

**OMKARA AS RECODIFICATION: A COMPARATIVE STUDY****DHIREN PARMAR**

Ph.D. Student and Temporary Assistant Professor

Department of English, Faculty of Arts, The Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda, Vadodara,
Gujarat, India -390002

dhirep9@gmail.com

<https://doi.org/10.33329/elt.74.23>**ABSTRACT**

With the coming in of the cultural studies' perspective in the research discourse, the ways in which Shakespeare's adaptations are studied have undergone a substantial change in the past two score years. The paper attempts to make an exploratory and comparative study of the target text, a 2006 Hindi feature film *Omkara* directed by Vishal Bhardwaj and the source text, a 1603 play *Othello* by William Shakespeare. The research model adopted for the analysis would be the theory of 'recodification', developed by William Frawley.

The paper aims to ground the understanding of the play *Othello* in translational discourse. The research objective of the paper is to demonstrate a research model to the students and the critics of Shakespeare and of translation studies, which will try to contribute to knowledge and enhance level of critical thinking in the existing clichéd understanding of film analysis. Moreover, The paper here aims to explore the various components in the adapted film *Omkara* with specific reference to the source text *Othello* and to put a range of evaluation and interpretation on the basis of fresh ground of inquiry and that is William Frawley's recodification concept. It sets an illustration of how interpretations of Shakespeare's plays are portrayed in the films linked to cultural and political contexts in the light of history.

Keywords: Source text, target text, translation, adaptation and recodification.

Certainly no other author than William Shakespeare has held such a sway over the literary world, undiminished through some four centuries of shifting artistic tastes. His plays and its plots and characters have continued to be a living reality for us. Whenever one reads his plays he never feels his plays to be a private fiction but seemingly convinces himself to believe it to be the reflection of real world. The reader observes human emotions, tactics and surrounding events which could happen in fact and Shakespeare portrays it with great accuracy. His well-known contemporary Ben Jonson in his poem "To the Memory of My Beloved the Author, Mr. William Shakespeare" wrote "Thou art still alive, while thy Booke doth live, And we have wits to read, and praise to give." (1917) This can be believed even in the present time as there are many filmmakers who adapt Shakespeare's plays in their films contextualizing the modern present day world to an extent of great accuracy.

The paper tries to examine how the play is translated into a film and also tries to examine how a new work of art is created if it is deviated from the original work from which it has been translated. As per the Roman Jakobson model of understanding translation, here the intersemiotic examination is not intralingual but interlingual that is, it is not out of the works from the same language but of two different languages. The present work will analyze the textual and audio-visual narrative of *Othello* and *Omkara*

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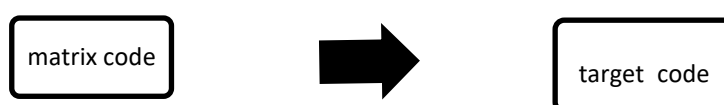
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respectively. As William Frawley states in his essay “Prolegomenon to a theory of Translation”(2006) that translation is not mere transfer of codes across languages but it is a process of recodification that is it is generation of a new code. Inquisition is to be made for about differences and the parallels between the two works and to analyze why and how Vishal Bhardwaj, the creator of *Omkara* deliberately departs from the play *Othello* transforming it not only into an adaptation but also generating it into a new work.

‘Recodification’

The term ‘recodification’ appears in the essay “Prolegomenon to a theory of Translation” (2006) written by a well-known scholar William Frawley. Frawley critiques the myths in the theories of translation and tries to revolutionize the concept of translation as in the way he argues and reinterprets in his own way. He argues that translation is not mere transfer of codes from one language to other but it is semiotic transfer. He says that there are three types of semiotic transfers and they are copying, transcribing and translating. (i) Copying is the verbatim reproduction of input of codes and it explains imagistic thinking. (ii) Transcribing is the reduction of input into codes which is governed by human semiosis. And (iii) Translating is the reduction of input codes into other codes. So he states that as transcription is cognizing thus translation is recognizing or recodification.

Frawley elaborates the term ‘recodification’ and explains that translation does not mean to establish synonymy across languages instead it is independent of whether or not a code is synonymous to the correlated element of other and adds that even if there is no synonymy across codes the act of translation can never be discredited or disproved. He explains translation as recodification by elaborating the process of translation. He calls the two ends of translation as the matrix code and the target code and it can be correlated as the source language (SL) and target language (TL) that is matrix code is the text in the original language and target code is the language in which the translation will be done. He states that matrix code is the code of origin of the translation and it demands rerendering. While the target code is the goal of the translation into which the matrix code is rendered. The matrix code provides essential information to be recodified and the target code provides the parameters for the rendering of the information. And he symbolically explains translation as :



Frawley explains that the process of translation is bilateral accomodation of matrix and target code. He then argues and accepts the fact that translation not only tranfers codes across languages but it also generates a third code which arises out of the bilateral consideration of the matrix annd target codes. He further says that translation emerges the third code in its own right, derivative of the matrix information and target parameters. He states that the new code is like soul of the translator’s existence as it takes over the original work and establishes itself as a valid code dictating its own logic. It is breath of life for translation as the new code establishes the essential difference necessary for semiosis. Thus the third code subverts its matrix information and target parameters and differentiates itself as a new information derivative of the matrix and target codes.

Frawley further states that the newly produced code that is the new semiotic unit is either a ‘moderate innovation’ or a ‘radical innovation.’ He elaborates that in moderate innovations the codes adheres closely to either the matrix code or the taget code. If the translation sticks closely to the matrix code than it is

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called a 'close translation' and if sticks closely to the target code than it is called a 'free translation.' Both these translations are kinds of moderate innovation. On the other hand radical innovations occur when the third code begins to break away from both the matrix and target codes. The new code establishes its own rules and also its redundancy so that it increases the possibility of new knowledge out of it. Thus the new codes generated from the translations or recodifications can either be moderate or radical innovations or even sometimes both.

The following critique and analysis of the Hindi feature film *Omkara* will be based on Frawley's recodification concept. And it will try to evaluate the film as a recodification and will also examine the kind of innovation or innovations. It will also try to answer the question of Vishal Bhardwaj's appropriation of Shakespeare and his recodification of setting, characters, plot, dialogues and songs of the play *Othello*.

Othello

The unprecedented admiration towards the works of Shakespeare created a fierce curiosity about his life but dearth of his biographical information makes his life shrouded in mystery. Many of his critics believe that the works bearing his name were written by someone else. But such claim is not supported by the scholars. He is known for his thirty-seven plays and hundred and fifty-four. His works have been translated into almost every literature of the world. His popularity is horizonless and the legacy of admiration of his works is endless. And it is a crystal clear example of his literary success that his works are studied and analyzed in the advanced level literary studies. Even there are Universities across the globe which honor students with specialized degrees in the study of Shakespeare.

Othello is one of the most famous tragedies written by Shakespeare in the years around 1603. It was written during Shakespeare's great tragic period (1600-1607), which also included the composition of *Hamlet* (1600), *King Lear* (1604-5), *Macbeth* (1606), and *Antony and Cleopatra* (1606-7).

Othello, a noble moor and a General in the Venetian Army, is in love with Desdemona. His most passionate and obsessive love is the central theme of the story. The villain in the story is Iago, who has ill feelings towards Othello for many reasons. He plots against Othello and uses all the other characters in the play to succeed in his evil aims. Roderigo, who is a foolish rich man, is madly in love with Desdemona and joins Iago hoping to be rewarded with Desdemona. The story ends in a tragedy when Othello falls prey to Iago's plan and murders Desdemona believing her to have been unfaithful to him. But when he realizes the truth about Desdemona's loyalty towards him which he never realized because of Iago, he commits suicide out of the guilt of having killed her.

The play opens with Roderigo and Iago plotting against Othello and Cassio. They raise the issue of Desdemona to Brabantio. Brabantio approaches the Duke but the issue is resolved when Desdemona confesses her love for Othello. Othello explains he narrated stories of adventure in travel and war. After that he leaves for Cyprus to fight Turkish army along with Desdemona, Iago and Cassio. When they reach there they are informed that the Turkish army has been destroyed at sea. There Othello calls for celebration and as Iago who wants revenge for the lieutenant's position given to Cassio, he sees that he can create a misunderstanding between Othello and Desdemona. Iago then makes Roderigo understand that he should fight with Cassio and disgrace himself. And so it happens but while chasing Roderigo when provoked Cassio accidentally stabs Governor Montano. This invokes fury all over.

Othello stops his marriage plans and comes to the place of commotion. He asks for justification but Iago cleverly tries to shield his friend Cassio. But Othello punishes Cassio by stripping him off his post of Lieutenant. Cassio is extremely upset over the issue and asks for help from Iago. Iago sees another opportunity

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here and tell him that only Desdemona can help him now. Iago tells Cassio that he will take Othello away so that he can talk to Desdemona. Desdemona is sympathetic but Othello comes back and sees Cassio leave Desdemona. Iago fuels the spark makes it look like Cassio leaving in a hurry to avoid being caught by Othello. Othello is now burning with jealousy.

Othello is heartbroken now and Desdemona fails to understand the reason. Meanwhile Emilia, Iago's wife takes a handkerchief back home. Iago finds it and becomes very happy. He plants the handkerchief in Cassio's room as evidence. Iago makes Othello realize the missing handkerchief and he asks for it from Desdemona. She is not able to produce it. This makes Othello very angry and he has fits (epilepsy). Iago fixes a meeting with Cassio during this time. He makes Cassio talk about Bianca and his love for her but Othello hiding close by interprets it as Cassio confessing his love for Desdemona. Here Lodovico comes as a replacement for Cassio.

Othello questions Desdemona and calls her a 'whore', but Desdemona and Emilia both are not able to convince Othello. Iago then sees the opportunity. He sends Roderigo to kill Cassio. But Cassio is not killed and though badly injured he kills Roderigo. Iago then covers up the murder and gets Cassio attended to. Meanwhile Othello weeping kills his wife. Emilia comes with the news that Roderigo is dead but when she sees Desdemona she explains her innocence. Iago comes in and tries to silence her but Othello realizes his mistake and weeps with regret. Iago kills Emilia. Othello kills himself. Iago tries to run away but is caught by Lodovico and Montano and punished. The play ends with a speech from Lodovico explaining hatred and jealousy.

Omkara

A versatile personality, Vishal Bhardwaj is a highly acclaimed Indian film director, writer, screenplayer, producer, music composer and playback singer. Vishal Bhardwaj was born on 4 August 1965, in Bijnor and was brought up in Meerut, Uttar Pradesh. Ram Bhardwaj, his father, was not only a government sugarcane inspector but also a famous poet and lyricist. Vishal Bhardwaj completed his graduation from the Hindu College of Delhi University. That is the place where he met his wife, Rekha Bhardwaj.

Vishal Bhardwaj started his career playing the harmonium for Ghazal singers, while he was still in Delhi. His association with Gulzar started with television series like Jungle Book, Alice In Wonderland and Gubbare. He composed the music for Maachis, which won the R. D. Burman Award (1996) and Godmother, which won the Rajat Kamal Award at the National Film Awards (1999). He also composed music for films like Satya, Chachi 420, Hu Tu Tu, Makdee, Omkara, Kaminey, Ishqiya and many others.

With Makdee (2002), he made his directorial debut. Bhardwaj seems to have an affinity to great writers. His second venture was the critically acclaimed Maqbool (2003), which he adapted from Shakespeare's *Macbeth*. The Blue Umbrella, his next venture was based on Ruskin Bond's story, by the same name. He reprised to Shakespeare again with the critically acclaimed and successful Omkara (2006), adapted from *Othello* and for which he received many National and International awards. He is also famous for his films like Ishqiya, No Smoking and Kaminey. He is best known for the adaptation of Hamlet as Haider which was released in the year 2014.

Omkara Shukla (Ajay Devgan) is a Bahubali, a right hand of a in power politician Bhaisahab (Naseeruddin Shah) somewhere in hindi belt of north India. In the beginning of the movie he elopes with beautiful Dolly (Kareena Kapoor) who is a daughter of Lawyer who is referred as vakilsahab. After some time, when he promoted the political hierarchy, he appoints, Kesu Firangi (Vivek Oberoi) as his successor instead of Langda Tyagi (Saif Ali Khan), who had been faithfully working with him for about fifteen years. Langda, smitten with jealousy and vengeance spins the plot wherein he convinces Omkara that his beloved Dolly has an affair with Kesu. The end

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is tragic leading death of Omkara and Dolly, also of Langda. Between these characters a very important character is that of Indu (Konkona Sen Sharma), who in the end reveals the truth to Omkara. But it's too late. Needless to say, Omkara is Othello, Dolly is Desdemona, Kesu is Cassio and Langda Tyagi is Iago while Indu is Emilia of the play *Othello*.

Omkara Shukla or Omi(Ajay Devgan) is a bahubali, the leader of a gang which carries out political crimes for the local politician Tiwari Bhaisaab (Naseeruddin Shah). Ishwar 'Langda' Tyagi (Saif Ali Khan) and Keshav 'Kesu' Firangi' Upadhyay (Vivek Oberoi) are his closest lieutenants.

The movie starts with Langda Tyagi hijacking a wedding procession and challenging Rajju (Deepak Dobriyal), the bridegroom, to try and stop Omkara from abducting the bride, Dolly Mishra (Kareena Kapoor). Rajju fails and the wedding never takes place.

Dolly's father Advocate Raghunath Mishra (Kamal Tiwari), referred in the movie as vakeel saab, is furious and confronts Omi. He puts a gun to Omi's head and demands the return of his daughter. Bhaisaab, the political boss, intervenes and resolves the conflict by mentioning the current political conditions and prevents bloodshed. Still unconvinced, Raghunath grieves to Bhaisaab the next day. To bring a final solution to this issue, Dolly is made to appear in front of her father and clarify that she eloped with Omkara rather than being abducted forcefully. She also tells the events of how she fell in love with Omkara. The father leaves feeling betrayed and ashamed.

After some crafty political arm-twisting, involving a MMS sex scandal, Omkara eliminates a powerful electoral rival. Bhaisaab is elected for parliament and Omkara is promoted from bahubali to the candidate for the upcoming state elections. Omkara appoints Kesu over Langda as his successor once he enters politics himself. Langda, disappointed with Omkara's poor judgment and jealous of Kesu, his younger, less-experienced, superior; hatches a plot to avenge both his offenders. He first causes a violent brawl between Kesu and Rajju by taking advantage of Kesu's low threshold for alcohol. Such irresponsible behaviour by Kesu infuriates Omi, who now starts having doubts over his decision.

On the one hand, playing the role of a concerned friend, Langda convinces Kesu to appeal to Dolly, Omi's lover and bride-to-be to mollify Omi. On the other hand, he starts to disrepute Dolly by implicating Kesu's visits to her as an illicit love affair between the two. A 'kamarbandh' carelessly dropped by Dolly and stolen by Langda's wife Indu (Konkona Sen Sharma), which eventually reaches Billo Chamanbahar (Bipasha Basu) as a gift from Kesu, plays an important part in the plot, as evidence of Dolly's infidelity.

During the ending, on the night of their wedding, Omi is convinced that Dolly and Kesu have been having an affair behind his back. In utter rage, he smothers his new wife to death. Langda shoots Kesu with a silent approval from Omi. Kesu is hit with a bullet on his arm. Hearing gunshots and in shock, Indu enters the room where Omi is sitting next to Dolly's corpse in remorse. Indu notices the kamarbandh and confesses to stealing it, they both understand the fatal misunderstanding and Langda as its root cause.

In retaliation, Indu slashes Langda's throat and Omi commits suicide. The movie closes with Omi lying dead on the floor and Dolly's dead body swinging above him, while Kesu looks on.

Analysis

Othello has a long and complex screen history, portrayed by many of the Hollywood and Bollywood's filmmakers, which includes Orson Welles in 1952, Laurence Olivier in 1965, Laurence Fishburne in 1995 and more recently Vishal Bhardwaj in 2006. Vishal Bhardwaj's *Omkara* the film has travelled far in terms of literary criticism. It adds a new twist to the typical features of a Bollywood film. Bhardwaj not only relocates *Othello* to

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India but also shapes and transfers the play into a successful film. While *Omkara* can be interpreted as one of the family tragedies but the shaping of the setting, characters, plot and the emergence of the songs and dance scenes are rooted in the film to accommodate the filmic tastes of the Bollywood audiences. *Omkara* therefore can be thought as an example of fluidity of cultural borrowings and conventions in the early twenty-first century.

The film *Omkara* in its adaptation of Shakespeare's *Othello*, remains true to the major story line of the play while also changing many aspects to create difference between the two. But still there is close analogy between the play and the film as far as the general plot is concerned. However there are many small departures *Omkara* does from *Othello* but still with subtle changes Vishal Bhardwaj creates a film which leads to a more to life and meaningful story.

The comparative analysis of the film *Omkara* and the play *Othello* will be hereafter in an ascending order of (i) setting, (ii) characters, (iii) plot, (iv) Language and (v) songs.

Setting

Othello is set against the backdrop of the wars between Venice and Turkey. And it is Cyprus where the play is set for most of the action while *Omkara* is set into the landscapes and culture of contemporary eastern Uttar Pradesh. However this is judged only on the basis of the number plates of the vehicles and the surnames of the main characters like Shukla, Tiwari, Mishra, Tyagi which make up a relatively high percentage of the population of Uttar Pradesh. Otherwise there is no exact mentioning of any of the places in the film.

Bhardwaj's change of the setting for his reverence towards Shakespeare's tragic tale of a General Othello is very interesting to explore. Eventhough the shooting of the film was done in Satara, Mahabaleshwar, Mumbai and Wai that is in Maharashtra, it seems that the sets were erected with precise details to securely root the narrative into the setting of authentic Uttar Pradesh villages. Bhardwaj locates the film in Uttar Pradesh may be to speak to the clan rivalries and the contests over caste and gender. Thus Bhardwaj completely changes the setting of *Othello* into the local and makes it accessible to the public whose daily lives are surrounded by conflicts, local rivalries and power-play in the interiors of contemporary India. He simultaneously draws on the legacy of a gangster film as a vehicle of intense drama and high emotions. And importantly it highlights a reality of contemporary India that is the economic and social aspirations of the restless underclass with a democratic system dominated by the corrupt and often criminalized politicians. He is trying to set the film in Uttar Pradesh or perhaps in modern Indian human society in general. Even though the setting is changed into the political background from the military background the modifications are capable to draw out the sense of alterity that the tale requires and which is convincing and splendid.

Thus the Turkey-Venice-Cyprus setting was skillfully adapted into the political scenario of the villages in India. May be this was the perfect way to Indianize the play. Otherwise if Bhardwaj would have tried to make the film exactly like the play then many would have argued on the mental stabilities of Indian Army officers and Generals. Because these officers and Generals firstly, they never have informal relations with their juniors and; Secondly, they never get easily influenced by the their juniors. So Bhardwaj would have tried to recreate the tale exactly in the same way in India then maybe it would not have earned the respect and acclaim like it did for the modification in the setting of *Omkara*.

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Characters

Though the filmmaker modifies a lot of elements into the film from the play but still the character names are very similar to the original inspiration which brings both the stories very close. He assigns locally suitable names suggesting Shakespearean archetypes.

Character in the play <i>Othello</i>	Character in the film <i>Omkara</i>	Performance by
Othello	Omkara Shukla or 'Omi Bhaiyya' or Omi	Ajay Devgan
Desdemona	Dolly Mishra or 'Dolly'	Kareena Kapoor
Iago	Ishwar Tyagi or 'Langda'	Saif Ali Khan
Cassio	Keshav Upadhyay or 'Kesu Firangi'	Vivek Oberoi
Rodrigo	Rajan Tiwari or 'Rajju'	Deepak Dobriyal
Emilia	Indu Tyagi	Konkan Sen Sharma
Bianca	Billo Chamanbahar or 'Billo'	Bipasha Basu
Duke of Venice	Tiwari Bhaisahab or 'Bhaisahab'	Naseeruddin Shah
Brabantio	Raghunath Mishra or 'Vakilsahab'	Kamal Tiwari

However the names aurally suggest Shakespearean archetypes Vishal Bhardwaj has taken liberties to modify the characters being loyal to the source which creates a more true to life and meaningful story. The discussion of the minor characters is hereafter which will be followed by the discussion of the major characters.

Vakilsahab: Raghunath Mishra is one of the minor characters in the film. Like Brabantio is one of the retired noble men Vakilsahab is also one of the men of law and also has close association with Bhaisahab like Brabantio having with the Duke of Venice. He has close resembling characteristics to that of Brabantio. But Vakilsahab is more stringent and rigid and does not accept her daughter's elopement unlike Brabantio. And it is Vakilsahab who starts to fill the poison into Omkara's head which has a considerable significance in the tragedy.

Bhaisahab: Tiwari Bhaisahab is a local politician and is in the jail in the beginning of the film. He like the Duke of Venice rules the region. He is a father figure for Omkara and the whole region. He uses people like Omkara to the full effect but also treats them with special respect. Thus the character of Bhaisahab is analogous to the Duke of Venice in the play but cannot be said as the same..

Rajju: Rajan Tiwari is a son of rich businessman and a friend of Langda Tyagi; Unlike in the play where Rodrigo just has a formal relationship with Iago for money and for the advancement of their revenge. He is ex-fiancee of Dolly. He is deeply in love with Dolly and cannot see Dolly with Omkara. He longs for her and joins Langda to destroy Omkara. And it is Rajju who taunts Langda for the injustice done to him by Langda, which gives birth to the evil Langda from the loyal Langda. Rajju has a brief but significant role.

Indu: Indu Tyagi is wife of Langda Tyagi. She is not a maid of Dolly like Emilia in the play instead she is an elderly senior figure for Dolly and often called as 'Didi' by her. She is a typical house wife and plays a vital part in resolving homely issues. She has a relation of sister with Omkara. Though having a minor role she plays an important part in the film by stealing the 'heirloom' or the 'kamarbandh' and finally in the end proving Dolly's fidelity.

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Billo: Billo Chamanbahar is a courtesan figure unlike Bianca who was a prostitute in the play. She is a contrasting figure to that of isolated innocent Dolly. She eventually falls in love with Kesu and is also one of the victims of the conspiracies within the film.

Kesu: Keshav Upadhyay or Kesu Firangi is the only educated person in the scenario after Vakilsahab. He makes friends with everyone very easily. He matches with every characteristics of the Cassio in the play. He is inexperienced, charming and has a good friendship with Dolly. He is one of the deputies of Omkara. He is also one of the victims of the jealousy and circumstances that arise out of hatred.

Dolly: Dolly Mishra is a simple girl of a lawyer. She falls in love with Omkara when he comes to her house injured. She is a typical housewife who cooks food and waits eagerly for her husband to return home. She fails to realize that her friendship with Kesu can become so fatal for her lovely happy life. She bears every resemblance to the character of Desdemona in the play. She is fair, innocent and truly loves Omkara but Omkara fails to understand it and finally in the end kills her.

Omkara: Omi Bhaiyya or Omkara Shukla is a right hand of a politician who uses his skills to secure his political position. Shakespeare's Othello was dark skinned and here Ajay Devgan not only has a darker complexion but is always seen wearing dark clothes. Othello was general in the army while here Omkara is a bahubali, who takes care of the political prospects of a Bhaisahab. Othello was Moor and Moors were the North African Arabs who ruled southern Europe while Omkara here rules the region as a bahubali. Othello was from a different race to that of Desdemona while Omkara here is of a 'halfcaste' or 'adhi jaat'. So Omkara recasts one of the central themes of the play that is racial difference with caste difference. And it is not Omkara but Dolly who advances for the love relationship and it only the love of upper-caste and exceptionally fair Dolly that wins the half caste and dark complexioned Omkara. Like Othello Omkara is a short-tempered true lover, whose jealousy and his vulnerability to Langda, destroys his happiness and love.

Langda: Ishar Tyagi or Langda is a faithful and reliable man of Omkara. He accompanies Omkara for all the tasks assigned. Eventually it is his deserving post of 'bahubali' which instead is given to Kesu which initiates jealousy and hatred which results into the tragic tale. He is an all-rounded sinister -personification of evil and metaphor of universal machiavelli. He is a scheming manipulator and a vengeance obsessed psychopath. He does not bear physical resemblance to that of Iago but has similar characteristics. Langda as the name suggests he limps and is physically disordered like the traditional and typical Hindi film villains. He is a schemer who commits no crime himself but manipulates others. He is unclean, has black teeth and his jealousy suffices his being as a green-eyed monster. "Though the actions of Langda match up well to those of Iago in the play there are still noticeable differences between the two, these differences combine in order to make the antagonist Langda less of a villain than Iago in *Othello*. There are some scenes which allow the audience to sympathize with Langda or atleast understand his viewpoint, in a way the film lessens the evil in Langda. While there is no sympathy felt for Iago. From the very beginning he is seen as a villain. On the other hand Langda is a character to which audience relate to. Even though he is seen performing evil actions, they are showed in a more human light. It is only after the appointment of Kesu as bahubali over him which gives him a start. And it is only because of him that the plot builds and ends.

Over and above these characters there are interesting relationships of Rajju and Langda, Dolly and Indu, Dolly and Kesu, Rajju and Omkara and Omkara and Langda unlike the relationships in the original source text. Also we see emergence of new characters like Langda's son 'Golu', political rivals 'Kaptan Singh' and 'Kicchlu'

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Plot

Vishal bhardwaj's renegotiation and appropriation of *Othello* and the play's meanings are embedded into the different production and reception context. His adaptation manages displaying nuances while sticking extremely close to the source material. The three main points which Bhjardwaj added to the play are emotions, expanding the narrative and inserting songs. While one could argue that it is quite difficult to insert even more emotions into *Othello* but still Bhardwaj easily manages to modify the play into a successful film. The apparent modifications by Bhradwaj are seemingly for desired effects. He does this not only to add nuances to the play but also because he must have had thought of the audience who would have never read or heard of the play *Othello*. He creates a plot in such a way where everything goes logical and practical, even the audience can sympathize and emphasize towards the characters within. Unlike the plot where there are pre-conceived talks and interpretations which play a part in the plot construction. *Omkara*'s screenplay has a neat script reference with the play. Conversant with the play Bhardwaj takes familiar moments and plays them in his way piling on scene after scene straight from the play.

The modification he does in the scenes is that e adds few more scenes to the visual narrative to clarify the plot and to get rid of the pre-conceived talks and interpretations as were in the play. But in each scene he has given his own peculiar twists and styling. He create such a film which truly grabs attention of those who have read *Othello* and validates its own particularity with appreciation in return.

Omkara is an interesting adaptation of Shakespeare's *Othello*. Bhardwaj mostly follows the same plot as of Shakespeare's and each scene of the original play is re-enacted with equal or more fluidity and believability. The movie begins entirely differently from the original play. First, it is set in modern India and instead Iago and Rodrigo yelling at Brabantio in the scene I act I of the play it takes place just before the wedding ceremony of Rajju and Dolly. From that point Rajju runs quickly to tell Dolly's father of the horrible news and then the play follows the original plot fairly close but simultaneously differing that Brabantio dislikes Rodrigo while Rajju is already engaged to Dolly. The main difference between the story lines are that Omkara is a bahubali and he is the General of regional gangs who are fighting for seats in the Indian Parliament and Dolly is daughter of a prestigious Indian Lawyer. When Dolly elopes with Omkara her father is entirely outraged and upset just like Brabantio in Shakespeare's version. Then there is emergence of a new scene which shows Dolly's advancing love for Omkara. Another difference is that the token of love given to Dolly from Omkara is not a handkerchief but a family heirloom, a waistband, which is worn by the brides to symbolize that they are married. When this is found to be in Kesu's possession ofcourse from the encouragement of Langda, Omkara is extremely angry with Dolly. One more scene which Bhardwaj adds to the narrative is that the coronation Kesu which takes place on a hilltop with crowds gathered below. And it is from this point that Langda grows evil as he deserves the post of bahubali over the inexperienced Kesu. It is same like the post of lieutenant in the Venetian Army given by Othello to Cassio instead Iago. One more new scene where there is discussion between Raju and Langda on a river bridge where they taunt and laugh on each other for their fates. The use of technology for manipulation is well in *Omkara* for example the MMS scandal of political rival and when Langda uses the phone talk with Kesu to scheme for disturbance in the love life of Omkara and Dolly. The scene of Langda's son's birthday evening where Langda realizes that he could use Kesu as the obstacle in the happy love life of Omkara and Dolly; The marriage scenes of Omkara and Dolly and the threatening inauspicious happenings before the marriage; A do or die situation for Langda for the proof of infidelity of Dolly; In the climax Indu killing Langda and committing suicide; All these scenes are new and different from the play.

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Despite the huge differences there were many similarities between the two plots. Omkara grew angrier as the movie progressed, Langda used Rajju his sidekick and Kesu had weakness for alcohol and women. Likewise Omkara ends up smothering Dolly after confronting her about the affair. Immediately Indu runs into the room to tell Omkara that Rajju and Kesu were dead and finds dead Dolly on the swing. Similar to the Shakespeare's play Indu explains to Omkara she stole the waistband from Dolly. Langda then comes into the place Omkara does not kill Langda but bans and pushes him out of the room. Contrary to the text it is Indu who kills Langda because she knows that he is the reason for all the fatal misunderstandings. And she kills herself by jumping into a well. Omkara is interrupted by Kesu who happens to live through his gun wounds and seems as if Omkara will kill Kesu but instead he shoots himself in the chest. Overall the film creates more drama happening in the world around the characters which makes the story much more clear and convincing.

Language

The Language in *Othello* like other Shakespeare's plays is calm, poetic and with use of archaic pronouns and verbs. While the writer Vishal Bhardwaj writes the dialogues in the Khariboli dialect of Hindi, and it comes out with splendid realism. Though Bhardwaj tries to set the film in Uttar Pradesh, the language in the film can also be thought of Haryana or Rajasthan. The words are raw yet poetic, abusive yet literate and mundane yet metaphoric.

Even though there is no space in the film for the soliloquies of the characters of the play but the dialogues by Bhardwaj are most remarkable. His translations of Shakespeare's words are not only accurate but they convey similar emotions to the viewer. Therefore those who are unfamiliar with the play are not missing anything at least but surely listen something more than the play. Sometimes Bhardwaj translates the lines not literally but conveying the same emotions. For example when outraged Brabantio warns Othello in lines 289-290 of Scene-III, Act-I :

"Look to her, Moor, if thou hast eyes to see.

She has deceived her father, and may thee."

The translation to this in *Omkara* is:

"Bahubali, aurat ke dariya charittar ko mat bhulna,

Jo ladki apne baap ko thag sakti hai

Who kisi aur ki sagi kya hogi."

Another example of the translation when Othello demands Iago for why has he done what he has done then Iago replies that is in the lines 300-301 of Scene-II, Act V

"Demand me nothing, what you know, you know

From this time forth I never will speak a word."

The translation to this in *Omkara* is :

"Aap jo jaante ho bbus wahi jaano, mere sach aur jhutth me ab koi farak nai hega

Dag do mera matha, kardo meri mukti."

Overall the translations in the film are remarkable accurate and convey same emotions without translating it literally

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Songs

Almost all the songs rooted in the film which includes item numbers and romantic songs are to accommodate the filmic tastes of Bollywood audiences except for one song which is “*Naina thag lenge*” and it is analogous to the Willow song which appears in the Scene III, Act IV of the play. Desdemona sings the Willow song and it is about a woman who is betrayed by her lover. The lyrics suggest that both men and women are unfaithful to one another. And even though the song “*Naina thag lenge*” does not appear at the same time of the story in the film as in the play but it conveys the same kind of meaning. The lyrics suggest that do not trust on everything that your eyes show you. The things are not what they seem to be on the first look. These eyes will steal and deceive. That is these eyes will make you fall in love and it will result into stealing and cheating. So, both the songs raise and suggest the issue of betrayal from the one you love.

Conclusion

If we consider *Omkara* as a translation, then we find that it stands as a recodification and fits with theory of recodification by William Frawley. And *Omkara* suffice itself as a translation being an adaptation. As William Frawley explains in his essay that translation is a bilateral accommodation of matrix and target and so goes with *Omkara*. From the comparative analysis and from the thorough understanding of both art works, one finds that *Omkara* appropriately and bilaterally accommodates the matrix information and target parameters. Bhardwaj thus creates a film which is loyal to the source and transforms itself into an art work which is understood and appreciated by the audience, keeping the target parameters into consideration. And the nuances generated in the film, by not mere translating it literally, emerges as the third code in its own right which is derivative of the matrix information and target parameters. Thus *Omkara* differentiates itself as a new art work and validates its individuality dictating its own logic. The loyalty towards the source and the essential difference to accommodate the target tastes and conventions are two of the many reasons for *Omkara* to be highly acclaimed and to be awarded not only in India but also abroad.

Omkara is a kind of innovation which adheres closely to the target code and seems to accommodate every possible conventions of the target audiences. So *Omkara* is a free translation that is one of the two moderate innovations. On the other hand with the nuances and the differences generated in the film begins to break away from both matrix information and target parameters. The film establishes its own rules and redundancy which makes the tale more logical and convincing. So, *Omkara* being a moderate innovation is also a radical innovation. And it suffice its being as a translation by being an adaptation by supporting every argument of William Frawley for a translation as a recodification from his essay “Prolegomenon to a theory of Translation.”

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