

Film Studies



CAESURAE: POETICS OF CULTURAL TRANSLATION

Combined Volumes (3:2 & 4: 1)

(ISSN 2454 -9495)

2019-2020

Lost or Not Lost in the Translation? The Curious Case of Gang of Ghosts and Dhadak

*** Harshit Sabharwal & Dr Sulagna Mohanty**

Abstract

Cinema has always been considered a significant means of cultural translation. Similarly, film remakes, and especially Indian/regional movie remakes, offer a more nuanced version of cross-cultural communiqué. Being the representatives of the kaleidoscopic cultures of India, the regional movies capture the native flavor of the states they belong to. Interestingly, Bollywood, being one of the largest global movie producing centers, takes a keen interest in translating these regional cultures into Hindi, and it results in the production of a range of Bollywood remakes of regional flicks. This paper intends to take two regional movies, the Bengali *Bhooter Bhabishyat* (2012) and the Marathi *Sairat* (2016) to compare them to their respective Bollywood remakes named *Gangs of Ghosts* (2014) and *Dhadak* (2018). This paper tries to have a comparative study of the employment of Bengali and Marathi culture in the originals and the transition of the cultural translations in their Hindi adaptations. The paper would seek to analyze if the remakes are faithful adaptations or have been made into superficial and flashy extravaganza while lacking the creative originality of the originals. Though a remake is expected to have a certain quantity of divergence of plot or narration, this paper would also try to scrutinize if the context and the essence of the originals are lost or retained in these multilayered process of cinematic translation.

Key words: *Remake, adaptation, cultural translation, originality, cross-cultural*

Film Studies



CAESURAE: POETICS OF CULTURAL TRANSLATION

Combined Volumes (3:2 & 4: 1)

(ISSN 2454 -9495)

2019-2020

Introduction

Cinema has always been considered a significant means of cultural translation. Similarly, film remakes, and especially Indian/regional movie remakes, offer a more nuanced version of cross-cultural communiqué. Being the representatives of the kaleidoscopic cultures of India, the regional movies capture the native flavor of the states they belong to. Interestingly, Bollywood, being one of the largest global movie producing centers, takes a keen interest in translating these regional cultures into Hindi and it results in the production of a range of Bollywood remakes of regional flicks. This paper intends to take two regional movies; the Bengali *Bhooter Bhabishyat* (2012) and the Marathi *Sairat* (2016) to compare them to their respective Bollywood remakes named *Gangs of Ghosts* (2014) and *Dhadak* (2018). This paper tries to have a comparative study of the employment of Bengali and Marathi culture in the originals and the transition of the cultural translations in their Hindi adaptations. The paper would seek to analyze if the remakes are faithful adaptations or have been made into superficial and flashy extravaganza while lacking the creative originality of the originals. Though a remake is expected to have a certain quantity of divergence of plot or narration, this paper would also try to scrutinize if the context and the essence of the originals are lost or retained in this multilayered process of cinematic translation.

A film is a compilation of various essential elements working in unison in the pursuit of producing an extraordinary epitome of craftsmanship and creativity. Impersonated movies are

Film Studies



CAESURAE: POETICS OF CULTURAL TRANSLATION

Combined Volumes (3:2 & 4: 1)

(ISSN 2454 -9495)

2019-2020

like new seeds planted in the same soil where a massive tree has already endowed people with the sweet fruits of contentment. As “a remake can be understood as borrowing ideas, and adaptation of a work of another cultural and linguistic background to another society and country in modern period of globalization” (Noh, Who), this paper intends to scrutinize the various elements that add to the making of a worthy remake and infer if the branches of the new sapling assimilate the recourses available to it in the form of plot and storyline in a judicious and innovative manner. Pinpointing the various components, this paper skims through the comparison made on the grounds of attire which symbolically represents the culture of a place, the depiction of ethnicity through music, the impact of the title, the intricacies of theatrics, depiction of class struggle along with contemplating on the emphasis laid on the location and setting of the story and the handling of climax.

Title as an Identity

Title or name of an object is like the first impression and perception formed at the first sight and is long lasting. It might be wrong to assert that nothing depends on name. In fact, totally contrary to this adage, expectations and interests are born out of a Title. Moreover, a misfit name can destroy the whole image. Name is the first projection of thoughts and ideas regarding a subject. The case is more or less similar when it comes to cinematic world. An apt title which is capable

Film Studies



CAESURAE: POETICS OF CULTURAL TRANSLATION

Combined Volumes (3:2 & 4: 1)

(ISSN 2454 -9495)

2019-2020

of intriguing the viewers and has some meaningful layer under it works wonders in favor of the movie.

The title *Bhooter Bhabishyat* is a wonderful word play with a treat of pun. It has two layers to be unfurled; one being the direct and literal meaning indicating that the story revolves around ghosts; and the second layer poses a deep question triggering a thought process regarding the future of our past. It is a stark sarcasm on the ignorance towards the destruction of our historical heritage and marvels of the past. In today's accelerated world which itself is a race against time, the due importance for our rich history is being vehemently neglected. Moreover, it is not an exaggeration to note that if this attitude continues to dwell, the negligence will force the diverse cultural heritage and ethnicity to succumb to the ravages of sluttish time. This zing of pun, sarcasm and creativity give this title, the power to exploit the thoughts and emotions of the moviegoers. This pun of freshness and inventiveness is absolutely missing in the translated version of the original film. On the other hand, the simplistic title of *Gang of Ghosts* is a result of narrow artistry and lack of contemplation and introspection on this important aspect of film making. The title ascribed to the remake washes away the purpose and essence of the deep title making it a superficial alliterative catchphrase.

Film Studies



CAESURAE: POETICS OF CULTURAL TRANSLATION

Combined Volumes (3:2 & 4: 1)

(ISSN 2454 -9495)

2019-2020

However, the titles of the other two movies under consideration, *Sairat* and *Dhadak*, are more or less true to the content they present. The name *Sairat* throws light on the wild and spontaneous nature of the love that sprouts between the duo and fights off all the hardships, crosses all barriers, and achieves all in its control. The title *Sairat* is symbolic of the unrestrained and ever growing hatred and animosity in the family for the dwelling and flourishing love between the characters. *Dhadak*, on the other hand, is emblematic of the heartbeats or palpitations of the heart which are connected through the strings of love. The title suits the love and affection part of the story but falls short in enveloping the wholesome picture of love, hate, and struggle.

City as a Character

The setting of a film infuses life in the still abstract ideas and establishes itself as a canvas for the painting to flourish. A well chosen city becomes the stage and makes the drama being staged look relevant and palpable by providing grounds for exploration. As every tale has an awakening, latent back story, the strings of that story simulate a spider web that spans through the whole place setting and connects every minute detail and all delicate nuances by its fine glossy fibers. Here, city as a protagonist indicates a dominant narrative space which is more than just a virtual ambient containing the characters and facts. The location is a film's principal narrative element and changing it makes the whole narration different and meaningless.

Film Studies



CAESURAE: POETICS OF CULTURAL TRANSLATION

Combined Volumes (3:2 & 4: 1)

(ISSN 2454 -9495)

2019-2020

Every city has a charm, a quirk, an aura and history of its own. It plays a vital role in the lives of those who inhabit it and grow with it. This indelible mark of a city on the lives within it hasn't escaped the attention of the makers of *Bhooter Bhabishyat*, who have tried to capture the essence and the soul of the iconic city of Kolkata, giving it a life and screen presence of its own. In addition to that, the dark, disturbing, and wretched side to urbanization has been captured by the filmmaker with equal verve and vigour. The city of joy abundantly rich in its architectural culture and wealth is shown to being looted of its marvels. The beautiful old cultural and historical buildings and monuments are being demolished to construct large showy condominiums, tacky malls, and other modern buildings. The film delves into the beauty, power, and ambience of Kolkata and how the beautiful past is being sacrificed for the sake of unpredictable future. The city in this movie is an integral part of the story line making a good backdrop for a wonderful social satire.

Unfortunately, in its remake *Gang of Ghosts*, the rich and beautiful Bengali culture has been unapologetically plucked and a futile attempt has been made to plant it in Mumbai. A story which totally depends on the culture, ethnicity and vivacity of a place is lost in the translation, sucked dry, and is deprived of its substance and connect when it witnesses a frame shift. Although Mumbai is ever bustling with development due to which the heritage suffers but this setting of a dilapidated bungalow being a haven of ghosts seems like a misplaced peg on the

Film Studies



CAESURAE: POETICS OF CULTURAL TRANSLATION

Combined Volumes (3:2 & 4: 1)

(ISSN 2454 -9495)

2019-2020

same old chess board. The visual and emotional connection that erupts in *Bhooter Bhabishyat*, which also explores the interesting Bengali legends of haunted houses, is eclipsed by irrelevance and results in the lack of tuning between the proceedings in the remade film and the setting of the story. Thus, the depth and essence has been lost and the content becomes shallow, superficial and flashy.

Similarly, the movie *Sairat* is set in a rural background lined heavily with banana and cane plantations to add to the rugged countryside charm to the film. The disparities of caste and creed are more prevalent and rooted in the areas where the narrow mentality has not been widened by the avenues of education. Due to the village setting, the paradox of status becomes visually evident and relatable. In addition, the explorations of Hyderabad slum and eye for the hardships faced in the resource-less span of their struggle do not seem mechanical and shines against the backdrop of the city.

But it is sad to note that the large wells and coarse life in *Sairat* has been traded for the beautiful and magnificent lakes of *Dhadak*'s Udaipur, set in Rajasthan. The depth and creativity of the story vanishes into thin air as the difference of caste does not appear to be omnipresent in a place where both the families are educated and well off. The problem fails to reach the audience because instead of using cinematographic excellence, the class disparity has been accentuated

Film Studies



CAESURAE: POETICS OF CULTURAL TRANSLATION

Combined Volumes (3:2 & 4: 1)

(ISSN 2454 -9495)

2019-2020

vocally through dialogues. When the protagonists reach their safe haven in Kolkata, the hurdles that pose as roadblocks are sorted out easily and represent the everyday life of majority of Indians; thus failing to touch with perfection, the important theme of poverty. The wrongly placed setting of the storyline moors the heavily adorned ship of *Dhadak* to the harbor and never lets it leave the shore to discover the horizons of reality and actual depth of the story.

Portrayal of Class Struggle

When the canvas for painting and creativity is same, what really counts is the way the maker smear paint on it. The plot for both the movies *Dhadak* and *Sairat* is hackneyed and the set up is familiar with the storyline revolving around the prohibited romance between an aristocratic high class girl and a poor low caste boy but the difference lies in what the audience know and what the audience feel. *Sairat* impressed the viewers for its symbolism and penetrating yet unpretentious tone, but when it was put under the faulty Xerox machine for remake, the focus shifted to aesthetically shot scenes instead of building up a life-threatening conflict.

Great love stories, especially ones which dare to put spotlight on age-old inequalities and deep-seated prejudices of caste and class and religion shift something and initiate or trigger a discussion. The best ones go after barriers, subvert hidebound notions of honor, and give us a new way of coming at that oldest story in the world- Love. More than anything else, they give us

Film Studies



CAESURAE: POETICS OF CULTURAL TRANSLATION

Combined Volumes (3:2 & 4: 1)

(ISSN 2454 -9495)

2019-2020

passion, incendiary passion that puts the screen on fire. Manjule's masterpiece is a touching tale of caste conflict and covers societal evils while breezing through the various stages of an intimate relationship. The evolution of its characters is fluid and the climax stuns the audience.

On the other hand, *Dhadak* is only a first copy from Thailand that milks the original to a point that the cow would deem objectionable. The complexity of relationships in *Sairat* is more natural and goes well with the locales. The director of *Sairat* emphasizes on getting the milieu right. He sets things up step by step. First, Archie and Parshya meet, weigh up their options and then jump into it with everything they have, only to find out that reality is not rose-tinted. However, when we consider *Dhadak*, caste is such a hot button issue that it burns or it rightfully should when it is used in a film as central theme. Here, it is bandied about a couple of times just as a phrase, without any real attempt to delve into the complexities and miseries of what it means to be of a lower caste in today's India.

The adaptation suits Jhanvi Kapoor and Ishaan Khatter in the beginning. An easy breezy love story makes the audience laugh, mostly because of Ishaan's innocent frolics. He keeps it simple by not going overboard. In fact, he is like any other urban teenager who aspires for better things in life and isn't on the same wavelength as his parents. He understands social intricacies, but decides to look beyond them.

Film Studies



CAESURAE: POETICS OF CULTURAL TRANSLATION

Combined Volumes (3:2 & 4: 1)

(ISSN 2454 -9495)

2019-2020

Another tonal difference between *Sairat* and *Dhadak* is its treatment of male leads. When the shy Parshya is a byproduct of years of oppression in *Sairat*, Ishan's Madhu is more or less vocal. He is from a well-off family who never expects things to escalate beyond control. Here, one closely witnesses the harsh realities of life form the base of *Sairat*. *Dhadak* tries to replicate it, but doesn't go all guns blazing to address pertinent questions related to caste. It's more of a class distinction than caste paradox in *Dhadak*.

In the original film, an air of dread and despair hangs over the young couple as they try to come to terms with their new life in Hyderabad. But *Dhadak*'s ill-advised detours- narrative, take the ideational and locational focus away from the plight of the lovers who are never out of harm's way even when they find what appears to be a safe haven a thousand miles away from home. With Bittergaon's Parshya and Archie, beleaguered lovers in whom one gets deeply invested, giving way to a pair of prettified, pale shadows, it is only sporadically that *Dhadak* shows any sign of life. Neither the blossoming of the furtive and risky romance between two college mates nor their forced flight from their hometown when their affair is discovered by the girl's ruthless, class-conscious family springs out of the screen quite in the profoundly affecting manner that it did in *Sairat*, a film that drew much of its efficacy from casual, confident understatement. The

Film Studies



CAESURAE: POETICS OF CULTURAL TRANSLATION

Combined Volumes (3:2 & 4: 1)

(ISSN 2454 -9495)

2019-2020

world that *Dhadak* creates is too artificial and synthetic. It lacks the power and might to evoke empathy.

Attire as a Cultural Representation

Attire is another skin on our skin and functions as a mirror to our ethnicity. A particular kind of costumery is reflective of the cultural beauty of a place. The fabric is adorned with the beads of traditions, climatic and topographic conditions, religious practices, social beliefs, and historical legacy. Attire conceals the physical aspect of an individual but at the same time acts as a window to its personality, status, and preferences. Being known as the ‘social skin,’ different kinds of attire are ascribed to different sets and classes of people. This categorization of clothes has become so omnipresent that it marks the identity of a class as whole.

When it comes to depicting this inevitable part of our lives on the celluloid, it becomes the unwritten character of the film. It is so cardinal and essential on its own that the performance of the protagonist is more or less influenced by this fruit of the loom. Carefully tailored apparels hold the dual contrasting power of making the characters relevant or out of place in the backdrop of the storyline.

Film Studies



CAESURAE: POETICS OF CULTURAL TRANSLATION

Combined Volumes (3:2 & 4: 1)

(ISSN 2454 -9495)

2019-2020

Comparing the choice of clothes in the two movies: *Dhadak* and *Sairat*, it is quite interesting and thought provoking to note the realistic choice of apparels for the protagonists in *Sairat* whereas the protagonists in *Dhadak* are in all finery and that is quite deceiving. The characters in *Sairat* are completely engraved in the Marathi culture and what they wear does full justice to the parts they play in the film. Archana hailing from a rich family enjoys the privilege of choosing a wardrobe collection but her selections resonate well with the prevalent dress culture. Her apparels accentuate her free spirited persona and are instrumental in giving her portrayal that is raw and native. Her clothes are a perfect reflection of her disposition, status and surrounding influences of traditions, weather and social stigmas.

Parshya, a fisherman's son from the Pardhi community who lives in a Dalit ghetto is styled in the simplest and most effortless way possible. His apparels and looks in the doomed love story bring out with vivacity the stark realities of his social and economic background. His way of dressing in the film envelopes his identity and highlights the whole sect that he represents. Even when Parshya dresses up in his best and runs possessed in the pink of love his look was totally realistic, obediently conforming to the peculiar details of his character. The contrast of the class and caste which is at play all throughout the screenplay is well projected through the selection of apparels. The paradox of their lifestyles is quite clear and obvious.

Film Studies



CAESURAE: POETICS OF CULTURAL TRANSLATION

Combined Volumes (3:2 & 4: 1)

(ISSN 2454 -9495)

2019-2020

On the other hand, during costume designing for *Dhadak*, the vision for realism seems to be put on a back burner. Though the bandhni prints and the intricate mirror work on Jahanvi's lehengas do full justice to the colorful culture of Rajasthan, it fails to add the condiments of crudeness and vulnerability to the raw character she plays. Khattar's apparels which were meant to be disparate from those of his female counterpart fail to serve the purpose of marking the difference in their character setting. The visual connect that springs up in *Sairat* through the medium of attires is evidently lacking in *Dhadak*. In the pursuit of making the actors more presentable for the screen the rough and rocky side of the characters is crushed to fine and smooth powder.

Furthermore, when the costumes of the movie *Bhooter Bhabishyat* are put under the watch glass, absolute truthfulness to the opulent culture and elegance of Bengal is a clear observation that hallmarks the creative excellence of the makers of the movie. The apparels, in this movie, are like a triple chord perfume, the first chord gives the essence of the character's relevance and importance in the film, second chord plays its notes by revealing the individual's significance in then prevalent social makeup while the third chord exudes the scent of peculiar eccentricities of the artist and at the same time all the three are blended in the beautiful base of Bengali ethnicity. Whereas, considering *Gang of Ghosts*, the carbon copy of this classic, and scrutinizing it on the same lines what comes as an inference is a futile attempt to recreate the charismatic grandeur of the attires. The loom and the fabric were all plainly borrowed but the already out of place

Film Studies



CAESURAE: POETICS OF CULTURAL TRANSLATION

Combined Volumes (3:2 & 4: 1)

(ISSN 2454 -9495)

2019-2020

characters struggle to fit into the clothes. The dresses were beautifully tailored in the hands of prominent designers with the touch of perfection but the hint of Bollywood extravaganza in the finery did nothing to help the lack of substance in oddly written characters.

The purpose of costumery in a film is to reinforce that the protagonists are emblematic to the character's background and community which is totally served in the regional counterparts but in the remakes the endeavor to set trends and the airbrushed faces of the actors seem to be eclipsing the gritty angle of the parts.

Reproduction of Music

Music is the soul of Indian culture and shapes itself in various forms like ballads, folklore, bhajans and finds expression in various languages and dialects. Being the most beautiful medium of expression music absorbs all kinds of feelings and sentiments. The deepest emotions buried deep in the darkness of heart find a meaningful expression in melody. Thus, dance and music go hand in hand and are considered inseparable. One completes the other along with adding its own sparkle.

Every cultural sect has its own heritage of music and dance which is like a well maintained album of its development. Since movies are the depiction of real lives, music assumes the role of

Film Studies



CAESURAE: POETICS OF CULTURAL TRANSLATION

Combined Volumes (3:2 & 4: 1)

(ISSN 2454 -9495)

2019-2020

a skeletal spine and provides support to the expression of ideas. Hence, in movies, well written lyrics and carefully placed music pierce the heart like a perfectly aimed arrow.

Filtering the music of *Dhadak* and *Sairat* through the same Muslin cloth leaves ample disparities in the retentate. The music of *Sairat* is dipped and layered in the Marathi culture. The title track of this movie is translated as being totally wild or mad which strikes a chord with the viewers as it provides meaning to the state of the love that the characters are engrossed in. It also adds flavor to the forbidden romance and leaves an everlasting impression on the spirit. The soft music and the background score of the film is like the first rain of the season that brings with itself the sweet fragrance of the land. The immensely popular number “Zingat” again is a perky and energetic depiction of the fun and frolic that runs through the veins of rich Marathi culture. The untamed choreography and wild dancing stays true to the essence of having a love hangover. The zeal and zany antics in the song are infectious.

Similarly, the music in *Dhadak*, given by the same music director of *Sairat* Ajay-Atul, has its own charm when it comes to the lyrics and the way it is picturized and placed but somehow it lacks depth, royalty and sweetness of the Rajasthani culture the movie portrays. When the original Marathi setting of *Sairat* is changed and shifted to Rajasthan, the land of warriors, not indulging in the vivid dance and music of the place to enhance the glory of the film is a major

Film Studies



CAESURAE: POETICS OF CULTURAL TRANSLATION

Combined Volumes (3:2 & 4: 1)

(ISSN 2454 -9495)

2019-2020

setback. The “Zingat” song which has Marathi roots playing at a Rajasthani feast is not as authentic as it happens to be in the original form. Moreover, the signature choreography of Dhadak’s “Zingat” ruins the impromptu and random nature of the insane merrymaking as shown in *Sairat*. In *Dhadak*, the title track, on the other hand, is a melodious track but the intensity seems to be missing and it does not manage to rush the palpitations of the heart as the English translation of the word *Dhadak* suggests. A little shower of Rajasthani folklore and a dry breeze of Rajasthani colors would have worked wonders to the melody segment of the film.

Similarly, *Bhooter Bhabishyat*, a movie packed with ensemble cast and amazing story line is sewn together by the soothing and appealing Bengali music which is true to its origin. Every song ascribed either to a character or a situation becomes a part of its form and enables the peculiarities of the culture flourish gracefully on the screen. The music plays a pivotal role in easy understanding of the Bengali culture and the intricate nuances of its hues. On the contrary, the music of *Gang of Ghosts* seemed to be irrelevant and out of place at times. The cultural translation seems to be the culprit here as the traditions and ethnicity of a place are framed in a different setting, and thus the glimmer vanishes. It seems like the makers force to fit retro like songs at every turn and twist in the film, diluting the essence and subtext of the original film.

Film Studies



CAESURAE: POETICS OF CULTURAL TRANSLATION

Combined Volumes (3:2 & 4: 1)

(ISSN 2454 -9495)

2019-2020

Performance and Theatrics

Coming up with a good story line and writing a phenomenal script is only one leap towards the making of a remarkable movie. If the story and script are considered to be the genotype of a film, the quality of acting is undoubtedly its phenotype. The genetic makeup of a film physically expresses itself through the acting skill of the artists. This translation from paper to the screen is influenced by innumerable factors in which living the character and absorbing and accepting all its traits is the torch bearer which aids the actor to shed off his own persona and cast himself in a new mold is an important aspect. The camera captures everything that the naked human eye misses ranging from inhibitions to nervousness and inexperience. But vulnerability is a magic wand that holds the power to pose inexperience as a boon for an unripe artist. When the acting looks forceful and restrained, justice to the character is denied which in turn affects the whole story but if this mighty armament is used effortlessly, the characters as well as the story becomes promising and relatable.

The artists in *Sairat* stay original to the culture they represent which is one of the pros when it comes to playing a local character. Their vulnerable, raw and untamed nature helps them to fit in the skin of the role they play. Keeping all their inhibitions and reservations at a bay they have effortlessly enlivened the characters and have completely imbibed the intricate details of the fictitious bodies they provide spirit to. Their screen presence and raw charm is contagious.

Film Studies



CAESURAE: POETICS OF CULTURAL TRANSLATION

Combined Volumes (3:2 & 4: 1)

(ISSN 2454 -9495)

2019-2020

Throughout the movie, the viewers are made to believe that the characters are real and an unexplained love and rooting for them develops gradually. Every emotion and feeling is depicted gracefully through apt and subtle contortions of expressions. In *Dhadak* credit should be given to Ishan, who seems to be enjoying the situation. He displays a wide range of emotions but the lack of depth in the narrative holds him back. Jhanvi's character, on the other hand, isn't exactly a feminist, though a tinge of rebellion is always visible. She is better in scenes with typical Bollywood arches like build-up to song sequences or hero-heroine dialogues, but fails whenever it's about enacting pain and agony induced by personal experiences.

In their ups and downs, Kapoor and Khatter are visibly comfortable with each other but as individual actors they dodder. Even though they embody ordinary characters and are fresh faces one can't help but look at them as celebrities rather than actors. Debutante Kapoor attempts to convey a range of emotions with the same facial expressions. Her performance is rarely in sync with the proceedings. Kapoor's insipid performance allows Khatter to shine in comparison. He plunges into every emotion and situation his character finds himself in with complete immersion. Always a reliable rowdy, Ashutosh Rana packs his Ratan Singh with a distinguished evil streak and conveys intimidation through his nefarious character.

Film Studies



CAESURAE: POETICS OF CULTURAL TRANSLATION

Combined Volumes (3:2 & 4: 1)

(ISSN 2454 -9495)

2019-2020

Similarly, *Bhooter Bhabishyat*, a social satire packs remarkably astonishing performances under its hood. All the characters add up charm and grace to their roles by staying truthful to their ethnicity. All of them, who are totally different from each other, find a connection and are beautifully knitted together using intricate needles. The feelings have been emoted in an effortless and subtle way leaving no grounds for artificiality. The wonderful act by all the artists evoke the right amount of sympathy and affection and at the same time sway you away to their own world.

On the other hand, *Gang of Ghosts* is populated by a horde of zany denizens of the nether world who exhibit totally different designs to be embroidered on one fabric. The depth of the characters has absolutely been lost in translation that has been drawn with sweeping brush strokes and is squeezed dry of any meaningful political and social undertones. The characters appear to be a dead bunch, literally and figuratively. The brief to these actors seems unequivocal; ham away and leave nothing to the imagination. Apart from Parambrata Chattopadhyay, *Gang of Ghosts* utilizes a fresh set of actors for this Hindi-language relocation of the story which are filled with irritable traits that doom the already dead and half baked parts. The 1950's twang that is Mahie Gill's predominant character trait gets on the nerves when the novelty wears off. For Meera Chopra, *Gang of Ghosts* can be anything but a debut she could cherish or be proud of her acting and emoting skills. The most debilitating mistake in the film is the decision to replace the

Film Studies



CAESURAE: POETICS OF CULTURAL TRANSLATION

Combined Volumes (3:2 & 4: 1)

(ISSN 2454 -9495)

2019-2020

principal narrator. Although Sharman Joshi makes a fair fist of the half baked role, his projection as a cheerful, chatty, never-say-die tramp kills the worldly wise man of ideas and ideals who pinned the original film to a well defined moral and socio-political context. Not one delicate story string from the Bengali version is allowed to remain the same here, overpowered by cheap innuendos, sad lines and desperate physical comedy.

Treatment of Climax

Climax is where the investment of the viewers shapes itself as a gain or a loss and materializes as the hallmark of the story. The climax is a point of heightened intensity and anxious anticipation which envelopes the power of bringing events to a head and leading to a worthy conclusion. Classic love stories usually have a set pattern. Societal divisions and fuming parents threaten to separate the ardent lovers, who have to find a way out of the chaos and build a world for them. It is a Herculean task, and their romance is as far from a fairy tale as it can get.

Sairat takes the done to death Romeo and Juliet trope and is given the shimmering caste tensions in the foreground. It was a burning answer to systems that withhold and abuse power, and it leaves the viewers with a devastating ending that makes them think and question the norms of our society. When the rooting for a happy ever after ending emerges the masterstroke of the movie comes into play and jolts the dreadfully guarded anticipation of the viewers leaving them

Film Studies



CAESURAE: POETICS OF CULTURAL TRANSLATION

Combined Volumes (3:2 & 4: 1)

(ISSN 2454 -9495)

2019-2020

totally devastated. The blood inked foot impressions of the orphaned toddler strikes as a thunderclap and numbs every sensory nerve in the body. The brilliance of the director lies not in showing the violence of the climax scene, but making the viewers imagine it playing in the minds of the moviegoers. The climax leaves no stone unturned to skip a beat in the cardiac rhythm of the spectators and startles them to the core.

The after effects of the scene linger on for long and the onlookers can't help but imagine the plight and future of the child who can't even realize his loss. The real power of the scene lies in the fact that all the melancholy news headlines about killing and suicides which one reads and does not provide much thought to, start pouring from all directions. The heart wrenching climax portrays and brings to daylight the stark reality of still prevalent discriminations, caste disparities and societal divide.

On the other hand, Shashank Khaitan the director of *Dhadak*, fiddles with the climax and gives his own take. However, he ends up confusing honor killing with revenge. If *Sairat* conveyed the message through its blood-curdling silence and the haunting music in the closing credits, *Dhadak* throws in some statistics about honor-killing. Hence, what could have been a turning point in Bollywood storytelling ends up as a lost opportunity. The climax is the litmus test for a movie. The audience, while watching *Dhadak* already knows what is in store. But as it is unfolded on

Film Studies



CAESURAE: POETICS OF CULTURAL TRANSLATION

Combined Volumes (3:2 & 4: 1)

(ISSN 2454 -9495)

2019-2020

the screen there is still a dull thud in the chest. Though not as gut-wrenching and hair splitting as *Sairat*'s climax, which leaves the audience speechless and clueless for a long time even after the movie ends, *Dhadak*'s tragic climax does not fail to make the spectators feel heartbroken. The scene, despite being saddening, falls short in terms of the spine chilling power and the ability to fix the audience to the seats, gaping hopelessly at the screen with a tear-blurred vision.

Conclusion

The success of a film that brushes along the lines of classical romances lies in the connection it makes with the viewers and the way a zing and flavor is added to it. If the audience changes from passive to active and delves into the spirit of the story, the battle is almost won. The rightly framed adages fit well in the inference, for *Sairat* and *Bhooter Bhabishyat*, the original pieces of art which are unique in all respects and it is found out that here any imitation is a deviation from the innovative novelty and stands less chances of surpassing the creative instinct of the real and the primary masterpiece. During the remake of these path breaking cinematic marvels, all the elements of miracle and wonder are lost in translation and what remains after the osmosis is the distilled, glorified, and shallow counterfeit that is merely an impersonation sans essence and the characteristic perfume meant to pervade and elevate the senses.

Film Studies



CAESURAE: POETICS OF CULTURAL TRANSLATION

Combined Volumes (3:2 & 4: 1)

(ISSN 2454 -9495)

2019-2020

References

- Chatterjee, Saibal. Dhadak Movie Review: Janhvi Kapoor And Ishaan Khatter Can't Enliven Comatose Film. 20 July. 2018. <https://www.ndtv.com/entertainment/dhadak-movie-review-janhvi-kapoor-and-ishaan-khatter-cant-enliven-comatose-film-2-stars-1886562>. Accessed 24 September 2018.
- Chatterjee, Suprateek. 'Sairat' Is A Soaring, Gut-Wrenching Melodrama On Young Love And Caste-Based Discrimination. 29 April. 2016. https://www.huffingtonpost.in/2016/04/29/sairat-review-interview_n_9803798.htm. Accessed 21 September 2018.
- Chatterjee, Aambar. Bhooteer Bhabishyat (2012). 7 May 2013. <https://aambar.wordpress.com/2013/05/07/bhooteer-bhabishyat2012/>. Accessed on 21 September 2018.
- Forrest, Jennifer and Leonard R. Koos. Eds. *In Dead Ringers: The Remake in Theory and Practice*. New York: SUNY Press, 2002.
- Gupta, Shubhra. *Dhadak movie review: There is no 'dhak dhak' in this Janhvi Kapoor starrer*. 20 July. 2018. <https://indianexpress.com/article/entertainment/movie-review/dhadak-movie-review-rating-janhvi-kapoor-ishaan-khatter-5267071/>. Accessed 23 September 2018.
- Herbert, Daniel. *Transnational Film Remakes: Time, Space, Identity*. Los

Film Studies



CAESURAE: POETICS OF CULTURAL TRANSLATION

Combined Volumes (3:2 & 4: 1)

(ISSN 2454 -9495)

2019-2020

Angeles: University of Southern California, 2008.

Rediff.com. Review: Gang Of Ghosts is definitely NOT a must-watch. 21 March. 2014.

<http://www.rediff.com/movies/report/review-gang-of-ghosts-is-definitely-not-a-must-watch/20140321.htm>. Accessed on 22 September 2018.

Roasario, Kenneth. 'Dhadak' review: Heart of the original lost in the remake. 20 July. 2018.

<https://www.thehindu.com/entertainment/movies/dhadak-review-all-that-glitters-isnt-gold/article24473143.ece>. Accessed 23 September 2018.

Sen, Shomini. 'Gang of Ghosts' review: Easy steps to ruin a potentially good film. 21 March.

2014. <https://www.news18.com/news/india/gang-of-ghosts-review-easy-steps-to-ruin-a-potentially-good-film-675573.html>. Accessed on 22 September 2018.

About the Authors

*Harshit Sabharwal is an undergraduate scholar of English language and literature, Amrita Vishwa Vidyapeetham, Coimbatore. His research interests include visual art, cultural studies, film studies and queer studies. He has presented papers in various International conferences.

*Dr Sulagna Mohanty is an Assistant Professor in the Department of English of Amrita School of Engineering, Vishwa Vidyapeetham, Coimbatore, India. Her research interests

Film Studies



CAESURAE: POETICS OF CULTURAL TRANSLATION

Combined Volumes (3:2 & 4: 1)

(ISSN 2454 -9495)

2019-2020

include film studies, myth and folklore studies, cultural studies and postcolonial studies. She has extensively published on a variety of topics and presented papers both nationally and internationally.