

Literature and Cinema

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If we look at the history of cinema, it can be said that the relationship between literature and cinema is very old. Because, in the early days of cinema, most of the films were based on literary works. Initially, many films were made and became successful based on eternal works like the Mahabharata, Ramayana, Bible, Bhagavat, or any other popular religious works. The main task of a literary writer is to create a character, while the task of a film director is to bring that character to life on the screen. That is why we have been able to make our imagination of mythological or divine characters special only through the medium of films.

In a way, literature and film are two different mediums, yet they are closely related. Of course, the basic purpose of both is to satisfy the sentiments of the audience, to entertain them, as well as to preserve culture. Any work of literature is a translation of the experiences of its creator into words. The creator of that literary work conveys their experience to the audience by transforming it into words or narration using techniques like imagination, metaphor, and symbolism.

In short, “फिल्मसर्जन वो पढ़ने की बात को देखने में ढालना है ! “1.

"Films are about seeing what is written!"

“Most in literature is indirectly present, whereas in film, everything is present as living and animate. This means that film is the art of transformation, from the abstract to the tangible, from the unseen to the visual. This art of transformation is known as adaptation.”2

When this adaptation of the creator is converted into a film, it has many layers. No literary work is directly transformed into a film; digital technology gives it a new shape with its unique creative power. The medium of literature is words or ears, while the medium of film is shape or form. As Prof. Ramesh Chaudhary writes in one of his articles,

“Literature is a creation and film is an adaptation.” 3

Seen thus, there are many differences between the two arts, even though they are interconnected. A literary word or narrative is transformed into a cinematic scene and is also controlled by narrative; literature has the freedom of portrayal. Before converting any literary work into a film, the director has to be a good critic. A writer tries to bring the character of a work to life through words alone, but a filmmaker uses many techniques like actors, music, costumes, atmosphere, makeup, and lighting to bring that character to life. So literature is the creation of only one person, whereas film is an art of collective creation. In it, experts of various types of arts get an opportunity to display their art. It has a beautiful combination of many arts like acting, painting, music, dance, sculpture, and lighting. So a film is a collective creation like a play.

"Cinema is above all an art of juxtaposition." 4

"Film holds a special position among the arts: it can include all of them—literature, poetry, drama, painting, architecture, music, photography, and recording. Ideally, it demands a familiarity with the history, tradition, aesthetics, and practice of all these older arts." 5

Drama and film are both also called '**Dependent Arts.**' A writer can sit alone in any corner and create his work. Also, the creation of a literary work does not involve any special expenditure. When the same work is converted into a film, it requires the expertise of many arts, and it also becomes very expensive. Before creating a literary work, the writer may not worry about whether the readers will like it or not. However, the success and failure of a film depend on its audience, so the director and filmmaker cannot ignore its fans. A filmmaker usually creates a film keeping in mind the interests of audiences of different ages. Dr. Rahi Masoom Raza writes about this,

“सिनेमा वह मोर है जो जंगल में नाच ही नहीं सकता, क्योंकि दर्शकों के बिना उसका कोई वजूद नहीं है .” 6

("Cinema is that peacock which cannot dance in the forest because without the audience it has no existence.")

In general, any art is a great medium to express the emotions of human life like happiness, sadness, joy, grief, and sorrow. These feelings of the human mind can be expressed beautifully in literature too. But to reveal these feelings in literature, the author has to make many long descriptions. Even that kind of vivid environment takes a lot of effort to portray effectively. While in films, these emotions can be expressed very easily with actors and various camera techniques. The director renders even the smallest details with the camera very effectively. The writer does not succeed in making such a fine vision with the same accuracy in their story.

A film fan is mostly bound by time and place constraints. They have to go to a specific time and place to watch a film, whereas a literature fan can enjoy reading the work at their own time and place without any constraints. Of course, with the revolution of mobile and internet technology over the years, now the audience does not have to follow any

restrictions of time and place to watch a movie; they can watch it anytime on their computer or mobile. Also, reading takes a long time, but a film is typically over in three hours at most. Generally, a work of literature can be read by a single reader at about the same time. Perhaps, even if two or more people read the same work at the same time, not everyone can enjoy that literary work in the same way. Each person can interpret it based on their own interest, mental health, and imagination. While any film can be watched by thousands of fans simultaneously, and they can all enjoy its experience equally. Of course, film-making requires some preparation. However, the sense of the film is much simpler compared to the reading of a literary work. Different means of both are responsible for this. Mike Smith writes about the difference between literary work and the spirit of the film,

"A distinction remains though, that to read and to be read to are both language-based, but to view is to watch and listen, to see and hear. Language alone demands our imagination. Moving picture demands observation.

The one tilts towards the creative, the other towards the analytical."⁷

Reading literary works awakens the imagination of the reader. This activates the mind of the reader to imagine. Since the film is an audio-visual art, everything has to be shown in it, so the audience gets engrossed in watching its scenes, so it does not get a chance to imagine for example, on reading the word 'Sea' in a book, the mind of reader starts imagining the sea and the scene around it. While in the film, the viewer sees the sea and its sounding beauty right in front of his eyes, so he does not get a chance to imagine that scene, so the writer has to achieve the reality with the help of word or language. The creator of literature has to strive tirelessly to make the visual of his imagination so that even the audience can see it clearly. Which the film maker already has this facility. But, when this achievement of the film also becomes the limit of this medium for example, a director shows a rape scene in a film with the intention of showing the atrocities. On women and the mental anguish of the woman at that time, but the audience sometimes fails to feel the pain of the woman while watching the rape scene and instead the audience feels the pain of the scene due to various filming techniques and background music.

Thus, there are some similarities in the depiction of place and time in both the arts of literature and cinema as it is possible to leap in place and time in both the mediums of novel and film. A film can show an actor roaming the streets of a village in one scene and on foreign soil in the next. A writer can also take the readers to a new place time in the new chapter of his story, like the film maker the writer can depict multiple layers of place and time with techniques such as dreams in Kamleshwer's famous novel "**Kitane Pakistan**" several centuries are seen standing together. Generally speaking any literary work when converted in to a film is presented to the audience in a new form and in a new style. It is said that:

"The first full-length film made in India was made in Marathi by Dada Saheb Falke as 'Raja Harishchandra' based on the play 'Harishchandra' by Bharathendu Harishchandra, considered the father of modern Hindi literature. But before that in India N.G. Chitre and R.G. Torane together with in 1912 centuries an attempt was

made to make a film called “Poondrik” . Which was India’s first narrative film based on the life of saint pundit. “Raja Harishchandra“ was our 50 minute long silent movie made in 1913 . Then in 1913, Ardesharji Iraani, a Gujarati parsi, made India’s first talking film “ Aalam Aara “. 8

At that time, Rachodram Udayaram Dave’s play “Raja Visaan’ was very successful on the old Gujarat stage, so Dada Saheb made a film based on mythological stories like ‘Kaliymardan’, ‘Satyvaan Savitri’, ‘Mohini Bhasmasur’ and ‘Lankaadahan’. Thus, most of the early films of India were based on mythological stories or literary work, so it can be definitely said that the relationship between literature and cinema has been there since the beginning of cinema. Films like, ‘Meel Majdoor’, ‘Seva Sadan’, and ‘Navjeevan’ have been made based on the work of the well- known creator of Hindi literature Premchandji. Many Hindi films have also been made based on the works of famous writers of Hindi literature Bechan Sharma, Bhagavatcharan Verma, Manikaul, Manu Bhandaaari, Amrutlaal Nagar, Phanidhgarnaath Renu, and Chaturlaal Shashtri. Bengoli creator Sharadchandra Chattopadhayay’s novel ‘Devdas’ has been adapted into three films named ‘Devdas’ in Hindi. Amrita Pritam’s Punjabi story ‘Pinjar’ has been turned into a successful Hindi film titled ‘Pinjar’. Girish Karnard made a Hindi film called ‘Utsav’ based on the Sanskrit play ‘Mrichhhakatikam’. So Shyam Benegal made a Hindi film called ‘Stree’ based on the play ‘Abhigyan Shakuntalm’ by Mahakavi Kalidas apart from this, many Hindi films like ‘Anand Math’, ‘Parinita’, ‘Sooraj Ka Satvaa Ghoda’, ‘Hajar choryaasi KI Maa’, have been made from literary work, whereas in Hollywood , there is a whole tradition of films adapted from literary works. But many English plays and novels have been made into Hindi films and have become successful , such as ‘Omkara’ (Othello) ‘Maqbool’ (Macbeth) ‘Hydar’ (Hamlet) ‘Two States’ (Two States) ‘Three Idiots’ (Five Point Someone) ‘Hello’ (Night At The Call Centre) ‘Sawaria’ (White Knight) ‘Tere Mere Sapane’ (The Citadel) ‘Lutera’ (Last Leaf) ‘Half Girlfriend’ (Half Girlfriend) ‘Guide’ (The Guide) etc.... JOHN HARRINGTON writes in his book ‘Film and / is Arts’:

“Out of the total number of films made, a third of the films are based on novels. Also, if we include films based on other literary forms like novels, dramas, epics, then about sixty five per cent of the films are based on literary works. This is about Indian films, there are many films based on epics like Ramayana, Mahabharat, not only that, many films have been made based on different characters on events of epics. In Suraj Barjatya’s film ‘Hum Saath Saath Hai’, the story of Ramayana is seen in a new form. The super hero ‘Krish’ of Rakesh Roshan’s film ‘Krish’ is also based on Mahanayak Shri Krishna.” 9

However, when any literary work is adapted into a film. There are two prevailing beliefs about it. Some believe that when a film is adapted from a literary work, the film is adapted from a literary work; the film should remain faithful to the original literary work. However, most art or commercial films remain faithful to such works. But if that director is not faithful to the literary work, there is resentment between the creator of the literary work and his audience. For example, Devanand himself made a film called ‘Guide’ based on the

famous novel 'THE GUIDE' by the original Indian English novelist R. K. Narayan. But towards its filiation the original author of the work, that Narayana was deeply dissatisfied.

We have many Hindi films made from many plays of Shakespeare there. But many of these films have managed to take a completely different approach than their original literary work, presenting characters, situations, settings and main ideas in different ways. For example, VISHAL BHARADWAJ made a Hindi film called '**Haider**' based on Shakespeare's play '**Hamlet**'. It relates the original work to the problem of terrorism in Kashmir and the current situation. The context is wonderfully presented. Director Ketan mehta made a beautiful Hindi titled '**Mirch Masala**' based on Gujarati storyteller Chunilal Madiya's short story '**Abhu Makarani**'. In it, the director was able to accurately portray the sound feminism and women's freedom of the original story. While Gujarati creator Goverdhanram Tripathi's classic epic '**Sarshvatichandra**' was adapted into a film by director Govind Saravaiya. He was very successful in capturing the place, period, environment and love story of the work but failed completely in portraying the main idea of the work – sacrifice, dedication and love devotion of a woman. Sometimes a creative director is able to add new scenes that are not in the work his imagination and still manage to present the original heart of the work in a way that doesn't harm in the slightest. For example, from Bengali author Vibhuti Bhushan Bandhopadhyay's novel '**Pather Panchali**' made into a film by director Satyajit Rai titled '**Pather Panchali**'. There is a scene in the film where children Apu and Durga go to play in the field on rainy days the silken tufts of a few tall Kashkulla are wafting in a smoky lisotto to the eye. A train passes by. In it, the white, dark patterns of the swaying fringes of the wind are imprinted along with the flow. This scene was not in the original work. But director Satyajit Ray has portrayed it in such a wonderful way that he has managed to give the film a new magic without harming his original work even a bit.

There is also a huge difference between the portrayal of characters in a literary work and the characters in a film. A reader of a literary work creates an image in his mind of the characters of the story with his imagination while reading the text while the filmmaker has to select the actors and actress according to the imagination of the audience as his creation is an audio-visual art. For that, just as it is not necessary to be beautiful in acting, it is also not necessary to be beautiful in appearance. However, neither Amarish Puri, nor Nasaruddin Shah can be taken for the character of Akabar in Ashutosh Govarikar's '**Jodha Akabr**'. It is also a reality because about the choice of characters for the film, after seeing Richard Attenborough in the character of Gandhiji in the film 'Gandhi'. Well-known Gujarati poet Harindra Dave writes in the daily "Janmbhoomi Pravasi" that,

"Attenborough has brought my Gandhi to life So I'm not talking about the human form moving across the cinema screen, but the form that moves inside us when we see this human being ". 10

Thus, the filmmaker has to take the help of other techniques in addition to choosing the right actor, costume, make-up, to leave a lasting impression on the mind of the audience. However, if the actor is equally well – dressed. He merges with the audience's imagination and the imaginary hero of the audience is realized in him. For example, Prithviraj Kapoor's

justice to the character of 'Akabar' the film 'Mughale Azam' or the way Nasiruddin Shah brought the character of 'Shivaji' to life in the serial 'Bharat Ek Khoj' have remained in the hearts of fans till date. Also, techniques like dreams, soliloquies have to be resorted to present the inner world of the creative character of a literary work. While the filmmaker has to present the inner world of the character with the help of song, music, gestures of the character, external actions etc.

Thus viewed as a whole, the relationship between cinema and literature can be characterized in various ways. A film based on a literary work produced by an imaginative creator manages to appeal to a wide audience by doing justice to the literary work before the art lovers. The creativity that is in the literary work should also be preserved in the film based on it. It is especially important.

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