
Differences between the play Macbeth and the film Maqbool.

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Abstract

Maqbool is a 2004 Indian film directed by Vishal Bhardwaj, a renowned Indian film director in Mumbai. The film Maqbool is an adaptation of one of the greatest tragedies of Shakespeare, Macbeth. In this paper, we propose to explore the differences between Shakespeare's original play, Macbeth, and the Hindi film, Maqbool, which is based on William Shakespeare's play, Macbeth. The film is an adaptation, not an imitation of the original play. The very word, adaptation, indicates that the director has made a lot of changes in the setting, background, characters, and structure while adapting the play into a film. These changes are to suit the Indian filmgoers. When we watch the film and compare it with the play, we find a lot of differences between the play and the film. However, we do not find any change in the story and the themes. Vishal Bhardwaj has treated the same themes in the movie that Shakespeare has treated in the play. This paper will explore how the film Maqbool is different from the original play, Macbeth, by Shakespeare.

Keywords: Adaptation, Differences, Film, Macbeth, Maqbool, Vishal Bhardwaj

Introduction:

Directed by an Indian Director and filmmaker, Vishal Bhardwaj, the film Maqbool is based on one of the greatest tragedies of Shakespeare, Macbeth. It is a crime drama set against the background of the Mumbai underworld. In this film, the director realistically depicts the life of the Mumbai underworld gangsters, their rivalry, and their war for supremacy and control over the area. The film starred Irfan Khan in the lead role of Macbeth, Tabbu in the role of Lady Macbeth,

Pankaj kapur in the role of King Duncon, Naseeruddin Shah and Om puri in the role of the witches, the weird sisters who make prophecy for the murder of King Duncon and the rise and fall of Macbeth. The other roles have been played by Piyush Mishra, Murali Sharma and Masumeh Makhaji.

PLOT:

The story of the film is based on Macbeth. The film is set against the background of the Mumbai underground criminals. Jahangir Khan alias Abbaji is the head of the Mumbai gangster. He is respected and the most powerful person in Mumbai. Due to his political connections, Abbaji became very powerful, and no policeman dared to arrest him. Rather, they play in his lap for the sake of money and other facilities. Maqbool is Abbaji's right hand and has great respect for him. He is also the most powerful person in the gang after Abbaji, who loves him as his own son. Nimmi, a young and beautiful girl, is Abbaji's mistress. She has come from Lucknow to try her luck in the Mumbai film industry, but she meets failure and becomes Abbaji's mistress to survive in Mumbai. But Maqbool and Nimmi secretly love each other. Like Lady Macbeth in the play, Nimmi is also overambitious and wants control over the gang through Maqbool and also to liberate herself from Abbaji. So, she persuades Maqbool to kill Abbaji and become the leader of the gang. Gradually, Maqbool also becomes ambitious, and after some hesitation, he kills Abbaji, his mentor, while he is sleeping on the bed beside Nimmi. Maqbool easily becomes the leader of the gang. However, some members of the gang doubt Maqbool and whisper that Maqbool has killed Abbaji to have complete control over the gang. From here, Maqbool and Nimmi's tragic fall starts. Nimmi goes mad. She washes her hand again and again, but the blood stain is not washed out from her hand. On the other hand, Maqbool becomes weak. He is surrounded by many enemies. He becomes penniless, and so he loses the favor of the politicians. He tries to flee to Dubai with his pregnant wife, but he does not succeed. He tries his best to save his wife and their newborn child, but he fails. Nimmi dies of madness and uncared labor pain, whereas Macbeth is killed in the exchange of fire between him and the naval police in a raid on his hideout. Thus, both of them meet tragic ends.

When the film was released in 2004 in India, it did not become a box office hit. The film did not perform well. The cinemagoers did not like the film, but it was highly acclaimed by film critics all over the world. This film made Vishal Bhardwaj internationally famous. He was internationally acclaimed for his film Maqbool. Now, he has become an internationally acclaimed director. Vishal Bhardwaj not only directed the film but also composed the songs and music. He also composed the background score of the film. Vishal Bhardwaj's interest in Shakespeare's play is well known. In 2006 he made a film, Omkara, based on Shakespeare's play Othello, and in 2014, Haider, based on Shakespeare's play Hamlet. All these three films,

Based on Shakespeare's famous tragedies, they were internationally acclaimed and were called Vishal Bhardwaj Shakespeare's Trilogy. Although the film Maqbool could not gather a sufficient audience at the time of its release in India, the critics praised the movie for its character, background, and music, and as a result, in the Filmfare Award, Pankaj Kapur won the Best Actor (critics) Award, and a National Film Award for Best Supporting Actor. Moreover, the film was also screened at the Cannes Film Festival in France, where the film was acclaimed as one

of the best films in the Hindi language, and it received applause from the critics as well as the audience at the premiere.

After the premiere, Maqbool received universal acclaim. Sita Menon, in his article, "Watch Maqbool. It is Class!" described the film as "a visual gallery that is an intelligent blend of dark, tragic overtones and comic satirical undertones." India Today described it as a "haunting Operative tragedy ."Madhu Jain in Out Look said that it "effectively transported the essence of the story to the milieu of the Bombay underworld of our times." Deccan Herald described the film as "Brooding, tragic and brilliant 'Maqbool' with its satirical undertones is cinema at its best ."The other cinema critic, Derek Elley, in his review, "Maqbool," wrote that the visuals are great, but audiences might need an understanding of the play Macbeth to fully understand and enjoy the film.

Before being released in India, Maqbool was premiered in North America in 2003 at the Toronto Film Festival Where it was a grand success and was appreciated by the audience as well as critics.

Literature Review:

A lot of scholars and critics have worked on Shakespeare adaptation to Indian films. Surbhi Modi in her work, "Shadows in the Mirror: A Select Semiotic Study of Indian Cinematic Representations of Shakespeare's Plays", has studied the female characters in Shakespeare adaptation to four great tragedies to Indian films. In this regard she has studied Maqbool, Omkara, and Haider. She has also studied the transformation of the female characters in these films.

Another scholar, Vikram Singh Thakur, in his work, " Performing Shakespeare in Indian Adaptation," explores the adaptation and performances of Shakespeare's plays in regional theatres of India. The other important work, "Bollywood Shakespeare," edited by Craig Dionne and Parmita Kapadia, explores the interrelationship between Bollywood and Shakespeare's plays. In this collected essays, the authors have analyzed the Bollywood adaptation of Shakespeare's Plays. Rajiv Verma in his research articles, "Shakespeare in Hindi Cinema" explores the influences of Shakespeare's plays on Hindi cinema.

Many other scholars like Sisir Kumar Das, Sukanta Chaudhry, Poonam Trivedi, etc., have written research articles in which they have explored the translation and interpretation of Shakespeare's plays in different languages and cultures of India. One of my research articles, "Indian Films and Literature," may be consulted to find a strong relationship between Indian films and literature and to show that literature is essential for filmmaking because it provides stories that are essential components of films.

Thus we see that no scholar or critic has paid full attention to a film which is fully based on one of the best plays of Shakespeare with a difference in setting, background, and characterization like Indian film, Maqbool. In this paper, we have

taken the film Maqbool as a role model of Vishal Bhardwaj's direction and explored the differences in detail that have been made by the director to suit the taste of Indian audiences and their culture.

Objective:

The main objective of this research paper is to have a close study of Shakespeare's play, Macbeth, and the film, Maqbool, which is based on the play Macbeth, and to point out the differences in the setting, background, and the nomenclature of the characters to suit Indian Milieu. Although the themes are the same as we find in the play, the director made many changes while filming the film. Our main aim in this paper is to study those changes and also to find out the reasons for those changes.

Methodology:

We believe that without fully understanding the play in performance or the text of the play, it is not possible to understand and enjoy the film fully. So, we have conducted a detailed textual study of the play and a visual study of the film Maqbool to point out the differences between Macbeth and Maqbool. We have repeated the process, read the play, and watched the play on YouTube again and again to understand it fully. A similar method has been used for the film. We watched the film again and again to understand the differences between the play and the film fully. This repeated methodology has made our concept clear, which we have incorporated into this paper.

Although the film, Maqbool is an adaptation of Shakespeare play, Macbeth, it is set against the background of Mumbai gangster. In spite of similarity in plot, characters and motif there are many differences between the original play of Shakespeare and the film.

Star Cast of the Movie:

Irrfan Khan-----Maqbool (Original Macbeth).
Tabu----- Nimmi (original Lady Macbeth)
Pankaj Kapoor----- Jahangir Khan alias Abbaji (Original King Duncan of Scotland).
Piyush Mishra----- Kaka (Original Banquo).
Om puri -----Inspector Pandit (original Witch, weird sisters)
Naseeruddin Shah ----- Inspector Purohit (original Witch, Weird sisters)
Ankur Vikal ----- Riyaz Boti (original Macduff)
Masumeh Makhija ----- Sameera, Abbaji's Daughter (original Malcolm).
Since Maqbool's background is that of a Mumbai gangster, the names of the characters are given accordingly to suit the taste of the modern cinema-going audience.

Differences:

After watching the play and the movie, we find the following differences:

In the movie, Lady Macbeth of the play becomes Nimmi, who has come to Mumbai from Lucknow to become an actress, but she fails and ultimately becomes

the mistress of Abbaji, a leader of a notorious gang of criminals who has complete control over the Mumbai underworld. In the play, Lady Macbeth is Macbeth's legitimate wife. Although Nimmy, in the film, is the mistress of Jahangir Khan alias Abbaji (respected father) and living with him as a wife, she is secretly in love with Miyan Maqbool, the right hand of Abbaji. She pursues Maqbool to kill Abbaji again and again to fulfill her ambition to become the lady of the gang. Anyhow, in the film, we do not find this illicit relationship. If we accept Nimmi as Abbaji's wife, her relationship will be illicit. In the play, we do not find Lady Macbeth having an illicit relationship and seeking help from others to achieve her goal and fulfill her ambition. She is loyal to her husband and only pursues him to kill King Duncan and fulfill her ambition. In the film, we see that Nimmi is selfish, and due to her selfishness, she deceives her patron, Abbaji. Here, we find that Nimmi is using Maqbool to achieve her goal. But in the play, the ambition of both Macbeth and Lady Macbeth is the same. They both live as true husbands and wives. Thus, we see that Lady Macbeth presents a domestic life, whereas Nimmi is the representative of extramarital affairs. In the original play of Shakespeare, Duncan is a respected and popular king of Scotland. But in Vishal Bhardwaj's movie, Duncan has become Abbaji, a creepy leader of the Mumbai gangster. In the play, King Duncan is represented as a gentle, honest, and respected king of Scotland. The People love him and have great respect for him. Although he is powerful, he meets his king, and people are not afraid of him. Rather, they love him. On the contrary, Jahangir Khan, who is popularly known as Abbaji, is a dreaded criminal. People are afraid of him. No one can speak against him not because, as in the case of King Duncan, the people love and respect him but because they are afraid of him and his gang. Unlike King Duncan, Abbaji is a shrewd man. He has killed many of his rival gangs, but he is not on the list of the police. Even the police of Mumbai bowed down before him because he had political connections and contributed a lot of money to the politicians at the time of the election. Being an intelligent person, he has complete control over his men as well as the other underworld gangs of Mumbai. Unfortunately, as is the tradition, he is trapped in the beauty of a woman, and so he meets a tragic death.

In Shakespeare's play, the motif of killing the king is the lust for absolute power and ambition to become the king and the queen of the country. Macbeth in the play holds the rank just below the king, Duncan, and he is equally popular among the people. This makes him and his wife, Lady Macbeth, ambitious to become king and queen of Scotland. But this is not possible without the death of the king. But they do not have the patience to wait for the death of the king. To acquire absolute power as soon as possible, they plan to kill the king. Lady Macbeth is rather more ambitious and so continuously pursues Macbeth to kill the king. Since Duncan is a father-like figure to Macbeth, he feels hesitation in killing him. But the constant persuasion of his wife, Lady Macbeth, makes him ambitious, and one night, when the king is sleeping, Macbeth, along with his wife, kills the king and becomes the king of Scotland. But in the film, the main motif behind the killing is jealousy for love, which provokes Maqbool to kill his mentor, Abbaji. Maqbool and Nimmi are in love

with each other, and they know that unless Abbaji is dead, they cannot be united. It is an illicit love affair that instigates the murder plan. There is a gap between the age of Abbaji and Nimmi. This is an unmatched relationship. Being young and at the age of Maqbool, her attraction towards Maqbool is natural. He is also attracted to her. But they are aware of the power and influence of Abbaji. So they make a secret plan to kill Abbaji so they can freely live as husband and wife and enjoy the power and influence of Abbaji, and thus, they will lead a happy life.

In the play Macbeth, there are three witches, the weird sisters, who make prophecies regarding Macbeth and his future. But in the movie Inspector Pandit (Om Puri) and Inspector Prohit (Naseeruddin Shah), the two corrupt and saying cops played the role of three witches. One

Nightthe when Abbaji is sleeping in the bed with Nimmi, Macbeth shoots Abbaji and puts the blame on the unknown enemy, and he himself becomes the leader of the gang and a declared lover of Nimmi. One notable difference we find here is that in the play, Duncan is sleeping alone, but in the film, Abbaji is with Nimmi in bed, which fuels Macbeth's jealousy. These two corrupt policemen are the source of black comedy in the movie. They make prophecies about the rise of Macbeth as the leader of the Mumbai underworld, like the three witches in the play. They become loyal to Maqbool when he becomes the leader of the gang, and they help him finish his rivals.

In the play, three weird sisters make a prophecy that Macbeth will not be killed unless the Birnham wood talks to him, but in the film, the two corrupt fortune-telling policemen make a prophecy that Maqbool will not be killed unless the sea walks to him. At the end of the play, their prophecy becomes true when the enemy soldiers come to attack Macbeth, holding the branches of trees to hide themselves, which, from far away, seems that Birnham Wood is coming. This is the symbolic use of the Birnham forest. In the film, we see that in the end, the Indian navy raids Maqbool, and he is shot dead in the encounter. The Naval Police here symbolizes the sea. Thus, the prophecy of the policemen becomes true.

Nimmi gives birth to a child in the end of the movie whereas Lady Macbeth does not have any child in the play. After the death of the King Duncan, Nimmi and Maqbool are living as husband and wife. Lady Macbeth becomes pregnant and towards the end of the film she gives birth to a child but in the play Lady Macbeth is neither pregnant nor gives birth to a child.

The other difference we find between the play and the film is the background and setting. The background of the play Macbeth is the kingdom of Scotland, whereas the background of the film is Mumbai's underground world. In the play, Duncan is the king of Scotland, and he is a very gentle and respected king. He has great care for his people. Macbeth is one of the prominent courtiers and holds a very high position in the kingdom of Scotland. His rank is just below the king. On the other hand, the film deals with the life of a Mumbai gangster. Jahangir Khan, alias Abbaji, is the

substitute for King Duncan, a hard-core criminal and the leader of the Mumbai underworld. He is the leader of the gangster. He has, of course, respect for the people, but this respect is due to fear. People are afraid of him due to his criminal background and connection with the politicians. Maqbool in the film, unlike Macbeth in the play, is not a gentleman. He is a criminal and killer. He is the right hand of Abbaji in the crime. He is popular, but in a bad sense.

The other important difference is that in the play, Lady Macbeth is a respected housewife of Macbeth and belongs to a royal family, whereas in the film, Nimmi is an ordinary girl who has Come from Lucknow to Mumbai to become an actress in the film industry and ultimately become the mistress of the leader of the Mumbai underworld.

Our above discussion shows that there are many differences between the play and the film, although the themes remain the same. Regarding these differences, a film critic, James McLeod, has rightly observed that:

Macbeth meets the God father in present day Mumbai. The Scottish tragedy set in the contemporary underworld of India's commercial capital; two corrupt fortune telling policemen take the roles of a crime family. Abbaji's mistress and Maqbool plot and carry out his death; the sea plays the role of Birnam wood. (www.Imbd.com/Lit).

Thus we see that the adaptation of shakespeare's play has become one of the best psychological movies which probes into the inner conscious of the audience and makes us to understand the side effect of being overambitious. The film is also a great contribution and helpful for the translation studies in India.

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