

## CHAPTER V

### Dynamics of Transformation from- Text to Theatre to Cinema

Maria Jose Fresnadillo Martinez writes:

The versions, adaptations, movements, translations, transferences, transcriptions, inspirations, recreations, fusions and finally, such worn and taken cultural diversions have a long tradition establishing an authentic cobweb of relations and “artistic” influences: from the theatre to the theatre (*Antigona* of Sophocles and the modified version of Bertolt Brecht), from the novel to the theatre ( *Hopscotch of Cortazar* and the theatrical version of Jaime Kogan), from theatre to cinema ( *The dog of the market gardener* of Lope de Vega and *The homonymous of Pilar Miró*; *Tirano Banderas of Valle-Inclan* re-interpreted by Jose Luis Garcia Sanchez or *The house of Bernarda Alba* of Federico Garcia Lorca adapted by Mario Camus)... (“Literature and Cinema. History of a fascination” 57)

Literature, theatre and cinema are descriptive agencies, and accordingly, a constant and continuing stratagem to narrate accounts since the ancient trends of oral transmissions to present day modern communication. Each of the above mentioned narrative arts has been not only specifically individual on certain pretexts but also converges on several contexts. It is apparent that the formal erudite literary lingo and the verbal communication of theatre or cinematographic language are different and even their specific systems of communication differ but still they share narrative motives and have structural convergence zones.

This section brings together all the three mediums together to analyse their relationship with each other. No doubt, text, theatre and cinema have their own working formats. While the textual imprint uses words, theatre and cinema on the other hand convey through imagery, although the objective is the equivalent: the narrated account, which through the device of language aids in portraying sentiments and feelings. In spite of all the similarities and differences this research endeavour consider the

experience of textual, theatrical and cinematic interpretation together in an unbiased fashion. No doubt, it is the experience of adaptations which is comparatively analyzed in this project but rightfully this attempt ascertains the hypothesis that in the case of adaptations the issue is not about discerning the narrative, simply by substituting the words with images, but of comprehending an explanation of the story. This marks an evolution of the spirit of the literary transcript to another medium with the intention that the other medium gets proper life.

Holding this final statement upright, it is suitable to accept the importance of theatrical and cinematic adaptations when considering a textual narrative. The reasons for this influence are as follows: Firstly, theatre and cinema constitute two vehicles for the adaptation of the written text into visual and audible images. Secondly, theatrical and cinematic mediums add great amount of information to what the writer of the narrative originally provided the audience. Furthermore, it would be unfair to solely converse about good pictorial illustrations of a narrative work acknowledging as a great re-creative process without referring to the live illustrations provided by stage and film. At any rate, the collective study of reading a book , viewing a staged performance and analyzing a screened film can enhance and deepen the understanding of all the three mediums and in particular their adaptation quality. The target-narrative book, the theatrical performance and cinematic version, each in its own characteristic style, perform very specific functions which certainly adapt different sign codes.

*-The Printed Book-* it provides visual form to the original writer's conception.

*-The Staged Play Adaptation-* it provides live multisensory adaptation-recreation of the original playwright's text. It includes dialogues and stage directions which convey yet another meaning to the original script.

*-The Screen-Projected Script Adaptation-* it is an equally multisensory rendering of a written text into a series of visual-audible bi-dimensional images ( Poyatos 112)

So the very concept of adaptation is visualized in a new light when it is applied to the final realization of each of those three mediums carried by readers or spectators.

(Fernando Poyatos 111-112)

In context of the above arguments, the present research project has undertaken adaptation process at three levels, in the first chapter the text of *Naga-Mandala* by Girish Karnad has been analyzed in detail which is followed by its theatrical adapted version by Neelam Mansingh as *Naga Chayya*. Lastly, the cinematic adapted version of Deepa Mehta's *Videsh- Heaven on Earth* has been discussed. So the three mediums - text, theatre and cinema have been comparatively surveyed back to back.

The study begins from the textual analysis of *Naga-Mandala* by Girish Karnad and while applying Sarah Cardwell's comparative theory the text is analyzed in terms of genre, authorial and medium –specific context. In mechanics of the narrative, order, duration and frequency of the text are examined in detail.

**1. Transformation of the basic story-** the first step while comparatively analysing three mediums together is to trace the growth of the basic story. The English translated text of *Naga-Mandala* by Girish Karnad operates as the basic text for this comparative adaptation study. The story of the *Naga-Mandala* innate four narratives one encompassing another. The first nexus concerns the story of the Author in the temple regretting about the curse. The second narrative concerns the arrival of Flames in the temple and their sharing of moralistic human stories. The third section is the most important and relates the tale of a young, beautiful girl named Rani. She is portrayed as a victim of the orthodox patriarchal set-up and thus bears the indifference and neglect of her husband. As such, she suffers the pangs of sadness and isolation before she is finally rescued by Kurudavva, her mother-in-laws friend, who offers her a magical root. Somehow with the help of this aid she finally enjoys the love of her husband as an imaginative lover. The twist in the tale is that this lover is actually an incarnated Naga. The climax is reached when reality shatters the delusion created by the fantasy delirium created by Rani and she is set to undergo the snake ordeal to prove her chastity. Fortunately she passes this test and lives happily ever after. The last section covers the three possible endings rendered by Karnad, set plausibly according to audience's personal choice.

This basic story of Rani's unhappy marriage and her wish for a loving husband has been handled differently by different adaptation mediums. Firstly analysing the

theatrical adaptation by Neelam Mansingh, the basic changes the story encounters is that the language changes from English to Punjabi and the milieu changes from the Kannad societal set-up to Punjabi traditional panorama. In spite of these changes the basic story of Rani remains unchanged and unaffected in the Punjabi script, entitled *Naga-Chayya*, penned down by Surjit Patar. While the first three sections follow one after the other in the narrative but the change can be traced in the last section. This change refers to the Neelam Mansingh's choice of providing just one single ending to the performance while in contrast to Karnad's three conceivable endings. This is the major change that the story undergoes while getting to its theatrical version. For Neelam Mansingh the Naga becomes inseparable from Rani by slipping in her tresses and residing there forever. She suggests that finally by this ending an amalgamation of the real and the imaginative world becomes possible for Rani. While living with her husband she also enlivens in herself the love and affection for the Naga (symbolising her dreams and wishes). Thus an avant-garde has been set by Neelam Mansingh by giving Rani everything. However for Karnad, he was not sure whether the conservative audiences would accept this ending. So he accordingly provides two more endings conceivable according to the choice of the spectators.

In the cinematic adaptation by Deepa Mehta in spite of some prominent changes the basic storyline remains the same-which is about a neglected and abused wife who is given a magic root by a wise woman to feed her husband so that he will fall in love with her. The sections dealing with the Author and Flames are nowhere present in the film script by Deepa Mehta. Shedding off the garb of Rani in *Naga-Mandala* and *Naga Chayya*, the central character takes on a new name of Chand who is played by Preity Zinta, a young woman from India who leaves for Canada (Brampton) to marry a man, who works as a taxi driver and whom she has never met. Many additions have been made to the supporting cast in the film. While Rani is shown alone in the textual and theatrical interpretations but here Chand has been provided a big family. Along with her mother shown in the movie, she has a huge in-law family including her husband, mother-in-law, father-in-law, sister-in-law, brother-in-law and their two children. This addition by Deepa Mehta has been purposefully done to decipher the fact that in spite of having such a big family Chand is still a loner just as the character of Rani. Not much

has been done by this family to help her free herself from her miseries. While Chand's in-law family members always become cause for aggravating the distress in her life but even her mother appears nowhere in the movie to listen to her miseries.

These miseries of Chand are as a result of the indifferent attitude acquired by her husband, Rocky, towards her. Rocky's apathetic behaviour is the result of his frustration with heavy familial responsibilities in contrast to Appanna and Kesho having an extra-marital relationship. This loads of liability makes Rocky highly offensive and he soon begins to take his frustrations out on Chand, who has no recourse but to retreat into fantasies and myth. Deepa Mehta ends the story with Chand's exit from the room. This ending is symbolic in the sense that Chand's exit marks her self-determination into a world of freedom. Deepa Mehta in contrast to Karnad and Neelam Mansingh does not leave Chand to try to be happy with her changed husband or with the fantasies of her imaginative lover or both together but strikes hard and let Chand escape from the shackles of the traditional family set-up. Deepa Mehta plunges in to deliver the fact that none of the sacrifices and hardships of a woman can change the underlined cemented male chauvinist family set-up. Chand did everything possible for her family to make them happy and contented. She bears physical brutality, social boycott, and personal isolation to the final extent of her patience but with none of the results. So what seems most likely in this situation for Deepa Mehta is to be a rebel and exit from such a dungeon of falsity instead of attempting to change it. Here Deepa Mehta is going a step ahead of Neelam Mansingh and gives an ultra-modern radical ending.

Finally it can be concluded that in all the three versions, from text to theatre to cinema the fundamental story of Rani, her pains and miseries and her final happiness remains the same. The change can be tracked in the directions selected by the individual creators to achieve the final goal of the happiness of women. Karnad and Neelam Mansingh ended up with their woman finding happiness within the four walls of her house while Deepa Mehta allows her woman to set herself free from any seclusion and soar high amidst the clouds of freedom.

**2.Thematic additions-** Though as mentioned above the basic story remains the same but as no two individuals think alike; similarly each of the creators in this comparative

analysis certainly craft the story of Rani with their individual vision. Beginning with Girish Karnad, his works always hubs on the subtle densities entrenched among humanistic rapport and contain a circuitous assessment of contemporary Indian society. Within apiece of his works, underneath a legendary/fabled or chronological story, one notices, “subtle and constant juxtaposition of the past with present” which has been “a common feature of Karnad’s dramatic art.” (Dhanavel 106). Accordingly, *Naga-Mandala* is no different in providing a befitting view of Karnad’s compassionate nature in terms of illustrating a sociological review of Indian women. Through the story of Rani, Karnad rightfully exposes the unreasonable bearing of the Indian society where womankind has been trained in the course of acquiring culture by accepting the supremacy of the imposing thought persuading male dominance. In the process of acquiring such status they are habituated to discredit their own clan and to support in their own weakness. This has ultimately disallowed women from appreciating their creative and ingenious prospectus. Thus Karnad’s *Naga-Mandala* proves to be a powerful satire on Indian culture in terms of the treatment meted out to Indian women. It also proposes corrective process which reproves the conformist Indian society by an illegitimate act of union between Rani and Naga.

Actually, Girish Karnad is a spot on observer of the in-depth rooted Indian culture. Indian psyche is not new to him; he is well familiar with both the conservative feminist ideologies and also the power tactics deployed by patriarchal ideologies in Indian society. *Naga-Mandala* is one such example where Karnad rightfully skills up a combat zone where cerebral conflicts, muscle relations, and the fight for identity have been portrayed efficiently. In the play, both the female characters, Rani, the protagonist, and Kurudavva, another supporting female character, are generic portrayals of victimised sufferers of male chauvinist orthodox Indian society. At every morsel of their life they have to incessantly effort for their self as a woman, as a wife, and as a mother.

Rani, the protagonist is considered a slave, jailed like an imprisoned culprit; neither allowed talking to outsiders nor outsiders allowed to talk to her. Her husband ignores her and she is subjugated only to the lowest level of a servant meant only for cooking and cleaning. Above all, despite her husband’s open disloyalty for her, it is her chastity and fidelity which is put under trial through the Naga ordeal. Thus, at every

step her identity as a woman is mutilated to satisfy the mean and unfair demands of the typical Indian male fraternity. Along with Rani, the other female partner to these tragic sufferings is Kappana. In spite of being blind, she is a fitting example of wisdom and compassion. When everyone goes blind towards Rani's victimization, at the hands of her unfaithful husband, it is sightless Kurudavva alone that senses Rani's pain and sadness. She extends her motherly love and care to Rani to improve her situation for good. It is through her magic root that fate interplays suitably for Rani. Though Kappana helps Rani, she herself is in a no better situation. She is also the sufferer of conventional social order where the position of a woman is passive and marginalized. Except her son Kappana, there is no one to take care of her. When her son is lost, the village elders behave cruelly and unsympathetically with her. Along with these major characters the portrayal of *Four Flames* and the *Story* also reflect the sufferings and exploitation of women. Karnad, through his female characters, clarifies about the stereotypical cultural identity generalized around the characterization of Indian women. He himself comments, *Naga-Mandala* express:

A distinctly woman's understanding of the reality around her, a lived counter point to the patriarchal structure of classical texts and institutions. The position of Rani in the story of *Naga-Mandala*, for instance, can be seen as a metaphor for the situation of a young girl in the bosom of a joint family where she sees her husband only in two unconnected roles—as a stranger during the day and as lover at night. Inevitably, the pattern of relationships she is forced to weave from these disjointed encounters must be something of a fiction. The empty house Rani is locked in could be the family she is married into. ("Introduction" to *Three Plays: Naga-Mandala, Hayavadana, Tughlaq*. 17)

However, Karnad does not restrict himself to being a mere observer of this all-pervasive male-chauvinist trend but through this play he gives a striking power-pack reply to this stereotypical tendency. Towards the end, Rani's acceptance of Naga in the form of her own tresses is a rude retort to the issue of extra-marital alliance in which

only males are approved to be held free of charge. For instance, Appanna, though married is unhesitant on visiting a concubine shows that the standard of morality is obligatory only upon women. As a befitting reply, through the characterization of Naga and further, Rani's adoration as a goddess, Karnad indirectly affirms his acceptance of extra-marital relations in terms of women. Though Karnad, by restricting this thought to the fantastical zone of Naga's appearance, safely reserves his thoughts to be highly blunt and clear but still fairly provides the idea of true happiness. According to him happiness bears its origin in the depths of mind and not in useless and unfair customs and traditions. Thus, Karnad successfully hits two targets with a single arrow; he not only gives his condemnation of Indian traditional society but also tries to find a unique and modern definition of happiness, where the mind is the sole ruler. J.D.Soni judiciously comments that Karnad in the play tries to "fuse artistically dialectical relationship between tradition and modernity" (76). The sad part is the situation of women which Karnad portrayed way back in 1987, persists even today after years of discussion concerning women empowerment. Gender equality in spite of many proclamations is still a myth.

*Naga-Chayya* just like the text of *Naga-Mandala* takes upon similar themes as discussed by Karnad. The issues of gender-inequality and chastity have been very sensitively handled by Neelam Mansingh. Nowhere do these themes lose their substance in the entire performance of the theatrical script. Actually, for Neelam Mansingh the gender issues in the story are not strange. Having been born and brought up in Amritsar, living in Chandigarh, which is quite a village kind of society, she understands the position of women in a still traditional and custom based society.

In addition to the women-centric themes the supernatural element associated with the myth regarding the Naga further inspired Neelam Mansingh to direct this play with a new thought. This includes her vision to attempt to unravel the inner layers of the character of Rani. She does this by aligning the role of Rani to two different artists, Ramanjit Kaur and Payal, in the performance. While, one is seen busy in the monotonous day-to-day work, the other can be seen engrossed in her fantasy worlds of desires and dreams. By employing this technique, Neelam Mansingh wants to narrate the double layering of the characterization of this character and to expose the foreplay

of the conscious and the unconscious levels in a human psyche. She has used the same technique in *A Wife's Letter* (Adaptation of Tagore's play, *Streer Patra*), where two actors play Mrinal (the child bride) - one is participating in the physical action on the stage and the other who is taking the narrative forward. Actually there is some reluctance in Neelam Mansingh to pin down women to any readymade interpretation; in her production there is excess-costume, speech, temperaments which break the bounds of the permissible and expand by theatrical invention into eloquent melodrama, passion and agitation.

Further, this attempt moves on to discuss the thematic inspirations of Deepa Mehta for undertaking the story of Chand. No doubt, the feminist issues always have been centric in all the works of Deepa Mehta and accordingly the story of Chand has been a typical choice for her. However, her aims have not been restricted to demonstrate merely the gender themes but she wanted to give an international flavour to the entire set-up. Themes of immigration, diasporic displacement and lack of human bonding affix on to the story of Chand letting it to expose an outdated thought that west has a lot more to offer than India. Through the story of Chand she wants to justify that it's better to live in Hell than in Heaven where there is more self dignity. Unlike the other Punjabi films which glorify the west, *Videsh* seems to be one among the limited category which illuminates the harsh realities of the lives of working class Punjabi immigrants. Issues such as alienation, domestic abuse and women being used as channels for the men in the family to migrate abroad are only peripherally explored in other Punjabi films, and are rarely given the attention they deserve. Mehta's depiction of life in diaspora deviates from this conventional depiction of the diaspora through the use of black and white imagery that renders Canada as lonely and desolate in contrast to the depiction of a colourful and vibrant Punjab.

### **3. Significance of the medium –specific variations**

When a text gets adapted into different mediums, the criteria of the individual medium-specific variations itself adds a lot of significance to the entire meaning of the story. Similarly in this attempt the format of the different mediums itself becomes instrument for rendering in fresh insights to the creator's vision. To begin with Girish

Karnad, he deals with his issues through folklorist skill. He admits that he has no other option in a conversation with Montushi Chakravarty where he likewise affirms, “he felt incapable of inventing stories, he drew his plot from history, folklore, myths and legends” (23). So the suitable characteristics applicable in a folk theatre technique dominate the entire narrative of the drama with much customary devices of magic, mime, Sutrathar, mixing of human and non-human worlds and changing the course of events. Further Karnad follows the western signboard which restricts the direct participation of the audience in his folklorist technique. This method has been primarily coupled with the German playwright Bertolt Brecht (1898-1956), whose works have imparted an immense influence on Karnad. Bertolt Brecht much famous work concerns his concept of ‘Alienation Effect’ which has been favourably received and transmuted by Karnad in his narratives. *Naga-Mandala* is Girish Karnad’s one such fine example, where Brechtian technique is completely operational though the means are different. The narrative of the play forwards like a fable screening that if a newly-wed young woman is abandoned for long in a patriarchal society, she is but natural to get a secret lover. Further, the play underlines the culmination in the form of a poetic justice, where she is compensated with all she wanted, apart from the social infringement she committed to attain.

Going with flow of Brecht’s technique, Karnad makes sure that his narrative should gather much of spectator’s mind in comparison to their feelings. The audiences continue to remain disconnected with the ongoing story thus staying alert in the pretext of being mere observers to a performance and hence should use more of their minds rather than feel regarding the performance on the stage. Bertolt Brecht termed this trend as alienation effect or estrangement (*Verfremdung*) which is a theatrical alternative to empathy. The motive behind this procedure is to evaluate the reality of characters sensibly and not emotionally. This method strikes the fact that only by leaving aside empathy that one can visualize the reality. Karnad does exploit Brechtian edifice of alienation effect, firstly by deriving the substance of the play from folktales. Secondly by using the non-naturalistic techniques of Indian traditional theatre—that is by mixing of human and non-human worlds as distancing device, for instance the magical powers the cobra. Thus, he rightfully observes:

The theatrical conventions Brecht was reacting against –character as a psychological construct providing a focus for emotional identification, ‘the willing suspension of disbelief’ syndrome, and the notion of unified spectacle –were never a part of traditional Indian theatre. There was therefore no question of arriving at an alienation effect by using Brechtian artifice. What he did was to sensitize us to the potentialities of non-naturalistic techniques in our own theatre. (Jalote 177-183)

Finally, by not providing any final ending or in other words rejecting the value of emotional identification and catharsis Karnad eventually reaches the benchmark of Brechtian edifice of epic theatre.

Next this attempt shifts its focus on analysing the medium-specific variations forwarded by the theatrical adaptation crafted by Neelam Mansingh Chowdhry in *Naga-Chayya*. The foremost medium-specific stance includes the change of the textual story from the printed page to the live performance on the stage. There is a change in the names of the characters in the script of *Naga Chayya*. The name of Rani continuous in the Punjabi script but Appanna changes to Shama and Kurudavva changes to Bishni. Vansh Bhardwaj, Ramanjit Kaur, Payal and Gick Grewal perform with excellent vigour and grace. Their compelling performances, fantastic stage energy and further earthy music and choreography give actual life to unidentified characters. The performance of Ramanjit Kaur is par excellence and besides her dance moves, which are accompanied by her expressions, she brings in the house of Rani various elements such as an old colourful trunk, a pond with lotus flowers, a glass of milk, flour for the chapattis which seem to be so genuine. Thus live performance enables to garnish the mere characters in the text with more delicacy of emotions, gestures, appearances which allows the audiences to connect more to the story.

Neelam Mansingh gave freedom to her performers to invent the play without the text. Further, pushing them into employing hazards by outriding the preset approaches, caft in their own special terminology, incessantly opinioning them to experiment, discover and finally to learn. Thus provoking them into exploring the ambiguous world that Girish Karnad creates where fictional characters and real

characters intermingle and the lines between the visible and the invisible are blurred. This provided the text of *Naga-Mandala* a new outlook and universal understanding.

In addition Neelam Mansingh have done impressive job to make this live performance not just one step but many steps more verbal and emotive than Girish Karnad. This is not to say that Girish Karnad lags behind in his technical set-up but it is just the magic crafted by a theatre performance. Neelam Mansingh while employing the tents of Epic theatre by Bertolt Brecht has gone much forward with her personal scheme of performance. To begin with to add live music to her performance she revives the folk theatre technique of *naqqals*. *Naqqal* is a theatrical style that breaks all the rules of realism and they present traditional tales in an idiosyncratic way within a variety of frameworks that includes music and dance. They have an amazing repertoire of music, of movements, of musical skills and do not come under the genre of “high art” or “classical art”, but is more of a basic populous kind of art and thus becomes a valuable part of Neelam Mansingh’s genre of theatre. She in an interview comments about her genre skills:

Audiences are also evolving now. If as a theatrist I want to present plays that are denser, complex the audience too wants to see things differently, things that rattle their minds rather than plain simple texts. As we try and evoke a new grammar for storytelling, I become like the writer who deviates from chick lit strictly into profound literature. And like in art you now have complicated subjects like installation art; I hope my plays are a more purposeful genre. (“Punjabi is my political compulsion: Neelam Mansingh”)

Further, Surjit Patar adds the script of *Naga Chayya* his poetry which mirrors a cosmic influence that is soaked with subtlety of the culture and an amplified sense of modernity that is unrestricted and untrapped in regional constricts. His translation and additions to the script add much to the value of thought provoking process of the play. He uses variety of forms of poetry like *Baint*, *Heer* and *Ahalyia* in the script to incarnate many instances like the introduction of Rani, her pain while remembering her parents.

His poetry comes alive on stage through live musicians and music which creates a spell bounding experience.

Not only has the performance captured a modern voguish stance but the message which it delivers braces a much buoyant and spontaneous manner. The much used props aid themselves as a route to a suitable aim in the performance. Neelam Mansingh is known for using fire, smoke, water, oil and food — things that other directors would find too messy — on-stage, to make her plays come alive, and blending these with carefully-chosen symbolic props, to suggest a psychological state of mind. Instances can be traced where audiences watch a brilliant red gas stove and a non-stick ‘*tava*’ in the kitchen which is sheltered with gunny bags of Venky's Poultry feed. Neelam Mansingh frequents in symbolism with water and fire which equates tranquillity and anxiety according to the situational demands.

Many other props are deployed on the stage with special connotations for instance the mirror is used like a dual image, the whole image of *maya*. One see's what one wants to see but it also shows you what you are. Neelam Mansingh creates with the mirror the image of illusion and its reality and the whole ambiguity of shifting from the world of reality to the world of make believe. Other props include water, flour, a trunk full of cotton etc.

Neelam Mansingh's stage-craft plays a pivotal and, at the same time, a supportive role in the presentation of the emotions of the characters and the theme, and the mood of the play. Light and sound mechanism is extremely crucial as they are to the stage what salt is to food: a pinch less makes the scene tasteless, while a pinch more mars the effect that is required. The black and grey areas mean violence and ruin or it simply means the unattended area. For instance, when the character of Naga gets alive on stage then a strong beam of light shines darting on his face, in the middle of the darkness, which is effectual in symbolizing hope and happiness. In addition she uses earthy colures for the costumes to give a homely and authentic touch to the characterization.

In spite of the above changes in the text of *Naga-Mandala*, common to both Girish Karnad and Mansingh Chowdhry are the prioritization of the indigenous and the

rural and the readiness to experiment in order to find a distinct idiom to express their art. Karnad speaks of forging a tradition of his own making and central to Mansingh Chowdhry's art seems to be the belief that the performance of serious theatre that infuses the rural spirit of Punjab into classical forms would go a long way in the recovery of the language and also of self-esteem. The successful performance of *Naga-Mandala* brought these concerns significantly closer to their realization. *Naga-Mandala* is her masterpiece direction. She uses dance, music and song of Punjabi folk in such way that even Girish Karnad's Kannad play looks like Punjabi original script. She uses the *naqqals* of Punjab in her play who sang most of her production which create an indigenous feeling.

Finally the endeavour comparatively analyse the cinematic medium-specificity employed by Deepa Mehta in *Videsh-Heaven on Earth*. To begin with, in the cinematic adaptation the story of *Naga-Mandala* becomes alive on the silver screen with visible characters and their actions. In comparison to theatrical artists who give live single-take performances on the stage, the cinema artists toil for months to enliven a character. Deepa Mehta took six long months in shooting the one and a half hour long movie, *Videsh-Heaven on Earth*. From the textual single person's attempt of writing the story, in the cinematic adaptation large group of crew members including the cast, the director, editor, producer, musicians, costume-designers and many more join hands in depicting the story. Theatrical adaptation also involves a lot of human resources but much less than the cinematic adaptation. From economical perspective also the cinematic adaptation is most expensive and needs a big production company.

Fortunately, Deepa Mehta's choice of Preity Zinta to play the role of a young bride named Chand from Punjab has been perfect. Even, Vansh Bhardwaj, though a first timer from Chandigarh, a theatre artist in Neelam Mansingh's the Company, has proved his acting skill well. He is impressive and leaves a mark. Ramanjit Kaur and Gick Grewal other theatre artists also gracefully carry out their performances. The beautiful and melodious background music has been inspired from the poetry of Surjit Patar in *Naga Chayya*. The music gives the film its life and soul. Principal photography for *Heaven on Earth* started in November 2007 and concluded at the end of December 2007. The film is primarily shot in Toronto and Brampton in Canada, with additional

location shooting in Punjab, India, where it was completed. Cinematic techniques like black-and white scenes, close-up performance, space management, symbolic references, usage of polarities further provides ample meaning to the Deepa Mehta's cinematic transaction.

#### 4. Tracing certain ambiguities

This section nowhere deals with loopholes or weakness in the text of any of the above discussed mediums. The only thought behind this section is an attempt to raise some queries regarding some vagueness and uncertainties in the text which may further allow the audiences to be a better judge of the text. Certainly, Girish Karnad has rarely ever received any negative review in context of his writing skills. *Naga-Mandala* is no different in the sense that it has been applauded by audiences nationally and internationally. The only portion of the text which has raised certain queries has been regarding its ambiguous ending. Girish Karnad in *Naga-Mandala*, much alike in his other writings takes up social issues, makes an effort to condemn them through a story but ends up with no proper solution. Basically it seems that his technique of 'alienation effect' bars him from offering one final key to the problems in the text. He wants the audience to use their brains to make up a final apt solution but still this ambiguous ending seems a little indigestible for regular readers who do not cherish this self-service asked upon by the writer.

Neelam Mansingh theatrical performance of *Naga-Chayya* is without doubt a commendable endeavour. She successfully voices out the hidden substance in the text of *Naga-Mandala* by employing her critical vision and talent of emotion. She has been a great judge of human emotion and the characters she created on the stage not only powerfully enlivens up the textual characters but also craft a world full of plethora of emotions. None of the emotions ranging from: love to hate, jealousy, lust, passion, remorse, regret or elevation has been beyond her dictionary of expression. For her more than the story, it has always been her artists which have been of prime importance to her. The artists in *Naga-Chayya* are fearless enough to speak beyond their dialogues and act beyond their action. Basically there is nothing which irks about the entire performance of *Naga-Chayya* but when it comes to the Punjabi script, queries regarding

innovation and originality somewhere bother the mind. No doubt, Neelam Mansingh does try to unmask the hidden emotions of Rani with double artist performance but something more could have been done on scriptural level.

Talking about the response to *Videsh- Heaven on Earth*, it's a fact that while Indian diasporic cinema is applauded in western liberal circles, they seldom receive attention of mass audiences in the subcontinent. Moreover, while liberal critics in the west look favourable at the Indian diasporic cinema, mainstream critics conflate it with native Indian Cinema that has so far been meted out the orientalist treatment in western popular culture. The discourse found in reviews of Indian diasporic cinema in India itself is similarly divided between indifference, hostility and critical applause. Accordingly in India, *Videsh- Heaven on Earth* created modest discerning or discussion and acknowledged mostly depressing reviews upon release.

What is common amongst these reactions is the recognition, in the language of the reviewers, of a separation between native cinema and the productions of the diaspora. Due to the western base of the filmmaker, and the use of non-native aesthetics and finances to tell native stories, these films are often accused of pandering to western notions of India's supposed cultural parochialism. While some reviewers do not consider diasporic filmmakers authentic representatives of the modern Indian nation, others hold them culpable for abdicating representative responsibility and because of many of such reasons the film has received little recognition.

The present author feels that the movie received little importance because it deals with an issue that is very real, and still exists today, but has become monotonous for the cinema goers. Psychologically this movie is fascinating. Though many may think Chand is just losing her mind by seeing a kind husband, the present author opines that it is more of a coping mechanism to get her through her situation. She imagines the husband she wants but isn't able to have the mere idea of what gets her through the day. Accordingly the stories she whispers to herself are another form of coping. Many of them have to do with her mother, which shows the importance she places on her mom. Even in the case of Rocky, hitting Chand seems to him a source of coping mechanism. He is the sole bread winner of the family, and he doesn't earn much, then his family

decides to add another mouth to feed by bringing Chand around. Since he can't take his frustration out on his other family member, Chand becomes the only available target.

Before watching this movie it is also important to look up the plot of the play *Naga-Mandala*, which is kind of the foundation of *Videsh*. It's also important to know that in Hindu mythology, serpents (naga) are like shape shifters, and can take on human form, which is why we see in one instance the cobra, followed by Rocky. Nagas are also protectors of treasure and the cobra/Rocky character acts as a protector of Chand (who would be the treasure) by showing gentleness and kindness to her. It's important also to understand the element of fantasy in this movie, especially concerning the cobra. The unrealistic elements in the movie mar its effect like the possibility of a cobra hanging around in Canada and no matter what if you stick your hand in a snake pit, you probably will harm your hand no matter if you're innocent or guilty. However focusing only on the point of view of the movie, the cobra is just the vehicle Deepa Mehta uses to get her story across and it is just a metaphor to show Chand's strength.

The loopholes of the movie include its abrupt ending, the very small cast of the movie which gives it the ambience and impression of a stage play being highly confined. Further, the alteration of the narration style from being completely rational and linear in the first-half to a second half that brings in magical realism, and black-and-white scenes in which Chand is unexpectedly driveling yarns that actually no-one else can listen to, is just bizarre and strident. In addition, the sad part is that Deepa Mehta is known for its downright feminism and the ending which the movie provides seems unacceptable for the regular Deepa Mehta fans. In contrast to, Girish Karnad happy ending, where Rani attains everything she wishes for or the ending by Neelam Mansingh, where Rani is adorned as a Goddess, Deepa Mehta's Chand falls a little short in finding her happiness and contentment. She neither provides any fight back in the movie nor receives any adoration in the end which seems that the ending of the movie is falling short of the expected happy ending.

In spite of these negative feedbacks one cannot ignore the hard truth that Deepa Mehta's film are known to create pandemonium amongst politically incorrect society

and *Videsh-Heaven on Earth* has made the politically correct stand up too and not only notice this extraordinary piece of storytelling but also recognize it.

After the above comparative analysing of the three mediums, it would be a sheer injustice if this attempt considers one medium surpassing the other in skills of narrative communication and adaptability. Every medium has its own methods and techniques and suits the taste of certain set of audiences. So after analysing the three different mediums, text, theatre and cinema instead of passing a judgement acknowledging one over the other, it is only the significance of the adaptation method itself which has found due recognition through this research challenge. This recognition has been defended by host of authors who mount opinions in favour of adaptations. For instance, Julie Sanders ends her new book called *Adaptation and Appropriation* with these words: “Adaptation and appropriation ... are, endlessly and wonderfully, about seeing things come back to us in as many forms as possible” (160). The storytelling imagination is an adaptive mechanism—whether manifesting itself in print or on stage or on screen. The study of the production of literature should, this research would like to argue, include those other forms taken by that storytelling drive. Terry Pratchett in Linda Hutcheon *In Defense of Literary Adaptation as Cultural Production* concludes it beautifully by commenting: “Stories, great flapping ribbons of shaped space-time, have been blowing and uncoiling around the universe since the beginning of time. And they have evolved. The weakest have died and the strongest have survived and they have grown fat on the retelling”( qtd in Linda Hutcheon 6).

It is true that fidelity issues will always arise in this field but this project regards that in practice, adaptation necessitates great or even greater proficiency in numerous of the equivalent expertise skills that a writer might employ in generating a new work. Finally, this project strives to argue that instead of being an indebted replica of an original work, through the action of the medium-specificity, an adaptation outgrows sufficiently much more like the original work.