

# A Celluloid Representation of Vikas Swarup's *Q&A*

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**Abstract:** Literature and cinema are associated with each other, though having many identical characteristics, still different and unique in their own senses. Each theoretical and cinematic adaptation of classics and epics display clear reflections of lifestyle and society. Literature and cinema have constantly been one of the most pleasant/attractive styles of expertise, making remarkable effects on human psychology. The present research is primarily based on the speculation whether the movie adaptation of traditional writings manifests as a parody of the original textual content or adds a new aspect to its time examined aura. Adaptation theory has been employed to compare both the art forms. The study focuses upon film adaptation of classics which assists in engaging and generating the interest of younger generation in literature and developing analytical thinking skills. The result will be based on whether this tendency of adaptation assists in blurring the hierarchy that exists between the two art forms or in negating critical opinion which disregards film as inferior.

**Index Terms:** Adaptation, cinematic adaptation, negating, art forms, traditional writings.

## Introduction

The adaptation of a literary text is an important endeavour that becomes a critical effort of studying, understanding and interpreting it in the light of recent or contemporary events or situations. Theatrical and cinematic adaptations have proved to be a powerful media for transposing/transferring meaning throughout historical times and cultures. Adaptations help us re-live the texts and make a more inclusive enquiry. Both theatrical and cinematic adaptations of classics and epics are nothing but the informed reflections on culture and society. Film adaptations of classics help contemporary audiences revisit the museumised classics from the vantage point of contemporary social life. In reworking the classics, it is hence not surprising how the dialogues are enunciated with an altered script while the plot is more or less consistent.

Fidelity has been a prominent debate since the very inception of transforming literary work into cinematic adaptations. In the very initial phase of adaptation, critics like Robert Stam and Linda Hutcheon relegated the process as “minor” “subsidiary”, “derivative” or “secondary” products, lacking the symbolic richness of the books and missing their “spirit”. Within the introduction Hutcheon explicitly states that the study is not a series of case-studies but rather a comparative analysis of adaptation, examining a variety of genres such as literature, film, theatre, opera, television, and interactive websites.”(Hutcheon, 2006)

Conversely, literary classics are made accessible to the masses in the colloquial language and parole of the masses. Highlighting the revolutionising facet of cinema, Leo Tolstoy has aptly written that cinema “will make a revolution in our life- in the life of writers”. Altering the old and traditional methods of reading the narrative discourse, adaptation amalgamates emotional thoughts with that of real life experiences. Tolstoy further claims that “cinema has divined the mystery of motion” , and that its “greatness” (Michaels, 3) lies in the changing trends.

Adaptation possesses the ability to alter the life of the narrative by changing it into another art form. Critic like Linda Hutcheon has relegated adaptation to have a devolutionary effect as transforming the originality of the source text is perceived as inferior, but adaptation should not be perceived as the mimesis of the original. The target text or the cinematic text in itself is a creative endeavour and can be revered as transcreation of the source text.

The process of adaptation can be correlated to the process of intertextuality wherein the ideas and the substances permeate from one text to another. Commenting upon this flow of art and the interconnectedness between the two art forms, Julie Sanders in *Adaptation*

and Appropriation observes, “Adaptation and appropriation are fundamental to the practice and indeed to the enjoyment of literature... intertextuality... how art creates art or how literature is made by literature... cultural osmosis regularly takes place between adaptive writers and texts” (14). Sander’s assertion verifies the binding relationship between a text and its adaptation. She aptly calls it “intersexuality” which enables a better and a rich comprehension of literature. The adaptation like the original is a coherent organization of the author’s thought. The adapted text, however, is an indicator of the director’s own perceptions.

The questions and queries that arise in a director’s mind when he/she directs an adaptation are:

- Can the adaptation stand alone, or is it necessary to have read the novel?
- Does adaptation capture the novels’ proper elements: the themes, the characterization, style, tone and plot of the novel?
- When the screen writer changes some of the formal elements of the novel, is overall message retained?

Such questions remain the key elements while transforming a source text into target text. In the similar vein, Anthony Davies emphasizes on the creative role of the director when he says; “How far can the filmmaker be a creator? To what extent is he obliged to confine himself to being an interpreter? What happens when narratives spoken through the printed words are to be told in a language of noise up moving pictures? And to most important what extent are literary film adaptations useful as learning texts?” (Raina and kang, 2014)

There have been occasions when the popular reworking of classics subverts the original work with a mutant version. The text is intersected to continue in the essential theme of the book, while disposing off the elements that do not serve the objective of adaptation. It is by these and many more popular venues that film adaptations have revisited the classics in the arena of popular culture. In cue with this, there exist various reasons for film adaptation.

Movie making is a very expensive process; studying the already existing well-known selling book, it is a guarantee that the adaptation will benefit from this and attract numerous readers. It basically avoids disastrous financial flop. There is an esteem involved in film’s close relationship to literature. Filmmakers try to get away from the labels of light and shallow entertainment by making alliances with far more highly regarded medium of the written world. The main reason is that best story is often found between the cones of a novel. Novels- into-film studies without a doubt stimulate the attention for literature, for reading. Numerous film adaptations cause a claim for the books they are based on. Film and TV play an important part in our lives to represent big changes in the learning environment. Obviously, it must have results for the text books and their educational medium that are produced now and in the future.

Further, transforming a novel into film is not an easy task and hence involves several ways of relation between the film and the text which can be categorized as “Borrowing, intersecting and the fidelity of transformation” (Andrew, 1984). In case of borrowing, the main concern is the overview of the original; it’s potential for wide and varied appeal in short, its existence as a continuing form or standard in culture. *Namesake* is the example of borrowing the adaptation mode.

We often come across a concept, what Dudley Andrew calls as “intersecting” in his celebrated work *Concepts in Film Theory*, while examining an adapted movie from a renowned text. Here, the individuality of the original text is preserved to such an amount that it is intentionally left unassimilated in adaptation. For instance, *Aisha* movie is an adaption of Jane Austen’s *Emma*. Mainly, the method of adaptation ( of movie and literature) concerns fidelity and transformation. “The task of adaptation is the reproduction in cinema of something essential about an original text. Fidelity of adaptation is conventionally treated in relation to the “letter” and to the “spirit” of the text, as though adaptation were the rendering of an interpretation of a legal precedent”( Andrew, 1984).

In this age of films, adaptations and re-interpretations of literary classics have become significant creative-critical enterprises. Over the years it has generated a plethora of responses/interpretations through films that often try to understand the contemporary world through the moral/psychological lens offered by the intriguing text of Shakespeare’s *Macbeth* or say *Hamlet*. The single aspect has made the play a favourite for adaptations and interpretations across cultures. Different cultures interpret the seductive tale of *Macbeth* according to their own co-ordinates, but there is a certain universality that makes each study fascinating and equally valid. In the field of cinema, Roman Polanski’s *Macbeth* (1971) and Kurosawa’s *Throne of Blood* are remarkable. In Bollywood cinema, vishal bhardwaj’s *Maqbool* has been a fresh look into the intricacies of *Macbeth*, and its newer possibilities in a completely different context make it an interesting take, proving how Shakespeare can be starched beyond limits to cater to a postcolonial world. Bollywood films it makes a deeper study and studies of intricacies of passion through the Nimmi *Maqbool* relationship. The basic humanity of *Macbeth* character has been successfully captured in both *Maqbool* and *throne of blood*, perhaps more in the character of *maqbool* which is as intense and powerful as the samurai lord washizu, but perhaps more passionate. This angle has more to do with the characteristics of Bollywood cinema. So as adaptations/interpretations both the film brings similar ways (p. 137).

“Adaptations claiming fidelity stand the original like a signified, while those inspired with or artificial from a previous text stand in a relation to the original. No film maker and no film respond instantly to reality itself, or its own inner vision. Every representational film adapts a prior start. Indeed the very term “representation” suggests the existence of a model”. (Andrew, 1984) The formulation of a movie out of an earlier written text is almost as old as the equipment of cinema itself. All parts of our business films have come

from literary originals- although no means all of these originals are respected. The Films and the text have still several possible modes of relation. “These modes can, for convenience, be reduced to three: borrowing, intersection, and fidelity of transformation. ‘Borrowing’, being the most commonly used adaptation form, uses novel’s material or ideas and form to.... In this situation the adapter is hoping to gain credibility for his work with the prestige of a known title/work but give his work its own acclaim and appreciation”. (Andrew, 1984). So Andrew argues if one is to learn this particular adaptation form they have to look for the source of power in the original and next look to see how the adaptation made use of that source in the adaptation.

In this adaptation mode the next mode is intersecting so in this mode there is “uniqueness of the original text is preserved to such an extent that it is intentionally left is assimilated in adaptation” (31). The movie here is to contain aimed to serve as a “refraction to the original”, which is basically the original text. That almost many peoples in the common public are expecting an adaptation movie nearbe, and that’s why a lot of people are disappointed by a cinematic adaptation because, as Andrew points out, borrowing mode of adaptation is much more common than intersect.

The final mode of adaptation is fidelity and transformation. This is a difficult method of adaptation for many people to accept because it allows the widest amount of interpretation by the adapter. This mode demands the reproduction of something “essential” about the original text that is reproduced in the film. It has only to capture “the spirit” of the original, but to say only is an understatement because it can be very difficult task. In fact, Andrew points out that most critics argue that capturing this spirit is basically impossible because the media (film and text) are so different (Eadon32). As Andrew explains:

“Generally film is found to work from perception toward signification, from external facts to interior motivation and consequences, from the givenness of a world to the meaning of a story cut out of that world. Literary fiction works oppositely” (Andrew32).

He gives great credit to both the work of the adaptation and the original work. While he knows that adaptation cannot exist without the original source, he wants to see adaptation respected as its own work as well.

The objective is to focus on such adaptation the adaptation of Swarup’s debut book, as *Questions Answers* to Danny Boyle’s film slum dog millionaire. The perspective of Linda Hutcheon’s Theory of adaptation which aims at exploring the adaptation method. Hutcheon’s argues to entire media include an original unity with respect to their role in the process of adaptation and all genres reveal information about how adaptation *functions*. This assumption sets up her methodology, which involves “[identifying] a text- based issue that extends across a variety of media, [finding] ways to study it comparatively, and then [teasing] out the theoretical implications from multiple textual examples” (Hutcheon 2006).

Hutcheon discusses adaptation in two ways: as a 'product' and as a 'process'. As a product, adaptation cannot remain entirely faithful to its original text, otherwise questions of plagiarism arise; adaptation must differ enough from the original text while still maintaining the source’s fundamental ideas. She compares adaptation to language, stating that translations can never be liberal because they are taken out of the context of their original language therefore the primary source has the authority and authenticity. Adaptation as a process becomes an act of appropriating and salvaging while trying to give new meaning to a text. Adaptations are intertextual and become part of the public history of a story. As a result, all previous adaptations become part of our understanding of all later adaptations. She argues that the reasons behind why we create adaptations are diverse and can include economics, the building of culture, personal interests, homage, sheer entertainment, and social commentary. She states that the reasons behind adaptation should be considered seriously by adaptation theory, even if this means rethinking the role of intentionally in our critical thinking about art in general”(Hutcheon 95). She argues reasons for adaptations, perhaps more so than in “original” art, must be closely considered by scholars and audiences to uncover the layers that may exist in the (re)presenting of a story. Reasons for creating art are almost as important as the art itself. Subsequently, hutcheon discusses the relative importance of the context of adaptation in terms of time, space, place, gender, politics and culture. Hutcheon’s book resonates with the work of other adaptation theorists such as Brian McFarlane, Robert Stam, Thomas leitch, Julie Scanders, and Christine Geraghty, all of whom agree that adaptation is a complex part of my art and it can alter the way in which we view a variety of cultural products.

The structure of the book provides a concise overview of the exchanges that occur during the process of adaptation across various media forms. Following the lead of Robert Stam, hutcheon moves the argument about adaptation beyond fidelity, which seems primarily invested in chasing loss, into far more productive critical territory. The first section of the book addresses issues of audience reception related to adapted works. What makes this approach unique is that Hutcheon is interested in understanding the experience of adaptation. She notes: “part of this pleasure i want to argue, comes simply from repetition with variation, from the comfort of ritual combined with the piquancy of surprise” (4). Hutcheon identifies a primary industrial imperative within the contemporary entertainment industry, which is a pattern of repetitive media consumption across a range of forms. For this reason, adaptations dominate the media landscape from video games to television spinoffs to web episodes, establishing what producers hope will be an ongoing entertainment experience without boundaries. Hutcheon draws us into a study of the “politics of intertextuality” (xii) in order to understand that adaptations exist not in a hierarchy of source material and recreation, but rather as works that are in dialogue.

Chapter two covers the exchanges between telling and showing in relation to media specificity. Hutcheon gives special attention to the aspects of performance, specifically interpretations encompassing gesture, dialogue, and the voice areas of media studies that have often been neglected in the past. She even extends this analysis of gesture into the area of video games, which is highly relevant to this emerging entertainment form and new media theory. Subsequently, chapter 3 deals with the “whom” and “why” of the adaptation, specifically considering authorship as “interpretation” with the understanding that media production is collaborative on every level. Hutcheon presents this analysis against the backdrop of intellectual property concerns, specifically the legal constraints related to availability of rights, even with works in the public domain. The “why” of adaptation is expanded to consider the nature of cultural capital? For example, media producers must constantly evaluate the viability of an adaptation through an understanding of the audience’s previous awareness of a story and often match this with the institutional imperatives of the distributors, whether that might be PBS or a specific theatrical company, which caters to specific demographics or audiences. The final chapters of the book address the how, when, and where, of the adaptation process, in which hutcheon connects adaptation to the larger educational field, specially to celebrity, current events, (end page 405) and transcultural considerations of race and gender. This analysis becomes particularly significant since Hollywood reaches away from its limits to borrow stories starting other nations to create movies like the *The Departed* and *Vanilla sky*.

Hutcheon avoids extended case studies, opting as an alternative for examples drawn from many sources in a form of meta-investigation. This method is simultaneously a power and weakness. The Adaptation theory will employ to trace the four significant aspects both from original text and to projects how the movie reflects the reinvention, thereby shaping it into something new. The research paper study in the perspective of Linda Hutcheon’s *A theory of Adaptation* (2006) which reveals that all genera provides some significant information in their own domain which pushes towards viewing of the production, causing yet a unique adaptation of story. In today’s time adaptations are everywhere like on the television, and movie screen, on the musical and on the internet, in texts and comic books. Adaptations are so much a part of western culture but still recognize the epical as well classical literature which is the need of present generation.

In the novel the main protagonist, Ram is an orphan raised by a way of priest and he meets his love who’s a prostitute, most effective in his teenage years. And inside the film casting Jamal is a hero Muslim boy from the slums of Mumbai. Both are orphaned but Jamal orphaned after his mother killed in a Muslim riot. Ram goes to the television quiz show with the intention of getting cash to pay the pimp free latika. Jamal works in a name centre and goes on the tv quiz show to attract the eye of Latika. (Sebastian,2009). Within the novel he reveals his story to his lawyer. The film is a flashback of jamal sharing the tale with the police inspector irfaan khan. In the novel q&a the first few pages of novel starts where swarup’s starts with the novel with a prologue in which the protagonist Ram mohammad Thomas said :

"I have been arrested. For winning a quiz show. They came for me late last night, when even the stray dogs had gone off to sleep. They broke open my door, handcuffed me and marched me off to the waiting jeep with a flashing red light. There was no hue and cry. Not one resident stirred from his hut. Only the old owl on the tamarind tree hooted at my arrest". (Swarup, 2005)

In the movie, boyle presents the episode through a very powerful scene of the constable puffing cigarette smoke on the to jamal malik’s face as he begins touring the young man to get a forced confession out. In the original text and cinematic text both shows the starting scenes there is different way to tell the stories of their life. (Boyle, 2008).

The picture of child violence and torture perpetrated by Maman , Punnose and their men, expose yet another social problem at chance in the slums. Salim is promised to complete leader and an expert in the trade, if he cooperated with them. This episode taken from movie where both brothers jamal and salim is under the maman’s house. Maman is type of gang leader in the slum areas, he is buying a orphans or poor children for his own benefit and use them as what they want from them.

MAMAN: the time has come to choose, friend.

The life of a slum dog or the life of a man. A real man.

A gunfighter, salim. Your destiny is in your hands, bhai.

You can be me.

Or nobody, understand? (Boyle, 2009).

Different characters but role is same in the target text and audio text: In the film simon Beaufoy shows the techniques which is used as episodes flashbacks as three actors acting a slum renders of different age group children’s and in the mid of the movie how they separated to each other. Jamal, the main hero of the movie, tells the life history to the police inspector with every childhood memories is related to the quiz show. In the novel, Ram unfolds his story to smita shah the lawyer. As she reviews the footage of the show to

build the case, ram tells heart wrenching stories from his life and the mystery unfolds. Ram narrates his life story in 13 controlled, quick paced episodes, that link into the each quiz query. On the other hand, in the film the police inspector shows the videotape and after each question Jamal narrates his life- story: his childhood with his brother Salim, his crush for Latika and their fight to survive on the streets. Guided by his common sense and past experiences, Jamal is able to give right answers to all questions. (Sebastian,2009).

### Conclusion:

When we talk about cinematic adaptations of literary works, it was for many years dominated by the questions of fidelity to the source and by the tendencies to prioritize the literary originals over their movie versions. Adaptations were seen by most critics as inferior to the adapted texts, as ‘minor’, ‘subsidiary’, ‘derivative’ or ‘secondary’ products, lacking the symbolic richness of the books and missing their ‘spirit’.(Hutcheon 2006). But in the recent decades, there has been a significant shift in the way the phenomenon of adaptation has been regarded. It paraphrases the already existing art to simplify it for the interpreters as given by Bluestone, “what happens therefore, when the filmist undertakes the adaptation of a novel, given the inevitable mutation, is ...is a kind of paraphrase of the novel – the novel viewed as raw material... that is why no necessary correspondence between the excellence of a novel and the quality of the film in which the novel is recorded..... (George, 1957). Geoffrey Wagner, in the novel and the cinema, suggests three possible categories which are open to film- maker and to the critic assessing his adaptation:

Transposition, ‘in which a novel is given directly on the screen with a minimum of apparent; commentary, ‘where an original is taken and either purposely or inadvertently altered in some respect ... when there has been a different intention on the part of the film-maker, rather than infidelity or outright violation; and analogy, which must represent a fairly considerable departure for the sake of making another work of art’. (Wagner, 1975).

In the similar way when we talk about adaptation of *Q&A* ends up being "a cinematic adaptation emphasising that there exists no hierarchy between the two art forms thereby giving a path for its cinematic adaptation. The cinematic adaptation blurs the boundaries between the text and the film and gives new evidence of the necessity to promote a symbiotic relationship between the film and the text" (Preet Simran, 2018).

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