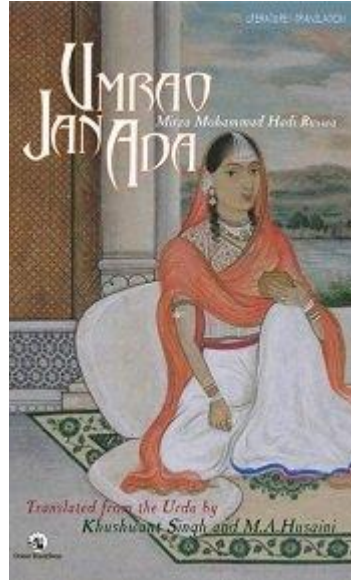


Umrao-o-Jaan: Adaptation from Static to Dynamic
Samana Asaghar



Abstract

The name of the personality is as famous as Awadh itself. *Umrao Jaan* is presented in the form of a memoir. The novel is written by Mirza Mohammad Hadi Ruswa in 1889. In 1981, Muzaffar Ali gave a visual image of the novel in his screen play *Umrao Jaan*. The film is considered as an iconic film of Indian cinema. This paper mainly focuses on the adaptation of the novel to identify how the director interprets, communicates and manipulates the biography of *Umrao Jaan* in the form of film, how the director visualises the cultural influence in film, how the director uses the technique of adaptation and how closely he represents the novel.

Key words: *Umrao Jaan*, Mirza Mohammad Hadi Ruswa, Film adaptation features, Transposition, Minimum Interference, Commentary, Analogy.

Film Adaptation

Film adaptation is a transfer of code from non-visual to visual. Adaptation may focus on the interpretation of original written work. “A work in one medium that derives its

impulse as well as varying number of elements from a work in a different medium” (Konigsberg 6). Deborah Cartmell and Imelda Whelehan give many ways of adapted work. In their book, *Screen adaptation*, they give the three lines of categorization from Geoffrey Wagner.

1. **Transposition** in which the screen version sticks closely to the literary sources with a minimum of interference.
2. **Commentary** in which the original work is intentionally altered by the film maker.
3. **Analogy** in which a completely different work of art which is substantial departure from the original is presented (Cartmell and Whelehan).

As Linda Seger remarks —“Doing an adaptation means paying for the project twice--- first to purchase the rights, second to pay for the screen play. And the material needs to be evaluated twice: first the potential workability of the source material must be assessed: than it must be decided whether the screen play is the best translation of the story”. (xiii)

Sometimes, adaptation is seen as the risk for studios because film makers or screen writers establish a work according to the society, audience and so on. Adaptation could manage the inclusion and exclusion of the characters. In Muzaffar Ali’s creation, some characters are not introduced though the story revolving around the specific characters. The task of adaptation depends on the director whether he emphasize the “narrative cinema” or character. It pointed to “any film that emphasizes the story” (Konigsberg, 261). Adaptation is the best way to study the transfer medium. The work of adaptation is to faithfully attach to the novel, Michael Klein and Gillian Parker identify adaptation types:-

- 1-“Faithful, that is literal translations”.
- 2-“Retains the core structure of the narrative while significantly reinter relating, or in some cases deconstructing the source text”.
- 3-“Regards the source merely, as a law material, as simply the occasion for an original work”.

Geoffrey Wagner’s work is similar to Klein and Parker’s categories.

Brain Me Farlane points out that-

The critic will need to understand which kind of adaptation he is dealing with if his commentary on the individual film is to valuable .These attempts as classification represent

some heartening challenges to the primary of fidelity as the critical creation (Mc Farlane 1996:11)

Alteration

Alteration is the common practice of directors, but Muzaffar Ali ignored to modify the cultural history. He had added some visual images, beliefs, customs, and styles which explicitly represent the particular community. The reality is that courtesan (Tawaif) culture is completely extinct. Interpretation and manipulation is the difficult task for directors because both these will get success only if the audience is satisfied with it. Muzaffar Ali in *Umrao jaan* used the cinematic techniques to present the story through the face of a famous courtesan.

The Need for Film Analysis

A film analysis is essential when the films are based on pioneer text. Jaffrey Geiger states in his book *Film Analysis* that “many movie goers see the cinema as no more than an entertaining visual experience, requiring literary experience and thought” (2005). Human beings are quite different culturally and ideologically. Cultural attributes bring difference in behaviour, which is controlled by particular environmental needs. Cultural attributes create enclosures suitable for a new group of people of the same society who act think and live differently. Human beings live in cultural worlds which provide peculiar meaning and significance.

Textual Articulation

The courtesan of Lucknow was culturally influenced by the Persian. *Umrao Jaan* is an interview of *Umrao Jaan* by Ruswa, which is divided into three parts, the narrator, novel writer and re creator or the director of the film. It is a difficult task for the director to recreate the novel in the form of film with a changing time and culture, so this is the representation of the textual articulation.

Nabaneeta Deb Sen gives the comment on the term “articulation” as “secondary orality: how words speak through television” is very informative. Author states that :-

“The term *articulation*, of course, suggests a discourse or speech but never a self present “expressive” voice and subject”. So the visual articulation less the effort of dialogue

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director, sometimes visualization explains everything, on the other hand the director pay effort towards the simple and easy sentences, to create the atmosphere to prove it.

Muzaffar Ali's Visualization

In the film most of the scenes begin with Gauhar Mirza. This is a challenging job for Muzaffar Ali to be faithful regarding the novel and audience. Time is a crucial in this act as the novel was written in 1889 and it comes in form of film in 1981. It is a blockbuster till date. Ali follows the commentary and he is very much close to the original work. In her erudite book, *Double Exposure, Fiction into Film*, Joy Gould Boyum said "style in film must be constructed out of totality of different elements: pictorial decor and composition, camera movement and editing transitional devices and lighting score and sound effect and so on"

Camera movement helps in the adaptation. The camera movement enables the audience to see the character through the camera man's own prospective. The emergence of the situation is explicitly explained through camera eye, i.e., aerial shot backlighting, bridging shot, camera angle, close ups and so on are the pillars of adaptation. Best cinematography and best editing of the film get the best result in the form of blockbuster. The crucial task for the adaptation is to maintain the co-ordination of the film. The position of the director is very crucial. Muzaffar Ali worked on a story narrated approximate hundred years ago, and he made an excellent and appealing presentation of Ruswa's work. He balanced the truthful representation from the static to the dynamic.

For example, the character of the novel speaks Urdu language and Awadhi as well and this practice is common in the film. The film strictly follows the traditional conventions or rituals. The film begins with the traditional song "*Kahe ko bayhe bides are lakiya babul more*". This traditional folk song is famous in north India and the Ameeran wore jewellery made of flowers. In the film courtesan cooked the *halva* for *Nazar*, and the brothel house was closed till forty days because of *Muharram*. So, the life of the person revolved around culture profession and created a demarcation line among people of society but culture not.

In the novel the metaphorical use is common. Indian culture is explained explicitly in the words, in the music, in the rhythm of song and dance. The novel gives the description but is fulfilled by the film; in the first shot director deeply mark the mind of audience to show all the cultural aspect. The first scene in the novel and the first shot in the film describes popular

game of Muslims, Ameeran's father released his pigeons as per daily routine and Dilwar Khan a typical villain was doing the same and suddenly he captured one of her father's pigeon. Similarly it completely related to the life of Ameeran, this act give sign of Ameeran further life which is captured by Khanam intentionally. In the novel *Ruswa* explains the quality of *Umrao jaan*, she was expert in singing, dancing and poetry. Again the life is given to Umrao jaan one and only iconic character, Rekha in Muzzafar Ali's screen play. Courtesans of Indian films are always very beautiful, devotee and sensitive. According to Nabaneeta Deb Sen, "secondary orality is a product of technology. It produces a new type of culture that grows out of the technologies, world and helps to maintain the praxis that produced it"

Muzaffar Ali did justice towards jewellery, costume, dance sequence, artefacts and many other audio-visual objects that presents a deep message. Director tried to give the coherent link from novel to film. He was trying to close the truthfulness of adaptation. This paper discusses **two scenes** which give the idea about the relationship between novel and film. Scenes provide the effort of director in respect of truthfulness for adaptation.

An example of truthful adaptation is given below.

Scence-1

Khanam –yahi chokri hain

Dilavar khan-ji hain

Khanam-jo humne kah diya wo maujud hain,aur dusri chokri khana gayi

Peer Baqsh –iska to mamla ho gaya

Khanam –kitna par

Peer Baqsh-do sau paer

Khanam-accha kahir kahan hua

Peer Baqsh-ek begum sahib ne apne sahib zade ki waste mol liya hain

Khanam-surrat shkal ki acchi hain es qadar hum bhi de nikalte

Peer Baqsh – main kya araun maine to behad samghaya mere sale ne ek na mani

Dilavar khan –surat iski bhi acchi hain age apki pasand

Khanam-khair admi ka baccha hain

Dilavar khan –accha jo khuch hain apki samne hazir hain

Khanam-Achha tumhar hi sahi

Khanam-Hussaini sanduqcha lao

Khanam- yeh chokri itne damaon mein mahgi to nahi malum hoti

Hussaini-mahngi main kahti hun sasti

Khanam-sasti bhi nahi hain,kahir hoga surat to bhola bhola si hain khuda jaane kiski larki hain haiye maan bap ka kya hal hua hoga khuda jane kahan se muhe utha late hain,zara bhi khaufe khuda nahi hain

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Bua hussaini-hum log bilkul bequsuur hain aab sawabinhi muo ki garden pe hoga hain humse kya-kahir yahan na bikti kahin aur bikte

Husaini-khanam sahib yahan per acchi rahenge apne suna nahi bibiyon mein laundiyoun ka kya hal hota hain

Khanam –suna kyun nahi ,ae abhi ussi din ka zikr hain suna tha sultan jahan begum ne apni laundi ko kahain apne miyan se bat karte deh liye siqchiyou se dagh ki maar dala

Husaini –duniya mein jo chahey kar lein qayamat ki din ase bibiyou ka muh kala hoga

Khanam –muh kala hoga jahanum ki kunde parenge

Husaini –khub hoga

Husaini-yeh chokri mughe de dejeje main palunge,mal apka khidmat meri

Khanam-tum hi palo

Husaini-bitiya tum kahan se aye ho

Main –bangle se

Husaini-bangala kahan hain

Khanam-ayhey kya nanhi ho,faizabad ko bangle bhi kahte hain

Husaini-tumhare abba ka kya naam hain

Main –jamadar

Khanam-tum bhi ghazab karti ho,bhala naam kya jane wo abhi bachi

Husaini-accha tumhara naam kya hain

Main – Ameeran

Khanam-bhiye yeh naam to humhe pasan nahi tum to *Umrao* kah kar pukarengey

Husaini-suna bacchii *Umrao* ki naam per bolna jab bibi kahen *Umrao* tum kahna ji

Scene- 2

In this scene, the paper discussed those dialogues which are similar in both work, static and dynamic. Director made some alteration of dialogue with same content. This scene will give the idea of Director focuses on truthfulness. In this scene *Umrao* and Nawab Sultan was sitting in the room where as *Umrao* about to sang a song suddenly a new character enter into a room. In the novel there is a description where *Umrao* called to Hussain bua. Now the dialogue started:-

2(a)-Novel Scene:-

Bua hussaini- Khan sahib mujhe khuch apse arz karna hain.idhar tashreef laeye.

Khan sahib:-Jo khuch kahna hain wahin se kaho hum log kahin bateh ke uthe nahi..

Bua Hussaini:-To khan sahib koi zabardasti hain.

Khan sahib:-Khan sahib usme zabardasti kya...randiyou ke makan per kissika ijara nahi. Aur agr zabardasti hi sahihum to nahi uthne ke...dekhe to humme kaun yahan se utha deta hain.

Bua bussaini:-Ijara koi nahi..jo zar karche ga randi usi ki hain..per aur koi us waqt nahi aa sakta..

Kahn sahib:-To zar kharachne ko hum nabir hain...

Bua hussaini- Accha us waqt unka koi mauqa nahi aur kisi waqt tashreef layega.

Khan sahib-Aurat khuch daahe hui hain,kah diya hum nahi uthenge...

Bua hussaini-Beti...Accha to uth ke idhar chali aa..nawab sahib apke aaram ka waqt hain kote per tashreef le jaye..

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Nawab sahib-Khan sahib randi ha hath chod dijiye usme khariyat hain.ap bahut khuch zatiyan kar chuke hain.

Kahn sahib-Magar ab tum kya kar sakte ho dekhe to kaunrandi ka hath chuda leta hain...

Ummarao-Accha to hath chod dijiye main kahin jati nahi...waqiye mein nawab ko chod ke hargiz na jati...

Nawab-Main kahe deta hun zara zaban sabhal ke guftugu kijeye...malum hota hain ki apne sharifoun ki sohbat nahi uthaye.

Khan sahib-Khair tumne to sharifoun ki sohbat uthae hain jo khuch ho sake kar lo

Nawab-Yeh to malum hua ki ap ladne per amada hain, magar randi ka makaan koi akhada nahi hain...na maidaan.behtar hain ki usko kisi aur waqt per mauquf rakheye aur ab tashreef le jaye, nahi to

Khan Sahab-Nahi to tum mujhe ghol ke pee jaoge....tashreef le jaye,yeh ek hi kahe ...tum hi nahi chale jatt...

Nawab Sahab-Khan sahib Janab-e Ameer ki qasam main bahut tarah deta hunisliye ki mujhe kisi qadar apni izzat ka khayal hain.waldein ,azziz,dost jo sunega naam rakhega warna apko abhi is gustakhoyou ka maza chakha deta...Phir main apse kahta hun ki befayda hujjat na kijeye tashreef le jaye...

Khan Sahab-Randi ke ghar per to aate ho aur amma jaan se darte ho...?gustakhiyan kaise tumhare baap ka naukar hun..tum apne ghar ke raiszade ho to hua karo...randi ke makann per tum bhi baithe ho aur hum bhi baithe hain.jab hamare jee chahega jayenge...tum khud bekaar hujjat karte ho kisi ko uthate nahi dekha.

Nawab Sahab-Utha dena koi mushkil nahi....khidmatgaro ko awaz deta hun to apke gardan mein abhi hath deke nikale dete hain..

Khan Sahab-Khidmatgaroun ke bal per na phulna.yeh katar bhi dekha hain...

Nawab-Ase bahut katar dekhe,jo waqt pe kam awe wo katar hain...apke katar meyan se kilati rahege.Yahan to abhi gardan naap de jayegi...phir dekha jayega..

Khan Sahab-Le ab tum hi ghar ko chale jao ...ammajaan yad karti hongii....

Nawab-Accha uheye khan sahab hum ap dono yahan se chale chale....ashbagh mein chalke hamare apke do do hath ho jayein...

Khan Sahab-Sahab zade abhi tum khud muh chumne ke layaq ho ..aur mardo se khana jangi karne ka hausla...kahin koi charka kha jaoge to ammajaan riti phirenge...

Nawab-Mardud ab teri bad zubaniyan had ko phuch gayin hain...dekh ab tujhe teri gustakhi ki saza deta hun...

Nawab-Main nahi jata...ab jo khuch hua hua aur jo khuch hona hoga ho jayega...

Shamsher khan-Janab-e-Ameer A.S ki qasam abhi apne kaleja mein maar lunga...nahi to barye khuda ap chale jaeye..apka yahan thaharna accha nahi hain...

Film scene:

Ummaro-Bua...

Bua hussaini-Khan sahab zara idhar tashreef laeyegamujhe apse khuch arz karna hain...

Khan Sahab- Jo khuch kahna hain wahi se kaho hum jahan baith jate hain wahan se uthte nahi....

Bua Hussaini-.To khan sahab koi zabardasti hain...

Khan sahab – Isme zabardasti ki kya baat hain ...randi ka kotha sabke liye hota hain...kisi haram ke chane ka theka nhi...

Bua Hussaini-Theka kyun nahi...jo gath se maal nikalega randi uski hain...

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Khan Sahab-To kya mal nikalne ko hum pheeche hain...
Bua Hussaini-Ap kisi aur waqt tashreef layega...
Khan Sahab-Mahi hui hain...maine kah diya main yahan se nahi hatunga...
Bua Hussaini-Tu hi uth ke chali aa
Nawab Sahab-Hath chod dijiye Khan Sahab
Khan Sahab-Dekihe to kaun bhadwa hath chodane ki jurrat kar sakta hain
Nawab Sahab-Zaban sambhal ke baat kijeye shayad apne shareefo ki sohbat nahi uthaye...
Khan Sahab-Kair tumne to shareefo ki sohbat uthai hain jo khuch karna hain kar lo
Nawab Sahab-Janabe Ameer ki qasam waledain ki izzat ka khayal hain warna maza chakha deta...
Khan Sahab-Randi ke kothe pe aate ho aur aro ke mmi jaan se darte ho???
Khan Sahab-Khitmatgaro ke bharse na rahna...yeh talwar dekhi hain...
Nawab Sahab-Yeh Akhata nahi hain Khan Sahab...agar muqable ka itna shauq hain to bahar aye ho jaye do-do hath
Khan Sahab-Miya Sahab zade abhi to tum khud muh chumne ke layeq ho...mardo se ladoge to cahka khajaoge...aur bechari ammi jaan roti phirenge..
Nawab Sahab-Zaleel mardood
Khanam-Huzur...ghar chale jaye main samjh lungi...
Nawab Sahab-Hum nahi jayenge..

Time Boundary

Ruswa's readers are limited but Muzaffar Ali's viewer's are not limited. They are sharing variousness regarding culture, region, language etc. Muzaffar Ali's film remains as a unforgettable experience till date. Shades of pathetic moment of life reflected after the release of film *Umrao jaan* from the face of success ,ordinary life transformed into a glamorous courtesan life performing a very first mujra which is famous till date "**Dil chiz kya hai ap meri jaan lejiye**" and another one is "**In ankhun ki mast eke mastanae hazarun hai**".The mourn song which win the heart of audience "**yeh kya jagah hain dostoun,yeh kaun sa dayar hain**" Muzaffar Ali make some slight changes in the scene, Ruswa gives the detail of Nawab Jafar Ali Khan and Umrao's relationship but in the film Muzaffar Ali did not focus on it, this name is taken by Gowhar Mirza at once in the film. Muzaffar Ali emphasize the love between Umrao and young Nawab Sultan after the marriage of Nawab Sultan *Umrao* eloped with Faiz Ali but in the novel Ruswa had explained number of characters. *Umrao* came back with Hussaini buwa in Lucknow. In this course of time she visits her parental house but her brother did not entertain for a while. *Umrao* returns to Lucknow the film ends at this point, but novel continues to narrate the story of *Umrao jaan* becomes as strong women.

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Muzaffar Ali is aware the fact that every scene has a political reason because of this he visualised everything in a very attractive manner that is glamour, power, jewellery, living standard, costume, language and so on. Behind all these things he had shown the darkness of the life of *Umrao jaan* or tawayif through the mirror at the end of the film. He has skipped some point intentionally. Ruswa presented *Umarao jan* as strong character, but Muzaffar Ali presented her as a weak women who is the victim of circumstances.

Feminism in Films

Women are presented as a centre of desire and lust fulfilment by male counterparts in cinema. However, a two-way contrast can also be seen of women in certain social spheres, first as a symbol of purity, loyalty, and compliance ascribing a status of idol and on the other hand we can see her as a *Umrao jan* prostitute. Although as a guardian of morality and modesty of family, society and community, a woman is incapable of protecting herself against the filth of the society.

The projection of Muslim women in Hindi cinema highlights two dimension of marginality. First as a woman and second as a minority member, which gives an inferior image exclusively. In this way they portray Muslim women in cinema. In *Umrao jaan* women have a central position oppressed by our dominant society, i.e., male. This face of the society is not exclusive for Indian Cinema. It shares the same platform all over the world. Christine Glendhill in her essay “Recent Development in Feminist Criticism” remarks that a crucial issue of Feminist film criticism is the examination of the fact that “women as women” are not represented in cinema, that they do not have a voice, and that the female point of view is not heard.

Recognition of this fact unites all attempts at any Feminist critique of the cinema (251). The situation becomes terrible for *Umrao jaan*. The storyline of Umraojaan’s life was pathetic and her brother was not ready to accept her, again a cruel face of society. *Umrao jaan* has accepted the life of a prostitute unwillingly. With the gift of beauty, kindness, and love, female characters are able to win the heart of male characters and the shower of love exists between them in restricted parameters. The society looked like a villain which limits the boundaries of love with prostitute.

Fareed Kazmi in her essay “Muslim social and the female protagonist” remarks: “It is this image which helps in interpolating the audience, especially those women who belong to the subaltern classes and see in them a role model that they would like to emulate but cannot, because of their existential situation. In other words, this rebellious posturing of the female protagonists helps define and articulate the innermost desire of these women” (233).

Conclusion

In the cinematic adaptation, director enjoys the power of acting. Muzaffar Ali did not destroy any thing which is essential for the film; he used all the important techniques and symbols for the success of the film. He was loyal regarding his work as much as he could use the exact dialogues used in Ruswa’s novel. He showed the cultural affinity in the film. The film emphasizes the genre, metaphorical representation, which attracts audience; through the film he gave a silent view of this particular profession.

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