

Beyond Fidelity: A Critical Adaptation Study of Anurag Pathak's 12th Fail and Vidhu Vinod Chopra's Film Adaptation

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ABSTRACT

The given paper presents a critical review of the Twelfth Fail written by Anurag Pathak and turned into a biographical drama movie 12th Fail written and directed by Vidhu Vinod Chopra (2023). Leaping squarely beyond the fidelity debate--the more evaluative aspect which considers adaptations as modified versions of source texts of a closer relationship--this paper adopts the theory of adaptations as a creative re-enactment created by Linda Hutcheon, and the dialogical and intertextual approach of films by Robert Stam, and the argument of hierarchical source filming relationships by Thomas Leitch, in the highland and lowland theories. The paper explores the particular processes through which the linear, journalistic prose of the novel is shifted to the film structure based on the visual authenticity, compressive chronology, and affective immediacy. It also examines the manner in which the characters of Manoj Kumar Sharma and Shraddha Joshi are represented with remarkable representational change: in the novel, their characters are motivational archetypes, whereas, in the movie, they are depicted as psychologically complex, socially-rooted people. The application of handheld cinematography, location shooting, naturalistic sound design and the use of non-professional casting of actors as part of the formal strategies of the film to generate meanings that are not possible to achieve through literary presentation are addressed. The paper postulates that the most far-reaching modifications in the film (the exaggeration of the love story, the anticipation of systemic corruption, the moderation on the treatment of religious or providential interpretation of success of Manoj) are in fact, ideological decisions which bring the adaptation to the contemporary social realism, which is more antagonistic to the secular view of religion, and more socially critical. The movie is therefore not an inferior adaptation of the book but, as Hutcheon puts it, a reiteration that goes beyond the alternatives that come up as an interpretive possibility on its own. The advantages along with limitations of this adaptive transformation are assessed. The author concludes that 12th Fail is an important addition to a body of work of socially committed Indian cinema and a worthy case study on the approach of adaptation studies to regional literature and vernacular film production.

Keywords: Adaptation Studies, Fidelity Discourse, Hindi Cinema, Intertextuality, Narrative Transformation, Linda Hutcheon, 12th Fail, UPSC, Social Realism.

INTRODUCTION

The interaction of literature and film has spawned one of the most fruitful--as well as endlessly debated--humanities debates. The question of fidelity how well a film is reproductive of its literary source, is at the heart of this discussion. This question, which regards fidelity as a principle of evaluation and as the inherent gauge of a film value, was dominant during much of the twentieth century among adaptation scholarship, which commended in the discussion of film adaptation. This orthodoxy has been vigorously criticized by the modern adaptation theory, which was launched in its more modern form by the works of Robert Stam, Linda Hutcheon and Thomas Leitch, arguing that the fidelity criterion is theoretically unsustainable, practically unproductive and ideologically conservative. To judge a film by the way it relates to a novel is to fail to comprehend both the novel and the film; to do so is to perceive adaptation as a sort of transcription and not as an art. This theoretical reorientation is fulfilled by a rich and almost untapped case study by adapting the Hindi novel Twelfth Fail by Anurag Pathak into the film 12th Fail (2023) by filmmaker Vidhu Vinod Chopra. The true story of the book is written by NeoLit Publications and is based on a poor student of Chambal in Madhya Pradesh, Manoj Kumar Sharma who fails his twelfth examinations, faces a corrupt educational system, and through tremendous perseverance and morality becomes an Indian Police Service officer. Pathak is journalistic in his prose: there is gathering of anecdote, dialogue is reportorial as

transcribed, and his protagonist is treated with a direct admiration that entails the narrative squarely within the framework of inspirational biography. In 2021, the English translation of the novel by Gautam Choubey and Lalit Kumar was published by HarperCollins India to reach beyond its Hindi audience. Vinod Chopra Films produced the film adaptation of the story written by Chopra himself, released on 27 October 2023 and starring Vikrant Massey as Manoj Sharma and Medha Shankar as Shraddha Joshi, becoming one of the most widely-acclaimed and commercially successful Hindi films of 2023. Having an IMDb rating of 8.8 and being nominated to receive many awards, the movie triggered a substantial popular discourse on the problem of the UPSC examination system, the aspirations of the countryside to the city and the morals of being a civil servant. More importantly, the film also begs us to engage in long-lasting academic analysis of what got retained, altered, abridged, and created during the adaptation process whatever those changes entail.

This essay maintains that Chopra has not reproduced the novel but reinterpreted it: reinterpreted to evoke a palimpsest that is what Hutcheon refers to as an acknowledged palimpsest (Hutcheon 6) although creating a unique aesthetic and ideological response. Specific decisions, concerning structure, character, tone, visual style, and the way the social critique was framed, are both not arbitrary and capricious but reflect both the logic of the medium of cinema and the priorities of a director, who would like to work with a specific historical event of the Indian public life. The main goal of this paper is to critically comprehend these choices.

The article will be structured in the following way: an overview of the literature on the topic of adaptation theory and Indian cinematography; a statement of the theoretical framework; a note on the methods; six discussion sections covering the issues of the narrative structure, the character representation and characterisation, educational struggle and social mobility, thematic and ideological changes, the techniques of cinematography and the question of fidelity and reinterpretation; findings, conclusion, and the complete list of Works Cited.

LITERATURE REVIEW

As a discrete academic discipline, adaptation did not surface as a field of study until the second half of the twentieth century as a result of the wider overlap of movie studies and literary critique. The initial scholarly thought largely, as Stam notes, was predominated by a discourse of fidelity and betrayal whereby films were mainly checked on how close they were to source-texts (Stam, *Literature Through Film* 3). The seminal work of *Novels into Film* (1957) by George Bluestone, which is often considered the first book to supply the nomenclature to the discipline, has laid down a methodology that focuses on comparing the story elements and the means of their expression in cinematographic forms. Although Bluestone did acknowledge the essential distinction between a verbal and a visual media, his comparative still assumed the novel as the reference point where the film was evaluated.

The theoretical interventions of the late 1990s and the early 2000s were a systematic deconstruction of this evaluative hierarchy. In his essay *Beyond Fidelity: The Dialogics of Adaptation*, in an anthology of film adaptation published in 2000 by James Naremore, Stam posited a Bakhtinian theory of intertextuality seeing the adapted film as a site of intersection and negotiation of multiple texts, discourses, and cultural formations as opposed to a derivative of a unique original. In the following monographs and edited collections, and notably *Literature through Film: Realism, Magic, and the Art of Adaptation* (2005) and the edited *Literature and Film: A Guide to the Theory and Practice of Film Adaptation* (2005), this argument was built out, reorienting the field more towards dialogical analysis.

The most comprehensive synthesis of theoretical material in the field was presented in Hutcheon theory of *Adaptation* (2006). Positing the adaptations described as being created in three concurrent guises, Hutcheon suggested adaptations as formal products, as creative processes, and as audience-receptive modes. Her argument that adaptations are repetition without replication (7) that they reuse old plots differently gave scholars permission to judge adaptations by their own standards other than by the standards as inferior products to their originals. The notion of palimpsestic adaptation, where the adapted text still shows signs of its origin even as it is changed, was also first put forward by Hutcheon and is especially useful to the study of films such as *12th Fail*, which are obviously based on biographical prose.

Staffed by Leitch's *Film Adaptation and Its Discontents* (2007), this critical project was both extended and radically broadened to file a dozen different types of adaptation, ranging between faithful reproduction and loose appropriation, and by showing that even the idea of a single, authoritative source text can be seen as an imaginary fiction. The evolution of the cultural politics of adaptation as Leitch links it to the politics of fidelity, especially the point where he states that the discussion of fidelity is used to buttify institutional prestige of literature (to the detriment of cinema) finds direct germination as far as the present study is concerned, in that the relative cultural prestige of the two media is itself another significant variable.

The contextual background of Indian cinema is provided by its scholarship. The Encyclopaedia of Indian Cinema (1994) by Ashish Rajadhyaksa and Paul Willemen is still the reference book that is necessary to achieve the historical and generic context of Hindi film production. The writings of Bollywood Cinema: Temples of Desire (2002) by Vijay Mishra provide a valuable theoretical explanation of structural conventions of Hindi popular cinema, how this film relates to Hindu epic traditions and the particular codes of melodramatic that characterize characters and storyline. The notion of the Bollywood melodrama as a culturally specific genre that has its own logic of desire, sacrifice and resolution by Mishra can be used to better understand what the film by Chopra borrowed and adapted in these conventions.

As a particular convergence of Hindi literary adaption with a movie, both its modern-day context and historical background have been given minimal scholarly focus. Although there is a long-standing critical tradition of adaptation of the Bengali literary text into film, and even though the relationship between Hindi cinema and the Urdu literary culture has been the source of discourse among scholars such as Ravi Vasudevan and Rosie Thomas, there is little examination of the adaption of contemporary popular fiction written in Hindi to commercial cinema. The current article is provided as a contribution to this gap.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Three theory frameworks that interconnect based on studies of adaptation are used in this paper alongside the help of other pertinent concepts in relation to narrative theory and studies of Indian cinema.

The main one is the tripartite model of adaptation presented by Hutcheon: product, process and reception (A Theory of Adaptation 78). As such product, the film of Chopra is examined as an autonomous text that is formally independent and has some traces of its origin and that has its aesthetic identity. The conversion of prose narrative into screen is analyzed as a process in which the adaptive strategies were creative and ideological choices, determining the nature of the adaptation: condensation, expansion, resequence, invention. Approaching the film as a way of reception, the analysis responds to the unique spectatorial address of the film, the creation of affect by visual and aural means such as those unattainable by the novel, and its location in a contemporary Indian cultural context defined by the anxieties of competitive testing, social mobility, and governmental corruption.

The second theory is the one of Stam, dialogical and intertextual framework which views the adapted movie as part of a web of textual and cultural allusions that stretches to a lot farther than its direct origin (Literature Through Film 35). In the case of Stam, any text is formed with the many-voiced discourse of the cultural field, in which it is created, according to Bakhtin. The film by Chopra thus addresses both the novel by Pathak and the conventions of Hindi cinema of biographical drama, previous film adaptations to the culture of the UPSC examination (especially the web series Aspirants), the realism of the films of Neeraj Ghaywan and Anurag Kashyap, and the tradition of Hindi film critiquing of the issue of rural-urban migration and social aspiration. Intertextual reading of the film enhances our comprehension of its particular adaptive decisions.

The third framework is based on the taxonomy of adaptive modes and his criticism of the discourse of fidelity presented by Leitch. The analysis by Leitch will make us realize that the question of how faithfully the film is to the novel is not as interesting/informative as the questions of what the adaptation is focusing on and why, as well as what the adaptation makes possible that the novel cannot. (Film Adaptation 17). These are the questions which plan the analytical parts of this paper.

Added to these frameworks, the paper builds on the initial yet fruitful explanation of adaptation in the form of borrowing as a continuum ranging between fidelity and transformation (Concepts in Film Theory 97106). The semiotic aspect of adaptation to which Andrew alludes, specifically that narrative information that exists in a verbal code must be recoded in a visual, aural and temporal code (97) prefigures the inevitability of the adaptive process to introduce both losses and new possibilities of meaning into a narrative.

METHODOLOGY

The present paper uses a close comparative textual study of the novel Twelfth Fail in its English translation by HarperCollins (2021) and film 12th Fail (2023), directed by Vidhu Vinod Chopra. The comparative methodology is based on the model developed in the adaptation studies by McFarlane, Stam and Hutcheon: it locates the areas of divergence and convergence of the two texts and attempts to critically assess the interpretive meaning of the areas of divergence and convergence instead of merely listing the similarities and differences.

In analyzing the film, it specifically focuses on the methods of meaning-making through cinematic elements mise-en-scene, cinematography, editing, sound design and performance, that cannot be reduced to their textual content. This echoes the old debate about film studies that cinema is not an illustrated narrative but it has its own spoken language. The novel is analyzed in terms of narrative point of view, prose mode, building of interiority, structuring of time and the ideological implications of the generic placement of the text as inspirational biography.

The paper does not attempt one by one a page by page or scene by scene listing of the differences; which would be both impractical in the scale of a journal article and poorly conceptualized theoretically, as it would reproduce vehemently the system of fidelity that this paper would be attempting to leave behind. Rather, it is thematically structured, isolating the greatest locus of adaptive change and focusing each to standpoint critical interpretation. Where particular scenes or passages are addressed, they are selected because they help elucidate general principles of the adaptive approach to interpretation.

ANALYSIS

Narrative Structure and Adaptation, 1.

The novel by Anurag Pathak has a roughly linear chronological flow. Starting with the early years of the life of Manoj, the story of his life takes the distinct form of academic failure, systemic corruption at board exams, migration to Agra and then Delhi, failure in the UPSC Civil Services Examinations 3 times, and ending with success. It is the form of classic bildungsroman redone in motivational biography: the narrative flow is pretty much not hindered by structural obstacles, and the narrator is in a point of omniscient, admiring, detachment, to the story's hero. Chapters of the novel are not so long and dramatic, quite episodic, and suggest the cumulative incidence as opposed to the creation of dramatic tension in the literary sense.

In a number of key ways, Chopra changes this structure in his film. Most conspicuously, the film uses a framing device not present in the novel, namely the fact that the story is partly structured around the retrospective vision of Manoj with his friend Pritam Pandey (Anant Joshi) not being just a supporting figure but a proxy narrator whose presence foreshadows the act of remembering. There are two significant effects of this narratological decision. To begin with, it creates a temporal doubling- a present that an account of the past is presented in a way that creates dramatic irony and prompts the audience to read the plight of Manoj in the understanding that at least, at present, the reader knows that this struggle will eventually end. Second, it changes the locus of meaning not to the protagonist but to the interrelation between aspiration and community: the loyalty of Pritam and his friendship starts to play the crucial role in the story, not a side-note.

This also constitutes a significant element of the film where the story of Manoj during his childhood years in Chambal is condensed with the novel focusing on several years of description in a relatively short opening sequence. It is not so much of a loss as it is a reframing: scurrying at top speed at first, between rural childhood and exam hall where the first instances of corruption take place, this film sets up its main thematic issue, which is the integrity of a person in a corrupt system, with the kind of economy of operation that the more removed pace of a novel does not insist upon. The film does not give us quite as much sociological information on the specific cultural geography of Chambal as we would have appreciated, but it is given the necessary narrative urgency.

On the other hand, the film greatly adds to the coverage of the years Manoj spent in Delhi as an aspirant of the UPSC, and devotes considerable time to the social ecology of coaching colleges, shared rooms as well as on general culture of urban aspirations among the students with provincial origins. This extension is a formal, as well as an ideological option: in this way the movie will be able not only to serve as a biography of a great personality, but also as a social record of a more general phenomenon. This is a typifying gesture of what could be termed the modern Hindi social realist film, an impulse that the film knowingly enters into and which its conventions consciously and at the same time borrow, as well as partially critique.

The structure of the story in the movie also lends the subplot about Vikas Divyakirti, who starring in the film, is the founder of Drishti IAS, a well-known UPSC preparation school. The mentorship of Manoj by Divyakirti is one of the substantive plot lines of the movie and the fact that the real man stands up instead of an actor adds an authentic documentary mood, blurring fiction and biography. It is an elaborate adaptive decision: integrating the actual individual, the movie indicates its desire to a particular type of reality, which prose fiction, represented by the novel in question, attains in other ways.

2. Representation and Development of Characters.

Perhaps the most analytically enriched aspect of the adaptation is that of transformation of character. Manoj Kumar Sharma is a personality in the novel who portrays a hero of near-blameless heroism: his will is undeterred, his uprightness beyond question, and his hardship noble. The narration portrays a distancing gaze, which helps keep the audience at bay and

prohibit entry to his inner life of struggles and indecisions. This characterisation is in line with the generic conventions of inspirational biography that mostly yield exemplary characters as opposed to psychological complex portraits.

Performance of Manoj by Vikrant Massey in the film brings a lot of nuance to this portrait. The desperation of the character, his social nervousness among the more fortunate students in Delhi, his momentary anger and self-doubt, his tenderness in the love affair with Shraddha are described with a particularity which the narrative distance of the novel prevents. This is not the mere addition of psychological richness to its own end and is a tactical decision that would render the success of Manoj, when it finally comes, more emotionally persuasive: the reader can now know what the novel withholds, which the difference between feebleness and triumph becomes not a purely biographical fact but an emotional investment.

Shraddha Joshi character symbolizes an even greater scene of adaptive change. Shraddha serves main purposes in the novel in connection with Manoj: she is the love interest whose fidelity gives him emotional support to his struggle. Her personal ambitions and career growth as an IRS officer are not ignored but they are not at the core of the story and its theme with Manoj. The movie, in its turn, greatly serves to build Shraddha as a separate topic. This view of Shraddha by Medha Shankar assures her career goals, interpersonal insight and an upright ethos, especially in the scenes where her family forces her to betray her exam plan, which is a parallel narrative of ambition as opposed to a background love story.

This enlargement of the role of Shraddha is a cinematic expediency, as well as an ideologically important decision. In practical terms, to make a love story that keeps the viewers engaged throughout a 146-minute movie, the two involved must have enough dramatic appeal to make the investment worth it. Ideologically, the fact that the film constructs Shraddha as providing exactly the same motivation, as an equally capable, exactly capable UPSC aspirant, removes the articulation of social mobility to a solely-male domain in the film and makes it evident and acceptable to view a gendered aspiration. It is a substantial break with the representational economy of the novel and such that brings the film into agreement with the current discussions regarding gender representation in Hindi cinema.

The character of the richly bribed examination officer, a significant presence in the novel of the mass cheating scandal at the board examinations of Manoj, is more fervorously dramatized in the movie. Instead of the way of a cold systemic characteristic, the film localises a form of corruption in a character whose threat is made personal, thus turning the ethical challenge between Manoj and the system of examination into a more dramatic spectacle of legibility in conflict. It is a typical adaptation technique: what the novel can narratively describe and comment on by the author has to be put into cinematic form as human struggle.

3. teaching struggle and social mobility.

The thematic core of both the novel and the movie is the UPSC Civil Services Examination - one of the most competitive tests in the world, and the most sought-after instrument of social mobility of poor and rural young Indians. The two texts deal with the meeting of personal ambition and structural injustice; the system of examination is represented both as a system of meritocracy and as one highly corrupted by economic advantage, by institutions that are corrupt and by the realm of urban and rural difference.

The focus of this theme in the novel is mostly positive: the examination system is portrayed as, fundamentally, a fair apparatus that becomes corrupted, and whose violation can be defeated through the use of personal ethos. The success of Manoj justifies this argument: a man of pure honesty and exceptional endurance can, according to the novel, have his way even in a system that is pitted against him. This is the archetypal story of meritocracy and the journalistic prose of Pathak strengthens it by emphasizing on individual extraordinary will instead of the institutional factors that most such aspirants fail.

The movie provides a more liberal version. Although it does not undermine the meritocratic narrative (the success of Manoj is the emotional payoff of the film) it devotes much more space to the human cost of aspiration, to the students who fail, to the material realities of life in the coaching-institute ghetto of Delhi. The scenes framed in the tight, communal living conditions of those aspiring to work in the state agencies and filmed in a documentary style, featuring a handheld camera and naturalistic lighting that highlights the state of awkwardness and vulnerability, captures a social phenomenon, the mass exodus of young Indians to Delhi in search of a government job, that surpasses single narratives. The social documentary drive of the movie here complicates and adds to the novel biographical focus in a way.

The corruption theme is also given greater continued treatment in the movie than in the book. The cheating in the examination hall where examination officers are abetting cheating and where Manoj has refused to take part, is brought out with a lot of dramatic impact in the film. To achieve as much moral legibility as possible, the sequence is shot in a way that

puts the corruption on view, the pressure on Manoj is physical and immediate, and his rejection is a case of bodily as well as ethical dissent. This cinematographic treatment of the novel turns what is reported in the novel as a stand of principle to a scene of dramatic spectacle-ethics- moment- landscape, a transformation which is reminiscent of the inherent organisation of meaning of the same by cinema around visible spectacle of action.

The role of the mentor in both texts, though first met in the form of an honest police officer who first inspires Manoj and then later, Vikas Divyakirti can also be found in the role of structure. The mentor figure carries in it one of the most resilient ideological constructions of Hindi cinema: the imparting of values from older to younger generations and strata, the understanding that ethical integrity can be learned and trained. The fact that the movie has chosen Divyakirti as its own exemplifies this encoding and lends the imparting of values the documentary authority that the novel can (only) acquire through prose.

4. Adaptation of Themes and Ideology

The novel and the film intersect around a collection of themes: the worth of persistence in the face of a downward system, the righteousness of integrity in the face of a corruptive system, the chances that can be gained through education in scrabbling up in the social ladder, and the role that love plays as a motivation in professional pursuits. Nevertheless, there is a vast difference in the ideological framing of the said themes in both texts.

Manoj is successful in the novel because of a set of personal traits, determination, honesty, the desire to sacrifice something, but, in some cases, it was also because of the feeling of being supported by some power. There are scenes in the story where the journey of Manoj is implicitly seen as directed by some forces that are not as much human. Such framing is representative of a larger trend in up-to-date Hindi story production, as proposed by Mishra to be found at the heart of the structure of Bollywood melodramas more generally, that in both aims to seek and find the agency of the individual within a cosmological moral logic, which ultimately rewards the virtuous (Mishra 45–47). The inspirational genre conventions of the novel support this framing: the subtitle, *Hara Wahi Jo Ladaa Nahi* (“Only the one who did not struggle was a real loser”), makes an assertion of a moral absoluteness which is merely sociologically beyond the pale.

In contrast, the movie is distinctly secularized in its ideological contextualisation. Chopra deprives the story to a large extent of the providential or the metaphysical, and, in the index of his success, places it on the scale of the social and the human: his is the success of his labour, of his love to Shraddha, of the charity of a teacher and friends, and of no longer virtuous nature. This marks a big ideological turn on the source text, a turn that puts the film in keeping with a modern form of social realism in Hindi cinema that is suspicious of the supernaturally legitimate forms of social hierarchy and uneasy with the providentialism pressured of popular narrative.

The two texts also dissimilarly treat ambition instructively. In the novel, the ambition of Manoj is given as a pure aim; it is an ambition to be the IPS which is an ambition to serve the country and this ambition is seen as a kind of enlightening in itself. The movie preserves this metric of service, but offers a little more sophisticated description of the social value of ambition. The shots in which other UPSC applicants are shown, whose applications have been seven, eight, ten years long, whose funds have been depleted by their families, point toward the human price of an exam system that has been focusing the hopes of millions of people on the handful of jobs it opens up. This criticism is not yet built up in the film to the level of discrediting the story of its main character, although the existence of such characters makes it difficult to revel in dreaming, unqualified that the novel is.

The moral axis of both texts is the theme of ethical integrity, Manoj refusal to bribe, cheat or compromise at all, despite the results they might have. But this theme is treated in the film with a certain ethics of visibility contributions original to the cinematic ethics. The integrity of Manoj could be in the form of internal monologue and author commentary in the novel, and it has to be put into practice in the film. It is a demand of visibility that generates a progression of confrontational episodes-the test hall, the confrontations with 'bad men' like the corrupt officials, the scene when Manoj refuses to accept an offer of money in a senior officers hand-that moral decisions are dramatized to appear as physical ones. These are some of the strongest scenes in the film, and they showcase one of the specific powers of cinema as one of the adaptive arts: its capacity to render abstract values legible in embodied action.

5. Cinematic Techniques and Visual Storytelling

Formal language of the movie created by Chopra is probably the most important aspect of adaptation peculiarity. Although straightforward and easy to read, prose of the novel provides the functionality of the codes of journalistic narrative: it describes, reports, explains. The meaning process developed by the film is based on a completely other semiotic system whereby the arrangement of space, light, sound, movement, and time generates meaning in such a way like no other in the verbal narration system.

The visually organized plan of the cinematographer Rangarajan Ramabadrán is based on the principle of the authenticity of materials, which is consistent throughout. The movie was filmed mostly on-site in Agra, the Chambal area, Delhi, Mussoorie, and Mumbai, and location filming is employed not to provide only background, but to create an environment of meaning-making. The grime, the shattered infrastructure, the cramped quarters and the fluorescent opinion of examination rooms are not romanticized or idealized but are depicted with a documentary insistency which demands the material circumstances of aspiration. This pictorial truth is an argument, formal in nature: that the success of Manoj is extraordinary precisely due to the material circumstances he had to counteract, circumstances about which it makes no difference whether they are implied or explicitly encountered. Handheld camera used in the scenes that illustrate the social and institutional conflict: the examination hall, the scenes in the police station, the overcrowded streets of Delhi, bring about a sense of kinetic closeness that makes the spectator a part of the action not the reflective distance of traditional biographical film. It is an approach linked both to the tradition of the observational documentary, and to the socialist realist films of the Indian New Wave, and its use here indicates how the film is desirous of a mode of realism that is aesthetic as well as ethical: to have a clear view of social conditions, free of the redemptive aestheticisation of pain.

The naturalistic sound design used in the film is also important. Instead of counting on the use of a continuously grounded background score to steer the audience reaction, as has been the standard technique of Hindi popular cinema, vast expanses of the film are accompanied by the natural sound of their settings: the commotion at a coaching hall, the silence of an examination hall, the rain on a tiled roof. The music composed by Shantanu Moitra is deployed selectively, its use signifies times of culmination of emotion as opposed to offering a continuous layer of emotion. This reserve itself is a formal assertion concerning the manner of realism that the movie claims to be: the kind where emotion had to be gained through story, as opposed to the kind that had to be produced through musical interference. Making use of non-professional actors in supporting parts, the very casting of Vikas Divyakirti in the main part, belongs to the formal strategy as well as to the ideological one. The film fashions a texture of social reality by closeting the professional leads in people whose versions of the experience being illustrated have existence in social reality, which no amount of research or rehearsal can quite capture. The dedication to physical authenticity that Vikrant Massey invested in this film, spending weeks in Chambal tanning in the sun without makeup to make the illusion of a rural student, extends this emphasis on physical verisimilitude to the lead role, as acting and document start to blend.

The editing, which is shared by Chopra and Jaskunwar Kohli, has a significant role in controlling the tension between the social panorama and the individual story in the film. The intercutting of the personal scenes of doubt of Manoj with the social scenes of the culture of the coaching institute produces a rhythm that does not lead the film to topple completely into the plane of individual biography. The editing approach represents the ideological ambivalence of the film on whether it is narrating a story of a single extraordinary man, or the story of many aspiring people of a generation.

6. Fidelity, Transformation and reinterpretation.

Having clearly seen the particular dimensions of Chopra adaptive transformation it is now possible to critique the film within the theoretical framework set at the beginning of this paper, not of it as a more or less faithful reproduction of the novel but of it as a creative work that relates to the novel as its source and produces its own meanings. In the usage of Hutcheon, 12th Fail is an adaptation that recognizes its origin and approach to its departures as intentional interpretive options and not as unlucky or unfortunate coincidences. The palimpsest nature of adaptation that Hutcheon ascribes to any adaptation is especially evident here: the movie bears the remnants of the characters and the main events of the novel, its philosophies and values and adapts them consistently to the particulars of the social realist film codes. When the audience has the interior knowledge of the novel, they will read the film in a different manner as the audience, which lacks such knowledge and this dual address; to the knowing audience and the unknowing audience is one of the special characteristics of the mode of adaptation.

On the dialogical terms by Stam, the movie is engaged in a significantly broader intertextual field than the novel is left to its own devices. Its visual realist mode engages with the tradition of Italian neorealism mediated in the Hindi parallel cinema; its account of the culture of the UPSC examination engages with a tradition of popular discourse about the civil services; its romantic subplot engages with a tradition of involvements in the contemporary Hindi love story; and its biographical structure engages with an increasingly popular genre of Indian films about real people who have accomplished public significance through extraordinary effort. It is important to read the film not in its relation exclusively to the novel of Pathak. The most important weakness of the film as an adaptation, which is vital to be critically analyzed, is the extent to which it is subordinating the sociological depth of a novel to the law of personal life. Thought to be covered with the inspiration of biography, this novel has just a longer burst with the structural terms of the poverty, the culture within the Chambal region, and the systematic essence of educational corruption than the 146 minutes of the film can bear without losing its dramatic interest. The movie makes a dramatic rather than a sociological legibility decision, and it is a justifiable decision--but it does make a narrative which, in some ways, is more traditional redemptive than the novel on which it is

based. This critique of the examination system which is implicit in the accumulation of evidence in the novel is in part reclaimed by the emotional investment the film makes in personal success.

And simultaneously, the movie does what the novel by the limitations of its genre is unable to do, it brings Manoj physically there, into his senses and making it real. The viewer of the movie is aware in a corporeal sense which can neither be reproduced in prose of the appearance of the exam rooms, what poverty smells like (compared to its visual counterparts), and what it is like to have a human-face take in the burden of multiple failure. The latter is no insignificant feat, and Leich is quite justified in his warning against mere projection of the literary original on its film counterpart in this case. The film provides a kind of knowledge, that which is affective, embodied, social, supplements that which the novel offers and, in some of its aspects is transcendent of it.

FINDINGS

The above discussion converts a few important results that can be summarized as follows.

To begin with, the adaptation by Chopra is a so-called repetition with a difference: it uses the narrative, characters and the ethical principles of the novel, with a consistent restructuring of these elements in line with the requirements of the medium through which the film is created, which is cinema, and the tenets of modern Hollywood-style Hindi socio-realism. These changes to the original text are not merely caused by accidents or commercial pressures but by making consistent interpretative decisions regarding the way the meanings of the story are to be created and conveyed.

Secondly, the most significantly impactful adaptive changes are experienced at the character level. The repositioning of Shraddha Joshi as a co-protagonist rather than an ally is an important ideological change that brings the film into accordance with modern Hindi cinema needs of gender equity, and complicates the implicitly masculine narrative of ambition and service presented in the source text. This heightening of the psychological efficiency of the depiction of the character of Manoj through the performance of Massey gives rise to a productive investment which is sealed by the admiring distance of the novel.

Third, the formal elements of the movie, namely location shooting, handheld camera, naturalistic sound, non-professional actors, etc., represent a consistent form of social realism, which not only helps to set the movie in the canvas of the traditional Hindi biographical movie but serves as an argument that this very story is to be perceived in the way it has been filmed. The visual appearance of the film cannot be disconnected with the meaning in the adaptation by Chopra; form and sound cannot be separated and what is said about the social reality in the film.

Fourth, the secularisation of the novel also a mode of intermittently providentialist narrative in the film is an ideological re-orientation which is not entirely admitted in popular reception of the film. The film is proposing, in a particular sense, what it takes agency, meritocracy, and the circumstances of the possibility of exceptional achievement, by finding in the register of the human and the social the success of Manoj, and such a success must be both validated and made complex by the inspirational genre.

Fifth, the process of the movie of the UPSC examination culture as a social phenomenon, not the biographical background, is a further development of the frame of the source text that provides the adaptation with a documentary touch, which is not found in the novel. This enlargement is the most important contribution of the film to the cultural presence of the aspiration of UPSC in the Indian popular life.

Sixth, there are actual constraints of the adaptation. The submissiveness of the structural criticism to the biography of specific individuals, the relative backwardness of the regional situation of Chambal, a certain amount of compression in the real sense of the word of narration in the last act, possibly setting upon the cutting-room floor some of the most humanizing episodes of the novel, are actual losses. In Hutcheon, any type of adaptation will always be a negotiation between what one can bring with them and what they have to leave behind and negotiation is never without a price and Chopra is no exception.

CONCLUSION

Adaptation of the Twelfth Fail of Anurag Pathak into 12 th Fail of Vidhu Vinod Chopra is a prolific case study of what can be done and not be done as creative and cultural practice in adaptation of a work of literature. This analysis has been able bypassing fidelity discourse- lacking comprehension of the movie by ranking it just based on how close it is to the novel - by ruling out the very existence of the interpretive strategies that dominate the adaptation and judging those strategies as such. Chopra did not update his film according to the novel by Pathak. It is an encounter with a story, characters, and ethical principles of the novel in the particular perspective of a filmmaker who works within the constraints and possibilities of the contemporary Hindi cinema and employs the formal means of the medium to produce a version of the

story that in major ways both resembles and is closer to the original than the novel. The visual reality of the film, its elaboration of the agency of Shraddha, its secularization of aspirationality, and its documentary concern with the social geography of UPSC preparation are all moves out of the novel that are interpretively as well as merely commercial or practical compromises. Meanwhile, the subjugation of structural critique by individual biography in the film is also a converting impulse, which constrains the radicality of the social commentary in the movie. It criticizes the examination system, which is nonetheless proved in its essence by the emotional stake the narrative has on the success of Manoj in the examination system. This sociological concern with both social critique and inspirational genre is not afforded in the movie and one can say that the more enduring sociological commitment to the terms of poverty and corruption in the novel provides a better, even less immediate, description of the same social fact.

The 12th Fail case identifies a number of potential lines of inquiry that have a promising future in relation to adaptation studies as a discipline. Specifically, the adaptation of Hindi-language popular fiction by mainstream Hindi cinema is a phenomenon that is not only extensive but also under-researched in general, artificially engaging transgressive and apprehensive questions regarding the correlation between literary highbrow, cinema as a mass culture, and the politics of cultural translation. The film adaptations made on the basis of biographies of prominent individuals and, specifically, the adaptation of biographical movies on the context of modern reality, where the institutions and people, mentioned in the books, were transferred to the screen, brings up the ethical and epistemological issues of biographical adaptation, which need long-term theoretical discussion. The question of the negotiation of the values and aesthetics of social realism into the norms of commercial Hindi cinema, is, indeed, one of the most interesting and significant questions of the critics of the contemporary Indian cinema.

It is safe to say that 12th Fail is a movie worth the critical scrutiny, and that fact is evidenced by the fact that, contrary to the bias of the fidelity discussion, an adaptation can be shown to be really different and unquestionably itself worthy of critical analysis. The film is not a lesser Twelfth Fail according to the Hutcheonian version, but a different sort of text altogether, where the novel functions as the familiar point of departure as a different sort of aesthetic and ideological project is undertaken. The critical that tries to enter into relationship with that project is also the critical that tries to enter into relationship with some of the most significant questions that modern cultural life of India offers to the critic of literature and cinema.

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