**Myths and Hindi Cinema: Transforming Hamlet to Haider**

**Abstract**

*This paper examines the influence of myths in Hindi Cinema through an analysis of Haider (2014) an adaptation of Shakespeare’s Hamlet (1602), and addresses the role of myths in fostering the growth of stories in different array of forms. The films focus on the myths of Yayati and Oedipus give space to express such mythical realities as truths that can transform a story. The character of Haider and Yayati myth may appear to be an inversion to the Oedipus myth and the character of Hamlet which could also be a matter of viewing and perceiving according to the varied cultural connotation each myth in the film and text seek to exhibit. To substantiate, the cultural connotations in Hamlet and Haider would generate ideas true to the myths of Oedipus and Yayati depending on the primeval knowledge which each myth embodies.* *The working of myths in the film and the text act as unconscious truths adding a new dimension to the same story.* *The transformation or evolution of Shakespeare’s ‘Hamlet into Vishal Bharadwaj’s ‘Haider’ exhibits the influence of the Yayati myth on the film. Through a comparative analysis of the film ‘Haider’ and the original ‘Hamlet’ one could notice the stories differing due to the influence of each culture in the form of the Oedipus and Yayati myths.*

**Key words** Hindi Cinema, Myth,,Yayati, Oedipus, Evolution

**Introduction**

‘The future in Shakespeare; Shakespeare in the future – these two types of futurity are linked by questions of desire’ (Ryle 2014: 8).

It is interesting to retrospect on how and why human desires are re-staged, re-performed and re-theorised. One of the reasons could be traced in the dearth of stories in satisfying the rising demands of new media. Besides, business goals and ideological explorations ‘it is simply that both organisms and stories ‘evolve’- that is, replicate and change’ (Bortolotti and Hutcheon 2014: 446). The narratives of Shakespeare’s *Hamlet* (1602) and Vishal Bharadwaj’s *Haider* (2014) embody such an evolution as it abounds in the interpretation of desire in two diverse ways through the myths of Yayati and Oedipus. The change is evinced in the way the story of *Hamlet* undergoes a metaphorphosis when placed amidst an Indian setting. The character of Haider and Yayati myth may appear to be an inversion to the Oedipus myth and the character of Hamlet which could also be a matter of viewing and perceiving according to the varied cultural connotation each myth in the film and text seek to exhibit. As Lacan (1901-81) says, ‘there is a perpetual sliding of the signified ‘under the signifier’. Such dicta were to have major repercussions on the theory and practice of interpretation’ (Lodge and Wood 79- 80). Roland Barthes declares that ‘any text is an intertext’ (Dick 2010: 2). *Haider* justifies the notion of an inter-text as it identifies the juxtaposition of two diverse cultures through the myths of Oedipus and Yayati. It is as stated above perhaps the matter of perceiving the same realities through the perspective of the unconscious knowledge innate within each culture.

The working of myths in the film and the text act as unconscious truths adding a new dimension to the same story. Perhaps, such truths get shaded with hue of culture, connoting ideas of resemblance and variance in the film and the text. Resemblance pertaining to the universal primeval truth and variance pertaining to the impact of a distinct culture. This paper would engage in the purposeful reassembling of fragments of two cultures to form a new whole moving between two generic modes and context. It would be one of the sustained engagements on the most predominant idea of the two myths which is the emotional inclination of the son for the mother (Oedipus) and that of the son for the father (Yayati). The paper would attempt to identify and exemplify this emotional inclination and its working in the film *Haider* identifying its difference from the original *Hamlet.* What becomes prominent is the evolution of the film from the source not in the form of mere imitation but a change which occurs when placed amidst a different cultural setting. In doing so ideas in the film *Haider* are concretized and words are transformed into images distinct from the source.Vishal Bharadwaj’s *Haider* conveys a purely verbal narrative *Hamlet* inanew way through language, sound and visual images.

**Myth in Cinema**

Delving into the idea of creating new wholes through mythical realities in *Haider* wouldn’t be impossible if we would allude to the myth of Yayati as a means to reverse the premise of the Oedipus complex. It is the cultural transmission of stories based on myths which leads to its evolution. Oedipus refers to a fifth century BC mythological character of eponymous Oedipus, who unknowingly kills his father, Laius and marries his mother, Jocasta. A play based on the myth, *Oedipus* *Rex*, is written by Sophocles. The Austrian psychiatrist, Sigmund Freud (1856-1939), in his book *The Interpretation of Dream* (1899) proposes that an oedipal desire is a universal psychological phenomenon. He claims that Shakespeare’s *Hamlet* at the subterranean level is rooted in the desire of Oedipal.The Yayati complex on the contrary glorifies the sacrifices made by the children to preserve the dignity of their parents. There have been many exemplary tales of such extraordinary gestures in Indian History. Lord Ram of *Ramayana* (11 century CE) and Bheshma of *Mahabharata* (8 and 9 century BCE) are an epitome of submitting to the will of their fathers as a token of reverence and sacrifice. The myth of Yayati encapsulates such tales of dedication and compliance to fathers’ will. The story of Yayati is tinged in the saga of a son’s unconditional love for his father. Puru, the son of Yayati willingly becomes old to retain the youth of his father. Yayati loses his youth after being cursed by Shukracharya, his father-in law for his secret liaison with Sharmishtha. Instead of brooding on the idea of the well known narrative of the incest between the parent and child of the opposite sex, as indicated in the Oedipal complex, the Yayati complex identifies an idea contrary to it. This leads us to Philip Spratt (1902-1971) a British writer and intellectual who, in his *Hindu Culture and Personality: A Psychoanalytic Study,* suggests that *‘*rather than ‘positive oedipal’ stories of son going against fathers, Indian mythology primarily presents “negative oedipal” tales of “narcissistic” fathers attacking, killing or castrating sons’ (Burnett et al 46). In the film *Haider,* Haider becomes an epitome of an ideal son by submitting to his father’s secret intentions of being a revolutionary which perhaps had an adverse effect on his life and also his mothers. To quote,

Uranus is killed by his son, Cronus, the Titan. Cronus, in turn, is killed by his son, Zeus, the Olympian. The first to lead the gods is Uranus. When he is killed Cronus takes his place. When Cronus is killed Zeus takes his place. Thus, succession takes place by the death of the father…Sons have to revolt against their father and claim the universe.In Hindu mythology, however, a different recurring theme is seen. Here, it is the father who triumphs and the son loses. And the defeat of the son, often voluntary is glorified. What scholars have observed in India is the Yayati complex, which is rather the opposite of the Oedipus complex …son sacrifices himself for the pleasure of the father and for this he is glorified as a hero. Yayati complex is then about the younger generation submitting to the older generation.

(Pattanaik 2010: 49-50)

**Haider Cinema from Text**

Vishal Bharadwaj’s *Haider* (2014) is positioned during the militant movement in Srinagar, India of 1990’s. In the film *Haider,* father of the protagonist Haider, (Hamlet) Dr. Hilal Meer (King of Denmark referred to as the ghost of Hamlet’s father) is the prime suspect in the militant movement and is subjected to torture and interrogation by the Indian army till he disappears and gets killed in most mysterious circumstances. Haider, a research scholar in Aligarh University, is shaken by the sudden disappearance of his father whom he idolises and reveres. Haider’s beloved Arshi (Ophelia) informs him that his mother Gajala (Gertrude) is staying with his uncle Khurram (Claudius) after the death of his father, Dr Meer. Instead of moving towards his uncle’s home to meet his mother, he at once moves to his old home which has been gutted down by the Indian army.

A streak of melancholy emanates as Haider tries to gather the remnants of his lost habitat. Haider journeys through memory lane with flashbacks of togetherness where images of his father fills the screen more than his mother. The viewer’s eyes get drenched as they see the son remembering minutely the moments of happiness slipping from his hands. Throughout the film the thought of the father overpowers the young protagonist Haider while the viewers feel that the title of the film *Haider* could have included the father too. Haider is portrayed as someone who is overburdened with life’s trials and tribulations. The rhythm of his melancholy remains constant and consistent and doesn’t submit before situations which are bright and happy. The melancholic music of his existence gets transformed into expressions of violence and insanity when his father is condemned as a revolutionary. On finding his mother happily singing with his uncle after his death, he is not only enraged but he is driven by the force of vengeance and anger. Of course, the viewers might find the birth of an oedipal complex in the behaviour of Haider on being a possessive son but this is immediately replaced by a strong wave of Yayati complex. To substantiate, Haider makes an out roar of angst at this sight of jubilation between his uncle Khurram and mother Gajala. It becomes apparent that he is more concerned about his father’s honour being trampled under their foul and incestuous show of love. Besides, Haider’s love for his father is evinced in his obstinate urge to find him alive amidst impossibilities.

The plot of the play *Hamlet* is set in Denmark where Prince Hamlet is driven by the desire to avenge the death of his father. The ghost of King Hamlet’s father calls upon Hamlet to avenge his death from his uncle Claudius who is believed to have killed him. Claudius murders his own brother and marries his brother’s wife Gertrude. The character of Hamlet spells passivity as he apparently contradicts himself in his decision to avenge his father’s death. Hamlet baffles us by being happy in melancholic situations and by posing to be a passionate lover without affectations.‘They leave us with no doubt that Hamlet suffers from melancholia and suicidal wishes; the conscious cause is his mother’s hasty remarriage, and the unconscious source is the reawakened oedipal wish’ (Burnett 2013: 407).

The symbols and signs in the film and text point to the connotations of multiple meanings which have been preserved in the primeval memory. Bogatyrevs ‘sign of signs are what are generally designated as connotations. Connotation is a parasimitic semantic function, therefore whereby the sign-vehicle of one sign- relationship provides the basis for a second-older sign relationship (the sign-vehicle of the stage sign ‘crown’ acquires the secondary meanings ‘majesty,’ ‘corruption etc,’ (Hawkes 1987: 7). Haider’s anguish in losing his home and his father is expressed through the images of the dismantled house which he treasures. The house takes shape of the broken heart of Haider craving for repair. Both the house and the heart of Haider become synonymous as the Indian audience connect with the agony of being homeless. Indian culture breathes in the fragrance and aroma of family bonding which Vishal Bharadwaj, the director of *Haider*, a Cinematic adaptation of Shakespeare’s *Hamlet* successfully highlights. The broken house, the sedative music, the rising fume of sighs and life gasping for breath acts as a signifier to connote a sense of loss and hopelessness. Scenes of Haider reaching out to the shattered images of his father adorns the screen which again connotes the untold love of a son for his father. It also suggests Haider losing his home, his father and his identity throwing him in an acute existential crisis. Haider’s love for his beloved Arshi too is not free from doubts. The musical medley where Arshi and Haider are engrossed in a union of the body and soul signifies multiple meanings. It also enhances the verbal and visual aspects interlinking narration and explantion. The gestures, expression and tone of voice carries the entire narrative line. The verbal and visual ingredients in the film exist as two interacting rather than conflicting forces. It is only through the visuals that one can get an insight into the interior of the characters mind. But the one which is evident is the mystery of Haider’s disposition. The song seems to interpret his mysterious bent of mind as it says *khul kahin kabhi, mein asman tu jameen.* Apart from striking a musical chord, the song which says reveal yourself atleast once erupts the otherwise dormant state of Haider’s mind. It is true that Haider’s mind cannot be understood but his fluctuating mind could be easily perceived when he says *shak pe hain yakeen toh yakeen pe hain shak mujhe* meaning I trust what is doubtful and I distust what I trust*.* These lines clearly unfold Haider’s dilemma of moving between Khurram’s, (Haider’s uncle’s) plea for innocence and Rohdar’s a friend of Hamlet’s father claim of Khurram killing his father.

In the text such pensive moments are captured in the lines, ‘How weary, stale, flat, and unprofitable/Seem to me all the uses of the world’ (Shakespeare 1992: 11)! However, the character of Hamlet appears uncertain as we find him responding to wonder, terror and indignation in a strange manner. This varying emotion in Hamlet is vibrant in the working of his imagination and the conflict of passion. Just as Haider’s love for Arshi is not certain, Hamlet’s love for his beloved Ophelia is not free from doubts.Hamlet’s oscillating mind could be evinced from the very beginning of the play. He was struggling to overcome the agony of his father’s death and the uneasiness of his mother’s marriage to his uncle Claudius. Hamlet was not torn between ambition and the love of rule. He was perhaps moving between the unfaithfulness of his mother and fearful accusations made on his uncle. At one point we feel that losing his mother to his uncle would rob him off the very nucleus of life. But the next moment we are surprised to find him curse his destiny and fate in making him face the agony of confronting such a situation. This would imply the contradictions and digressions in his thought process. As Hamlet says, ‘To be, or not to be, that is the question:/Whether’tis nobler in the mind to suffer/The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune, /Or to take arms against a sea of troubles, /And by opposing end them’ (Shakespeare 1992: 45). It would connote his weakness as hero and his strength as a tragic hero as he falls short of heroism in not being able to decide on his love for his mother. His hatred for his mother could be evinced when he says, ‘wretched queen, adieu’ after she has been poisoned (Shakespeare 1992: 99). His willingness to escape from this contest or conflict which he blames his destiny to have created; rightfully makes him wear the crown of a tragic hero for losing faith in himself and confiding in his destiny. The Hamletian dilemma of ‘to be or not to be’, (Shakespeare 1992: 45) could be traced in the ancient *Bhagavad Gita* in the dialogue between Pandava prince Arjuna and his friend Krishna. Both Hamlet, Haider and Arjuna were overpowered by an instinct of indecisiveness. They were struggling to break free from the illusion of apparent or visible reality. Before the battle of *Mahabharata.* Arjuna faced an inner turmoil of whether he should raise his arms against his own relatives. Arjuna’s mind is reeling as he visualises inauspicious omens of misfortune overpowering him. Lord Krishna asks him to abandon all his attachments and perform his duty without paying heed to the results of his action (Astrospeak). Even after the ghost has informed him of the murder and commissioned him to avenge him, he appears to be complaining at the situation which he is made to face, ‘Revenge his foul and most unnatural murder’ (Shakespeare 1992: 21). As Gertrude, queen of Denmark and mother of Hamlet says ‘Do not for ever with thy vailed lids/ Seek for thy noble father in the dust./ Thou know’st tis common – all that lives must die,/Passing through nature to eternity’ (Shakespeare 1992: 9). He says, ‘Ay madam, it is common’ (Shakespeare 1992: 9).It would suggest Hamlet’s placid and unperturbed state of mind appeared at times turbulent and uncontrolled. Hamlet says, ‘Frailty, thy name is woman’ (Shakespeare 1992: 11)striking a chord of rebellion against the ones who laid his father to rest, could be his mother. It becomes apparent that he feels completely orphaned as he speaks to the mysterious form of his father which seems to beckon him to avenge his death not until he obeys to the call of his mother. This call of his mother in Haider fails to uproot him from the base of his fatherly inclination as he is unwilling to succumb before such frailty.Probably it is here that both Hamlet and Haider unite in attempt to have faith in the unpredictable trait of a woman, unfortunately their mothers.

When the father of Haider is questioned about his actions hampering the well being of his son and family. He out rightly says *Khudah hain* meaning God is there to take care of Haider. This remark points towards the single-minded pursuit of Dr. Meer, Haider’s father towards his rebellious inclination surpassing any concern for his family or his most loving son. Surrendering to the will of the dominant revolutionary spirit, and a means to achieve immortality, he forsakes the most sacred bond of marriage and family. Doctor Meer idealises his revolutionary ambition which is evinced in his answer to the question put forth by his wife in the midst of fear and anxiety. Gajala, his wife asks him to whose side he belongs, in the midst of crisis which they have to bear he replies by saying he belongs to the side where life is stationed. Gajala tells Haider that his father never considered her to be his life so she estranges herself from his father finding solace in the warmth of his love But unfortunately, it appears to her that Haider is more inclined to the love of his father’s life which is driven by an upsurge of revolutionary zeal as he is ready to take up arms like his father for the revolutionary cause. Haider would have been the rightful heir to his father’s revolutionary domain not until his mother forces him to leave for higher studies. What is significant here is the willingness of Haider to follow his father’s dream rather than his mother’s. Whatever the result may have been, it finally ends in Haider continuing the tradition of militancy by taking up arms against the Indian Govt. This would make Haider a patron of yayatian concern more than the oedipian. There is a scene in the film where Gajala meets Haider, and explains her plight in trying to cling on to the consequences of her husband’s revolutionary motives. Letting out a sigh of anguish she tells Haider, *Tere khatir marti aanrahi hun* meaning its only for her son Haider that she could sustain herself amidst agony and sufferings of an unhappy marriage. In the manner of a negative oedipal complex, Haider refuses to see anything from his mothers perspective, rising in stature as a sacrificial Yayatian figure. Sensing the birth of a negative oedipal trait, Gajala tells Haider that inspite of her noble thoughts for him, she is always condemned as a villain. She tells Haider that *Janti hu tu apne abbu ko mujh se jyada pyaar karta hain* meaning she knows that Haider loves his father more than him. In the Yayati myth, the son of Sharmishtha, Puru accepts the curse of sage Shukra to redeem his father. Accordingly, Yayati transferred his old age and sins to Puru, Dr. Meer too transfers the sorrow of living with the burden of being a son to a revolutionary father to Haider. But like Puru, Haider never complains about it instead submits before the will of his father.

The working of the underlying mythical realities enhances the cognitive ability of the readers as they unite to the ideal universal truth which each culture inhales. As viewers one bears the potential of creating ones own meanings based on ones own perception and guided by the notion of ones culture and convention. Watching *Haider* definitely evokes a response far from the textual realities as an Indian viewer would entwine it with mythical realities significant to Indian culture and tradition. The film embraces the most popular forte of Bollywood which is the outpouring of spontaneous emotions through the medium of song unlike a text. The lines uttered by sentinel Francisco in the beginning of the text, ‘I am sick at heart’, (Shakespeare 1992: 3) carries the joyless ecstasy dominant in the film, perhaps more prominent visually than verbally. The upsurge of joyless ecstasy of human identity is captured in a song in the film Haider *Jhelum Jhelum dhoonda kinara/ dooba suraj kin ankhon mein Jhelum hua khara /kisse pucha kitne dar se dard ko sehte jana hain/Andhi raat ke haat pakar kar kabtak chalte jaana hain.* The rhetoric of film vibrating with metaphorical overtones are dealt with clarity through the mechanics of film making. The song, music and expressions of the characters smoothly mingle with the emotions of the audience. ‘And film of course, builds permanence into its very rhetoric of composition, seeking to perfect a definitive version of posterity’s completion’ (Trussler 1994: xi-xii). The song beautifully weaves the metaphorical reality of the hopelessness of human existence through the plight of prisoners in Kashmiri prison. ‘Using the stipulating power of language as a background, what can we learn from the way music makes the mind move that would apply to a hypothetical cinema that was both precise and universal in referencing what words cannot? And with music, obviously, its not just the mind that is moved, (Barnet 2008: 76). The song personifies river Jhelum’s tireless and hopeless search to settle down and stop flowing with voices drowned in its murderous embrace. The water becomes salty as tears of the saddened souls eclipsed by the grief and agony mingles in its gigantic embrace. The river’s helpless plea to find a home is likened to Haider’s fruitless search of finding his father. The search is futile as Haider seems to be holding on to the hands of a dark night which emits only darkness and extinguishes the ray of hope flickering in his soul. But amidst his fickle and wavering state of mind, there seem to lie a permanent place to find his father against all odds, a trait which is negatively Oedipian.

The film *Haider* alludes to the original text only to inherit a prismatic experience of the universal reality through the perception of the director and readers/audience power of reception. It can be further stated that ‘the inherent textuality of literature encourages the ongoing, evolving, production of meaning, and ever expanding network of textual relations’(Sanders 2005: 3). In other words each text whether a film or play may evoke diverse meaning depending on the cognitive, cultural and mythical understanding of the readers and viewers,‘A movie is also a text, but a special kind of text – an audio visual one’ (Dick 2010:2 ). In *Haider* the mythical realities act as a custodial guide to the structure of the film. Oscillating between the two myths, it engages in evolvobility moving away from the apparent textual reality, ‘Shakespeare and non-Shakespearean dramatists are trapped in a reciprocal relationship, with each canon relying on the other to formulate its identity’. (Clement 2015: 2). An adaptation of Shakespeare’s *Hamlet* the film *Haider* questions the European norm of the play being replete with ideas of Oedipal realities only since there is a strong and significant presence of the working of the Yayati myth in it. Vishal Bharadwaj while maintaining the Oedipal notion true to the European psyche may have unconsciously woven a strong influence of the Yayati myth due to the submerged yet not dormant primeval consciousness.

The film could be considered a concoction of the two psyches, Indian and European merging with the same universal or collective consciousness. Both *Haider* and *Hamlet* embody an engagement with a strong introspective and reflective consciousness throughout the film and the play, ‘When we think about consciousness we may have in mind highly complex mental activities, such as reflective self consciousness or introspective consciousness, of which perhaps only human beings are capable’ (Trussler 1994: 9). There are many signifiers in the film which point to the working of the two opposing myths. These assumptions validate itself through the ensemble of elements found in the collective consciousness of the people. In Bharadwaj we could find a strong influence of Shakespeare coupled with a fidelity to the ethics of his cultural consciousness. *Haider* deconstructs the notion of a prodigal son as he is all set to fight for the dignity and self respect of his father. Displaying traits of a negative Oedipal complex, as found in *Hamlet* Haider challenges his mothers claim of his father being irresponsible in his relationships. The lack of happiness in her life takes shape in the absurdity of his arrival and prolongs itself even after his death. In other words, earlier Gajala, Haider’s mother waits for his father’s physical presence and now she craves for his dead body. When Gajala, tells Haider that his father symbolises the emptiness in her life and also the unpleasant feeling of waiting for Godot who never arrives. At this, Haider at once retaliates by saying very assertively *woh zinda hain* meaning his father is alive. Here we find Haider’s assertive tone of his father being alive towering over his mother’s claim of the insensitiveness of his father.

The film *Haider* unlike the text exemplifies the Yayatian myth through the interaction of the landscape and body. As the purpose of sound in films were to startle and produce an orienting response, the mythical allusions are relevant in initiating the discourse with its symbolic codes. The original *Hamlet* gets an innovative treatment as it unites with the use of spectacle of light, music and acting. Haider in the film expresses his inner turmoil through a creative space. The musical number which Haider sings *bismil bulbula bismil, mat mat mil gul se mat mil* meaning o bird do not unite with the flower heightens the intensity of situation. The bird symbolises Gajala and the flower Khurram Meer who Haider suspects has murdered his father, Dr. Hilal Meer. Through the expression of song and dance and amidst the rising and decreasing tone of this musical number throbbing and palpitating with Haider’s angst and vengeance, Haider narrates the entire story of betrayal. Vishal Bharadwaj is successful in making his audience interact with the ambience of utter remorse and desolation through the medium of the protagonists repressed desires of vengeance palpitating and emerging relentlessly with every violent move and words he utters, ‘An existential relation to objects is just one of the three dimensions needed in every sign relation’ (Ehrat 2005: 9). The symbol of the flower and bird unite to the universal consciousness of the audience. Bharadwaj has also made use of the structure of the play within a play in the manner of the revenge tragedy. The song, its intensity and Haider’s gestures throughout the song helps us to gain access to his mind with its unwavering will to avenge the death of his father.

*Haider* as a film has approached the yayatian concern more than the Oedipean as the film traces the consistent growth of the protagonists mind to redeem his father from the clutches of destiny. The mother in the film only acts as an emotional basis to mark the progression of the story. Somehow she has been portrayed in a negative light as she stands in contrast to the Indian concept of a mother who should remain true to her better half even in crucial situations. Gajala, the mother of Haider fails to rise to the stature of a perfect Indian mother. She re-marries and is believed to have conspired against her husband. Therefore, somehow the viewers support Dr. Meer in spite of being a militant as his wife betrays him for another man. This would connote the idea of collective consciousness being shaded by a hue of culture as Indian myths have glorified the importance of a father’s dignity before self which the viewers willingly respond to and wich the director manipulates.

Talking of the Oedipal moments in the film, the most obvious one is where Gajala is all set to marry her husband’s brother Khurram Meer. Looking ravishing in her wedding attire Gajala seems to mesmerise her own son. Haider, comes close to her mother embraces her and tells her *aapko batne ka dil nahin karta mohjhi Zeher Khoob surat hain aap* meaning I don’t want to share you with others, you are a poisonous beauty. These lines spell an oedipal response as it is tinged with passionate overtones claiming the mother to be a beauty who could kill or charm her seekers. We could refer to the poem by John Keats *La Belle Dame Sans Merci* (1819) meaning a beautiful lady without mercy who attracts lovers to destroy them by her supernatural powers. The Oedipal moment is once again overpowered by the Yayatian one. This is evident when Gajala reminds Haider of proclaiming to marry her when he grows old. She also recollects how Haider came between his father and mother when they were sleeping together. Haider replies by saying now his father’s brother has come in between them. What is striking here is he still hasn’t forgotten his revenge which he is bent on taking. Besides, Vishal Bharadwaj’s attempt to create an oedipal moment is but momentary as the Indian audience fail to see the mother in the negative light and many could not sense any incest or sinister affectations in the embrace which Haider bestowed on his mother. The audience think it is an uncorrupt love which a son has for his mother and not an oedipal one. Vishal Bharadwaj’s understanding of the temperament of his audience has made the mother of Haider Gajala rise above the mother of Hamlet Gertrude as the former dies for her son whereas the latter dies conspiring against him., ‘The drink, the drink !I am poisoned’ (Shakespeare 1992: 99).

**Conclusion**

Thus cultural connotations rule a person’s mind where certain symbols exemplify the meaning rather than meaning elevating the symbols. The film *Haider* and the text *Hamlet* is replete with such symbols in the form of cultural connotations embodied in the Oedipus and Yayati complexes. Perhaps, the Indian viewers could not connect to the Oedipal myth wholly as they found it difficult to erase what they are born with which is the presence of a strong culture which glorifies and doesn’t undermine the mother. To the Indian viewers Gajala is a mother who could re-marry but could never bear incestuous desires for her own son. Likewise the son could never harbour such sinister thoughts towards her own mother. Besides the film, *Haider* rises as a discrete entity rather than an imperfect representation of Shakespearean essence. This can be evinced in the portrayal of Haider’s mother Gajala who sacrifices her life exhibiting the idea that revenge will eventually lead to revenge. It becomes obvious that the real hero of Bharadwaj’s adaptation is Gajala as she intensifies the film’s ending by detonating bombs on her body. She dies as a suicide bomber keeping her son away from such violent activities. To quote a Sanskrit shloka uttered by Lord Rama in Valmiki’s *Ramayan* oneof the oldest ancient epics in world literature, *janani janama bhumi sca,* meaning mother and motherland are superior to heaven. Perhaps, the European idea of Oedipal complex in the film *Haider* failed to deconstruct the reality embodied in this saying. Besides, the film *Haider’s* focuss on the Oedipus complex may have shocked the Indian audience. Unlike the original *Hamlet*, Haider’s journey is not revenge but a desire to regain his lost father, providing a new reading to the play. The film *Haider* throws new light to the already existing and dominant Oedipus complex existing in the original *Hamlet* by highlighting the Yayatian concern of Haider’s unflinching love for his father. It is the influence of the Indian culture which has made the original *Hamlet* appear as a different story. However, in adaptation, the point of similarity and differences exist within the film and the text. Beyond the influence which each culture exerts on the film and the text what lies is the innate universal consciousness in the form of story telling which has been transmitted from ages leading to the evolution in adaptation. This would make us go beyond the questions of fidelity in *Haider* considering its story as an element of culture transmitted since ages through the process of imitation. Imitation is a natural phenomenon which exists in each culture and in this context fidelity is just a myth. ‘This emphasis on adaptation as an endless process of recycling with not clear point of origin has helped shift the field away from the dreaded Achilless heel of adaptation studies- namely, fidelity discourse (Smith 13)

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  |  |

**Works Cited**

Astrospeak. <https://www.astrospeak.com/slides/bhagavad-gita>, assessed on 25th February, 2018.

Barnett, Daniel. *Movement as Meaning in Experimental Film.* Rodopi B.V. 2008.

Bettinson, Gary, and James Udden. *The Poetics of Chinese Cinema*. Macmillan, 2012.

Bortolloti, Gary R, and Hutcheon Linda “On the Origin of Adaptations: Rethinking Fidelity Discourse and “Success”- Biologically.” *New* *Literary* *History*, vol. 38, pp. 443-448.

Burnett, Leon et al. *Myth , Literature and the Unconscious*. Karnac Books Ltd, 2013.

Clement, Jennifer. “Introduction to Special Issue on Adaptation and Early Modern Culture: Shakespeare and Beyond.” *Shakespeare,* vol. 11, no.1, 2015, pp. 1-9.

Dick, Bernad F. *Anatomy of Film.* St. Martin’s Press, 2010.

Ehrat, Johannes. “*Cinema and Semiotic Pierce and Film Aesthetics, Narration and Representation*. University of Toronto Press, 2005.

Hawkes, Terrance. *The Semiotics of Theatre and Drama*. Routledge, 1987.

Lodge, David, and Wood Nigel. *Modern Criticism and Theory A Reader*. Routledge, 2014.

Mayo, Sarah. “A Shakespeare for the People? Negotiating the Popular in Shakespeare in Love and Michael Hoffman’s A Mid Summer Nights Dream.” *Textual Practice*, vol. 17, no.2, 2003, pp. 295-315.

Pattanaik, Devdutt. *In Greek Mythology*. Penguin, 2010.

Ryle, Simon. *Shakespeare, Cinema and Desire*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2014.

Sanders, Julie. *Adaptation and Appropriation*. Routledge, 2005.

Shakespeare, William. *Hamlet.* Norton, 1992.

Smith, Ian Robert. *Cultural Borrowings: Appropriation, Reworking, Transformation.* Scope: An Online Journal of Film and Television Studies, 2009.

Trusler, Simon. *Cambridge Illustrated History British Theatre*. Cambridge, 1994.