

An Insight Study of the Film *Omkaara* by Vishal Bhardwaj

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Abstract

Shakespeare's plays were originally intended for theaters, but some contemporary directors have incorporated them into their works. The focus of the study is on Vishal Bhardwaj's 2006 film Omkaara, which is regarded as one of the best adaptations in Indian cinema history and is an adaptation of the Shakespeare play Othello. This article attempts to comprehend how Bhardwaj adapted Elizabethan-era plays and placed them in a very different context. Through it, the paper seeks to examine the similarities and differences between the films and their original sources of inspiration while highlighting the timeless qualities of Shakespeare's works that make them culturally and historically relevant.

Keywords: Indian Cinema, Shakespeare Play, Othello, Locations, Dialogues.

Introduction

Shakespeare's plays adapted for the screen can be considered an example of inter-temporal and inter-semiotic translation. The plays' context was altered along with the presentation medium. Shakespeare's plays have their roots in a particular cultural framework. The playwright deviated from them and added some complexity to 16th century English literature. Shakespeare therefore made an effort to include something fresh and original into his plays while writing in that setting. Literary works are adapted differently for theater and film because these two mediums are so dissimilar. Rewinding to the Elizabethan era of theater, little in the way of scenery and ornamentation was used, all shows were daytime affairs, and young boys were cast in the roles of women because women were not permitted to act on stage. There were technical issues with the theater at the time. Additionally, the target market was extremely narrowly defined. However, because they are able to successfully convey the illusion of reality on stage, cinematic adaptations have certain advantages. Technological developments have also altered the character of both cinematic and theatrical presentations. Additionally, it has increased the scope of such production's consumption on a global scale.

Comparison Between *Omkaara* and *Othello*

Shakespeare's impact has extended beyond Indian theater and literature to include Indian cinema. Bollywood's association with Shakespeare dates back to 1941, when J J Madan adapted *The Merchant of Venice* for his film *Zalim Saudagar*. Subsequently, numerous other adaptations emerged, such as *Gulzar's Angoor* from *Comedy of Errors*. More recently, popular adaptations by Vishal Bhardwaj, such as *Maqbool (Macbeth)* and *Omkaara (Othello)*, have sparked a resurgence of interest in the Bard's masterpieces, as evidenced by films like *10 ml Love (A Midsummer Night's Dream)* and *Issaq and Ishaqzaade (Romeo and Juliet)*. Shakespeare's works have been adapted to such an extent

that the masterwork of colonization has been translated, adapted, performed, and published more often than any other Western author.

Roleplay & Setting

The dialogue of Iago and Roderigo in Act I, Scene I, leads the scene by generating background where Iago makes a resentful statement against Othello, who had chosen a Florentine, Michael Cassio, as a Lieutenant whereas 17th-century classic Othello, it is a tragic love story starring actors such as Ajay Devgan, Neseeruddin Shah, and Kareena Kapoor. The story is firmly grounded in Uttar Pradesh, which not only gives rise to the characters but also creates the chaotic backdrop of corrupt local politics. The film begins with Langda (Ishwar 'Langda' Tyagi), a sharpshooter in Bhaisaab's party and Omkara's friend, attacking Raju's wedding procession. Raju's attempt to reach his in-law's residence fails, and the wedding does not take place. Though Shakespeare created a similar plot in the streets of Venice, the village of Uttar Pradesh was chosen for the film's production. In the film, Iago is replaced by Ishwar 'Langda' Tyagi, and Roderigo is replaced by Rajan Tiwari, who was engaged to Dolly, the daughter of Raghunath Mishra, a well-known advocate.

Plot

The film emphasizes the complexities of interpersonal relationships. Rather than depicting things in binary terms, the film emphasizes the gray areas. Shakespeare's place in a post-colonial India could be rewritten, but Bhardwaj's project can be seen as an attempt at post-colonial rewriting, despite the fact that Shakespeare is a symbol of Englishness in the context of the British empire that could be utilized to justify British colonialism. He accomplishes this by adapting Shakespeare's classics to Indian cultural contexts, which suggests that there may be room for understanding. While race is a major theme in Othello, caste has the same status in Omkara. This has to do with the parallel that can be drawn between race and caste, as well as the importance and uniqueness of the caste system in India. The director, on the other hand, only went so far. Instead of portraying the dark-skinned Omi Shukla as a Dalit, he portrayed him as a half-caste,

while the female lead, Dolly Mishra, is a Brahmin. However, as the film progresses, love's jealousy takes precedence over caste.

Characteration

A further important factor is ambition and power. Langda, the stage name for Saif Ali Khan's portrayal of Iago, is a multifaceted character. Since Langda Tyagi is the sister of Omkara, he is related to them. In addition to being a second lieutenant, he is Omkara's legitimate heir. However, Omkara selected Kesu, a young, well-educated boy played by Viek Oberoi, as her heir. He hoped Langda would see through the ploy of designating a young, intelligent man as the heir. When it appears that Langda will receive the ceremonial plate, the film goes to its most extreme point—a victim exposition—when Kesu ultimately receives it. The purpose of the scene where Langda looks in the mirror after the ceremony and crowns himself with his own blood is to make Iago seem more relatable. Billo, an adventurous dancer, receives ample screen time as well. Bhardwaj brought the Shakespearean play to life in India through these characters. The movie then shows how Langda uses Omi's jealous lover's fears to his advantage in order to eliminate Kesu, his rival, and clear his path to power. He manipulated a particular sequence of events in order to capitalize on the perceived betrayal of Omi by Doli. Omkara was even told by Doli's father that a daughter who can betray her father will never be dependable.

There are a few points where the temporal and spatial context of Omkara, which is based in local politics, and Langda's belief that Kesu is not even worthy of what he got, and Iago's belief that Michael Cassio lacks real battle experience and that he had an affair with Desdemona, coincide. All of these things lead to Cassio's death, but when Othello realizes that he was misled, he does not kill Iago but instead abandons him to a life of agony and despair. Similarly, Omkara, instead of punishing Langda, stabs himself in the chest.

Dialogue

Act One, Scene Three contains the most criticized dialogue, or perhaps the play's most important dialogue: "Look to her, Moor; have a quick eye to

see.” The line, “She has deceived her father; may do thee!” that sets up Othello and Desdemona’s tragic conclusion is handled brilliantly in the film. Raghunath warns Omkara, “Bahubali, aurat ke tariya charitr ko mat bhulna,” after Dolly confesses that she really does love Omkara. “Wisi aur ki sagi kya hogi? Jo apne baap thag sakti hein!” where the so-called “tariya charitra,” a proverb implying that it is extremely difficult to assess a woman’s character, is said to be presented. Although the word Triya-Charitra is a combination of the Indian literary terms “(s)triya,” which means woman, and “charitra,” which means character, it is noted that Omakra interprets the term as referring to a “lady with bad character,” which results in a disastrous conclusion to the story.

Plot -Divergence

In the play, an embroidered handkerchief that Othello gave to Desdemona as an inexpensive present is crucial in setting up the tragic conclusion of the story and giving Iago the chance to exact revenge. Iago takes the handkerchief from Emilia, his spouse, and places it in Michael Cassio’s room. In the film, during Omkara’s and Dolly’s passionate kiss, Omi requests that she put on his ancestral Kamarbandh, a waist-adorning piece. The item is taken by Indu, Langda’s wife and Dolly’s friend; it later ends up in Langda’s possession and can be seen as the first step toward getting even with Omi. When Omi hears Langda telling his friends a made-up story, he asks Dolly to bring out the kamarbandh. Throughout the film, Kamrabandh is portrayed as both an essential piece of equipment and an expression of a sensual symbol.

Conclusion

Shakespearean drama has demonstrated its ability to think universally, making it a perfect fit for the Indian context. Actors have shown that human characters are universal, just as they are in written works. The director, Vishal Bhardwaj, created situations, dialogues, and scenes in a way that was largely faithful to the original play. It would probably be more difficult to make the movie successful while adhering to the original text. Even though there are many restrictions in comparison to the written

play because everything cannot be presented, the director has frequently been able to convey his ideas to the audience of Indian moviegoers by utilizing contemporary cinematography. Though it’s not everyone’s cup of tea, contextual collaboration deserves appreciation. Due to the successful translation of the story, dialogue, and scenes into an Indian context, the Bollywood audience has expressed great appreciation for the adaptation.

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