter the meaning and significance of the transposed story. When Shakespeare’s *Macbeth* and *Othello* were transcoded by Vishal Bhardwaj as *Maqbool* (2004) and *Omkara* (2006), respectively, the focus of both the movies remained the projection of male desire and male gang politics in India; very relevant and much discussed topics of twenty-first century Indian cinema. Here, it is worthwhile to note that a text is often updated by the adapters in order to reduce the gap between the works created earlier and its contemporary audience. However, the attempt to bring an existing work closer to the experiential realm of the “new” audience by re-working its context is hazardous and not always successful. When Nikolai Gogol’s play *The Government Inspector* was adapted by Sanjay Sahay of Dayanand Sushila Sanskritik Kendra, Gaya as *Jaanch Padtaal* and was staged at Tagore Theatre, Chandigarh in 2007, it failed to generate the required response in the audience. Sanjay Sahay transported the story of a set of corrupt bureaucrats to Bihar and tried to weave humour around the then political scenario of Bihar and its local dialect. In spite of explicit references to real life politicians and Bollywood heroines, the humour of the play fell flat on the audience. The performances were strained and the comedy was forced. Thus, alteration of the context is no assurance of stage success and is not directly proportional to it.

ADAPTATION AND APPROPRIATION

Adaptation is a double process constituting interpretation and creation. Depending on the perspective, it is also termed as appropriating and salvaging. In practice, adaptation and appropriation intersect at many points and are, as a result, used synonymously. Most importantly, they share an impulse of a more sustained engagement with the source work than mere echoes or allusions. Nonetheless, these two terms have different connotations
and any study of re-working texts should also explore the relationship between adaptation and appropriation. Julie Sanders, in *Adaptation and Appropriation*, rightly proclaims that “adaptations and appropriations can vary in how explicitly they state their intertextual purpose” (2). Where adaptations overtly signal a relationship with its informing source text(s), appropriations occur in a less straightforward context. In appropriations, the intertextual relationship is more embedded. They do not always openly declare themselves as a re-interpretation of already existing work(s).

However, appropriations range from direct announcement of an intertextual relationship, perhaps through the title, to an indirect ‘absorption’ of a literary antecedent. Therefore, adaptations and appropriations cannot submit themselves to clear-cut bifurcation, and the rules are rather flexible. Tom Stoppard’s play *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead* (1967) overtly signals an appropriative reading of Shakespeare’s *Hamlet* from the standpoint of two minor characters of the play. It is not an adaptation of *Hamlet* because the engagement is not directly acknowledged but the title suggests a connection with the Shakespearean text. In addition, Stoppard moulds the attendant lords of Hamlet in the image of Samuel Beckett’s philosophizing tramps of *Waiting for Godot* (1952), Vladimir and Estragon. In this play, Stoppard creates a back story for the two ‘marginalized’ characters of *Hamlet*. The playwright presents us Rosencrantz and Guildenstern in their off-stage moments and focuses on metatheatricality. Many events and characters from Shakespeare’s play are visible during the course of the play but they are substantially ‘decentred’ in Tom Stoppard’s version.

This kind of defamiliarization and displacement is a common drive in postcolonial adaptations and appropriations. Characters ‘marginalized’ in the source text are transposed as focal points in the hypertext. They are given a voice and it is through their perspective that we approach a text. Furthermore, adaptations and appropriations provide an insight and build in-roads into the domains of other disciplines which include law, theatre, music, psychology and politics. Interestingly, in *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead*, Stoppard explores theatrical practices of his times by building his play on the “off-stage” moments of *Hamlet*.

Thus, adaptation and appropriation interrelate in many ways and yet they have a few clear distinctions. The primary difference between the two is pertinently identified by
Julie Sanders in *Adaptation and Appropriation*: “. . . appropriation . . . frequently adopts a posture of critique, even assault [in relation to the hypotext]” (4). The chief method adopted for the same is to decentralize the main characters of the hypotext, making the margins or the marginalized the ‘new’ centre. Even though appropriations do not openly celebrate their interaction with pre-existing text(s), the engagement with the source text(s), like in adaptations, is a prolonged one. In fact, adaptation, in a literal sense, involves the act of appropriation – of lifting of another’s story, taking possession of it and then recreating it, thereby, salvaging it for a more contemporary audience. Adapters, therefore, first perform the function of interpreters and then creators.

**ADAPTATION AND INTERTEXTUALITY**

Further, from the point of view of its reception, adaptation is also a form of intertextuality. A text, as already mentioned, is not an isolated work but an entity throbbing with multiple echoes and references. It is a multilaminated work of art that is explicitly connected to other works. They are experienced as palimpsests of other works and this label is a part of their formal identity. They reverberate with echoes of not only specific works but this resonance might exist by virtue of similar social and artistic conventions also. As an example one may cite Tom Stoppard’s play, *Travesties*, which is an ingenious intertextual collage where Henry Carr recalls his experiences and understanding of three 20th century influential personalities – James Joyce, Lenin and Tristan Tzara. This memory play makes use of a Zurich production of Oscar Wilde’s *The Importance of Being Earnest* to present the feelings and perception of Carr within the framework of art. Nicole Boireau, in “Tom Stoppard’s Metadrama: The Haunting Repetition”, declares that *Travesties* is “a dizzying composite of *The Importance of Being Earnest* and *Ulysses*” (137).

While transcoding a specific work, an adapter has the choice to work with a number of tropes. Tropes are those aspects of the text that are easily adaptable or which have the flexibility as well as the fecundity to adapt itself to a new time and cultural frame. The theme of a text is one such trope. Themes are adaptable across media and genre. Hans Christian Andersen gave a treasure of more than hundred fairy tales for children’s literature. These tales, over the centuries, have been adapted to performance media in various forms, both for the viewership of children and adults alike. Andersen’s
stories are a storehouse of traditional motifs and many accessible themes, such as, the quest motif, lost and found motif, magical tasks, disguises and good versus evil. In 1984, Andersen’s famous tale “The Little Mermaid” was adapted by Hollywood director Ron Howard to a romantic fantasy film, *Splash*, starring Tom Hanks and Daryl Hannah as a story of love, pain and sacrifice. Christian Metz, the film theorist, observes that cinema “tells us continuous stories; it ‘says’ things that could be conveyed also in the language of words; yet it says them differently. There is a reason for the possibility as well as the necessity of adaptations” (44).

Where themes are of primary significance in novels and plays, it is the screenplay which plays the key role in TV and films. However, themes, in electronic visual media of movies, must reinforce and serve the storyline. On the other hand, characters are significant to both, the narrative and the performance texts. The human subject is central to all genres and forms of media. So much so, that in the “interactive mode”, considered by Linda Hutcheon as the third mode of engagement after “telling” and “showing”, the players become the characters themselves (22-3). In videogame adaptations of films, the degree of immersion on the part of the audience is complete, physically and kinesthetically; and they ‘become’ one of the characters in the fictional world and act out their parts accordingly. Many stories have undergone adaptation in the interactive mode of engagement which includes the likes of videogames and even amusement parks. Jane Austen’s *Pride and Prejudice* has been adapted to a dice game in which the player who first reaches the church is the winner. *Die hard* series and *Star Wars* have also been adapted as computer games.

Next, units of a story can also be altered in the process of adaptation. The pacing can be tempered with; an adapter might expand or compress a unit or might even delete it. A radical change can be brought by shifting the focalization of a text. “Hansel and Gretel”, a story of Germanic origin was formulated into a fairy tale by Grimm Brothers. In 2002, this tale was adapted by Vishal Bhardwaj into a Hindi film *Makdee* which was promoted as *The Web of the Witch* in English. Instead of focussing on the ordeal of a girl and a boy, this movie shifts the spotlight to a small village girl called Chunni. Chunni is poles apart from her twin sister Munni, who is sober, studious and obedient in the traditional sense of the word. Besides the twin sisters, Bhardwaj has added numerous other characters to give a realistic portrayal of an ordinary Indian village with a
stereotypical Masterjee (a school teacher), a patriarchal father, a simpleton for a grandmother, a couple of inefficient policemen and an idiosyncratic ‘Murgiwalah’ (the village butcher). The village is haunted by the presence of an eerie bungalow on its territorial periphery where many a village children have gone missing in the past. The movie basically narrates Chunni’s adventures as a naughty daughter, as a student, and as a brave child who signs a pact with a witch in order to rescue her sister from her clutches. In the process, Chunni uncovers some mysterious under-hand operations and is successful in liberating not only Munni but also a dozens of other villagers. The director has underlined the revolutionary change in the character of Chunni from being an errant and a wilful child to a brave girl who makes the right use of her strong-mindedness.

Similarly, the conclusion of a text can also be transmediated. The principal source of Shakespeare’s King Lear is an anonymous play titled The Chronicle History of King Leir. Many significant differences are perceptible in Shakespeare’s play and its source; but the most marked alteration made by Shakespeare in the story is the ending. In King Leir, France is victorious in her battle against Britain and the old king is restored to the throne of Britain. Goneril and Regan along with their husbands become fugitives and remain absent from the final scene. Shakespeare, in contrast, decides to do away with any possible consolation from the play and exploits the full tragic potential of the story by killing all the characters towards the end except Albany, Edgar and Kent. Moreover, the French army is vanquished by the British army and Lear is taken prisoner along with Cordelia, paving the way to the tragic end.

APPEAL OF ADAPTATION

Adaptation is not a newly found phenomenon. Ever since the creation of arts, adapters have revisited prior works in many forms and manners. But the need to re-invent and re-create prior works has always been questioned. As discussed, one of the appeals of adaptation is its unique synthesis of familiarity and invention. Prior knowledge of the story lends confidence to the reader/audience allowing them a comfortable space in which they can critically analyse a given text. It is equated with the comfort and the pleasure derived from ritualistic cycles which are repeated every year and yet there are extensions in the methods adopted to celebrate them. Correspondingly, adaptation is not a blind copy.
Intertextual pleasure is another appeal of adaptations for the “knowing” audience who are able to realise that the work is derived from more than one work (Hutcheon 120). Peter Allen David, an American writer noted for his prolific work in comic books, mingles serious issues with references to popular culture. In his novel adaptation of Spider-Man in 2002, Mary Jane stumbles upon Harry who is engrossed in reading Interview with a Vampire. She tells him that she has seen the movie version of Anne Rice’s book and the little girl in the film “creeped” her out (qtd. in Hutcheon 126). Only those who are familiar with the movie adaptation of Interview with a Vampire will be able to catch the hidden joke in her remark. The actor, Kristen Dunst, who plays Mary Jane in the Spider-Man trilogy, in fact, played, at the age of twelve, the “creepy” child-vampire in the screen adaptation of Rice’s novel. Similarly, Farah Khan’s Bollywood extravaganza, Om Shanti Om (2007) is not only a metatheatrical attempt on the art of movie-making and its behind-the-scenes arrangements but is also replete with in-jokes and witty references. Amusing anecdotes woven around renowned Bollywood directors like Mannmohan Desai and Sooraj Chand Barjatiya, and actors like Rajesh Khanna, Manoj Kumar and Govinda are a source of comedy and interest only for the “knowing” audience. At the same time, the movie is also a fine example of intertextual re-visitation. On one hand, the movie is a remake of Subhash Ghai’s 1980 Rishi Kapoor starrer Karz and on the other hand, the later half is explicitly modelled on Madhumati (1958), a landmark film by Bimal Roy on the subject of re-incarnation. Such intertextual echoes lead to an enriching and elitist experience for the viewers. The interplay between various works results in repetition with variation and opens up possibilities for fresh interpretations.

It is also argued that, economically, adaptations are reliable and assure good turnovers at the box-office. In order to survive in a commercial market, those who are associated with expensive art-forms like films, musicals and theatres turn to “safe bets” with a ready audience. Moreover, the pedagogical value of literary adaptations is an additional factor responsible for its popularity. Students of literature, teachers and scholars form a large portion of the market of adaptation works. It is, therefore, not surprising that there are more than a hundred adaptations of Charles Dickens’ Great Expectations to stage, radio and screen. Hollywood movies and British television
specialise in adapting the “tried”, “tested” and “trusted” nineteenth century novels (Ellis 3). It is also widely accepted that a screen or a television adaptation reaches more audience than those of a book. Adaptations not only exert a pull on the “knowing” audience but also create new consumers through the world of electronic media. The radio plays of Friedrich Durrenmatt cater to a different set of fan community than his stage plays.

It cannot be denied that there are personal reasons for choosing to either adapt a work or to stage/film an adaptation. In doing so, the adapter or the director not only re-interprets a text but also takes a position on it. Shakespearean adaptations in Britain are undertaken in the name of national culture and are given almost reverential treatment. These adaptations are intended as tributes to commemorate the power of a canonical cultural authority. At the same time, the purpose behind an adaptation of Shakespeare might be to subvert this very authority in a historically colonized context. There are other cultural and historical reasons which are instrumental in significantly inspiring an adapter and motivate her/him to select a certain text for adaptation. Neelam Man Singh Chowdhry saw a performance of The Suit in 1993 in London enacted by the Market Theatre Company from Johannesburg. The play was a theatrical version of a short story written by a South African writer, Can Themba. Neelam Man Singh claims that she was so impacted by the play at that time that it used to haunt her until she decided that she would adapt and stage it. The collapse of a relationship, the gradual disintegration of the wife and the question of justice and retribution tossed up by the play pegged onto Neelam Man Singh’s memory for a period of almost ten years. She re-envisions the play as an exploration of many facets of man-woman relationship including adultery, emotional violence and loss of love and faith. From being a four-page story on the subject of apartheid¹, The Suit becomes a sensitive and moving play about marital disintegration.

The need and the popularity of adaptations are also associated with the acceptance of narrative as some kind of a human universal through which we try to make our world

¹ Apartheid was a system of legal racial segregation among the Africans. Following the general election of 1948, apartheid was introduced as an official policy in South Africa. It classified inhabitants into racial groups – black, white, coloured and Indian. Blacks were deprived not only of their citizenship but the government also segregated their residential areas, education, medical care and other public services. In 1990s, negotiations began to end apartheid which culminated in 1994 when Nelson Mandela got elected as the President of South Africa.
and our actions more comprehensible for us. J. Edward Chamberlin believes that stories are created to, perhaps, give shape and meaning to our presence in the world (Hutcheon 175-6). But to explain the repetition of stories, J. Hillis Miller states: “We need the ‘same’ stories over and over, then, as one of the most powerful, perhaps the most powerful, of ways to assert the basic ideology of our culture” (72). Adaptations represent and reinforce a basic cultural ideology on one hand and depict necessitated progress, on the other.

AN OVERVIEW

Historically, adaptations can be traced back to the very evolution of culture and its consequent mythology. Sanders, in *Adaptation and Appropriation*, fittingly observes that “A culture’s mythology is its body of traditional narratives” and that “Mythical literature depends upon, incites even, perpetual acts of reinterpretation in new contexts, a process that embodies the very idea of appropriation” (63). Mythical speech has the quality of being communicated across generations and cultures through the process of relocation and re-contextualization. Familiar mythic templates are adopted by succeeding generations of story-tellers for their creative purposes. The myths are evoked, altered and then re-fashioned by the adapters according to the social, political, aesthetic and/or cultural requirements. The scriptures of widely practised religions of the world serve as popular storehouses as well as carriers of myths and legends. In Asia, the epics of Ramayana and Mahabharata have been perennially stirring the creative re-imaginings of writers and have served as fountainheads for an endless stream of literary treasure. The tales embedded in these epics are pregnant with lessons in the field of political administration, strategic combat, tolerance and morality, which, in turn, have been frequently appropriated by writers for literary, pedagogical and entertainment purposes. Their adaptation and appropriation is not limited to books and movies only. In the present era, these have also crossed geographical frontiers. They have profoundly influenced other forms of art, particularly theatre, painting and music.

A noteworthy element in these epics is their structure. The two Indian epics are the prototypes of ‘metanarratives’, simply explained as texts that have a major story at its core, which is called the ‘framed narrative’ or the ‘linked narrative’, giving birth to a number of other tales and sub-tales. Owing to the story-within-a-story constitution of Ramayana and Mahabharata, there are multiple narrators of these texts who, conversely,
serve as the subjects too. Other metanarratives of the world include the likes of *Kathasaritasagar, Shah-e-nama, Panchtantra, Odyssey, Arabian Nights, Aesop’s Fables* and *Decameron*. These texts are consummated illustrations of metanarratology, having a central story which encourages further web-weaving of tales derived from oral tradition, folk-lore, myths and legends. The stories usually reach the reader after filtering through various narrators and are related to the art of righteous living and just ruling. The myths contained within the story-telling of such texts have serviced a diverse range of cultural appropriations. In this manner, it can be concluded that along with the plot-lines, the structural construction of texts have ‘universal’ archetypes which survive deliberate modifications and are, accordingly, re-contextualized.

Writers like Ovid, Aeschylus and Euripides also borrowed immensely from the existing mythical tradition. Ovid’s *Metamorphoses* is a canonical assortment of accounts of transformation, like Leda and the Swan, Venus and Adonis, and Pygmalion. These stories are set within ‘framed narratives’, one of them being that of Orpheus, a musician. Orpheus marries Eurydice, a beautiful nymph who untimely dies due to snakebite. Orpheus descends into the underworld to bring her back from the dead. He is granted his wish, for the first and the last time, on one condition that while leading her out of the underworld, Orpheus should not look back. He fails to keep the condition and Eurydice dies a second time. Orpheus withdraws himself into wilderness where he finds comfort in singing tales of love and passion before getting killed by a group of heavily intoxicated women. In this manner, Orpheus becomes the subject as well as a teller of stories. Within a wider framework of his story lies a number of many small stories or even cycle of stories. Moreover, Orpheus is considered as the archetypal lover, musician, poet and storyteller whose story has reappeared in diverse cultural contexts across generic and media boundaries, and the in-set tales sung by him based on pre-existing narratives have been available and used by adapters and appropriators for centuries across the world. In recent times, the writings of Salman Rushdie and Kate Atkinson liberally deploy Ovidian mythical images to communicate socially and politically troubling ideas.

Likewise, mythical counterparts like folk-lore and fairy tales also serve as cultural treasures of archetypal characters and stories, attracting as diverse a community as Walt Disney, the director and Angela Carter, the writer. One of the reasons for the widespread re-cycling of fairy tales in varied cultural contexts is their innate ambiguity that enables
them to transgress all the social and geographical barriers. Julie Sanders terms it as an “essential abstraction from a specific context” which makes its “castles, towers, villages, forests, monsters, beasts, ogres, and princesses . . . seemingly nowhere and yet everywhere in terms of applicability and relevance” (84). What cannot be overlooked is the fact that in spite of being definitely ascribed, these fairy tales have been deeply influenced by stories which have been long in circulation in the oral tradition. It is also true for Ovid’s *Metamorphoses* and other texts by canonical writers like Virgil, Aeschylus, Homer and Shakespeare which are considered as rich sources for contemporary adaptations and appropriations. These writers, in fact, refashioned already established mythical traditions, exploiting, twisting and re-visioning them in newly creative ways.

Fairy tales have been constantly evoked by novelists, playwrights and directors because of their universal motifs ranging from sibling rivalry, dysfunctional family structures to symbolic “steps in growing up and achieving an independent existence” (Bettelheim 73). Feminist Writers have been perpetually haunted by the attempts of suppressed violence against women embedded in these stories. Angela Carter, in her short story collection, *The Bloody Chamber* (1979) dwells on the topics of sexual awakening and sexual threats that permeate tales like “Beauty and the Beast”, “Puss in Boots” and “Little Red Riding Hood”. In *American Ghosts and Old World Wonders* (1994), Carter emphasises the revisionary potential of these tales by providing the reader with three alternative versions of the Cinderella story.

Classical drama has been recognised to have employed mythical outline in order to enrich plot and characterisation. Drama originally signifies visual and aural retelling of an old story. These stories originate in the great deeds of people and are accumulated and stored in the literature of that region. The performers enact these stories on stage, thus revisiting the tales in a theatrical context. In the middle ages, religion found its way into literature resulting in the establishment of Miracle and Mystery plays in Europe. The early Miracle plays of England were performed twice a year to mark the occasions of Christmas and Easter. Stories related to the birth of Christ were performed during the Christmas cycle and the stories connected with the death and triumph of Christ constituted the latter cycle. By the advent of fourteenth century, both the cycles were combined to be presented annually, every spring. With the passage of every cycle, the
ritual became more elaborate and impressive. More characters were introduced, new scenes from the life of Christ were added, a choir was set up and scenes from the Gospel and the Old Testament were included to form a complete cycle of plays. Since changes were not tolerated in the general outline of the play, variations were carried out on the choric and the humorous aspects. Scenes of horror were inserted increasingly to ingrain the fear of hell in the minds of the townspeople. Alternating with the shrieking troops of devils and fire-belching dragons were the jokes, carols and scenes of domestic peace. Therefore, the stories from the Bible and the lives of saints were adapted from the “telling” mode to the “showing” to make the service didactically impressive. The themes of these plays were adapted from tales embedded in the Bible which were, further, improvised upon by subsequent performances.

The popularity of the Miracle and Mystery plays in England diminished with the rise of Elizabethan drama. The historical plays written by Shakespeare in sixteenth century and his predecessors, the University Wits, are also good instances of adaptation. It is a commonly accepted fact that the University Wits used to work together and borrow stories from common reserves of material for their plays. Frequent repetition of names and plots can be traced in their works. Shakespeare’s *The Merchant of Venice* is strongly suggestive of Christopher Marlowe’s *The Jew of Malta*, a theatrical study of lust for wealth which centres on an old money-lender, Barabas. Barabas is the foundation on which Shakespeare’s most controversial character, Shylock, is based. Like Shylock, Barabas also has a daughter who is in love with a Christian, and his lament, “My gold, my fortune . . . O girl! O gold! O beauty! O my bliss!” (“The Jew of Malta” 2:1:47-53) appears to inspire Shylock’s cries at the elopement of his daughter, Jessica, with Lorenzo: “My daughter! O my ducats! O my daughter!” (*MV* 2:8:15). However, it is evident that Shakespeare’s play is much superior in characterization and plot-building and is free from melodramatic horrors that pervade the second half of Marlow’s play, especially the means devised to check the murderous intent of Barabas – he falls into a boiling cauldron. It has also been argued that for *Hamlet*, Shakespeare used material from *Tragedy of Hamlet*, a contemporary play that was well known to the London stage in the last decade of sixteenth century and written by one of the University Wits, Thomas Kyd. *As You Like It*, one of his most refined comedies, has its origin in Thomas Lodge’s novelette, *Rosalynde*. Furthermore, any ambiguity or missing link in a Shakespearean plot can be solved by a
fair knowledge of the sources of his play. Plutarch’s *Lives* and Holinshed’s *Chronicles* were constantly referred to by Shakespeare for plots and themes and a study of Shakespeare’s historical or legendary play is incomplete without a mention of its ‘sources’.

Shakespeare had been, indisputably, an active appropriator of myths, folklore, fairy tales and works of writers like the University Wits, Holinshed, Ovid, and Plutarch; but he, in turn, has encouraged a scholarship of appropriation of long-standing and it will not be an exaggeration to state that “As long as there have been plays by Shakespeare, there have been adaptations of those plays” (Fischlin, and Fortier 1). The imitators and appropriators of Shakespearean canon have engaged in this practice for wide-ranging reasons: some writers only want to borrow from his repository to add weight to their own literary ventures and create an aura of erudition around them; others desire to supplant or overthrow him; and still others re-write Shakespeare as an attempt to subvert the patriarchal and imperial ideologies operating in Shakespearean plays in a subterranean mode.

Shakespearean adaptations can be traced back to as early as the Restoration in England. John Dryden’s *All for Love* is an imitation of *Antony and Cleopatra* and Thomas Otway’s *Caius Marius* has been termed as a “perversion” of *Romeo and Juliet* by Hazelton Spencer in his essay “Improving Shakespeare: Some Bibliographical Notes on the Restoration Adaptations” (729). Other playwrights like Nahum Tate and William D’Avenant freely altered Shakespeare for Restoration stage and between 1660 and 1820, all thirty seven of his plays were revised, the statistical count reaching to a minimum of hundred and twenty three (Wheeler 438). One of the prime reasons for the large scale production of Restoration adaptations of Shakespeare was the improvement in staging which tempted the writers to capitalize on re-workings of Shakespeare in popular contemporary forms of operas and spectacle. To employ the new staging techniques, plotlines were changed. Moreover, women began to act in professional theatre during this time which resulted in the introduction and expansion of female parts in plays like *Macbeth* and *King Lear* (439). Eighteenth century adaptations of Shakespeare can be distinguished from other eras because of their chief concern with form. David Wheeler
accurately observes that “eighteenth-century “theorist” adapters usually sought to correct what they perceived as faults in the original [works of Shakespeare]” (439).

In truth, adapting, improving, re-visioning, or subverting an established literary text is a global practice the success of which cannot be undermined. Shakespeare always proves to be a facilitating presence. His texts have been cut and modified to suit contemporary values in Germany and Japan. Shakespeare on the German Stage (1990) examines how Shakespeare instils new dignity in German actors by allowing them freedom to demonstrate how the same role can be played in different and, even, contradictory styles. The various essays in the book focus on the diverse interpretations of Hamlet, besides others, on the German stage to prove the point. Even the Japanese Puppet Theatre adapted Hamlet (1956) to an interesting mix of music and sound effects. Important modifications were made keeping in mind the time limitation and the high cost of a dolls production.

Each succeeding age has used Shakespeare for its own ends. In current times, writers are turning to Shakespeare with iconoclastic intentions. They aim at challenging the latent gender and colonial impulses prevailing in Shakespearean texts in their postmodernist re-imaginings, and one of the effective means of doing so is ‘transfocalization’ or viewing things from a different perspective. As discussed, transfocalization commonly involves emancipation of the suppressed voices of the hypotext. Novelists have successfully reshaped Shakespeare into first person narratives bringing to the forefront the ‘silenced’ or the ‘absent’ characters. Jane Smiley appropriates King Lear in A Thousand Acres (1992) and presents the viewpoint of Ginny, the eldest daughter of Larry Cook, a farmer-patriarch whose division of property results in familial disintegration. Larry Cook is analogous to King Lear and Ginny can be unquestionably equated with Goneril. From a grotesque emblem of villainy, Smiley transforms Goneril/Ginny into a living character with psychological motives behind her actions. Smiley gives Ginny a voice and a personal history to justify her violent actions

---

2 John Dennis in The Comical Gallant (1702), an adaptation of The Merry Wives of Windsor, corrected plot irregularity by centralizing the action and providing the audience with a unified plot. It is interesting to note here that for all the ‘corrective measures’ taken by Dennis, he encountered failure because his play suffered from the defects of the age – shallow characterisation and a play of convoluted intrigue. Nevertheless, eighteenth century adapters diligently occupied themselves in combining the raw power of Shakespeare with the formalistic elegance of their own century.
against her father, thereby, providing a ‘revaluation’ of a minor character. There are many other instances of contemporary Shakespearean appropriations which endow the marginalized, subjugated or even demonized characters with significant roles in the hypertext, such as, Marina Warner’s *Indigo*, or *Mapping the Waters* (1992) or John Updike’s *Gertrude and Claudius* (2000). Shakespearean canon has served as a touchstone over many centuries for the process of adaptation and appropriation, be it poems, novels, plays, films or musicals. Innovative directors like Peter Brook and Roman Polanski have frequently re-interpreted Shakespeare. Films like Derek Jarman’s *The Tempest* (1979) and Peter Greenaway’s *Prospero’s Books* (1991) presented an on-screen Sycorax, the unseen monster-mother from *The Tempest*. Musicals like *The Boys from Syracuse* and *West Side Story* re-envisioned *The Comedy of Errors* and *Romeo and Juliet*, respectively, according to the contemporary tastes.

Correspondingly, in Indian theatrical tradition, the period between 1485 A.D. and 1550 A.D. witnessed a significant development in folk art pioneered by a number of saints like Shankaradeva from Assam, Chaitnyadeva from Bengal, Shri Narayan Bhatt from Andhra Pradesh and Swami Hari Das presumably from Gujarat. Most of Shankaradeva’s plays like *Kaliya-Daman* and *Rukmini-Haran* were adaptations from Sanskrit, depicting the life of Krishna and his activities. Besides Ankiya Naats of Assam, other art forms of folk drama like dance dramas and processional theatre recurrently borrow themes from Ramayana, Mahabharata and Puranas. Also, these epics strongly influence the shadow-plays of South-East Asia particularly of Cambodia, Bali, Malaysia, Java and Indonesia. From yesteryears till today, the indigenous forms of theatre show an undaunted faith in the epics to instruct and entertain the spectators.

Stage adaptation of western plays by Indian mainstream theatre is also a common feature. P.L.Deshpande has adapted Sophocles’ *Oedipus Rex*, Brecht’s *Three Penny Opera* and Gogol’s *The Government Inspector* for the Indian stage. Arun Naik and V.V.Shirwadkar have adapted *Macbeth* and *Othello* independently and the latter’s *Natassamrat* has traces of *King Lear* (Nadkarni 11-5). *Jana Shatru* by J.N.Kaushal is an adaptation of Ibsen’s *An Enemy of the People*. Begum Qudsia Zaidi and Shama Zaidi have adapted several plays to Indian milieu. Surjit Patar has contributed by adapting the three tragedies of Lorca, besides others.
In fact, adaptation of Western plays has been a characteristic feature of modern Bengali theatre from its very inception in the late eighteenth century. In the mid-twentieth century, there was a sudden rise in this trend as plays of major western writers like Ibsen, Pirandello, Brecht, Camus, Sartre, and Beckett began to be adapted. This upsurge can be attributed to the political situation of Bengal during the 1950s and the late 1960s. The year 1967 saw the formation of the first leftist party in Bengal that brought fresh exposure to modern Western playwrights (Banerjee 2). Utpal Datta adapted *Mother Courage and her Children* in the late 1960s for the first time and set it against the backdrop of the Hindu-Muslim feuds during Islamic rule in India. Adapters like Ajitesh Bandyopadhyay, Sekhar Chattopadhyay and Badal Sircar considered Brecht very suitable for portrayal of political crisis in Bengal during the 1960s and a proper medium through which the complexities of a leftist position can be analyzed within a capitalist system (8). Moreover, Brecht concepts of theatre seemed not unfamiliar to them: distancing and narrative elements were intrinsic to the folk forms of Bengal like ‘jatra’\(^3\) and even to Tagore’s idea of theatre. What is noteworthy here is that Brecht himself experimented with the art of adaptation and allied with H.R.Hays in 1943 to adapt John Webster’s *The Duchess of Malfi* for Broadway.

Similarly, American playwrights like Arthur Miller, Tennessee Williams and Herman Wouk were adapted by French authors and were appreciated by both critics and public, and continues to do so in spite of the fundamental differences between American and French theatrical traditions\(^4\).

It can be, therefore, deduced that any enterprise dealing with adaptation or appropriation demands socio-political awareness and responsible participation on the part of the adapter as well as the reader or spectator. The differences in responses also take place due to the variations in generic mode and prior knowledge of the hypotext. An

\(^3\) The ‘Jatra’, the most prominent of folk forms prevalent in rural Bengal, is traditionally performed on a square wooden platform under the open sky or a canopy. The audience sits on all sides of the stage and a wooden gangway from the stage, used by actors for entrance and exit, leads to an improvised greenroom. There are virtually no sets and lighting is minimal. The actor talks directly to the audience introducing the action which is constantly interrupted by songs or the appearance of a type character called Vivek.

\(^4\) The French do not readily accept the heavy Freudian orientation of the American dramas. Though French plays are not completely devoid of violence, like Sartre’s, but their brutality is more intellectual in nature unlike that of Americans. For a detailed analysis, see “Adaptations of American Plays in Paris” by Thomas W. Bishop.
awareness of the ‘informing’ text(s) alerts the responses of the reader/spectator, and provides him/her with familiar reference points and ingenious perspectives. In this respect, an old story becomes a new one every time it is read or performed.

In the present research project, I concentrate on stage adaptations of three plays namely Shaw’s *Pygmalion* (1912), Lorca’s *Yerma* (1934) and Durrenmatt’s *The Visit of the Old Lady* (1956). I attempt to analyse the production of these plays with the intention of exploring the factors responsible for the ‘re-working’ of a text in a new context and the methods employed by the adapters and directors to adapt these plays for the audience of Chandigarh. Further, I focus on and critically analyze the interplay of western and Indian theatrical conventions in such adaptations.

A great deal of work and space has been devoted to screen adaptation but stage adaptation seems to have remained unnoticed and remains a comparatively neglected field, particularly Indian adaptations. Marjorie Boulton’s *The Anatomy of Drama* (1960) has one complete chapter “Adaptation of Plots” which includes a detailed comparison of Shakespeare’s *Othello* and its source, an Italian tale by Giraldi Cinthio (64-74). In Nicole Boireau’s *Drama on Drama: Dimensions of Theatricality on the Contemporary British Stage* (1997), there are two essays related to the topic of stage adaptation. Albert-Reiner Glaap’s essay titled “Translating, Adapting, Rewriting: Three Facets of Christopher Hampton’s Work as a Playwright” sheds light on two of Hampton’s adaptations, *Les Liaisons Dangereuses* and *Alice’s Adventures Under Ground* and his re-writing of Molière’s *Le Misanthrope* in *The Philanthropist* (215-30). “Devising Drama on Drama: The Community and Theatre Traditions” by Anne Fuchs focuses on intertextuality dominant in community plays like *Lear’s Daughters* and *Heartlanders* (184-95).

edited by Margreta de Grazia and Stanley Wells contains a number of essays on the reworkings of Shakespeare across space and time. A few essays on adaptation experiments in German, Austrian and South African theatre offer a glimpse of this stage practice in various countries. *The Play Out of Context: Transferring Plays from Culture to Culture* is a compilation of essays studying Greek drama in Rome, Egyptian-Arabic adaptations, and British and Japanese productions of Chekov, besides others.

Some references to adaptation can be found in Sudhakar Pandey and Freya Taraporewala’s *Contemporary Indian Drama* (1990) and Durgadas Mukhopadhyay’s *Culture, Performance, Communication* (1989) but neither of the two studies contains a detailed discussion on the topic. Arundhati Banerjee’s essay “Brecht Adaptations in Modern Bengali Theatre: A Study in Reception” is one of the few noteworthy essays of this field.

The process of adaptation takes place at every step of production-planning. A play reaches the audience after passing through various channels which facilitate filtration or/and improvisation. Thus, from the very first step of selecting a play right up to its enactment and execution by the actor on the stage, a number of perspectives mould the play. As a result, some aspects of the ‘source’ are foregrounded while the others are underplayed. It is this creative process which forms the first component of my study. The study attempts to compare the theatrical devices used and comprises a critical analysis of selected plays in the light of the conventions of contemporary Indian and western theatre. The main objective is to highlight how local colour is infused into stage adaptations and how texts travel across geographical and cultural boundaries.

The method of approaching the subject is two-fold, a study of the written word and the performed version or as Hutcheon terms it – the ‘telling’ mode and the ‘showing’ mode. Hutcheon fittingly believes that in narrative literature, our engagement begins in the realm of imagination which is controlled by the “directing words of the text” and is free from the “limits of the visual or aural” (23). But when these narratives are moved onto the showing mode of stage or films, we shift from the realm of imagination to that of direct perception and “are caught in an unrelenting, forward-driving story”. Music, sounds, images, the moving actors, facial expression etc. with its mix of detail and broad focus, generate effective response in the audience. The first step of the present study
comprises a thorough reading and understanding of the original script and its adaptation. Next, video recordings of performances of the concerned plays are examined. In addition, interviews are conducted with the directors of the selected plays with the objective of gaining first hand practical knowledge of stage adaptation. The transcripts of the interviews form an essential part of the study.

The relevance of the study lies in the fact that it examines the actual performances of literary works and explores the question of “physical considerations” characteristic to the form of drama because the two factors intrinsic to the nature of theatre – actors and audience – raise the question of physical endurance and capability absent in all other literary forms (Nicoll 31). Allardyce Nicoll suitably observes that “the playwright must . . . be bound by the facts that his play is designed to be produced in a material theatre, interpreted by actors who are, after all, only human, and before an audience which is exceedingly human”. This can be further elaborated with the help of Kenneth Pickering’s observation that the “printed word”, which is conventionally considered as the play text, is in actuality a very minor element in comparison to the larger “physical stage” and serves only “as a blueprint” for the main action (Pickering, Studying 2-3). Moreover, the “printed word” is open to various interpretations leading to multiple theatrical possibilities. This calls attention to practical aspects of literary adaptations which are the main concern of my intended research.

This study builds on Francisque Sarcey’s theory: “A play without an audience is inconceivable.” According to him, audience is the most crucial accessory in the performance of a dramatic work and cannot be replaced or suppressed (Nicoll 30). The study further rests on an idea put forward by Walter Benjamin in “The Storyteller” which compares the creative experience of a writer with a ladder resting on firm ground but reaching out into the skies (52). It underlines the idea that a text is not essentially local. The idea is that a text may originate in a particular time and place but it evolves as it moves along, travelling from one place to another. It is adapted to local needs and undergoes changes from time to time keeping in mind the emotional and cultural sensibilities of the audience and the performers, and yet the intrinsic framework remains the same.
The first chapter compares George Bernard Shaw’s *Pygmalion* and its Urdu adaptation *Azar ka Khwaab*. The adaptation was undertaken by the renowned theatre personality of India, Begum Qudsia Zaidi. Zaidi’s script inspired a number of productions like Yatrik Production in the 60s, Mohan Maharishi’s production in the latter half of the 60s and Bhanu Bharti’s production in the NSD Repertory in the 80s, besides others. The present study focuses on the local production of *Azar ka Khwaab* directed by Anjala Maharishi in 2001. *Pygmalion* is an interesting text because of its lush intertextuality. The mythical, classical and fairy-tale threads woven into the pattern of the text make it a rich but challenging study of characters and themes. Though Shaw labelled the play as an anti-romance in his interviews, many screenplay writers and directors moulded the play into a love story, thus, underlining the story’s inherent fecundity.

Shaw, in order to clarify his stand, added a preface introducing the subject of the play, and a sequel which states the impossibility of Eliza-Higgins romance to *Pygmalion*. Moreover, there are a few scenes in the play which Shaw has marked as candidates for omission, if necessary. These scenes, depending on their inclusion, exclusion and alteration are capable of modifying the theme of the play in the light of new perspectives. Further, the autobiographical element in *Pygmalion* dealing with his mother’s relationship with her tutor, if ignored, can completely transform the relationship shared by the main characters. While undertaking an adaptation of *Pygmalion*, the adapter and the director can choose to select or disregard any of the abovementioned inputs provided by Shaw, consequently, altering the message of the resultant text.

Zaidi re-located her script in Delhi and skilfully seeped it in the Indian Muslim culture. Right from the nomenclature and costumes to eating habits, religious practices and attitude towards women, every detail is worked out in compliance with Muslim way of living. Maharishi, as a director, further brought changes in Zaidi’s script keeping in mind the compulsions of dealing with theatre students and an ordinary stage. Her experiment with the actors makes the production an enriching experience for the viewers. Where Shaw terms his play as a social experiment to emphasise the importance of phonetics in English society, Zaidi and Maharishi are keen on portraying the nuances of Eliza/Hajjo’s character. Maharishi proclaims that Hajjo is the protagonist of her play and it is her innate self-respect and humanity which makes her aristocratic teacher realize her
independence and his own dependence on her in the end. The theme of the play is not only up-dated but also re-contextualised for the new audience in *Azar ka Khwaab*.

In the second chapter, a comparative analysis of Federico Garcia Lorca’s *Yerma* and its Punjabi adaptation by Surjit Patar under Neelam Man Singh Chowdhry’s direction is undertaken. Surjit Patar, in a colloquium, proclaims that there is a collision of ‘Nature’ and ‘Culture’ in his works. He elaborates that in his writings he explores the curtailment of nature’s freedom by culture. This is one of the reasons for his creative bond with Lorca as Lorca’s poetry also narrates the struggle of an individual to attain freedom from the clutches of culture. *Yerma*, also, narrates the story of a woman who lives in a free society with her own personal moral code. When this code is confronted, she frees herself from the impediments that are eroding the life force within her. This struggle, along with the music, poetry and the interplay of emotions inspired Patar to adapt Lorca into Punjabi. Moreover, Spanish and Punjabi poetry have common base in colloquial images that are rich with the impulses of the people and the land, like fields, livestock, fertility, sexuality, colours, water, sun and moon. The lives of farming community, passionate earth energy and Punjabi obsession with a male heir are compatible with Spanish way of life.

The choice of *Yerma* for the present study is chiefly guided by Patar’s and Neelam Man Singh’s version of Lorca’s classic. Neelam Man Singh Chowdhry produced Patar’s play, *Saeion Nee Main Ant-heen Tarkalan*, with the title *Yerma* in 1992. The tragic and farcical elements of Lorca’s play are adeptly re-planted in rural Punjab with its colourful background of mela scenes, noisy laundresses and superstitions. Neelam Man Singh sees Yerma as the ‘Earth woman’ and her yearning for a child is equated with the urge of the earth to renew and recreate herself. The oppressing heat and frustration, domestic nature of the conflict and a blend of tears and laughter make it a true representation of rural Punjab. Neelam Man Singh’s experiments with different theatrical forms including live music, female impersonators, and blurring of interior and exterior space make *Yerma* a significant landmark in the work of women directors in and outside India. Though *Yerma* has been extensively adapted across the globe, yet the pulsating poetry of Patar combined with Neelam Man Singh’s theatrical idiom makes the Punjabi adaptation a peculiar study.

The third chapter is a comparative study of Friedrich Duerrenmatt’s play *The Visit of the Old Lady* and *Leedli Nagari ki Neeti-Katha*, its local adaptation by Kumara Varma.
The selection of Duerrenmatt as one of the playwrights for the present study rests chiefly on Duerrenmatt’s own method of adapting and revising his early writings. His reworking of many of his short stories into radio plays can be explained in the light of his favourite aphorism “He who never contradicts himself will never be read again” (qtd. in Peppard 121). Duerrenmatt’s fame as a theorist of drama stems from a small volume of essays Problems of the Theatre, published in 1955. But he did not emphasise only theoretical accounting of his theatrical practice. According to him, the practical nature of his undertaking was a major consideration which he never failed to highlight.

The play is a landmark in the history of European drama because even after numerous translations and adaptations, it continues to unveil new and relevant meanings for diverse set of audience. It is possible to interpret this play from different perspectives and yet gain equal amount of pleasure from new discoveries of meaning. In present times, this play, most significantly, can be read as a study in temptation. It is a commentary on the authority of money and its power to commodify every person and emotion. The play is a double paradox consisting of the journey of the human mind, on one hand, visible in the transformation of Alfred Ill and, on the other, the fixity of purpose observed by Madam Zachanassian, the visitor, which leads to the distortion of the basic notion of justice.

Leedli Nagari ki Neeti-Katha becomes Kumara Varma’s platform from which he makes a critical statement on the growing capitalism in present-day society. His interpretation of Claire Zachanassian’s character as depicted in his choice of actor, the costume, appearance and even the brochure of the play provides a strong base for research. Kumara Varma’s use of lighting, sound effects, his ghoulish version of the blind pair and his selection of scenes according to the requirements of stage also contribute towards a successful re-visitation of Duerrenmatt’s play.

It is noteworthy that the three works chosen for study are adapted in three different languages – Urdu, Punjabi and Hindi. The adapters of the selected texts, Begum Qudsia Zaidi and Surjit Patar, enjoy international repute in the field of theatre and poetry. Their comprehensive knowledge of the languages – Urdu and Punjabi, respectively – and of Muslim and Punjabi cultures, respectively lead to successful adaptations of the concerned texts. Anjala Maharishi’s control and employment of the available resources in
Azar ka Khwaab, Neelam Man Singh’s vibrant celebration of Punjabi rural life in *Yerma* and Kumara Varma’s remarkable adaptation of the source play into a story of an Indian town with its strengths and weaknesses in *Leedli Nagari ki Neeti-Katha* offer insights in contemporary theatrical practices.

The concluding chapter comprises a critical summation of the issues investigated in the earlier chapters. The study attempts to draw attention towards Pickering’s idea that a text is open to multiple interpretations and there is no right or ‘set’ way of presenting a play. A text cannot be confined to a place or time and it acquires new meanings as it travels across all spatial and topical boundaries. Eventually, it underscores Allardyce Nicoll’s expansion of Sarcey’s judgement that to visualise a play without an audience and actors is impossible, which together form the first ‘law’ of drama (31).