

## **DOMESTICATING SHAKESPEARE: A STUDY OF INDIAN ADAPTATION OF SHAKESPEARE IN POPULAR CULTURE**

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**ABSTRACT:** *Shakespeare plays are illustration of the success and failures of human responses to order. These illustrations are very well captivated and displayed on silver screen. This paper is an attempt to study the Indian adaptation of Shakespeare in Popular Culture. It scrutinizes how Shakespeare has been utterly absorbed into the Indian imagination. The work mainly deals with recent four Shakespearean adaptations in Indian cinema : the bollywood director Vishal Bhardwaj's movie Maqbool (released in 2004; based on Shakespeare's adaptation of Macbeth), Omkara (released in 2006; based on Shakespeare's adaptation of Othello) , director Manish Tiwari's Issaq (released in 2012; based on Shakespeare's adaptation of Romeo and Juliet) , the Malyalam film director VK Prakash's Karamyogi (released in 2012; based on Shakespeare's adaptation of Hamlet). These movies achieved great success in India and domesticate Shakespeare like never before. The paper makes a foray into the strategies through which cinematic representation functions to ratify the existing social order. The paper analyses the ideology that governs the production of the film and the meanings that are transmitted through it.*

**KEYWORDS:** Popular Culture; Indian cinema; Shakespearean adaptations; Bollywood.

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### **INTRODUCTION**

Colonialism brought Shakespeare to Indian subcontinent. India's extensive history of colonial domination extends to cultural domination. The colonial education system in India was filled with western texts, including Shakespeare. A proliferation of Western literature, mainly Shakespeare, within the colonial education system was important for a political reason too; for example, Shakespeare was included in the colonial curricula not only as the exemplary figure of literary and artistic greatness, but also because his works demonstrated the core values of Western tradition. By the twentieth century, Shakespeare had been translated, adapted, and assimilated into many Indian languages, and writers and performances in the general Indian cultural landscape were contributing to sustaining his presence. A number of Indian authors from every major Indian language have written about his works, translated and adapted them, and/or been influenced by them: Bankim Chandra Chatterjee, Girish Chandra Ghosh, Dwijendralal Roy, Rabindranath Tagore, Jaishankar Prasad, Harivanshrai Bachchan, Pammal Sambanda Mudaliar, Gopal Ganesh Agarkar, Vrinda Karandikar, Kavalam Narain Panikkar, Kainikkara Kumara Pillai, Kuvempu, Masti Venkateshesa Iyengar, Mayadhar Mansingh, Laxminath Bezbarua, H.S. Shivaprakash, to name but an eminent few. The Parsi Theatre drew liberally on the works of Shakespeare for inspiration. Theme, characterisation, genre, structure—there are many ways in which the works of Shakespeare have influenced and have been absorbed in Indian literature and culture. Further, developments in translation and adaptation studies, performance and cultural studies and the

spread of globalisation and internationalism have problematized the way we negotiate this relationship.

His idea of family relationships, same-sex relationships, generational conflicts, the idea of the twin or the double, gender, women, ideas of masculinity, friendship, the outsider, the racial other, violence, conflict, emotions, the idea of empire, the idea of the nation, kingship, good governance, politics, law, order, disorder, disguise, appearance and reality, nature, landscape, geography, supernatural and, prophecy have an enduring wisdom which found strong foothold in global cinema. The world famous literary works of the Bard of Avon have for decades inspired the Bollywood films. Adapting Shakespeare's work to Indian ethos is the latest "in" thing in Indian cinema. By and large, Bollywood has become synonymous with Indian popular culture over the years, and it simultaneously represents and shapes the consciousness of the country. Bollywood can be said to be bluntly Shakespeare-esque in its temperament featuring song and dance, love triangles, comedy, melodrama, star-crossed lovers, angry parents, conniving villains, convenient coincidences and mistaken identities. Yet even in a massive culture industry, the Bard of Avon is often left unacknowledged in the practice of adaptation. However, recent Bollywood productions, such as the bollywood director Vishal Bhardwaj's movie *Maqbool* (released in 2004; based on Shakespeare's adaptation of *Macbeth*), *Omkara* (released in 2006; based on Shakespeare's adaptation of *Othello*), director Manish Tiwari's *Issaq* (released in 2012; based on Shakespeare's adaptation of *Romeo and Juliet*), the Malyalam film director VK Prakash's *Karamyogi* (released in 2012; based on Shakespeare's adaptation of *Hamlet*) have departed from the "blatant plagiarism" of their predecessors and listed Shakespeare as the source text or inspiration.

***Maqbool*, director Vishal Bharadwaj's adaptation of Shakespeare's *Macbeth***

Shakespeare's classic tale of greed and ambition is transplanted to Mumbai's criminal underworld in this adaptation of *Macbeth* from Indian writer-director Vishal Bhardwaj (Makdee). Bollywood legend Irrfan Khan (*Slumdog Millionaire*) stars as *Macbeth* stand-in *Maqbool*, the right-hand man of powerful crime boss *Abbaji* (Pankaj Kapur). When *Maqbool* begins an illicit affair with *Abbaji*'s beautiful young mistress, *Nimmi* (Tabu), she convinces her lover to murder his boss and usurp his way to the top of the city's gangster syndicate.

*Maqbool* is true protégé to *Abbaji*. He will do anything on his command and *Nimmi* will go to any extent to bring *Maqbool* in her embrace. *Abbaji* is fighting a war for his dominance. *Maqbool* thinks that he is being sidelined in the entire happening for no reason. So he takes things in his own hand. Here again the two police officers -- *Pandit* and *Purohit* (*Om Puri* and *Naseeruddin Shah*) enter. They predict that *Maqbool* will lose the battle of the power (as were the prophecies of witches in *Macbeth*). There are gritty scenes that remind us of *Sorcerer's* movies as in *Macbeth*. The blood battle also has its parallel drawn from 'Tarantino'.

*Maqbool*' is a masterpiece on many accounts. First, it defies the set formulae of Bollywood of a hero and a heroine falling in love and making rounds of trees with dozens of other dancers. It also doesn't have a battle between the good and the bad. It is a film where the bad meets the worse. The heroine is not an ideology bearer. She doesn't suppress her desires. The film also walks on the rough patches of denial. It talks of denial of power, denial of desires and denial of supremacy. Every character fights against these denials with a desire to mend the life in his or her own way.

The fight is for self and not for society, and this very approach makes this film look realistic and very contemporary though the basic idea of the film (Macbeth) is centuries' old.

*Maqbool* succeeds in the domestic as well as the international markets precisely because the film melds the betrayal and chaos portrayed in Shakespeare with the murky, sinister Mumbai underworld. The film includes the love plots so essential to mainstream Bollywood movies; simultaneously, however, *Maqbool* opens up questions of corruption, terrorism, and communal harmony that have taken the center stage in recent Hindi films. William Shakespeare and the underworld evidently form a great mix — at least in Bollywood. 'Maqbool' is an Indianised version of Shakespeare's Macbeth in a different time and space. There have been many stage presentations of this play around the world. Some films have also been made but not in Indian context. 'Maqbool' is a path setter in many ways and is a winner in terms of its presentation and style.

***Omkaara*, director Vishal Bhardwaj's adaptation of Shakespeare's *Othello***

*Omkaara* begins with a credit that reads, "Vishal Bhardwaj's adaptation of Shakespeare's *Othello*." The characters in Bhardwaj's movie share the same first letters as their counterparts in the Shakespearean play - Omkara (Othello), Ishwar (Iago), Dolly (Desdemona), Indu (Emilia), Kesu (Cassio), Billo (Bianca), and so on. The year 2007 marks the 385th anniversary of the first publication of *Othello*. For those not familiar with the Bard's Venetian domestic tragedy, *Othello*, the movie *Omkaara* can be said to be on the global theme of suspicion kills. Some might think the director had liberally borrowed themes from Hindu epics - such as *Ramayana* (suspicion of the wife and listening to false counsel) and *Mahabharata* (power and the politics of power) - rather than *Othello*. However, for those who have not read *Othello* are bound to enjoy the movie more, as the ending will be a surprise to them.

Set in the rural areas of the North Indian state of Uttar Pradesh, the story of *Omkaara* goes something like this - Omkara or Omi (Ajay Devgan) is a political goon in love with Dolly (Kareena Kapoor), a lawyer's daughter. As her father had arranged for her to marry Rajoh (Deepak Dobriyal), Dolly elopes with her love, Omkara. Omkara has two trusted right-hand men namely Ishwar "Langda" Tyagi (Saif Ali Khan) and Kesu (Vivek Oberoi). Nicknamed "Langda" or "Lame", Ishwar is a sharpshooter - smart, ruthless and power-hungry. He is married to Indu (Konkana Sen), who is the big sister to all the goons of Omkara's gang, including Omkara. Kesu is an educated, loyal goon whose mistress is a local dancer named Billo (Bipasha Basu).

When it comes to naming his chief lieutenant, Omkara chooses Kesu over Langda to attract Kesu's large political base and thereby ensure an electoral win for Bhai Sahib. When the astute Bhai Sahib asks, "What about Langda?" Omkara naively replies, "He is like my brother. He will understand." Omkara trusts and values Langda implicitly but never bothers to explain his reasons to him. This single incident sets off Langda to bring down Omkara and Kesu by sowing suspicions in Omkara of Dolly and Kesu having an affair.

Langda teams up with Rajoh, who is vengeful over Dolly's refusal to marry him, and they slowly create circumstantial evidence that makes Omkara begin to suspect Dolly of adultery.

Saif Ali Khan, who otherwise appears in characteristic chocolate-boy looks, fashionable clothes, and the image of a leading man, gives in *Omkaara* a controlled, brilliant performance as a power-hungry, uneducated, rustic goon with a wonderful sense of humor. Despite his unkempt looks,

jarring language, and limp, Langda is made a lovable villain by Khan's performance. Khan acts marvelously even when he is not delivering dialogues.

Khan makes Langda dignified, so that the audience sympathizes with him when he does not get the lieutenant post. Khan provides a clear emotional background to his character. When Rajoh makes him wear sunglasses and dances around him screaming "Langda, Bahubali" (Langda, Chief-Lieutenant!), Langda's face broadens into a smile, conveying expectation. Following this, Omkara passes up on Langda and the flushed, disappointed face put on by Khan quietly conveys the hurt and the disbelief of his character. Finally, adding insult to injury, Langda is asked to announce to those waiting outside that Kesu has been appointed chief-lieutenant. He does it with a quiet majesty and never shouts, cries, or questions. Later, he smashes his own reflection in the mirror and uses his own blood to put a mark on his forehead (a *tilak*), crowning himself lieutenant. Khan makes Langda a force to reckon with, which is unusual for a villainous role. Even in the song sequences, Khan remains in character, moving like a hooded cobra ready to strike.

Konkana Sen, who plays Langda's wife, Indu, seems to live the role. She slips into the character effortlessly. For the length of the movie, you feel she must be, in reality, some smart-talking, sassy village belle who has no qualms or illusions about life. After a long time, Vivek Oberoi, as Kesu, provides a good performance. He looks like the fool and perfectly fits the character of a gullible, unsuspecting, educated goon who does not realize both Langda and Omkara are using him. Deepak Dobriyal, as Rajoh, shows he can act; he morphs from the distraught bridegroom who realizes there is going to be no marriage to the conniving man out for revenge.

the movie provides an accurate illustration of the politics of power. Fools do not deserve power, even if they have a large following and, in fact, it is dangerous when they possess it. Fools is referred to both Omkara and Kesu. Omkara considers himself a power broker but does not know even the basic rules of politics - beware of sycophants whom you have ignored or slighted, and always initiate communications, explain your actions, and apologize if you have to, so others understand they are not being purposely lied to or betrayed.

Kesu is a fool with a good heart and short temper. His weakness is that he is manipulated and does not even know it. This makes him unfit to be a politician. However, some of the scenes are very realistic and one can see such events occurring in today's Uttar Pradesh, like the demand by a minor politician in power to change the destination of the train.

The tragedy of **Othello**, and hence the plot, should be familiar to most. Bharadwaj stays true to the essential elements of the story, but transplants the action from Venice and Cyprus to a rural town in India. Instead of a dark and alienated Moorish general among Italians, Othello is now Omkara (Ajay Devgan), a half-caste rabble-rouser and gangster in the employ of the local leader/jailbird/parliamentary candidate Bhai-saab (Naseeruddin Shah). In the riveting opening sequence, Omkara's men break up the wedding of his beloved Dolly (Kareena Kapoor in the **Desdemona** role) to the hapless Rajju (the **Roderigo** character), and then face a tense gunpoint confrontation with Dolly's angry father. Though Omkara and Dolly are truly in love, he is stung by the parting words of her bitter father, which echo Shakespeare's "Look to her, Moor, if thou hast eyes to see: She has deceived her father, and may thee" (**Othello**, I, iii).

Meanwhile, as Omkara's status rises in the wake of Bhaisaab's release from prison, he must choose a replacement leader from among his lieutenants. Portentously, he elevates carefree student-leader Kesu (Vivek Oberoi, perfectly cast as **Cassio**) over hardened brigand Langda (Saif Ali Khan, who shines as **Iago**). Langda is not pleased, and hatches a nefarious scheme to turn Omkara against Kesu and Dolly by convincing him that they are having an affair. Omkara, though a fierce warrior, is not experienced in love and, as in the original play, ill-served by his ability to judge character. Langda weaves a web of trickery, enlisting the unwitting aid of Kesu and his lover, the dancer Billo (a smoking hot Bipasha Basu as **Bianca**), Roderigo, and Dolly herself, as well as his own wife (and Omkara's sister), the earthy Indu (Konkona Sen Sharma as **Emilia**). While some minor characters suffer different fates, the essential elements of the original story are all intact as the plot moves to its preordained conclusion. And though this bloody climax is inevitable, it is shocking nonetheless, powerfully played and strikingly staged.

While the middle of the film drags a bit (**Othello** has a lot of set-up, after all), Bharadwaj has a lot of fun along the way mixing signifiers. Clearly a fan of spaghetti westerns, Bharadwaj has Devgan spend much of the film riding a horse and walking around in a poncho that looks like it is on loan from the **Man With No Name**. Crashing up against all of those elements are the constant cell-phone usage of nearly every character which Bharadwaj integrates seamlessly into the four hundred-year-old story, and the intentionally hilarious use of one of the schmaltziest songs of the 1980s. (**Omkara** shows that Bharadwaj clearly has a devious sense of humor, one that was not on display at all in **Maqbool**.) Also, like the film itself, Bharadwaj's fine musical compositions have a simultaneously modern and timeless feel to them. It doesn't hurt that Bharadwaj once again has the assistance of India's pre-eminent lyricist **Gulzar**.

*Omkara* stays true to Othello's spirit. What Shakespeare did verbally, Bharadwaj did visually. The film is full of highly symbolic gestures and objects. Desdemona's misplaced "handkerchief" which leads to the tragic end in *Othello* is replaced by a waist band in the movie. The waist band is not only an erotic symbol but it has a cultural significance too. Also, like in true Bollywood style, characters randomly burst into songs and dance routines, but none of them take away from the credibility of the film.

### **Issaq, director Manish Tiwari's adaptation of Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet***

As the epitome of all things romantic, Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* has been a benchmark for playwrights and filmmakers alike. Bollywood too has made umpteen desi adaptations of the immortal love story over the decades. *Romeo and Juliet*, a perennially favourite inspiration of Hindi filmmakers, will soon be seen in three new versions. The first flick to be released in this genre is *Issaq*, which is 'ishq' pronounced the rustic Bihari way. Directed by Manish Tiwari who made the critically acclaimed Imaad Shah-starrer *Dil Dosti Etc* (2007), *Issaq* stars Prateik and a new girl in the lead. Next in line is music composer Ismail Darbar, who is debuting as a director, with his version which even bears the name of the original. *Romeo Juliet* is ready to go on the floors and will be shot in Kashmir and Turkey. "Since all love stories begin from Shakespeare's *Romeo And Juliet*, .....which is the source and inspiration of all romance, I chose it for a film

adaptation,..... "says Darbar.

Tiwary's Romeo is a pragmatic gun-toting killer (read Prateik) from Benaras and his Juliet is called Bacchi (child) because she's a naïve teenager who's easily moulded and influenced into an 'ideal' romance. "Shakespeare's Juliet was a 14-year-old girl, " says Tiwary, who couldn't find his Juliet in any of the girls from the industry and hence cast a new face. Issaq is slated for a summer (June-July ) 2012 release.

In this original Indian adaptation of William Shakespeare's Romeo & Juliet directed by Manish Tiwary, we see the story transposed to Banaras and its neighbouring areas that are witness to violence unleashed by sand mafia controlled by urban elite and equally violent retaliation by Naxalite armies. The sand mafia is run by two influential Banarasi families, Kashyaps and Mishras, who are at brutal feud with each other.

Kashyap has an 18-year old, pretty and innocent daughter Bachchi from his first wife, Bachchi's role is played by Amyra Dastur who marks her debut in this film. On the other hand, Mishra's son Rahul (Played by Prateik) is a good-looking teenager with predictable interests for a boy of his background – Girls & Guns!

Things change when the battle-hardened and pleasure-seeking Rahul and romantic yet head strong Bachchi fall in love. Disregarding the consequences, the young lovers choose go ahead with the dictates of their hearts. What follows is a high octane action-filled drama. Manish Tiwary's Issaq turns into a commentary on the meaning of love in contemporary India!

#### **Section V: *Karmayogi*, director V K Prakash's adaptation of Shakespeare's *Hamlet***

For the first time in Malayalam cinema, an adaptation of Shakespeare's Hamlet will hit the silver screens next month through V K Prakash's Karmayogi.' Indrajith plays the dual role of Hamlet and his father in Karmayogi, which will feature most of the characters of the Shakespearean tragedy, while Nithya Menon and yesteryear Bollywood actress Padmini Kolhapure plays the characters of Ophelia and Gertrude, respectively. The movie will be an entertaining action drama, beams director Prakash, adding that it will give prominence to the traditional martial art form - Kalaripayattu.

Indrajith plays a conflicted Kalaripayattu exponent who is tormented by his father's death, which leads him to his mother, Gertrude, living with his uncle. The story focuses on the themes of indecision, revenge, loyalty and treachery. If Rudran Gurukkal is 'Hamlet', Bhairavan is 'Claudius', Mankamma is 'Gertrude', Moonnumani (Nithya Menen) is 'Ophelia', Kidathan (M R Gopakumar) is 'Polonius' and so on.

Interestingly, most of the action sequences in the movie are real stunts done by Manipuri men. The national award winning director's previous two movies, 'Gulumaal' and 'Three Kings,' were commercial entertainers but, according to the director, Karmayogi' is an entertaining action drama. I have always struck a balance between both genres, says Prakash who is of the opinion that Malayali audience should promote different and experimental cinema by going to the theatres.

He says that though the audience now like fast-paced movies that keep them entertained, sensitive cinema with fresh ideas should also be encouraged. "Karmayogi is the result of my undying passion for evolving cinema and my favorite Shakespearean work," said V K Prakash

'Desi' Hamlet

Indrajit, the protagonist, plays the 'desi' Hamlet called Rudran. He is a picture of indecision and procrastination and gets to portray an enviable range of emotions and action. He wields the 'urumi' with success, as his brother did in the movie with the same name.

Nithya Menon is Ophelia personified; the mystery and beauty intact, someone to watch out for. Saiju Kurup, Thalaivasal Vijay, Padmini Kolhapure, M. R. Gopakumar, Ashokan, Manikuttan, the seductive, sultry Kani have all been cast intelligently. Manikkuttan as a soldier does well in his cameo role. Sajive Nair, of Creative Shop, an ad firm and Vachan Shetty, are the producers who made 'Karmayogi' possible through Creative Pictures. Says the Mumbai-based Sajive, "All those Malayalam movies we grew up watching in the eighties influenced me to enter the film world." Vachan Shetty from Bangalore is the man who financed 'Rithu'. "I am always open to good cinema," says Vachan.

He is also the producer of Prakash's Kannada movie which has five plays of Jayaprakash Kuloor, woven into a whole, a la 'Kerala Café.' With R.D. Rajashekar's camera ('Ghajini', '4 the People', 'Khakka Khakka') being steadfast to the theme and story, without 'overdoing' things to attract attention, there are memorable sequences in the fight scenes and also romantic reels. By the way, the fight scenes are very realistic, no 'Crouching Tiger Hidden Dragon' copycat moments. Cuckoo Parameshwaran's costumes keep up with the period-fairytale style.

'Karmayogi' is a fairytale presentation of a period story which can well turn topical, theme-wise, as all Shakespearean writings are.

### **Some less straightforward reinterpretations of Shakespeare in Bollywood**

We are in Shakespeare's 449th birthday. Many of us had to read *Romeo and Juliet* in ninth grade English class and memorize the "To Be or Not To Be" speech from *Hamlet*. We've probably all seen some sort of adaptation of one of Shakespeare's plays at some point in our lives. But Shakespeare isn't just something we read in school or go to the theater to feel self-important about. Shakespeare's influence is pervasive worldwide.

Even in India, **Shakespeare** is influencing the arts still today – more than 60 years after the British left and all of their pretentious literature could have been thrown out with them. We already know about the obvious Shakespeare adaptations in Bollywood: *Omkara*, *Maqbool*, and *Angoor*. These movies are all direct Shakespeare adaptations, but there are many Shakespearean plots forming the basis for our favorite movies in less explicit ways. They're not really adaptations; they are full reinterpretations that bring the Bard's plotlines into a new, uniquely Indian context.

### ***Om Shanti Om* and *Hamlet***

*Hamlet* is, at its essence, about avenging a loved one's death in the most melodramatic way possible. It therefore follows that when making a movie whose primary purpose is to mock Bollywood's melodramatic tendencies, they would just decide to rewrite *Hamlet*. But *Hamlet* doesn't lend itself well to song and dance sequences with happy endings where

everyone ends up happily in love – or even alive! How can we mock Bollywood without a love story and a happy ending? As *Om Shanti Om* reminds us: “Hamare filmon mein... agar tik na ho, to hoti hai nahin; picture abhi baaki hai” (In our films... if it’s not happy, then it’s not the end). The answer is: we reinvent it.

Instead of *Hamlet* taking revenge for his father’s murder, we have Om taking revenge for the murder of his beloved Shanti. Throw in some backstory (one thing I love about Bollywood is that very rarely is character development taken for granted), a bit of reincarnation, and more than a handful of clever references to ‘60s Bollywood, and we have a film!

The best reinterpretations: the play *Hamlet* stages where he reenacts the murder of his father is reimagined into an absolutely chilling song sequence, and both versions of *Hamlet* include iconic speeches that I have memorized. Unlike *Hamlet*, *Om Shanti Om* leaves us with an optimistic message: “Agar kisi chiz ko dil se chaho, to puri kaynath usse tumse milane ke koshish mein lag jaati hain” (If you want something with all your heart, then the entire world will conspire to help you get it). I have been told this quote is also a rip-off – from *The Alchemist* - but it sounds better in Hindi anyway.

I could go into all the specifics of why Om and Shanti’s love story is better than Hamlet and Ophelia’s, but I’ll leave it short for now. Just don’t worry: Shanti is never the object of Om’s heart’s desire as presented in the iconic quote. Despite Deepika’s role as an actress being to stand and look pretty, Shanti as a character is quite strong. Shanti’s situation is much worse than Ophelia’s, and yet she would never erode into a depressed mess and try to kill herself.

### ***Dil Bole Hadippa! and The Twelfth Night***

Just like *Om Shanti Om* remains true to the melodrama of a Shakespearean tragedy, *Dil Bole Hadippa!* is a pure Shakespearean comedy. It actually simplifies the original Shakespearean plot, and really just takes from it the basic elements: girl pretends to be a boy, meets another boy, and they eventually fall in love. Of course, *Dil Bole Hadippa!* does this through effervescent Punjabis with over-decorated trucks and excessive ethnic pride.

The movie, like *Lagaan*, builds patriotism through cricket. Once again, the Indian team is the underdog, but through proper training they defeat their enemies (this time it’s Pakistan). *Dil Bole Hadippa!* also relies on strong family loyalty: The only reason Rohan comes to India to coach the cricket team is because he loves his father. None of these elements are present in the original, and help to bring a distinctly Indian flavor to a Shakespearean story.

The similarities remain in the antics. In *The Twelfth Night*, Viola has a real life twin brother. In *Dil Bole Hadippa!*, Veera only pretends to have a twin brother (herself). And, although involving only two characters instead of Shakespeare’s four, the confusion that arises is classic: Veera as Veer despises Rohan, but Rohan falls for Veera, not recognizing she is Veer. After a while, Veera as Veera starts to fall for Rohan, too. However, she still has to be Veer in order to be allowed on the cricket team. All of this results in a number of comedic scenes that are even Shakespearean in their delivery.



*Dil Bole Hadippa!* also adds a slight feminist twist through a speech Veera gives about women in sports. It resolves itself very quickly and doesn't really show any sort of realistic struggle on Veera's part – but then again, that was never the point.

There are three real reasons to watch *Dil Bole Hadippa!*, which I imagine aren't much different from the reasons 17th century Brits went to see Shakespeare's comedies: to have mindless fun, to fall in love with Rani Mukherjee, and to stare at Shahid for three hours.

### ***Ishaqzaade and Romeo and Juliet***

*Ishaqzaade* presents itself as a **modern-day India's *Romeo and Juliet*** (the title even means “star-crossed lovers”). In both, young lovers from feuding political families are destined to have a tragic ending, but the simple setting of modern-day India allows the same story to be more than just simply retold.

The setting of Parma and Zoya's romance is entirely dependent on an Indian context. Only in India are college politics and government politics so strongly interconnected. This setting, as well as the traditions of patriarchy, are essential to understanding Parma's conflicted attraction to Zoya's defiance of him.

The primary breaking point from the original occurs at the climax, when Parma and Zoya are married. When the original Romeo and Juliet consummate their marriage, Romeo doesn't run off saying “haha! that was a fake marriage! now you're tainted and I'm a man!” What's more: The character development is such that we actually understand his motives. The corruption and violence in his family's life has influenced Parma so strongly that doing something like this to someone he loves seems natural.

Much like Romeo and Juliet's hasty, melodramatic love is dependent on their youth, *Ishaqzaade* is dependent on Parma and Zoya's immaturity. Romeo falls in love with Juliet and quickly forgets all about the other girl he had been pursuing. We see this same naivety in Parma during Zoya's rape, as well as in Zoya in her slow but eventual forgiveness of him.

No one today can deny the love between Romeo and Juliet; the story has become this universal symbol of love, like the story of Radha and Krishna. The framing of Romeo as a rapist was a clever choice; it brings *Ishaqzaade* a deepness and relevance that other tales of young star-crossed lovers don't have, and emphasizes to a modern audience how not straightforward this romance really is.

## **CONCLUSION**

Bhardwaj said in an interview, post the year 2000 has started what we can doubtlessly call the golden age of Indian cinema. This is an obvious result of the rapid development in filmmaking techniques along with other peripheral advances- the huge leap in the development of the communication system in the internet age etc. in short, the phenomena we call globalization. Such rapid growth, along with the aid of certain other socio-cultural and economic factors, has almost completely changed the viewing practice of the urban audience. Now, there is a gamut of audience for every kind of cinema. Owing to such reassuring conditions, producers are also more willing to experiment with both content and form of cinema and break free from the boundaries of the traditional storytelling modes and preferences. Also, Bollywood today readily finds at its disposal

a widespread global audience, enjoys simultaneous international releases and higher ticket prices. The overseas market today generates 65% of a film's total income. Keeping this figures in mind, one may say that in the recent tumultuous years of global economic crisis, Bollywood perhaps enjoys a larger viewership than any other film industry in the world.

In such times, artists with a sensibility steeped in literary and cultural tradition can afford to revisit old practices, and not merely grind their talent in mindless money churners.

When "all the world's a stage" to the bard, Indian cinema has proven to be no exception.

In the sub continental, as well as in a global context, Bhardwaj's films can be seen as works that string together disparate aspects of a global trans-cultural history of art, across mediums of expression, adapting the English master in a foreign tongue and still managing to keep both cultural elements intact with all their nuances and flavor. In a global context, Bollywood films can be understood and enjoyed as a requiem for world peace, sung in a foreign (firang) tongue at the turn of 21<sup>st</sup> century.

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