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Shakespeare's *Macbeth* and Vishal Bhardwaj's *Maqbool*: A Comparative Analysis

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ABSTRACT

The dramas of William Shakespeare have been one of the potential sources for adaptation and appropriation. He dramatized basic issues like love, marriage, familial relationships, race, class, humor, betrayal, evil, revenge, murder and death. He crafted unforgettable characters, from lowly thieves to lofty kings, who have become archetypes of modern drama, but still remain people with whom we can relate. These basic concepts and eternal characters provide filmmakers with the finest raw material to create great visual treats. The notable director Vishal Bhardwaj received much critical acclaim for his trilogy, *Maqbool* inspired by *Macbeth*, *Omkara* by *Othello*, and *Haider* adapted from Shakespeare's *Hamlet*. However, Bhardwaj has taken certain liberties to mold the story according to his cinematic demands. The present article analyzes Vishal Bhardwaj's *Maqbool* and Shakespeare's *Macbeth* in the light of comparative analysis. It begins by defining comparative literature in brief and moves on to discuss the opening scenes, the art of characterization, the different dramatic devices that are being employed, the setting and the ending. It also explores the points of contact and departure between the adaptation (*Maqbool*) and the original source text (*Macbeth*).

摘要

莎士比亚的戏剧是改编和挪用的潜在来源之一。他把爱情, 婚姻, 家庭关系, 种族, 阶级, 幽默, 背叛, 邪恶, 复仇, 谋杀和死亡等基本问题戏剧化。他塑造了令人难忘的人物形象, 从卑微的小偷到崇高的国王, 这些人物已经成为现代戏剧的原型, 但仍然是我们可以联系的人。这些基本概念和永恒的角色为电影制作者提供了最好的原材料, 以创造伟大的视觉享受。著名导演维沙尔巴德瓦吉因其三部曲《麦克白的灵感》和《奥赛罗的乌姆卡拉》以及改编自莎士比亚的《哈姆雷特》的海德尔三部曲而广受好评。然而, 巴尔德瓦吉采取了一定的自由, 根据他的电影要求塑造了这个故事。本文试图用比较分析的方法对维沙尔巴德瓦吉的《马格布尔》和莎士比亚的《麦克白》进行分析。本文首先简要讨论了苏珊·贝塞内特提出的比较分析理论, 接着讨论了开场白, 人物塑造的艺术, 所采用的不同戏剧手段, 背景和结局。本文还试图探索改编 (*Maqbool*) 与原著 (*Macbeth*) 之间的联系和背离点。

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1. Defining comparative literature

Comparative Literature involves the study of texts across culture that is interdisciplinary and concerned with patterns of connection in literatures across both time and space

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(Bassnett 1). To be more specific, it is an interdisciplinary field whose practitioners study literature across national borders, time periods, languages, genres, and across boundaries between literature and other arts such as music, painting, dance, film etc, as well as across disciplines such as literature and psychology, philosophy, science, history, architecture, sociology, politics etc. Broadly speaking, comparative literature is the study of “literature without borders.” Bassnett is of the opinion that people do not start with comparative literature but they eventually end up with it in some way or the other. Often as scholars of comparative literature, students first begin with reading the texts and then arrive at comparison, which further results in the analysis of the similarities and dissimilarities between the texts that are being compared.

One such example is the comparative analysis of a literary text (*Macbeth*) with its cinematic adaptation (*Maqbool*). This article is an attempt to critically compare William Shakespeare’s *Macbeth* with Vishal Bhardwaj’s *Maqbool* in order to analyze the points of contact and departure. The focus is on some of the crucial scenes, the major events that help in the development of the plot, characterization, and on the dramatic devices that are being employed in the play or in the movie.

2. Analyzing the opening scenes

The “opening” or the beginning of any creative venture plays an extremely crucial role; be it the opening lecture of a teacher, the opening of a movie, the first composition of a musician, the first draft of the scriptwriter, the first painting made by an artist or be it the opening of any literary genre, for instance – the opening line of a poem, the opening paragraph of a short story, the opening chapter of a novel or the opening scene of a play. The first impression is always the last impression; therefore, poets, novelists and playwrights stress the importance of the “openings” and invest much of their time to pen down the opening of their literary works.

The opening of the play is always important as it sets the mood and atmosphere of the play; it alerts the audience or the readers about the future action and therefore captures their attention from the very beginning of the play. It is an important theatrical device, which helps in exposing the plot, theme, setting, and environment and also in highlighting the main issues and concerns of the play. Shakespeare uses certain techniques to open his plays in a more effective manner. *Macbeth*, for example, opens with thunder and lightening and with the entry of the three witches. Through the conversation of the witches the audience gets to know about the battle that has already taken place and it is further revealed through their discussion that they intend to meet Macbeth in the near future. Similarly, the thunder and lightening with which the play opens suggests menace and violence.

The opening of both *Macbeth* and *Maqbool* is marked with vivid darkness, gloom, heavy rain, thunder and lightning. This “special atmosphere of a Shakespearean tragedy” (Bradley 286) is brilliantly portrayed by Bhardwaj in *Maqbool* from the very opening. However, as a director, or more appropriately as an adapter of the play, he has taken certain liberties to mold the film according to his cinematic demands. Therefore, the court of Scotland is replaced with the Mumbai underworld and the two corrupt policemen (Pandit and Purohit) play the role of the three weird sisters. In a preface to *Maqbool*’s screenplay Bhardwaj explains:

Like every filmmaker I also wanted to explore the juiciest genre of cinema—the world of gangsters. I was looking for a story that could give me the scope to have the underworld as a backdrop but with a strong human story. During this period, whatever I read, any story or article I read it with only one agenda in mind—to find a story for my gangster film ... The first breakthrough in the screenplay was the discovery of witches in our story. What could have made the best parallel to the witches in contemporary India? Of course, cops. (Bhardwaj and Tyrewala vi)

When Shakespeare wrote *Macbeth* in the year 1606, the idea of witches worked well to heighten the suspense and mystery in the play. This idea of introducing supernatural elements into the play was welcomed by the audience in Elizabethan times but when Bhardwaj decided to make *Maqbool* in the year 2003, no audience would have accepted the concept of witches making prophecies for the protagonist. It would have become an unreal and an unimaginative idea to believe in. Therefore, these changes on the part of the director added a real perspective to the film.

Shakespeare's intention to weave witches into the fabric of the tragedy was to create the atmosphere of fear, the task that was assigned to the two policemen by Bhardwaj in *Maqbool*. *Maqbool* has innumerable instances of encounters, either by Pandit or Purohit or by Maqbool's gang. In fact, SC. 2¹ of the film witness a police encounter, where inspector Purohit shoots a local gangster Sadiq from point blank range. He dies on the spot and blood splashes all around. These encounters help to create the atmosphere of fear in the film. Other than creating the atmosphere of fear, the witches in the play also act as the soothsayers. In Act 1, SC. 3, witches confront Macbeth and Banquo when they are returning from the battlefield and make prophecies first for Macbeth and later on for Banquo as well. They greet Macbeth first as Thane of Glamis, then as Thane of Cawdor and finally as the king. Bhardwaj draws an interesting parallel in *Maqbool* through the character of inspector Pandit, who like the witches of *Macbeth* is able to make prophecies through reading a horoscope. From the very opening of the play till the end "we are confronted by mystery, darkness, abnormality, hideousness: and therefore by fear" (Knight 161–62). The similar patterns of fear, mystery, suspense and darkness also brood upon the film.

3. The motives for the crime

"Dark secrecy and night are in Shakespeare ever the badges of crime" (Knight 177). Both *Macbeth* and *Maqbool* use darkness of night as a shield to hide their heinous crimes. Seeking refuge in night's dark hour they fulfill their deepest desires. A.C Bradley is of the opinion that "all the scenes which at once recur to memory take place either at night or in some dark spot. The vision of the dagger, the murder of Duncan, murder of Banquo ... all come in night-scenes" (Bradley 287). However, it is important to note here, that though the murder of Abba ji also takes place at night like the murder of Duncan in the play yet the motives behind the crime are different. In the play, the "ambition" of Macbeth to become the king was the sole motive behind killing Duncan, who was like a father figure to him. But unlike the play, Maqbool murders Abba ji because of his sexual jealousy. His primary motive is to gain Nimmi's love and therefore taking Abba ji's position becomes secondary. Bhardwaj explains this change in the preface of the film's screenplay:

the major decision was to change the character of Lady Macbeth - from Macbeth's wife to Duncan's mistress who was having an affair with Macbeth. This changed the dynamics of the relationships completely. Suddenly the sexual conflict became the core of the screenplay. For Macbeth, the Lady Macbeth became the throne herself (Bhardwaj and Tyrewala vi).

Before tracing the journey of Maqbool from Abba ji's right hand man to his murderer, it is important to mention that, in the play the murder of Duncan is not the focal point: "the action ... hurries through seven very brief scenes of mounting suspense to a terrible crisis, which is reached, in the murder of Duncan, at the beginning of the second act" (Bradley 286). In other words in *Macbeth* the murder is committed at the very beginning of the second act but in *Maqbool*, the murder of Abba ji takes place when half of the film is over, in SC. 41. It is at this juncture that the film reaches its climax. This shift points out the change in the perspective of Bhardwaj - he wanted to weave his crime thriller around the theme of sexual jealousy, where Nimmi is throne for Maqbool and killing Abba ji is the route to achieve that throne. Therefore more than half of the film revolves around the murder of Abba ji.

In the play, witches lure Macbeth toward that brutal crime, but in the film Nimmi keeps instigating Maqbool to murder Abba ji. Though she is Abba ji's mistress, she hates being close to "his repulsively fat body." Whenever she is in bed with him, "she looks totally uninvolved and keeps looking blankly" (Bhardwaj and Tyrewala 54). On the other hand she secretly desires to be with Maqbool all the time. But she cannot fulfill her desires till Abba ji is alive; therefore, she starts instigating Maqbool to commit that brutal crime. She first hits Maqbool when they are walking alone in SC. 18. The following dialogue between the two clearly explain the scene:

Nimmi - "That astrologer inspector Pandit of yours ... he's a goddamn liar ... you'll never take Abba ji's place ..."

Maqbool - "Why?"

Nimmi - "You're a wimp ... that's why"

Maqbool - "I see ..."

Nimmi - "Then what ... you'd burn in my love but you'd never have the guts to touch me ... Guddu is the real successor to Abba ji ..."

Maqbool - "Guddu?"

Nimmi - "If you don't have a son, the son-in law becomes the next in line." (Bhardwaj and Tyrewala 38-39)

From the above dialogue it becomes clear that Nimmi has begun her game to instigate Maqbool against Abba ji.

Till now, Maqbool was running away from Nimmi's advances but now he surrenders in the face of her evil charms. SC. 29 of the film depicts their lovemaking. With this, Nimmi has won half of the battle. She always wanted to be in Maqbool's arms and now she has finally lived her desire. Here it becomes important to note that the relationship between Macbeth and Lady Macbeth was a holy relationship, guided through holy vows. They were legitimate husband and wife but the film portrays a forbidden romance. The

relationship of Maqbool and Nimmi is an illegitimate one, governed not by holy vows and true love but filled with fornication and sexual jealousy.

Rain, storm, thunder and lightening are symbolic of disorder in Shakespeare's plays, as if Nature is giving some sort of warning to mankind. SC. 39 of the film opens up with a similar description of raging violent weather:

Nanny - "Such strange weather ... in my seventy years, I've never seen it rain in this month ... lord have mercy ..."

The hour has come, Maqbool and Nimmi finally decide to murder Abba ji:

Nimmi - "Have you decided?"

Maqbool - "Hmm ... " (Bhardwaj and Tyrewala 83)

While Maqbool is on his way to kill Abba ji, he imagines blood in a corner on a terrace, where a holy sacrifice had been performed a while ago. Looking at the blood, he madly shouts for a servant and asks him to clean the floor, only to find that it has already been cleaned. Maqbool looks at the floor again and this time there is no blood. He starts losing his mind. Bhardwaj has done a commendable job here, in drawing a parallel with the famous dagger scene of *Macbeth*. After the brutal murder, Maqbool now takes Abba ji's position and Nimmi becomes his mistress. For Maqbool now, there is no looking back, like Macbeth he would also do anything to maintain his powerful position. He therefore goes on committing crimes. With each passing day Maqbool "grows rich in crime"; he becomes more villainous, brutal and inhuman while Nimmi on the other hand becomes "a human wreck" (Knight 173).

4. The art of characterization

Shakespeare's art of characterization needs no introduction. His characters do not belong to any particular place or time; they are universal in nature and this universality of his characters allows filmmakers even today to adapt his plays and characters for their cinematic purpose. His characters are rooted in reality and are not at all exaggerated. He is perhaps the only dramatist after Chaucer, to depict such a wide gallery of portraits. The character sketches of his great tragic heroes like Macbeth, Hamlet, and Othello; the portrayal of the heroines of his famous comedies like Hermia, Rosalind, Viola; and the characters of fools and clowns are immortal and therefore so many years after Shakespeare's death these characters are still fresh in the minds of his readers.

However, it is important to note that characters undergo transformation when they are shifted from one literary medium (text) to another (film). This happens mainly because the power of visual media is entirely different from that of print media. For example, a writer may need a thousand words to explain a particular scene, a parallel of which can be easily shown in only one scene of a film. Similarly a character has to change according to the changed time and space also; for instance, Shakespeare's Macbeth is totally different from Vishal's Maqbool in terms of appearance. In place of shields and armor, Maqbool uses guns; he wears no crown and speaks the typical language of a local gangster.

However, Bhardwaj's portrayal of Maqbool's character depicts a similar journey like that of Shakespeare's Macbeth. In the beginning of the play, Macbeth "is introduced to us as a general of extraordinary prowess," – he was thought to be "honest," "honorable" and "too much of the milk of human kindness." King Duncan and other generals of his army are full of praise for him when he returns from the battle. But, by the end of the play he becomes a cruel and inhuman tyrant. Now, he is no longer "infirm of purpose: he becomes domineering and even brutal, or he becomes a cool pitiless hypocrite" (Bradley 300–305). He now "welcomes disorder and confusion ... he is plunging deeper and deeper into unreality ... forgets that he is trafficking with things of nightmare fantasy ..." (Knight 176). His ambition led him toward a life of destruction. The constant pressure from his wife and the prophecies made by the witches compel him to murder the noble king Duncan. Lady Macbeth "rouses him with a taunt no man can bear, and least of all a soldier – the word "coward" ... her passionate courage sweeps him off his feet" (Bradley 317).

The character of Maqbool also follows a similar pattern. When the film opens, he is seen as the most loyal and trusted member of Abba ji's gang. Abba ji loves him as his own son and he also treats him like his own father. But soon all love and respect vanishes and he shoots Abba ji. He gets swept away by the prophecies of Pandit and Purohit and by Nimmi's evil warnings. Like Lady Macbeth, Nimmi also rouses Maqbool with a taunt which no man could bear. She calls him "a wimp" (Bhardwaj and Tyrewala 38).

Through Nimmi, Bhardwaj tries to rebuild the character of Lady Macbeth, who was "not merely a woman of strong will" but "possessed of evil passion" (Knight 173). As wife of Macbeth, she shared a similar ambition and desire to reign. When Macbeth returns victorious from the battlefield "after braving infinite dangers and winning infinite praise," she does not utter a single word of affection to him and "goes straight to her purpose ... she animates him by picturing the deed as heroic, 'this night's great business,' or 'our great quell,' while she ignores its cruelty and faithlessness." She is not aware of the consequences nor is she ready to think, for "her eyes are fixed upon the crown" and she wishes to attain her goal at any cost. Unlike Macbeth who is initially doubtful and confused, she is bold, courageous and confident. However, at the end she loses all her courage, will and confidence and becomes a poor wreck, imagining bloodstains on the walls and the smell of blood on her hands. Her most poetical words are "All the perfumes of Arabia will not sweeten this little hand ... will these hands ne'er be clean?" (Bradley 317–23).

The character of Nimmi also shines through the different phases of growth and decline. In the beginning of the film, she keeps instigating Maqbool, who is unwilling to listen to her evil plans and runs away from her advances but a point comes when he falls prey to her evil designs and surrenders. But their happiness lasts for only a few days, as with each passing day Maqbool grows more ferocious and evil and she is left shattered like Lady Macbeth. She starts losing her peace of mind and is not able to sleep. She imagines bloodstains all over the walls and cries like a mad woman.

Bhardwaj has taken certain liberties to replace or add some characters according to his requirements. Therefore, in place of Malcolm and Donalbain, Abba ji has only one child – a daughter called Sameera, the three witches are replaced by the two policemen Pandit and Purohit, the character of Usman plays the part of Duncan's drugged chamberlains and other than these, there are many rustic characters such as Bhosle,

Tawde, Chinna, Palekar, Mohini and others who help in furthering the actions of the play.

One very important character that Bhardwaj introduces in the film is that of Nimmi's child. Unlike the play where there is no such mention of Lady Macbeth having any children, Nimmi gives birth to a child before dying. However, who is the father of her child is not made clear, the child could be Abba ji's or Maqbool's; this remains an unsolved mystery in the film. When Nimmi dies and Maqbool gets killed by Boti (Macduff's counterpart) Guddu and Sameera take care of Nimmi's child. Bhardwaj thus ended his story on a humane note, and the order that was disturbed by the corrupt actions of Maqbool and Nimmi gets restored by Guddu and Sameera's kind act of humanity.

5. The dramatic devices

5.1. Imagery

The vividness, magnitude and violence of the imagery in *Macbeth*, adds to the tragic atmosphere of the play. The images are mostly of blood, death, cruelty, destruction and disorder. For example, "images like those of the babe torn smiling from the breast and dashed to death . . . of the earth shaking in fear . . . of the mind full of scorpions; of the tale told by an idiot, full of sound fury." There is hardly an instance in the play where one is allowed to dwell on the thoughts of peace and beauty. Whether, in action or language, the entire play is replete with the images of storm, rain, thunder and lightening. With the entry of the witches comes the thunderstorm which creates the atmosphere of fear and mystery (Bradley 289). Also, the play is rich in blood imagery. There is constant reference to blood. Macbeth and Banquo "bathe in reeking wounds" in the battle field as reported by the "bloody" sergeant; Macbeth's sword "smoked with bloody execution"; there is blood on the hands of both Macbeth and Lady Macbeth, after she has "smeared" the sleeping grooms with it. There is also the description of Duncan's body, "his silver skin lac'd with his golden blood"; the apparition of the "bloody child" and the blood stains that Lady Macbeth imagines, are all examples of powerful blood images. However, Wilson Knight is of the opinion that the blood imagery in the play lacks brilliance, which is present in the fire-imagery. For example, "the images of thunder and lightning which accompanies the weird sisters, the fire of the cauldron, the green glint of the spectral dagger . . . the sheen of the three apparitions, the ghastly pageant of kings unborn." Other than fire and blood images, the play is also rich in animal imagery. The mention of the "Hyrcean tiger," the "armed rhinoceros," the "rugged Russain bear," the wolf, "whose howl's his watch," the raven who croaks the entrance of Duncan . . . the owl "fatal bellman who gives the stern'st good night . . . bat and his cloistered flight . . . mind full of scorpions." This horrific animal imagery reaches its peak in the supernatural scene, where witches prepare a filthy cauldron (Knight 166–168).

The violent and gigantic images of blood, fire, thunder and storm conspire with the appearances of the witches and ghostly apparitions to create an atmosphere of horror, mystery and of supernatural dread (Bradley 290).

The imagery that Bhardwaj creates in *Maqbool*, also helps in portraying the atmosphere of dread, mystery, terror, fear and disorder. Like Shakespeare, Bhardwaj also uses

the images of thunder and lightening to depict the change in the natural order. The film opens with heavy rain and the sound of thunder and lightening. Pandit and Purohit are sitting inside a police van, with a local gangster, Sadiq. While Purohit is questioning Sadiq about the whereabouts of Mughal, Pandit is busy in making a horoscope of Mumbai on the glass of the van. Suddenly Purohit takes out his gun and shoots Sadiq. The blood splashes on the horoscope made by Pandit. This powerful image of blood splashing on the horoscope explains the future course of the film. Later in the film, the night before Abba ji's murder, Maqbool imagines blood on the floor of a terrace; he shouts madly for the servant and asks him to clean the blood, only to find that it has already been cleaned after the holy sacrifice. The image of the blood on the floor that Maqbool imagines recalls of the famous dagger scene where Macbeth imagines a dagger floating in the air in front of his eyes. The image also warns the audience about Maqbool's evil desires against Abba ji. The imagery of blood is present in the film till the very end. Nimmi's obsession with the imaginary bloodstains on the walls, floor and even on her hands is another potent example.

Other than the images of blood and raging weather, there is also an instance of the animal imagery in the film. In SC. 35, a servant enters with the goats and informs Nimmi that they are ready for the holy sacrifice. She applies henna on their foreheads and puts garlands around their necks. After this the servant performs the sacrifice and blood flows out of the drain hole. Maqbool and Nimmi look at the blood and it is at this moment that they finally decide to murder Abba ji.

5.2. Irony

Irony is intricately woven into the plot in *Macbeth*. It helps to build and maintain suspense and also creates a vague sense of fear and mystery. Just before confronting the witches, Macbeth utters:

so foul and fair a day I have not seen (I,iii)

His words startle the readers or the audience by recalling the words of the witches in SC. 1 of the play:

Fair is foul, and foul is fair

Another instance of irony occurs in Duncan's words when he comments on the treachery of the Thane of Cawdor, in the following words:

There's no art,
To find the mind's construction in the face,
He was a gentlemen on whom I built
An absolute trust (I,iv)

At this moment, when he is commenting on the treachery of Cawdor, Macbeth enters; the situation itself becomes ironic with his entry at this crucial point. Duncan who is unaware of Macbeth's evil designs, greets him with open arms but the readers are fully aware that like Cawdor, Macbeth is soon going to commit treachery against Duncan. To the readers Lady Macbeth's light words,

A little water clears us of this deed;
How easy is it then ...

summon up the picture of the sleepwalking scene, where she tries to wash off the imaginary blood stains from her hands and no amount of water is enough to help her out (Bradley 291–292).

In *Maqbool* there are also many scenes where one could witness the presence of irony. At the end of SC. 22, Abba ji tries to calm down Maqbool, who is furious because ACP Devsare had slapped him:

That slap stung me much more than it did you ... Ramzan starts tomorrow ... nothing doing till the Eid ... (Bhardwaj and Tyrewala 46)

The irony is clearly inherent in Abba ji's dialogue. He is the don of the Mumbai underworld and he has reached this position by murdering several people mercilessly, he has even murdered his own mentor, Lal Ji Bhai. And despite being such a wicked murderer he is having respect for the holy month of Ramzan. Islam is a religion of peace and prosperity but here at one hand Abba ji and his gang members are brutally killing people and on the other hand show respect for Ramzan and Eid.

There are similar instances in later scenes in the film. In SC. 30, Nimmi is offering a prayer, when a night before she had slept with Maqbool – an illegitimate relationship which Islam does not approve at any cost. In SC. 49, Maqbool is offering prayer just after murdering Abba ji and acquiring his position. When he finishes the prayer, Nimmi asks him:

You know all the prayers by heart? Never seen you in prayer before ... you look like a baby ... (Bhardwaj and Tyrewala 94).

The words “you look like a baby” again have ironic overtones, because Nimmi is aware of the mask that Maqbool is wearing. In reality he is a murderer who acts like an innocent baby.

SC. 50 is also ironic in situation – it opens with the peace prayers going on for Abba ji. Maqbool and Nimmi are listening to the priest attentively and they are praying that Abba ji's soul may rest in peace. The scene is ironic as the murderers are praying for the victim's soul!

5.3. *Soliloquies and asides*

In the play, Act 1, SC. 7 opens with the first soliloquy of Macbeth. Through this long soliloquy of Macbeth the audience gets to know of his conflicting views. He is yet not sure of killing Duncan but his “vaulting ambition” compels him toward the crime. The next soliloquy of Macbeth occurs in Act 2, SC. 1. The dagger scene is one of the important scenes of the play. The soliloquy of Macbeth clearly reflects his state of mind and the dagger becomes the symbol of his conscience.

Other than soliloquies, there are also instances of asides in the play. One such example appears in Act 1, SC. 3 where Macbeth reacts with shock after finding out that King Duncan has honored him with the title of Thane of Cawdor. He is amazed to know that one of the prophecies has come true.

However, in *Maqbool* there are no instances of either soliloquies or asides. It is only through the exchange of dialogs that the audience comes to know of the character's inner state of mind.

5.4. Music

In *Macbeth*, there is no pleasant music at all; it is only the unpleasant sound of rain, storms, thunder and lightening that balances the un-musical situation somehow. But in the movie, *Maqbool* has very rich music. Keeping with the conventions of a typical Bollywood film, Bhardwaj has crafted beautiful music for the film and there are many songs and dance sequences.

According to Stephen Alter,

Unlike many Hindi films, where the shift from action to song is abrupt and often awkward, in Vishal's films there is a seamless quality to the music and images he presents. The songs in *Maqbool* are woven into the narrative ... *Maqbool* contains three songs, all of which occur in the first half. (Alter 16–17).

The first song that takes place in the film is “Tu mere ru baru hai,” which is a Sufi song that starts at the holy shrine. The singer is singing in praise of the Almighty, but the impact is implying *Maqbool*'s feelings for Nimmi and Guddu's for Sameera (Bhardwaj and Tyrewala 40). The second song in the film is “Rone do jiya kre,” and this song provides the background music during the love-making scene between *Maqbool* and Nimmi. According to Bhardwaj, “the song depicts Nimmi's emotions for *Maqbool*” (Bhardwaj and Tyrewala 68). The third and the last song “Jhin min jhini” celebrates the engagement of Guddu and Sameera.

Other than these lyrical songs, the film also has an instrumental theme music, which is played throughout in the background to foreshadow something foul that might happen.

5.5. Setting

The setting has been changed from the royal court of Scotland to the Mumbai underworld. In the words of Stephen Alter, “Foggy moors and dank castles give way to mildewed havelis and the stark cityscapes of Mumbai. Horses are replaced by Mercedes – Benzes and swords with pistols. But the real magic of the film lies in the way Vishal is able to reconstruct a Scottish melodrama within the dangerous and twisted domain of Mumbai's criminal underworld. Not only does he relocate the story in a different time and place but, like a familiar theme in music that gets remixed, Vishal sets it in another key” (Alter 14).

This has been done deliberately by Bhardwaj to cater to the needs of Bollywood. In place of kings and noble generals the film depicts men who belong to the underworld and most of them are from the Muslim community. But despite making the changes in setting, language and location, the film remains honest in its theme of Shakespearean tragedy.

5.6. Ending

In both *Macbeth* and *Maqbool* the order that is disturbed in the beginning gets restored in the end. In the play, Macduff kills Macbeth and carries his head onstage and Malcolm is placed on the throne. Order is restored because the legitimate heir of Duncan is crowned the king. In the film, however, order gets restored when Guddu and Sameera lovingly accept the child of Nimmi. Their kind act of humanity compensates for all the bloodshed and enmity.

6. The points of contact and departure between text and film

In making *Maqbool*, Bhardwaj has appropriated the source text *Macbeth*, though he draws many parallels with the famous scenes and other important aspects of the play but deviation is more potent. However, it is worth mentioning that in deviating from the play, Bhardwaj has created a unique work of his own which remains loyal to the theme of Shakespearean tragedy.

6.1. Points of contact

Like *Macbeth*, *Maqbool* also opens with thunder and lightening. Similarly, inspector Pandit and Purohit are introduced to the audience in the very first scene of the film like the entry of the witches in the opening of the play. In the prophecies made by the policemen, Bhardwaj draws an excellent parallel with the prophecies of the witches. In SC. 8 of the film, inspector Pandit confidently announces:

in six months' time, Abba ji's own throne will be Miyan's to claim ... Kings of Kings ...
(Bhardwaj and Tyrewala 15)

He keeps making prophecies for *Maqbool* till the end. In SC. 61, Pandit again predicts that *Maqbool* will be safe as long as the sea does not enter his house:

if the sea comes into your house, obviously you'll sink ... (Bhardwaj and Tyrewala 118)

The coming of the sea into *Maqbool*'s house is a suggested parallel with Birnam wood. The prophecy comes true as customs officers raid his house in order to arrest him but he escapes with the help of the two policemen.

As a parallel to the Banquet scene of the play, a meeting of *Maqbool*'s gang members takes place in SC. 49, from which Kaka and Guddu (Banquo and Fleance) are missing, *Maqbool* imagines blood on the floor as a reworking of the famous dagger scene; similarly, Nimmi becomes obsessed with the imaginary bloodstains on her hands and walls like Lady Macbeth in the sleep walking scene.

6.2. Points of departure

The setting has been changed from the royal court of Scotland to the Mumbai underworld. In place of the three witches, two corrupt policemen make prophecies for *Maqbool*. Like Lady Macbeth, Nimmi is not the lawfully wedded wife of *Maqbool* but the mistress of Abba ji. Unlike Duncan, Abba ji has no sons but only one daughter, Sameera. At the end of the film, Nimmi gives birth to a child but there is no such instance regarding Lady Macbeth

in the play. Bhardwaj has also changed the motive for the crime. In the play Macbeth murders King Duncan out of his “vaulting ambition” to become the King but Maqbool murders Abba ji because of his sexual jealousy, for him Nimmi becomes the throne herself.

7. Conclusion

In order to reconstruct or adapt, a film director heavily relies on the source text, keenly observes each word, scene, characters etc. However, he is bound to deviate from the original text to cater to the needs of cinema. Also, to fit into the present time certain changes and modification are necessary. If a filmmaker sticks to such demands the adaptation loses its true essence and instead becomes an appropriation. Such is the case with Vishal Bhardwaj's *Makbool*. Therefore, after the analysis of the two genres (text and film) it can be concluded that the film is an appropriation of the text, rather than being a strict adaptation of the source text, though there are many instances in the film where a strong parallel can be drawn with the text but the differences are more coherent. However, it is important to mention that despite making the changes in setting, location, language and plot, the film remains loyal to Shakespeare in its essence. The idea of crime, the concept of fear and evil, the portrayal of the disturbed natural order are the same as in the original source text maintaining the Shakespearean spirit.

Note

1. SC. has been used as an abbreviation for scene.

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Dr. Fatimah Javed holds a BA and MA in English literature from Aligarh Muslim University. In 2017 she earned her Ph.D. The title of her dissertation is *From Shakespearean Text to Cinema: A Study of Select Dramaturgic Adaptations*. The work is a detailed comparative analysis between Shakespeare's classic tragedies, namely *Macbeth*, *Othello* and *Hamlet* with the trilogy of adaptations (*Maqbool*, *Omkara* and *Haider*) by notable film director Vishal Bhardwaj. National Institute of Mass Communication New Delhi honored her with the Media Icon Award in 2018. Dr. Fatimah has published three national papers and has presented one national and one international paper. Her areas of interest include Shakespearean drama, film studies and comparative literature.

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