

Haider in Hamletian Cloak: Shakespeare Walking Through the Bazaar of Wounds

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Abstract

Shakespeare have been ceaselessly alluring film-makers with his diversified plots brimming with characters having myriad faces. Shakespeare's adaptations on celluloid have not only liberated the literary classics from the confinement of a strictly compartmentalized academic space but also have successfully made Shakespeare global. Bollywood was never idle in exploiting essence of Shakespeare(s) as inter-textual echoes and there were even direct text-to-film adaptations in the cinematic panorama of 1970s-80s. However, with Vishal Bharadwaj the Indian industry has touched the pinnacle. *Maqboo l*(adaptation of *Macbeth*) and *Omkara* (adaptation of *Othello*) created instant history the moment they hit the floor. Bharadwaj's creative endeavours recast Shakespeare amidst Indianized settings so fluidly that the films often have outgrown the frame provided by the hypo-text.

Haider, is the final film in the proposed Shakespeare trilogy of Bharadwaj, for the purpose of which the filmmaker brings Shakespeare in insurgency-hit Kashmir of 1995 when civilian disappearances were hushed up under the rule of AFSPA. Kashmir's unshaken voice of truth scathingly ruptures the narrative of utopia created by the mainstream films with colourful sceneries and counters the discourse of bravery and heroism manifested in the patriotic films which actually succeeded in lulling us to slumber. *Haider's* Kashmir represents the images under the negative, where the darkness comes to the fore and the brightness recedes to the fading background. The prevailing dystopia, an exploration of which is also found in Basharat Peer's *Curfewed Night*, makes us glimpse another version of the dismal Denmark of Shakespeare. *Haider*, the Hamletian protagonist, robes himself in the mould of his alter-ego to articulate what is unvoiced, to reveal what is hidden.

Though *Hamlet* remains one of the most adapted texts all over the world, Bharadwaj's epoch-making version carves a universally acclaimed niche, in spite of being a mere shadow of the hypo-text. This paper proposes to talk about the multifarious issues from setting, including characters to the analysis of scenes, all spaces where Shakespeare is reprocessed in the making of *Haider*.

Keywords: Hamlet, Kashmir, Adaptation, Transculturation, AFSPA