

# A STUDY OF FILM ADAPTATION AS A PROCESS OF CULTURAL GLOCALIZATION WITH REFERENCE TO OTHELLO AND OMKARA.

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## ABSTRACT

*Globalization is a process of sharing, spreading the objects, ideas, experiences to the people around the world. The very idea of 'sharing' comes with the concept of connecting through minds and hearts of people. The whole Globe is made up of various continents and oceans geographically which consist of multi cultural people. With the existence of various cultures come the varieties of objects and experiences. 'Globality' is the condition, where as, 'Globalization' is the process of transaction of social relations worldwide. The concept furthers with the idea of 'Glocalization' which is the combination of the terms, 'Globalization+ Localization'. According to Management Dictionary, Glocalization is an amalgamation of the words "Global" and "Localization". It is a term used for describing a product or service whose development and distribution is done globally, but after it reaches different local markets it is tailored to accommodate the user of that particular local market. It is basically the adaptation of globally standard products done in the local markets according to the laws, consumer preference, customs etc. The concept describes a product or service that is developed and distributed globally, however, is also adjusted to accommodate the user or consumer in a local market. The research intends to evaluate Omkara directed by Vishal Bharadwaj which is the Film Adaptation of the play Othello by William Shakespeare with Glocal perspective.*

**Keyword:** glocalization, film adaptation, Othello, Shakespeare, Omkara , Vishal Bharadwaj

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Literature, history, and films are distinct forms of communication which seem to have received a rapid spur in the information age we live in. The first means is the nature and tradition of adaptation itself. Although screen adaptation of literature has been around since the beginning of cinema and has provoked the most intense debate among the public at large. Film adaptation is a derivative work of transfer of literary text into a feature film. From primitive days of cinema, adaptation has been as common as the expansion of the original play. In society as well, if analyse, audience accept films more than text because the common class does not possess the ability to enjoy the text.

Film-adaptation is an attempt to serve the same dish in a new plate. Though, the art form changes and is bound with too many allegations of losing charm of original text or bringing away the form from the originality, brings forth a new version of what is already been said. It is intending to cover

the mass that is not able to read and interpret the literary text.

Glocalization, global meeting local. Glocalization basically is the concept from Economics; however, it can be referred to in literature as is done in this article by taking in account Othello and Omkara. Othello is a very well-known play written by William Shakespeare, whereas, Omkara is the adaptation of that very play. In the adaptation the East adapts from the West and thus Glocalisation becomes possible and comes out with a whole new version as a film. This article particularly focuses on how Cultural Glocalisation becomes possible with the passing of time. The concept intends to see the world of literature in closer context keeping in mind the differences of cultures and similarities in human tendencies.

## 2. THEORETICAL GROUND

Confinement of Western science results in the development of the telescope, which has a consequence "the decentering of the human universe" (286) through the closing stages of the

belief in Geocentrism. A new mode of representation, made possible by the technology of the camera vague, paradoxically sets up the subject as “the active center and origin of meaning.”

Baudry states that critics of the ideological belongings of film has focused on the effects that such movie have as finished products, but the “technical bases on which these effects depend” has been unobserved. “Between ‘objective reality’ and the camera, site of inscription, and between inscription and the projection are situated certain operations, a work which has as a result a finished product.” The dilemma is that this product, the film, hides the work that creates this transformation.

The film goes through transformations, from decoupage, the inoculation breakdown before shooting, to montage. Between these phases of production, a “mutation of signifying material takes place...precisely in the place occupied by the camera”. That is, the decoupage, which operates as language, is altered through the apparatus of the camera into image, or exposed film, which is then transformed again, through the apparatuses that make editing possible, into a finished product.

Another operation affected through instruments take place when the complete product of the film, which is a commodity that possesses exchange value, is transformed through the apparatus of the projector and the screen to become the filmic affair which can then be consumed, which is a product with use value.

The complete film restores the movement of the “objective reality” that the camera has filmed, but it does so by creating the illusion of movement through a series of separate, static images. The fact that this transformation, and the instruments that enact it, is obscured from the viewer, is inherently ideological.

### 3. ANALYSIS OF OTHELLO AND OMKARA

The Shakespearian drama Othello has two adaptations in which the first is the BBC version and second is the Bollywood adaptation, Omkara. The first does not have many changes but the later is affected massively with the Indian culture and the element of dirty politics is added along with.

The Indian version of Othello covers within the Indian culture and by that deals the plot of original

work, a bit differently. The movie consists of peculiarities of Indian politics, UP culture and symbolism. There are some changes in terms of plot when we see Billo’s character used for political purpose. In the end Indu kills his own husband LangdaTyagi where as in original work Emilia is killed by Iago. In several circuits, the dialect, the dark and disturbing theme and also the expletives curtail its prospects to an extent.

Sussane Guss gives title to her essay as “Shakespeare in Bollywood?” in which she refers to Vishal Bharadwaj as ‘Indian Shakespeare’(Gruss); as he carries the plot of his movies from Shakespearean drama. In his films, the audience get to see the Indian version of the dramas of Shakespeare. To take up the European plot and interweave the Indian culture is his speciality. The treatment of the movie comes to the audience as never expected in Shakespearean drama. Shakespearean dramas represented European culture and its nuances; whereas Vishal Bharadwaj gives it a complete Indian touch. Back during the time when film released, the popular newspaper “The Times of India” dated 28th July 2006 gave the review, “And yes, Vishal lives up to the Bard. For not only does he skilfully capture the netherworld of the human psyche — those ambiguous grey areas of conventional morality — which formed the playground for Shakespearean drama, he manages to lift the bar of Indian cinema with his unique adaptation” (Omkara).

In the beginning of the film, introduction of the villain of the film is being done through his unbalanced walk which introduces him as ‘Langda Tyagi’. The complete Uttar Pradesh culture is depicted in a very thorough manner. Let that be through their dressing, hot blood, language, characteristics of a person, representation of society. The proposal of Dolly to Omkara is done through letter is an example of woman belonging to Uttar Pradesh Culture. The designation changing of Omkara and Keshu is also done in a temple opting ceremony and Hawan. In Omkara and Dolly’s marriage many superstitions are been discussed which also acted as symbolism such as Omkara leaving the Haldi ceremony half way, an eagle flying with a dead snake in its mouth and it falls down in the bowl of Haldi for Dolly.

Langda Tyagi gets an idea to link up Dolly and Keshu in a birthday party of his own son. In just one song, couple of sequences are exhibited together; Keshu’s interest and protection towards

Billo, Langada encouraging Rajju to evoke Keshu and the physical relation between Omkara and Dolly.

In the original text Othello, Shakespeare has used historical backdrop: Military conflict between Vietnam and Turkey. In the adaptation, Bharadwaj has used Uttar Pradesh political scenario. Omakara is made Bahubali by Naseeruddin Shah which is the legacy followed from ages in political section. In both text and movie, political as well as social affairs are finely interwoven and are also somewhere responsible for disaster to come in personal lives of the characters. For instance, Kesu tries to teach Dolly English song to please Omakara and he convinces Dolly to plead Omkara for his forgiveness. This very instance brings the thought of Dolly's affair with Kesu in Omkara's mind.

Just as Shakespeare has expressed his character's inner most feelings through songs, similarly in the film many events are presented in the song sequence only. The music of this film became very popular among audience as it carried a very high lyrical meaning and visually every song told some story. This is a unique technique adapted by Vishal Bharadwaj. The first song Naina Thag Laenge says the story of Dolly falling in love with Omkara; second song Omkara...Title track depicts the personality of Omkara – an introduction to the character of Omkara; third song O Sathire presents the love and comfort between Omkara and Dolly in which towards the end of the song Kamarbandh is stolen by Imla and an jealous eye on their relation is exhibited. The fourth song, Bidi Jalai le presents the triple movement mentioned above and fifth song NamakIshqka plays a role of political mishaps and stolen Kamarbandh is noticed on Billo's waist. In Othello there are songs which narrate the deep thoughts of the minds of the character. Bharadwaj has used the technique of moving the plot through songs whereas Shakespeare has used them to depict the inner most feelings of the characters or situation. In Act-IV Scene-III, Shakespeare refers to a mournful folk ballad - "The Willow Song", which originally appeared in a book of lute music from 1583 with a view to intensify Desdemona's agony and her saddest destiny.

*Come all you forsaken and mourn you with me...  
Who speaks of a false love, mine's falser than she...  
Let love no more boast her in palace nor bower...*

*It buds, but it blasteth ere it be a flower...*

*Though fair and more false, I die with thy wound...*

*Thou hast lost the truest lover that goes upon the  
ground, sing... (Shakespeare's Saddest)*

The original drama Othello has a significant character of the 'handkerchief'. Though it is a materialistic tool or seems to be mere gift from a husband, however, it plays an important part in both the texts. In Othello, the handkerchief is very close to Othello because he gave it to Desdemona as a first gift, the handkerchief functions as a token of his love, which Desdemona cherishes.

#### 4. EMILIA

*I am glad I have found this napkin.*

*This was her first remembrance from the Moor. My  
wayward husband hath a hundred times Wooed  
me to steal it. But she so loves the token (For he  
conjured her she should ever keep it) That she  
reserves it evermore about her*

*To kiss and talk to. I'll have the work ta'en out  
And give 't Iago. What he will do with it Heaven  
knows, not I.*

*I nothing but to please his fantasy. (Shakespeare  
3.3.63)*

This is why Iago convinces his wife to steal it from Desdemona, he knows that it has a lot of sentimental value and that Othello will be angry when he finds out his wife no longer has it.

Iago also knows that, for Othello, the handkerchief symbolizes Desdemona's fidelity. When it shows up in Cassio's possession, Othello is convinced that Desdemona is unfaithful. The white napkin, as we know, is spotted with red strawberries, and Othello tells Desdemona that the strawberries were hand stitched with thread that has been dyed with blood from "maidens' hearts" or, virgins' blood (Shakespeare 3.4.87).

In this way, the handkerchief resembles a white wedding sheet that's also been stained with a virgin's blood. So, in Othello's mind, as long as Desdemona has the handkerchief in her possession, she's chaste. But the moment she "loses it," she loses her chastity.

The handkerchief also seems to function as a symbol of Othello's mysterious past and his

“exoticness.” He tells Desdemona that an Egyptian “charmer” gave it to his mother and that it

would keep his father under her spell (Shakespeare 3.4.67). That such a small object has such enormous weight in the play testifies to the sensitivity of jealous minds, and the way that small incidents can be magnified psychologically into “proofs” of love or betrayal.

In Omkara, handkerchief is replaced with ‘Kamarbandh’ which Omkara says is Pushtaini(ancestral) to be possessed by daughter in laws of the family. ‘Handkerchief’ and ‘Kamarbandh’ are not merely gifts or objects used in the drama but it plays a distinct character to bring twist and turns in the texts. They are closely associated with the fidelity of Desdemona and Dolly.

The characters in both Othello and Omkara are essentially the same in nature. However, due to change in social transformation from European to Indian, makes the difference. Desdemona in Othello is naive but brave woman to take decision to be with love of her life.

Race is given the central theme in the movie; however, caste is given the same weigh. It parallel deals with race and caste system in India. In Othello, Othello is a moor, whereas in Omkara, instead of portraying Omi Shukla a Dalit, he portrayed him as a half caste. Desdemona is a young fair lady belonging to the upper strata of the society; whereas, Dolly Mishra is a Brahmin. In Othello black Othello chooses white Desdemona and ego clashes; her father warns him for assumed betrayal from Desdemona’s side. In Omkara, half caste Omkara marries Brahmin Dolly and follows the same context in Indian approach.

In one of the scenes, Kesu is seen teaching an English song to Dolly in which she is unable to pronounce the word ‘bottom’ according to the accent of the song. This very incident carries various meanings, for instance, however tough try any Indian person gives to British accent, they lack somewhere, another derivation can be the hidden urge of an Indian not to accept British accent.

Towards the end, all the political, social and personal affairs reach to the height and do not resolve as such at the end. In one of the conversation of Imli and Omkara a touch of feminism is reflected. She talks about the woman in Indian society who leaves her own family and

loved ones to go and live with a boy but she is not honoured or trusted. The end, both in Othello and Omkara is treated differently. In Othello, Othello kills himself knowing the fact that it was Iago’s conspiracy of which Othello has to lose his love and Iago is arrested by the authorities. On the other hand, in Omkara, Imli kills Lagda Tyagi, knowing his mal intentions. In Indian society, husband is to be treated as God and holds supreme importance

for the wife; however, Imli killing her own husband brings to the forth the feminist touch in the plot as she does not get weak even if she has to kill her own husband. Guilty should be punished by Ma Durga as per Indian Mythology be it anyone is rightly framed in the end of the film Omkara.

## 5. CONCLUSION

Shakespearean Othello (1603) presented European culture and was adapted by Vishal Bharadwaj into Omkara which reflected Indian culture. Othello has two adaptations, first is by BBC which is the pictorial version of the text and thus can be considered as the transliteration. The next Omkara is the Indian version of Othello which is the transformation of the original text as it has difference in cultural impact but has stuck to the original plot.

Film adaptation, just as translation process, can be classified at three various levels: transliteration, transformation and transcreation; denoting the same concepts as that of associated with literary translations. Film in comparison to literary written text and adaptation are, like translated texts, considered sub-text, less than the main one. Transcreated film adaptations of famous literary texts are, arguably, evident of creative transformation of main text that enriches the literary experience of the viewers; hence, such film adaptations ought to be judged as separate valuable text.

Omkara is the Transcreated version of the play Othello which perfectly puts forth the example of Glocalization. William Shakespeare, nevertheless, is considered the master playwright for his quality of writing plays with universal appeal. Thus, his plays have been adapted into films time and again such as Hamlet to Haider, Macbeth to Maqbool directed by Vishal Bharadvaj and Romeo Juliet to Raam Leela directed by Sanjay Leela Bhansali.

In the nutshell, due to Shakespearean theme of writing play with universality, Glocalisation becomes possible. The vision of Shakespeare while writing dramas yet does not seem out dated. The play written in Europe became possible to be adapted in Indian Cinema due to Glocalization.

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