



Why Do People Choose Watching Adaptations of English Literature Over Reading It?

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Abstract— Nowadays people prefer to watch movie adaptations of a work rather than reading it. The main reason is the novel of around two fifty to n number of pages will finish within one and a half to three hours of duration. Even students of literature follow this trend of watching movies rather than reading books. The positive and negative of this trend are different for a student or academia of literature and people from other professions. Through this research paper, I am analyzing what are the positive and negative sides of this trend? How can we acquire the habit of reading books? What are the limitations of film adaptations? How can some directors overcome these limitations? Theresearch is based on my view on five movies from multiple languages including Malayalam, English, Swedish, Hindi and Italian that are adapted from famous novels and plays. The movies are Joji (2021), The Colour Purple (1985), A Man Called Ove (2015), 2 States (2014) and Canterbury Tales (1972)

Keywords— literature, film adaptation, novels, joji, the colour purple, 2 states

I. INTRODUCTION

Nowadays you can find lots of used book sellers in most parts of the country. If you have an experience in buying books from any of this shop you may be able to realize what I am going to say, most of the books that are sold by them are new and you will realize that it hasn't been read by its previous owner. I know many people who buy books with great interest. After turning the pages for sometimes they keep the book aside and they completely forget about it. When I used to ask them about their reading h habits most of the students who are between 15-25 said that, once they used to read books including Novels, stories, or at least comics and now they stopped reading, the reason that most of them unanimously tells is the usage or addiction of phone. Most of them are using phones especially due to the recent Covid – 19 pandemic most of the students had to study from their homes and they all got a smartphone for study purposes, in most cases after the study period they used to play games in the phone or spent time in social media platforms or video streaming platforms and this trend took the beautiful worlds that a book gives them and took to the darkest corners of their houses.

The role of smartphones is noticeably big in taking a reader away from the book. Since most students possess a laptop or at least a smartphone nowadays to study a novel or a drama they first search on Google whether there is a movie adaptation of that work if they find one, they watch that movie adaptation and later read the plot, summary and the themes of that novel, story or drama from any online resources. It is quite helpful for them to pass the exam, but this method has many pitfalls. Research on both the positive and negative aspects of this trend of wholeheartedly trusting adaptations of a literary work is a cardinal need of this age.

Watching a movie adaptation after reading the book is really good, you will be able to realize the changes the director and the scriptwriter made in the movie, and you will be able to distinguish which one is best for you. It is only through reading your imagination grows, the movie adaptation is the representation of someone else who read the book. When it comes to a student of literature or a literature enthusiast it is important to read the book, it is only through reading books you will be able to know the writing style of the author, the way he describes each situation and write a critical review on the book. If you are depending just on the adapted movie

in most cases your views and assumptions are wrong. On behalf of reading drama in most cases, if you are able to watch the enactment of the drama then it will help you to relate to the scenes in a better way especially when you are reading classic dramas like Spanish Tragedy, Doctor Faustus, The Shoemaker's Holiday, Way of the World, etc.

If you watch a film adaptation after reading the book you will be able to see the characters, the things, the dresses, and the places you imagined in your mind, sometimes it may be the same as you imagined in your mind and sometimes it may be completely different. While making film adaptations some directors even change the name of the characters, in the film adaptation of Bret Easton Ellis's American Psycho, Paul Owen and Timothy Price in the novel become Paul Allen and Timothy Bryce in the film. If you are watching a movie considering it as an effective way to judge the novel, then you are making a mistake for which you will repent for sure.

Film adaptations are blessings to those people who want to know the story or plot but do not know the language. Maybe these people do not want to read the novel because sometimes they do not know how to read or the language of the classic dramas like Doctor Faustus, King Lear, etc. must be not as easy as the English language that we use right now so watching a drama or a film adaptation will help them to possess a knowledge on that particular drama. There are many films that are adapted from great classic dramas, for example, the 1997 Jayaraj movie Kaliyattam is an adaptation of William Shakespeare's Othello, Kannaki is another Jayaraj film that was released in 2001 is a loose adaptation of William Shakespeare's Antony and Cleopatra, Iyobinte Pusthakam by Amal Neerad which released in 2014 reportedly a loose adaptation of King Lear and Joji, which released in 2021 is a loose adaptation of Macbeth.

These movies will help the common man to get the basic knowledge about the drama at least they will be able to know the plot of the drama but, a student of literature overcomes these limitations.

Objectives

Every study is conducted with some objective. The present study is taken with an objective.

- To study the positive and negative side of depending on a film adaptation of a literary work.
- To compare and analyze the characters, plot, and content between novels and movies.

Hypothesis

According to Oxford Reference Hypothesis, is a statement of the expected relationship between things being studied, which is intended to explain certain facts or observations or an idea to be tested. A research Hypothesis is an assumption

or the outcome of a study. It is a prediction or speculation by the researcher which may prove or may be disapproved. The hypothesis of this study is:

1. People from all streams consider watching film adaptations rather than reading books.
2. You cannot trust a movie adaptation, if you want to know about a book or its author you must read the book.

II. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research is conducted because of my interest in literary works and their film adaptations, for this, I have read many books and watched their film adaptations. For the successful completion of this research, I have read many books which I am going to explain in the upcoming parts of this paper. It gave me a direct experience in this subject with which I am dealing. For the sake of my studies, reading these books and watching their film adaptations were particularly important. By reading and watching I came to a conclusion which I would like to prove through this research.

III. LITERATURE REVIEW

According to Wikipedia Literary adaptation is the adaptation of a literary source for example a novel, short story, or poem to another genre or medium, such as film, stage play, or videogame.' While I was doing my research, I found an interesting fact that a game named Assassin's Creed II portrays Renaissance Italy as its open-world playground so playing this game will give you a valuable experience and you will feel that you are in Italy during Renaissance. So, this game gives us the idea that even video games can be adapted from literary works or literary backgrounds. Seth Schiesel wrote in Assassin's Creed II In New York Times that now the teachers who teach Italian history will be surprised when the students tell them that they have already visited Renaissance Italy, which is the effect of adaptations, people trust them, and they depend on them more than getting direct knowledge through literary works.

The India Today in its report **Joji Movie Review: Fahad Fasil's Macbeth adaptation is exceptional** states that Power corrupts. So does greed. This is what Shakespeare's Macbeth has taught those who read it. They are also asking who better than Fahad Fasil can show greed in his eyes.

The New York Times in its report **Film 'The Colour Purple by Steven Spielberg'** states that the characters in the movie adaptation are big and vibrant but beyond that they resemble Miss Walker barely at all.

The Times of India in its edition that came out on May 13, 2014, reported that “**2 States crosses the 100-crore mark at the box office**” It states that people are very excited to watch the movie.

Differences between a literary work and its film adaptation

The first thing that we have to keep in our mind is that both novels and movies are two different forms of art, both are independent in their sense. The usual page of a novel is between 200-380, in some cases especially when it comes to long novels it goes in between 750-10000 or more. In most cases, this gives an inconvenience for the person who just wants to know the story or plot of the book. In these cases, people depend upon film or any other literary adaptations. In most cases, the duration of a film is between 90-120 minutes. This is one of the main reasons people depend upon film adaptation rather than reading a physical or soft copy of a literary work.

Another major difference is that films give us a clearer picture than a book gives us. While film directly stimulates our perceptions, literary works indirectly stimulate them. While reading a book sometimes we find ourselves sinking into the imagination and spending time thinking or visualizing a situation in our mind but on the contrary, a film is fast-paced it will start at a specific time and end at a specific time, we don't have to think all that we have to do is just to watch the movie and understand the story, plot, and theme.

Regarding the visual imagination of the novel we read, it varies from person to person and their purpose of reading. Some people skim books, they just read fast and complete the text but that is unimaginable for some people, they turn each page very slowly reading each sentence by imagining that in their mind like a movie. We will be unsure about whether they will like the movie or not especially when they watch the film adaptation of their dearest book. Sometimes when the film is released, they will come to know that their favorite scene is cut. In most cases it happens because of the limitation of time. The 1972 Italian movie *Canterbury Tales* directed by Pier Paolo Pasolini is an example of this; the film is an adaptation of Geoffrey Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*. *Canterbury Tales* is a collection of twenty-four stories that have over 17000 lines, but the film portrays only a few stories among them, and it shows just the important scenes. If you need to get a clear understanding of the work, you must read the book. This short information that the movie gives you will not help you.

The film adaptation has many limitations; it varies from person to person, culture to culture, and place to place. In some places people will not understand the direct adaptation of a literary work, for example for a common man in Kerala,

Macbeth is something that they are not able to relate to. The crew of a film can't introduce a film to a group of audiences who will not be able to relate what they are trying to present before them, in this situation the movie will become a flop. The Malayalam movie *Joji* is a loose adaptation of William Shakespeare's *Macbeth*. Through some of the events that any Kerala man can relate to, the director tells us how greed destroys a person's life. The female character who acted as the sister-in-law resembles the Shakespearean character, Lady *Macbeth*.

But adaptation is always a big question for academia. Choosing the literary work over the adaptation needs a strong will. It is a literary work that will give a person a good understanding of the subject. Indian film has its audience always waiting for entertainment. All they want is entertainment, so a director cannot give a direct adaptation of a foreign literary work. Even though this is a fact many films including, Satyajit Ray's *Pathar Panchali*, *Apur Sansar*, and *Shatranj Ke Khiladi* were made from great Bengali works and audiences received it with both hands.

Data Collection

The data collection is based on my view of five movies from multiple languages including Malayalam, English, Swedish, Hindi, and Italian that are adapted from famous novels and plays. The movies are *Joji* (2021), *The Colour Purple* (1985), *A Man Called Ove* (2015), *2 States* (2014), and *Canterbury Tales* (1972)

IV. SUMMARY

Joji is inspired by William Shakespeare's famous play *Macbeth*. *Joji* was released through the OTT platform Amazon Prime on 7 April 2021 since the covid forced lockdown forced people to sit in their homes many people watched the movie. Critics praised the movie relating it to the play *Macbeth*. The plot of the movie consists of a father and his three children. The father is 74 years old and still he oversees the family affairs. He is like a dictator in the family. His three children include Jomon a divorcee, Jaison and his wife Bincy, and *Joji* the youngest son who is also an engineering dropout. All three sons are leading a life of fear under their father's domination. An unexpected event occurred in the family and gave hope to *Joji* that the death of his father will give him a fortune. His greed turns him into a modern *Macbeth* and by supporting him and motivating his greed Bincy becomes the modern Lady *Macbeth*.

The novel 'The Colour Purple' v/s Movie 'The Colour Purple'

Similarities

Colour Purple is an epistolary novel in which Celie writes

fifty-six letters to God and fourteen to her sister Nettie. To make an epistolary novel into a film is possible only with a man with a strong will. The famous director, producer, and screenwriter Steven Allan Spielberg did the direction of the movie. The name 'Steven Spielberg' itself gives us a reason to watch this film adaptation because he is such a promising director in Hollywood. The movie and novel have more similarities than dissimilarities. One of the similarities is Celie's stepfather raped her and she gave birth to two children named Adam and Olivia they were later given to Samuel and Corrine who were unable to have children. Another similarity is that in the novel Celie is afraid of men.

Differences

There are a few differences. One notable difference is in the novel Celie writes back letters to Nettie, but she does not write back letters in the movie. There are differences in some dialogues, in the novel Shug ask, "How is your god?" and in the movie, Shug and Celie do not even talk about God.

Novel 'A Man Called Ove' v/s Movie 'A Man Called Ove'

Similarities

Both in the book and the movie the character of Love is presented as the same stereotypical character. Most of the important scenes including the death of Ove's father is shown in the movie.

Dissimilarities

Even though the novel gives a long description introducing Ove's life, the movie shows Ove's life after his wife's death. The movie repeatedly shows Ove's various attempts of suicide and his visit to his dead wife's tomb alike it somehow forgets to portray the whole life of Ove as it is in the novel.

Novel 2 States: The Story of My Marriage v/s Movie 2 States

Similarities

2 States tells the story of Krish, who is a Punjabi, and Ananya who is a Tamilian who meets in IIM-A a prestigious institution in India, and become friends later fall in love, and eventually get married. The whole plot is about how they both are convincing their parents to agree to the marriage. The main reason for their parents opposing their marriage is that their language and culture are different.

Differences

Notable differences are hard to find but the second part of the movie seems hurriedly taken. As the novel is a lengthy version there are many limitations, so people are forced to make the movie shorter and more convenient for the audience. A few scenes like the scene which was shown in

the promo were cut off. Some parts of the novel like Krish's transfer and his work environment in Chennai were omitted. The name of the company where they both are working is also changed.

Canterbury Tales book v/s Canterbury Tales Movie

Similarities

The Canterbury Tales movie is a movie that came out in 1972. We will realize the talents of the director of this movie Paolo Pasolini when we think about the limitations that any director and crew members of a film face especially when it comes to the technical side.

Differences

The movie retells only eight stories from The Canterbury Tales that are, The Merchant's Tale, Friar's Tale, Miller's Tale, Wife of Bath's Tale, Reeve's Tale, Pardoner's Tale, and Summoner's Tale. Even though this film adaptation is largely faithful, Pasolini expands some stories.

V. CONCLUSION

Nowadays people adhere to the trend of watching film adaptations of literary works rather than reading the work. Trusting film adaptations is not a good trend. We will get first-hand knowledge and all the relevant knowledge about the book from the original literary work itself. Due to its heterogeneous audience, the film is more popular than the book. Due to the limitation of time, many directors and scriptwriters are forced to shorten the movie, which lets many of the important parts go missing, this scenario may not affect a common man who watches the movie for the sake of entertainment but it will definitely affect a student or academia of literature who watch the movie for the sake of learning the novel or the literary work. As we have seen in Paolo Pasolini's The Canterbury Tales many important scenes were cut off and many stories also cut off, so depending on this will not be helpful.

Some of the major limitations that a filmmaker will face while he adapts a story are casting, he should find casts that exactly fits the character in the work, and this will decide the success of the work. Another limitation is the technology, the imagination of a writer will go on and on to create an exact visual effect for this is a challenge for a director. In most cases, people do not read books because they feel lazy or bored after turning a few pages. That is why they depend on film adaptations. Depending on film adaptation is not a good trend for a student or researcher who works in literature even though it somehow helps them.

Only reading the original text will help a person to know about the author, his work, his writing style, and the limitations he faced during his period, it will also sharpen

the imaginative skills of the writer, and reading will give a reader more empathetic experience while he or she goes through each page.

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