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A SUCCESSFUL CINEMATIC ADAPTATION OF WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE'S PLAY
MACBETH IN VISHAL BHARDWAJ'S HINDI MOVIE *MAQBOOL*

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ABSTRACT

Shakespeare and his plays have greatly influenced to the modern filmmakers and content creators. These plays produced an atmosphere of tension, love, tragedy, action, and romance and all of these themes are prevalent in today's media. Shakespeare movies are so numerous; they form their own sub-genre. So there is a series of his plays which are adapted in the modern cinema. This paper also aims at the cinematic adaptation of *Macbeth*. Adaptation means to get some cultural and another elements which is borrowed from one group to another. Shakespeare was a dominant writer in the world. He was not of one age but of all ages. He can be judged as an era in English literature. His plays have been influencing all the film industries for a long time. *Macbeth* is one of the ideal examples of Shakespeare's classical tales which have great influence on masses belong to any age.

Keywords: Adaptation, Film Industry, *Macbeth*, *Maqbool*, Shakespeare.

Indian film industry, especially the Bombay Film Industry or better known as Bollywood is the largest film industry as per the total number of films made by it in a single year (McCarthy, 2014) [2]. It produces films in variety of genre, like action, comedy, romantic, satire, etc. Among these various types, adaptation films are also seen now and then in the industry and Vishal Bhardwaj is one of the prominent names in that genre. Post 2000, if one considers the film reviews made by the various film critics and the media agencies, it can be certainly inferred that Vishal Bhardwaj is one director who makes the most out of the adaptation films (New York Indian Film Festival [NYIFF], 2014) [3]. Vishal Bhardwaj had been making film adaptation of classic short stories or novels on regular intervals. Though he is established as a film maker today, Vishal Bhardwaj started his film career as a music director. If we discuss about Mr. Vishal Bhardwaj, he is very famous in film industry. He was influenced by William Shakespeare's plays. Due to this, he designed many movies such as *Maqbool* which is based on *Macbeth* and *Om Kara* which is based on *Othello*. In this paper I am trying to represent *Maqbool* as a cinematic adaptation of Shakespeare's famous play *Macbeth*. The character, plot and background of the play *Macbeth* is shown in modern way with similarities in *Maqbool*. *Maqbool's* hero Mr. Irfan Khan has been presented like *Macbeth* and he is doing job under the instruction of Jahangir Khan (Abbaji). Jahangir Khan has been presented like Duncan who is king of Scotland in the play *Macbeth*. The other important characters also give excellent performances. The whole story of the movie is related to Mafia and its hero is audacious and ambitious. Thus, this paper is an attempt to present almost all the similarities between *Macbeth* and *Maqbool* and Vishal Bardawaj seems to be a wonderful director who cannot be criticized.

Maqbool proves itself to be the most applauded films produced by him. With the passage of time this Movie has received positive reviews from the critics.

Adaptation is a specific process which involves the transition of one genre to another genre: novels and plays into films or musicals; the dramatization of prose narrative and prose fiction; or it could even be the inverse movement of making drama into prose narrative. This very casting of one genre to another generic mode, can be taken as an act of revision. It even indulges in the exercise of trimming and pruning. But at the same time it can be taken as an amplificatory procedure involving addition, expansion, interpolation, and accretion. Appropriation can be understood as the use of borrowed source into the creation of a wholly new cultural product and sphere. The writings of William Shakespeare have been one of the perennial sources for adaptation and appropriation.

This paper represents the cinematic adaptation of *Macbeth*. The meaning of adaptation is to get cultural and other elements which are borrowed from one group to another. Linda Hutcheon studies the process of adaptation in her book, *A Theory of Adaptation (2006)*. She suggests that adaptation can be studied from "three distinct but interrelated perspectives" (7). She remarks that adaptation can at first be studied as a, "formal entity or product", secondly as a "process of creation", and thirdly it can be studied as a "process of reception" (7-8). Hutcheon further observes that adaptation is "a form of intertextuality" (8).

For long time a cinematic adaptation is more popular in the world wide. It is a common trend in the history of Bollywood cinema to adapt stories of popular novel and dramas into films and so Shakespearean dramas are spare from this. Most of the film industries have been adapting the world literature in their industries. If we talk about Indian cinema there are so many directors who are adapting the literature .Mr. Vishal Bhardwaj is one among of them. He is very a famous in Bollywood. He started his career from music composer but later on he entered into the field of direction of movie and become a wonderful director.

In Indian cinema he adapted the very famous tragedies which are written by William Shakespeare. Such as *Macbeth*, *Othello* and *Hamlet*. These tragedies have been adapted in various movie. *Maqbool* is based on *Macbeth*, *Onkara* is based on *Othello* and *Hider* is based on *Hemlet* .These are the worldwide famous movies.

Through this paper I am going to explore the depth of *Maqbool* (2003) which is adapted from *Macbeth* .The story of *Macbeth* revolves around Macbeth who is the hero of this play. The play starts with the entering of three witches which prophecies for Macbeth and saying that he would become the king of Scotland after the death king of Duncan. After this prophecy Macbeth became excited or over ambitious and tells her wife lady Macbeth about this. She is also over ambitious lady. Hearing this news she goes into dreaming and starts thinking about Macbeth how he will become the king of Scotland. Ultimately she provokes to Macbeth for killing Duncan by hook and crook. Lady Macbeth says to Macbeth:

"unsex me here,
And fill me from the crown to the toe topful
Of direst cruelty!" *Macbeth Act 1, scene 5, 38-43*

After this Macbeth suffers through a dilemma. Lady Macbeth prompts him for doing such task. Thus Macbeth has been trapped by three witches. At the end of this play, Macbeth is murdered by Malcolm. In the same way the whole story of the play *Macbeth* has been adapted by Mr. Vishal Bharwaj in his Hindi movie *Maqbool*. The plot of this movie is completely based on the play *Macbeth*. The theme of this movie is mafia which is related to underworld don Of Mumbai. The characters, plot and context of this movie are based on Macbeth. The hero of this movie is Maqbool (Miyaji).This role is played by Bollywood celebrity Mr. Irfan khan. As far as the title of this movie is concerned, it is also based on the play *Macbeth*. He is serving under the instructions of underworld Don Jahangir Khan (Abbaji). Through the portrayal of this character, the director represents Duncan who was the King of Scotland same as Abbaji. He is completely devoted to Maqbool. Here the director shows the real scene which is based on opening of the play *Macbeth*. In this scene the three witches enter and provoked Macbeth for becoming the king. In the same way Maqbool the hero of this movie

is provoked by his beloved. He suffers through a mental anguish. This role has been played by Nimmi (Tabu). She is the wife of Abbaji but she secretly loves Maqbool. She is playing her role like lady Macbeth. Thus the movie opens just like *Macbeth*. The role of the three witches has been played by two police inspectors Mr. OmPuri and Mr. Naseeruddin. They prophecies that Maqbool would take over underworld from Abba Ji. The story accelerates with this scene. Here the director has tried to explain as it has happened in the real play. In this movie hero is serving under the supervision of Jahangir Khan Abbaji. Abba ji loves to Maqbool and most of decisions has been taken by Abba Ji with the help of Maqbool. He is very confident for Abba Ji but due to over ambitious he becomes selfish, and decided to kill Abba ji with the help of his beloved Mimmi. The other roles have been performed by Masumeh Makhija and Piyush Mishra in this movie. The Director has also shown the contemporary issues in this movie. If we talk about the business of Duncan, he is the king of Scotland and runs his Empire. But when we watch this movie, the director has represented Abba Ji as a Mafia. Another issue is about Maqbool's Kaka Who is really an honest man for Abba ji but the presentation of Kaka Ji is not shown much rather than police inspectors. Here the director also represents corruption of police department and compares it with that of three witches which are responsible for the pace in the storyline of the movie. They also impart a comic in the movie. Both are responsible for bringing tragedy as they predict the rise of Miyali and fall of Jahangir Khan. Once again if we compare this movie with the play then we see that William Shakespeare has presented the problem of human life. His greatness lies in the fact that he has portrayed his characters by his own experiences and labour which are the result of his genius. And this seems to be his supreme achievement which can be presented in all spheres of human life. In this context, Jitinder Verma speaks about great writer as:-

“Shakespeare is a strong on class structure and hierarchies but there hierarchies have broken down in England in Asia we still have these strong hierarchies. I would say the best way to do Shakespeare is true to him through in Asian eyes.”

In this way the *Maqbool* contains all the climatic ingredients which place it in the annals of a few global cinematic adaptations of Shakespeare. Although it is set in the murky underworld of Bombay (Mumbai), features Bollywood actors and draws freely upon the conventions of a typical Bollywood film. But in spite of this the film remains close to Shakespeare. In its extremely complex and successful reworking of *Macbeth* in a different genre (film), language (Hindi and Urdu), time and setting (present day Bombay), the filmmaker does not adulterate the complex issues evoked by Shakespeare's plays. Precisely this is the reason *Maqbool* and *Omkara* are the first Indian film adaptations of Shakespeare to have gained International recognition; they have been screened at several international film festivals and are and are discussed in Daniel Rosenthal's *100 Shakespeare Films* (2007), published by the British Film Institute.

Besides all these, Bhardwaj decorates the texture of *Maqbool* by incorporating in it a range of visual strategies. For example we see Maqbool cooking food for the guests in a huge cauldron the day before Abbaji's murder. Later on in the day, a little before the murder, he hallucinates that blood is coming out of the cauldron, an image that provides further incitement for the act he plans to commit. Thus, while Bhardwaj departs from Shakespeare at a literal level, he nevertheless is able to bring together the cauldron and dagger scenes of *Macbeth* in a way that shows his deep understanding of their significance and his ability to incorporate them in a radically new setting. The policemen's prediction of rain, which is extremely unusual for the time of the year, comes true and creates a suitably tense atmosphere right before Abbaji's murder. It exhibits the Shakespearean technique of mirroring a breach in the human order by a breach in the natural order. The chaos in the natural order heightens the intensity of moral order. Another important aspect which must not be overlooked at any cost is Bhardwaj's use of some Bollywood conventions in *Maqbool* may be as much a matter of choice as of compulsion. In this connection presence of Bollywood trademarks such as family scenes of festivity and weddings, catchy music, dances and songs (Trivedi 153-54), including an item number is all the more strange for a filmmaker who has dismissed mainstream Bollywood as kitschy (Today Othello 2006). The reasons for this are many, but significant one is no doubt, the globalized notion that equates Bollywood with Indian cinema, in no small measure because the powerful Indian diaspora and the well-oiled publicity machines of the Bollywood industry actively promote such a view. In this scenario it becomes

somewhat impossible for a filmmaker making films in Hindi to avoid and escape from the hegemony of Bollywood

To sum up the uniqueness of the craftsmanship of Vishal Bharadwaj is that he contextualizes the play with some or the other Indian version of the tragedy. The transposition is remarkable. Not just *Maqbool*, but the other movies too. For instance, the way he Indianised *Macbeth* by associating it with the police corruption; or the plot of *Macbeth* against the backdrop of corrupt political system in Indian society. His auteur ship lies in the way he merged the Shakespearean play into Indian politico-social problems that the audience can relate with. Thus I have tried to highlight the similarities between *Macbeth* and *Maqbool* through my keen observation of these works. Most of these popular issues have been raised by Mr. Vishal Baharwaj in this movie. So this is a wonderful production of movie through his mind.

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