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CINEMATIC ADAPTATIONS OF LITERARY TEXTS

(A Study with an Interdisciplinary Approach with a special reference to the selected works of fiction)

Date of Registration: 17/01/2012

Registration No: 1440

SYNOPSIS

Submitted To

Department of English
Maharaja Krishnakumarsinhji Bhavnagar University

For the Award of the

Degree of the Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) in English

By

Dhvani Joshi
Research Supervisor

Prof. Dilip Barad
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Chapter No 1 - Introduction

The long-standing relation between literature and cinema has sprawled out myriad of adaptation works. The century old medium of cinema has relied extensively on literature for material. For the longest time now, it has been understood and accepted that literature is the best source for other media to outsource and adapt. It was also considered that for a work of adaptation to be authentic and of a good quality.

It is very vital to remember here that adapting a novel into a film is not simply transforming the dialogues from the novel into the screenplay for the film. It is a process of transforming an entire medium along with the characters, dialogues, the setting, the story, and everything that encompasses the essence of a novel into a new piece of art; a film.

When examining works of adaptation, the relationship between the original source and the text, which is being adapted must be closely examined. The three ways in which one might classify the works of adaptation as given by Geoffrey Wagner are: transposition, commentary and analogue. (theory adaptation). Seemingly all works of adaptation are transpositions, as they transform a work of art from one medium to another. But there are many more layers to be explored for a researcher. Geographic, social, psychological, spacio-temporal factors may affect a work of adaptation as well. The second category Commentary constitutes an adapted version which might have additions or alterations. While the third category Analogue is difficult to understand since it expects out of a viewer or an art lover to look at a work of adaptation and experience is as an independent work of art. (Sanders)
Cinema is a century old medium as compared to literature which is archaic. Both the disciplines have their own set of rules and tools. Both are medium of storytelling and deal with narrative structures and have varied styles of presentation.

But for the most part, it is cinema that has relied on literature for material. Adapting on screen the loved and cherished stories written on paper has long been a dream of many a filmmakers. But when the same story that is bound into pages is taken to be turned into live images on screen, there begins what we understand a process of transformation. Irrespective of the fact whether the filmmaker wishes to be faithful or not, there is a change; the form changes.

In conducting this research, it has been estimated that such a study of cinematic adaptations of literature would bring to the forefront the comprehension of the mechanisms of these two disciplines. The basis of this research is to understand the way a text is dealt with in both the media and subsequently presented by them.

The interdisciplinary approach would assist in looking at Cinematic adaptation of literature applying the conventions of cinematic discipline where there once prevailed the conventions of fiction (short story, novella, novel) (Moran). While an author writes his/her novel, a film is a collaborative work. Many people work together on it and author it. Francoise Truffaut advocated that a director of a film must be called the auteur. He in real sense writes a text on screen and we see his world with our eyes. (Wartenberg)

In this chapter, the focus has also been on explaining what fidelity is. The reasons as to why a certain film is faithful to its original source or why it isn't if not are clarified.
The introductory chapter gives a brief explanation of all the five novels selected for the purpose of this study. It then moves on to describe the five films based on these five novels. While describing the novels, and the films, it also throws light on why a particular film was selected if there are more than one adapted versions on the same novel.

List of Selected Texts and their Film Adaptations

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<th>Work Type</th>
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Chapter No 2 - Rationale for the Study and Related Literature

The literary texts chosen for this research vary largely concerning their backgrounds and substance. Yet they all tread on common underlying theme of conflict (either between an individual and society or an individuals' conflict with self) thus rendering each novel different in its approach and style.

The choice of the texts has been made with respect to the author and their background globally. The aforementioned texts are not an arbitrary choice. All the preferred texts are in some way influencers of the postmodern era. While Ernest Hemingway stands at the pivot of American literature, U R Ananthamurthy is a well-known Indian author of Kannada lineage. On one hand Hermann Hesse probes into spirituality, and on the other Franz Kafka tries to question the notion of physical appearance and relationships. Whereas George Orwell takes a plunge into the psychotic, chaotic dystopian society that is enough to send a shiver down anyone's spine. Thus such a juxtaposition of varied works by different authors and in turn their cinematic counterpart would help to maintain objectivity in the process of research and add an element of universality to it.

Even though the study of cinematic adaptation has fascinated many scholars in the past, most seem to be content analysing simply the thematic structure. But certain burning questions still remain unanswered; Are literary adaptations at once literature and cinema? Should an adaptation be cinema first and then literature? Would it be appropriate to term a cinematic adaptation of literature as 'literature on screen'? If it is on screen, is it still literature? If it is literature, how can it be cinema as well? And why would anyone want to claim that it is both?
With a framework that consists of the questions of general nature as expressed above, this research will be focussed on three major focal points.

A work of literature tends to the states of consciousness and cognition whereas the film to that of the observed reality. In lieu of the statement above, does the adaptation of a text from one form/narrative to the other produce a new and completely independent form of art?

The major aim of this study is also to probe into this change and understand whether the text transforms as the form transforms or not. When a text is adapted into a form different from its original form altogether, a number of queries arise. The form, narration, technique of story-telling ET all transforms, even though the basic underlying message may/may not remain the same. This turn of events becomes an interesting study of the interplay of the two vastly different disciplines. For the longest time, researchers and theorists have tried to put the two works side by side and drawn conclusions. George Bluestone in his 'Novel into Films' focuses on the limits of the novel and the limits of the film. There is only so much each can portray(Bluestone). He states that language has its own limitations which push a writer to develop newer possibilities, realities thus making realities in novels more flexible. But films on the other hand have still to shift out of portraying reality. Even though in the recent decades, cinema has showcased that the reality in films too is pliable.

In light of the hypothesis proposed as above, this research seeks to put forth certain aims and objectives that would prove beneficial in the process of implementing the research.

To study the structure of the literary form, the narrative and the role of narrator, the linguistic style, the plot, characters, the themes and their corresponding cinematic adaptation (form of
the adaptive discipline, it's techniques, narration, limitations and benefits) The focal point in this study has been to understand the two disciplines and studying their interplay.

As with any qualitative empirical research the methodology of the study has been an in-depth reading of the texts and their adaptive counterparts initially.

Such deskwork has facilitated in understanding the complexity of the intertwining disciplines as the process of adaptation unfolds. It has also enabled to look at the texts and the forms without simply encountering a thematic comparison.

Since this research wishes to look at the interdisciplinary facet, such a comparative analysis, is expected to bring to the forefront the nuances and differences of the two disciplines and the way a same text is moulded when the form changes.

Each text and its version/s in the other discipline are understood in the purview of three major categories.

a) Form of the Novel and the Film

b) Narrative Structure of the Novel and the Film

c) Space and Time in the Novel and the Film

Thus allowing ample opportunity to apply the proposed hypothesis and check its validity.

Some of the past works in the field of adaptation studies have been critically examined for understanding adaptation studies. Specifically, the adaptation theory as explained by George Bluestone is taken as the main theory. He is considered to be a pioneer in the field and his outlook has more or less remained veneered till now. A look into newer theories also has
been taken such as understanding Linda Hutcheon's theory of adaptation (Hutcheon). This chapter also looks at some film theories that originated around 1960s till date. It also throws light on the philosophising of films and how this can help understand cinematic adaptations of literature. For this purpose, a deep insight into the works of Gilles Deleuze has been sought.

In her work of adaptation studies, Linda Hutcheon mentions that first and foremost Adaptation is repetition without replication. The intention behind adapting could be the urge to create new art or question the existing one. She also states that it is a process that delves into re-interpretation of a text and re-creation. She calls it an extended intertextual engagement with the adapted work. (Hutcheon)
Chapter No 3 - Form of the Novel and the Film

This chapter understanding 'form' of the novel and the film. Since this research is based on understanding how a text develops when the form changes this chapter aims to understand the basic forms of novel and film at the core. Then it shifts focus to understanding each novel selected for the purpose of the study with reference to its literary form and the corresponding cinematic form. In doing so, one analyses the changes that undergo within the text and why do they happen.

In the quest to understand this, some insightful revelations have been made. Whether the text that is adapted to film is faithful to the original or not is one of them. Many times there is not much change in the form. The major change is that everything is now visualized and instead of reading one can watch it. The changes that one might notice are those concerning the techniques of the new form altogether. These are the use of sound, lighting, visual techniques, dialogues, and colour.

It would be apt to mention the 1958 film adaptation of The Old Man and The Sea (Hemingway) by John Sturges. The screenplay of the film does not divert from the original novel as such. We see that the film is still a pleasure to watch as the story is not tampered with yet the director has added some audio visual effects that are attention gripping.

Whereas on the other hand, the rendition of The Metamorphosis of Franz Kafka made in 1993 by Carlos Atanes is a film noir in itself. It is completely based on the novel The Metamorphosis (Kafka). It is a completely bold and different take on the original text. The filmmaker makes a short film. The form of film is exploited in such a way by the filmmaker that the film looks like it is based on a dark gothic novel.
In their quest to adapt a text on screen, there are times when some editions have to be made by the filmmakers, whether they like it or not. When adapting a text like *Nineteen Eighty Four* (Orwell), there is not much scope for the filmmaker to show onscreen every single detail that is worded out in the novel. The filmmaker has to then rely on his own intuitive intellectual beliefs to select what he/she would portray on screen and what would be left out.

Since the form of a text allows a writer to go on and on, a novel can be as long or as short as one wishes for it to be. The cinema as a form has the boundaries of time. A filmmaker cannot make too long a film for the fear that the viewers might lose interest.

The form of cinema is in a way also very versatile. It may not be forgiving in terms of time but in many other areas, it is very operational and allows for greater scope of expressing creativity. The filmmaker has the powerful audio-visual medium at hand and can use it the way they like to realize the result they like. The form of film allows for a lot of possibilities. A film may be black and white or a colour film. The form may be that of a documentary or a feature or a feature with a narrator. There may be use of music or it may be completely left out. All these techniques and many more if used with care can enhance the overall form. The writer on the other hand has only one tool at hand and that is language.

*Siddhartha* (Hesse) the novel is a fairly moderate one that is story like and mystical. The 1970 film by Conrad Rooks looks magical and ethereal. The cinematographer Sven Nykvist has created a wonderland of sorts portraying India where the story is set as a mystical land. The essence of the novel is captured very well through the use of beautiful cinematography. The filmmaker has even employed Indian actors viz., Shashi Kapoor and Simi Garewal amongst many others to bring a touch of reality to the film. The form of film is beautifully
captured on screen even though the story does not differ much from the original text; the beauty of the art of filmmaking is absolutely worth a mention.

In the film Samskara by Girish Karnad based on the novel with the same name, we see a drastic difference. Both Siddhartha (Shashi Kapoor) and Samskara (Karnad) the films were made around the same time. Samskara is a black and white film. It is in Kannada and has English subtitles. The film to common eyes may see crude as compared to the poetic looking Siddhartha (film). What is truly phenomenal is the fact that both the films are different in their approaches and also in terms of the form they are playing with. Samskara (Ananthamurthy) the novel and film both ushered in the nouvelle vague in Kannada literature and cinema. They both have employed the use of Indian music but the treatment of Indian music in Siddhartha and Samskara is very different. The crux of the whole idea is that both are films that are works of adaptation and employing Indian Music in their films but the treatment varies as the filmmakers are the creators of their own art. The way one perceives the film as a form varies drastically from how the other does. In Siddhartha one does not even realise that there is music in the background. It is so subtle at times. In Samskara the use of sound is sometimes so overwhelming yet so effective it almost substitutes for dialogue in certain moments and makes one fell the urgency of time and makes one aware.
Chapter No 4 - Narrative Structure of the Novel and the Film

The next chapter deals with looking at the narrative structure of the novels and the films. Since first and foremost both novels and films are arts of storytelling, we know that they both deal with narratives. How each author develops his narrative is what makes his work unique and his own. So when a particular novel is made into a film, the filmmaker might choose to retain the original narrative or change it. What triggers this decision is tried to understand in this chapter. Sometimes, it might be necessary to change the narrative structure of the text when it is adapted into a film since that is the demand of the cinematic medium. How exactly does this happen and how far is it justified remains to be probed into.

The order of events, frequency, duration and the voice are some of the important aspects that Gerard Genette suggests one must remember while dissecting narratology of a text. (Contributors)

In their book on Film Theory, Richard Rushton and Gary Bettinson, also go on to argue what would be the response of a 'thinking viewer' upon watching a cinematic text. They also consider whether such a viewer would be influenced by the narrative or characterisation. (Richard Rushton)

In the novel Old Man and the Sea, and the film the narrative structures are so linear and so similar that one can almost skip reading the book entirely and simply watch the film. The film by John Sturges is an exact replica of the novel. There is a use of the narrator in the film who is actually the old man himself. The film has few dialogues but mostly there is a background narration with each scene. The narration is actually the train of thoughts of the old man. Just like the way it is put forth by Hemingway in the novella, the filmmaker too employs a similar technique of narration.
In the films *Siddhartha* and *Samskara* there is not much narration. In *Siddhartha* there are certain scenes where the character of *Siddhartha* is lost in thoughts or his reflections are narrated loudly for the viewer. In *Samskara*, Pattabhi Rama Reddy skips narration altogether. There is only dialogue and that is minimal as well.

What is interesting is the use of narrative techniques in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. There many sequences of narration where the protagonist Winston's thoughts are spoken out aloud for the viewer. These techniques of narration are not very novel or different. Many filmmakers employ such techniques of narration. Most of these are employing the use of first person point of view. The narrator is the protagonist in most cases say for example in *Siddhartha* (the film) it is the character of *Siddhartha* (the protagonist) himself. In *The Old Man and the Sea* it is Santiago. They directly relate their thoughts or experiences. In the novels as well, the narration is very similar and therefore one might assume that the filmmaker might have directly employed a similar technique. In these texts the narrator directly addresses 'you' who is the reader or the viewer and tells or narrates their experiences, what they feel, think.

These novels and films both make use of dialogue as well to aid their narration. In some novels such as *Nineteen Eighty Four* there is really minimal dialogue. The novel is mostly shaped through the thoughts of Winston the protagonist and we the world around him through his eyes and mind. The filmmaker Michael Radford has aptly made use of this technique in his film as well. There are dialogues as well. At times he also makes use of shifts in time as an aid to narration. This technique is seen in *The Old Man and the Sea* where the old man slips into dreams. The flashback or dream sequences are adapted on screen as well by the filmmakers. These make for a great foreshadowing tool to the narrator.
We see a single flashback scene in *Samskara* as well in a rather linear narrative which employs mostly dialogues. The use of colour and sound too aid the narration. Michael Radford has beautifully done this his rendition of *Nineteen Eighty Four*. The use of dull and then contrasting them with bright colours is an aid to the narration where the character slips into the dream like utopia and then is hurled back into the present dystopia.

The film *The Metamorphosis of Franz Kafka* is an experimental film made by Spanish director Carlos Atanes. The name of the film itself suggests that it is a work that is a metamorphosis (transformation) of the actual work that is written by Franz Kafka.

Even though the main plot is retained in the film, there are some interesting effects given in the film. The film (Atanes) has many digressions and though the original story is the same, a few changes have been made to the film. There is no narrator at all in this film. There are dialogues and use of music. In fact the director has included a beautiful portion of Beethoven's 5th symphony in this film. There is even a scene with Adolf Hitler and Nazi soldiers marching down the street and checking down the houses where Jews live and visiting the Samsa house. The use of narration is very interesting in each and every novel and its adaptive film.

After all narration is the tool used to make stories and tell them to the world and everyone would have a different way of telling stories. Moreover narrations are largely defined by social, historical and cultural contexts. Thus each writer whose novel we have selected to study would have a different technique of narration and so would the narrative techniques of all the films be different.
Chapter No 5 - Space and Time in the Novel and the Film

The next chapter delves into an altogether different perspective of comprehension. Both novels and films are media of storytelling and therefore both delve into space and time. This chapter seeks to look at the spacio-temporal analysis of the novels and the films. It looks at the physical space in the novel and the film as well as the mental space and how they coincide or differ. It also scrutinizes the actual time versus the mental time in the novels and the films. The concept of space and time adds a vital dimension to any art and therefore it makes for an interesting study.

A very interesting dimension of understanding a text in a new way is to analyse it from a spacio-temporal perspective. Particularly when undertaking a comparative analysis of two forms of art, understanding spacio-temporal relationships can be interesting and fun. For a film, one might consider a shot as a single unit of analysis and for a novel; it could be a particular event, or action or plot line. Undertaking spacio-temporal analysis of the films is far more fascinating and thought provoking. Two aspects of narrative space may be considered for the same purpose viz., spatial regions of interaction and spatial movement of characters.

In simple words, these are the two parameters that help us look at the spatial (space related) analysis of the film. We have to watch a film and closely analysis each scene and locate if there is a shift in space i.e. location or setting within the same scene. In the film The Old Man and the Sea (Sturges), we notice that when the old man sleeps at night, the camera zooms on his face and slowly fades away to a shot of a beach and lions roaming on that beach. In the text this is actually a dream that the old man sees every night. The filmmaker has made use of spatial regions of interaction to showcase the dream sequence. (Joseph P. Magliano)
A similar shift in space is seen in *The Metamorphosis*. Gregor Samsa starts staring at his doodle while working in the library and suddenly everything starts spinning around to give us (viewers) a feeling that he is feeling dizzy and then suddenly he is transformed into a creature that is half human, half insect. This is more apt to understand the *spatial movement of character*.

A film maker can transfer the viewer from region to region within the film, but the characters may not change location. On the other hand, film makers can stay in the same region, but the characters may enter and leave that space.

While looking at a text and narration the most important factor is the time. It is true that the relative importance of time and space is different in different texts and films. The *temporal continuity* occurs when the events that occur are in continuation to the previous shot and continue this way forward. But when this does not happen, there is a shift in the time dimension, called as *temporal discontinuity*. In a sense Eisenstein has proved that the use of temporal discontinuity may be able to arouse emotional and ideological consciousness of the viewer. The viewer thus becomes an active participant rather than just a passive observer. (Johnson, Montage theory: Eisenstein, Vertov, & Hitchcock)

One can simply look at the text *Siddhartha*, where the character of *Siddhartha* is in search of the ultimate truth/knowledge and in his quest; he embarks on a life long journey without even realising it. We too as readers do not realize that so much time has elapsed since he first set out from home. He finally attains the wisdom while silently rowing a boat on the river. Now this river has been described since the beginning of the novel and has always been mentioned at varied junctures in the novel. Thus it is our symbol that links us to the past where the novel
began and slowly it proceeded and led us to where we are now, the present. This is what temporal continuity looks like. The same applies to the film based on it as well. The river is always seen during the film, whether in the background or foreground. It is like a character that is omnipresent. It helps to create a link between the spatial and temporal shift that the viewer encounters. The river links the past to the present and also connects all the places where *Siddhartha* travels to.

Pioneering film director and theorist from Russia, Sergei Eisenstein is known for his montage theory in films. This theory propagates the manipulation of time by juxtaposing images. This was first seen in his film Battleship Potemkin (W. Contributors). He advocated that by the use of rapid progression one could give a sense of urgency and sensationalise the event giving a greater impact. (Johnson)

One may notice that film maker Carlos Atanes on the other hand, is not very soft and subtle while portraying these continuities. He probably enjoys the discomfort a viewer experiences on seeing a shift. The spatial shifts are obvious in his film. The film itself is quite gory and makes one feel gloomy but the rather disturbing shifts in space where characters are seen leaving one room and suddenly shown involved in doing something else in some other room of the same house without any shift in time.

The shift in space and time has been portrayed by Michael Radford in his film *Nineteen Eighty-Four* as well. It is based on a scene from the novel itself relating to room 101. Winston walks up to Room 101, and he opens it expecting it to be the place where the prisoners are met with the worst form of torture. Instead it opens up into a vast green pasture with cool breeze blowing and a lone tree swaying. He sees Julia stripping her clothes and running towards him. This is a rather artistic and beautiful depiction of spacio-temporal
discontinuity. Here Winston is transported (in his mind) to a utopic future which is beautiful and happy and we also get a hint of his dreaming for sexual liberation where he imagines Julia running towards him. This acute shift in space and time illustrates the core psychological desires of Winston; his longing for freedom and escape into a beautiful utopic future.
Chapter No 6 - Conclusion

The final chapter is the concluding chapter of the thesis. In this chapter we come to a conclusive understanding whether or not the text when adapted from one form to the other alters into a new form of art or not. This chapter takes the aid of the analyses conducted in the previous chapters and summarizes the findings whether or not the hypothesis has been met.

The literary and cinematic forms are different and thus their treatment ought to be so too. In fact when evaluating only novels in contrast with other novels we see that there is a lot of variance in the way one author shapes up the form of a novel and the way another does. Thus when juxtaposing two different mediums altogether we do notice that the form of a novel is different from how the adapted film would be. Here one must remember that the film maker is the creator of his own piece of art. The story may be the same, and the screen play might be an exact copy of the novel yet, the form of the film is in crux different from that of a novel. The film maker has constraints of time and sometimes space. But on the other hand they have the possibility of employing music, sound, properties, special effects that can transform a text altogether. Just as literature may be understood in depth with the help of literary theories, one can rely on the film theories to understand cinema. The major film theorists are Sergei Eisenstein, Francoise Truffaut, Andre Bazin, Gilles Deleuze. (contributors)

The narratives of a film may be very close to that of a novel it is based on. The narrative structure is determined by the story. Each narrative is based on the story that it revolves around which in turn is based on the social, political and cultural aspects. When a film maker adapts a novel into a film, he may introduce new aspects into the story. Just like Carlos
Atanes blatantly making a reference to Nazi propaganda in his film and characterizing Hitler wearing a Nazi badge.

In terms of any art, and especially films, the most interesting play is that of space and time. Whereas in a novel, the shift in space is more descriptive and cannot be left open to the readers' interpretation, time shift is more prominent and easier to grasp. But in film, the spacio-temporal continuity and discontinuity can be perplexing. In films Siddhartha and Samskara, one does not experience any such major disparity. But in The Old Man and the Sea and in Nineteen Eighty-Four dream (Radford) like sequences and flashbacks are obvious and done seamlessly. In The Metamorphosis, the film maker has gone out and beyond with this disparity of space and time.

The aim of the research was to find out whether the text undergoes any shift when it is adapted from one medium to another. One can safely say that while this holds true for some works of adaptation it may not for some others. In a general sense, though it is now clear after conducting this interesting study of adaptation of novel into films that even when a film is a faithful rendition of a novel, it does undergo a change. The motivating factors for this change are the form, the techniques of narration and the portrayal and play of time and space.

Since each film maker is the author who in a sense writes or creates his own version of the art the film is based on he may add to it or he may leave out something for the purpose of greater understanding. Also whether a book that is portrayed on screen is literature on screen or not is concerned, it depends on what one would judge as literary. When novels are adapted in to films, to some extent the literariness of the text cannot be removed. Even though one may twist it and mould it to one's own suitability, it does in the end have strings that connect it back to the original text it is based on.
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