

**Tribhuvan University**

**From Novel to Screen: A Comparative Study on Jhumpa Lahiri's *The Namesake* and Its  
Film Adaptation**

**A Thesis Submitted to the Central Department of English  
In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for Degree of  
Master of Arts in English**

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### **Abstract**

This research studies the relationship between the novel *The Namesake* and its film adaptation. While a novel is a written work of art designed to be read, a film is a visual and aural art to be seen and heard. Nonetheless, they share a number of elements like narrative, setting, plot and so forth. This research examines how the novel *The Namesake* and its film adaptation stand as unique works of art in spite of their having played on the same narrative. Though, the film adaptation shares the theme of identity crisis with the novel, it differs in the representation of other aspects of the novel. These variations are the result of the media each of the art form adopts. Despite some variations, the film adaptation however, has maintained its fidelity towards the novel while remaining a distinct creative work of art. In the film, the theme of identity crisis and awkwardness of the second-generation's assimilation is clearly visible. Sometimes just a single shot of the film is enough to replace a page or more descriptive passages of the novel. It is all due to the creativity of the film.

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### ***The Namesake* as Novel and Film**

This research intends to study the relationship between a novel and its film adaptation. This study probes into the transformation of the novel *The Namesake* into the film, bearing the same name. This research not only examines the elements peculiar to each of the artistic media, novel and film, but also analyzes those common features that establish an intimate but enigmatic bond between these two art forms. In short, this study aims at addressing the questions to what extent the film *The Namesake* (2007), is faithful to its source novel; the elements that are transferred as exactly as they are in the novel; and the elements that are adopted so as to make them fit in the film medium.

The film and novel evolved from distinct background and different traditions. While the novel emerged from the literary tradition, the film developed from the tradition of plastic arts and photography. Moreover, unlike novel the film is the child of science; it would have never existed unless there were rapid scientific and technological developments in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Thus, owing to the facts of their different origins, these two art forms are distinct.

Similarly, the novel is basically a written work of art whereas the film is visual art. The film communicates through the language of image and sounds. Though verbal language is used in a film, it is of secondary importance. The simultaneous and continuous interplay of image, sound and movement makes the film unique art. The free and constant motion of image is the peculiar property of film. In the same way, unlike novel that is understood through the concept of mental images instructed through written words, the film is understood through the concept of visual images. In the words of George Bluestone: "Between the percept of the visual image and concept of mental difference lies the root difference between the two media." (47) In this way, he points to the fundamental difference between the ways images are produced in the two media and how they are received.

Nevertheless, the film and novel have lots of elements such as narrative, point of view, setting, characters and so forth, in common. The difference between these two art forms is largely the way of employing these elements. Along with the advent of advanced motion picture cameras in the last decade of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Victorian narrative tradition exerted a great influence in the development of film art. The early creative artists of film, like D.H. Griffith adopted a number of techniques from 19<sup>th</sup> century novels and adopted some other techniques so as to make them fit in the film medium.

*The Namesake* (2003) is the second book by author Jhumpa Lahiri. It was originally a novella published in *The New Yorker* and was later expanded to a full length novel. It explores many of the same emotional and cultural themes as her *Pulitzer Prize* winning short story collection *Interpreter of Maladies*. Moving between events in Calcutta, Boston and New York City, the novel examines the nuances involved with being caught between two conflicting cultures with their highly distinct religious, social, and ideological differences.

Jhumpa Lahiri's most anticipated, and sprawling first novel *The Namesake* depicts the family's imperfect assimilation into America. It is the story of Gogol Ganguli, a son of immigrant Indian family in America. The novel argues that in the name of open and versatile country, America, immigrated people suffer a lot due to awkwardness of the second-generation assimilation even in the minor cases besides their culture and language and so on.

Regarding this Sheila Roberts opines:

Though parents Ashoke and Ashima long for the family and culture that enveloped them in India, they take great pride in the opportunities their sacrifices have afforded their children. Paradoxically, their son Gogol is torn between finding his own unique identity without losing his heritage. Even Gogol's name represents the family's journey into the unknown. (11)

In this way, the protagonist, Gogol, suffers throughout his life for the sake of proper name. The couple's hardship in the region of other's culture with the problem of the children's marriage is the main issue in the novel.

The film *The Namesake*, despite being a different medium, also deals with these issues. The screenplay was written by Sooni Taraporevala and was directed by Mira Nair, the winner of Golden Camera award at the Cannes Film Festival and also earned the nomination for Academy for the Best Foreign Language for her debut feature film *Salaam Bombay!* (1998). In the words of Sheila Roberts:

In her most personal film to date, Nair ("*Vanity Fair*," "*Monsoon Wedding*") brings to the screen a poignant and transporting version of *Pulitzer Prize-Winning* author Jhumpa Lahiri's bestselling novel, which won reader's hearts across the world with its exploration of the ties that can both tangle and bind global families as they brave the modern vicissitudes of change, conflict and disaster. The film's screen adaptation was penned by Sooni Taraporevala, with whom Nair previously collaborated on "*Mississippi Masala*" and the Oscar-nominated "*Salaam Bombay!*" (14)

The film *The Namesake* was released in United States in March 9, 2007 and in India in March 23 in the same year getting the more positive reviews than negative. The film presents Tabu as Ashima, Irrfan Khan as Ashoke, Kal Penn as Gogol and Sahira Nair as Sonia/Sonali. Supporting roles are played by Zuleikha Robinson as Moushumi Mazoomdar, Jacinda Barrett as Maxine Ratliffe, Ruma Guha Thakurta as Ashoke's mother, and, Sabyasachi Chakrabarty as Ashima's father, and Supriya Devi as Ashima's grandmother.

The title *The Namesake* is significant in understanding the themes of the novel and its film adaptation. According to the novel, Jhumpa Lahiri is very much aware of the names of her characters. All the characters in the novel and film show activities as per their names.

Similarly, the protagonist, Gogol, involves for the sake of proper name throughout his life, which he could not find. He struggles with his parents with their choice of name for him which he disfavors on the one hand. And on the other his parents feel discomfort to adapt the mix cultures and identity. The film received positive reviews from American critics.

A young Bengali girl trained in classical singing is married to a Bengali man who has settled in New York. After moving to the US and leaving behind her family and the life that she knows, the two of them try to adjust to the way of life in New York and to assimilate the cultural differences. In time, the couple grows to love one another though it is hard to express their feelings, having been brought up to hide emotion between a man and woman. In time, Ashima gives birth to a baby boy, and the father who is studying for a Ph D, names the boy Gogol in honor of the Russian author by the same name with which he has a special affinity. But according to Bengali custom the child is given the "good name" of Nikhil which is soon shortened to Nicky by his American acquaintances. In time another child is born, a girl named Sonia. Gogol grows up as a typical American teenager and inspired by a family trip to the Taj Mahal in India, studies to become an architect. He finds love with Maxine and is soon a part of her family, which goes hand in hand with his distancing from his own family.

However, when his father unexpectedly dies from a heart attack, Gogol is forced to confront his fears about his cultural identity and rejects Maxine's attempts to support him through his intense grief, which ultimately ends the relationship. Gogol meets an old childhood acquaintance, Moushumi, a second generation Bengali like himself, who has embraced the western way of life as keenly as he has. They get married, but that happiness is soon destroyed by Moushumi's affair with a French ex-lover of hers. Gogol finally learns to make peace with his culture and his circumstances. He and Moushumi acknowledge that no one is perfect. Meanwhile, Ashima embraces a new life of freedom though one that comes at a price-the price of widowhood.

Jhumapa Lahiri, born in 1967 in London, is the daughter of the immigrant Bengali parents. Raised in South Kingstown by her own parents, Lahiri moved with her family to Rhode Island where she spent her adolescence. Lahiri went to attend Barnard College. After graduating with a Bachelor of Arts in English from Barnard College she kept on applying to various graduate English programmes but was rejected by all of them. Eventually, Lahiri entered Boston University and received Master's Degree in English, Creative writing and Comparative Studies in Literature and Arts. It was here she learned a Ph D in Renaissance studies. Lahiri also worked for a short time teaching creative writing in Boston University and the Rhode Island school of Design. She, having the Indian origin, has traveled extensively in India. She is rich in the experiences of the effects of colonialism there as well as the issues of diaspora. She has feeling of strong tie to her ancestral homeland along with the United States and England. Growing up with ties to all three countries has created in Lahiri a sense of homelessness and an ability to feel accepted anywhere. Her first book, the collection of short stories entitled *Interpreter of Maladies* met with acclaim when it was published in 1999, winning a Pulitzer Prize for fiction in 2002, a PEN/Hemingway Award, and The American Academy of Arts and Letters Award. These stories, set in India and America, represent the predicament of Indian immigrants who are conscious of being in a different culture, and at the same time nostalgic for their own cultural roots.

Mira Nair, the director of the film *The Namesake*, was born in Rourkela, Orissa, India on 15 October 1957 in Punjabi family. She is an Indian film director and producer based on New York. Her production company is *Mirabai Films*. Nair is the first woman that has won the award her 2004 version of Thackeray's novel *Vanity Fair*. Besides this, she is director of various films including most popular film to date *Monsoon Wedding* (2001). In 2007, she was honored with the Pride of India award at the 9<sup>th</sup> Bollywood Film Awards for her contributions to the film industry.

She also directed a short film in New York, *I Love You*, a romantic-drama anthology of love stories set in New York and a 12-minute movie on AIDS awareness (funded by The Gates Foundation) called *Migration*. Her biographical film *Amelia* was released in October 2009 to predominantly negative reviews.

For several years, Nair was attached to a big-budget adaptation of the novel *Shantaram* but the production was shelved in 2009. Her future film *Impressionist* is a coming-of-age story set in the Raj of the 1920s. Nair has also purchased the rights to Mohsin Hamid's 2007 novel *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* and is scheduled to begin shooting her film adaptation in spring 2009. She began work on a documentary film about *The Beatles at Rishikesh* however; no date for the film release has been announced.

Jhumap Lahiri's novel *The Namesake* plays the various major themes such as the multicultural, multinational, identity crisis, diaspora, power of names as markers of identity, and cross-culture. Besides these, marriage, love, sex, family, kinship, tradition Vs modernity i.e. old world Vs new world etc. Mira Nair's film *The Namesake* seems faithful to the themes of the novel; meanwhile it exclusively promotes the theme identity crisis. *The Namesake* was made in 2007 by Mira Nair. The film received positive reviews from American critics.

Mira Nair's film '*The Namesake*' code is faithful to the themes of the novel.

Explaining the theme, Farha Shariff writes:

The film chronicles the struggles between generations with extraordinary visual and cultural detail. Nair outlines the cultural realities of the second generation while trying to embrace Indian parental values, thus allowing the viewer a firsthand glimpse into the complexities of assimilation. *The Namesake* (2007) frequently floats between New York City and Calcutta, two ostensibly different, yet inherently similar cities and worlds. (460)

Thus, Farha Shariff opines positive view on film based on the novel. According to him the film is depended on novel denoting its plot, theme as well as setting.

Moreover, the critic, Richard Alleva views that the film has explored the theme as identity crisis. The protagonist, Gogol, is torn between finding his own unique identity without losing his heritage. He says:

The boy, Gogol, his name epitomes his cultural confusion. It's neither an Indian nor an American name and kid feels neither entirely American nor Indian- just plain weird. This self-consciousness will play havoc with his romantic life, but, growing into a handsome man, he takes up with an all American golden girl whose WASP family dotes on him. Gogol returns their family, and neglects his own family. (18)

As per Alleva, the film bears the main motto of identity crisis as novel do. Identity crisis not only in the case of name, but also in the language, and culture that is overloaded the film.

Likewise, another critic Stephen Holden explains the theme of tradition Vs modernity. Based on this theme he says:

"*The Namesake*," adapted from Jhumpa Lahiri's popular novel, conveys a palpable sense of people as living, breathing creatures that are far more complex than their words might indicate. The story of upwardly mobile immigrants torn between tradition and modernity as they are absorbed into the American melting pot has been told in countless movies. (1-2)

This research studies how the film *The Namesake* maintains the close affinity with the novel to preserve the peculiar properties of its film medium. Although both of them work on almost the same materials and same themes, their ways of dealing with them widely differ. While the novel *The Namesake* exposes Gogol's awkwardness of the second-generation assimilation by the way his parents come to name him through the written words. The same theme and

condition have been pictured in the film through visual images, verbal sound and music.

Similarly, both of them maintain the power and beauty of language along with the issues like marriage, love, sex, family, kinship, tradition Vs modernity and identity crisis.

## **I. From Novel to Film: Art of Film Adaptation**

Both art forms, film and novel, are relatively newcomers; if the novel is the youngest of all literary genres, the film youngest of all artistic genres. Despite, sharing some elements, film and novel originated from distinct backgrounds and different historical situations, attributing their own unique features and strange qualities. Unlike novel, film did not emerge from literary tradition. Rather its seeds were planted in the tradition of plastic art and photography.

Film is the outcome of rapid scientific and technological development of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. While, pointing such developments in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, David A. Cook remarks, "The successive stages of technological developments throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century whereby simple optical devices used for entertainment grew into the sophisticated machines, which could convincingly represent empirical reality in motion" (1). Similarly, film critic, Arthur Knight, argues that the film is the product of science, "If the motion pictures have by this time come to be accepted into the sisterhood of the established arts, there is no denying that it was always the child of science" (4).

Although, the film is the result of the invention of motion picture, the concept of motion picture is not so new. Talking about the basic principles of motion picture photography, Summer Glimcher and Warren Johnson say:

The entire art and industry of photography is based upon two discoveries. The first was explained by Leonardo da Vinci (1452-1519) when he described the 'camera obscura'. Leonardo was the first to show how a tiny hole drilled in the wall of the room would, on a sunny day project an image inside down, on the opposite wall. The second discovery is a simple photochemical reaction: salts undergo a chemical change when exposed to light strips of various base materials were used as carriers of these chemicals. (1-2)

Thus, according to Glimcher and Johnson, the concept of photography was already discovered. The lens of today's camera corresponds to Da Vinci's hole; the camera and his room. The camera captures image and the film preserves it. And with the discovery of these silver salts, it was possible to make a permanent record of any given pattern of light and darkness.

The technological development of motion picture commenced in 1824 A.D. along with the publication of Peter Mark Roget's theory "The Persistence of Vision with Regard to Moving Objects". After the emergence of this theory, a number of scientists throughout the world began putting this theory into the test. In the same year in France Joseph Niepce was conducting a research on the fundamentals of photography. Eventually he succeeded in producing a crude and permanent photograph. Then onward many scientists across Europe and America engaged themselves in experimenting new theories on photography and perfecting those already invented. Summing up the extraordinary technological achievements towards the development of motion picture, David A. Cook writes, "By 1896, all the basic technological principles of the film recording and projection had been discovered and incorporated into existing machines, which with certain obvious exceptions like introduction of light-sensitive sound, have remained essentially unchanged from that day to this"(14).

However, mere technological developments did not make the film an art. The introduction of narrative into the film and the inventions of the various techniques, such as editing, art of montage, and different types of shots like close up, panoramic shots of middle shots etc., helped make the film an art. Although the great scientists of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, such as Thomas Alva Edison, Eadweard Maybridge, Etienne Jules Marey, and others contributed a lot in inventing the motion picture camera, it was D.W. Griffith who firmly established the film as the liveliest art so far existed. In the words of Arthur Knight:

Between 1908 and 1912 Griffith took the raw elements of movie making as they had evolved up to that time and, single-handed, wrought from them as medium more intimate than theater, more vivid than literature, more affecting than poetry. He created the art of the film, its language, and its syntax. He refined the elements already present in motion pictures, mastered them to serve his purpose. (24)

Of course, Griffith invented close up, cutting, the camera angle, and the way to use his camera functionally. Moreover, he developed editing from the crude assembly of unrelated shots into conscious artistic device. Thus, the desire of creating moving pictures as in the real world is realized due to the scientific and technological innovations, and the contributions of various prolific artists and directors. At present film art almost shadows other art forms because of its liveliest and dynamic nature.

Novel, on the other hand, was originated from the literary tradition. There is no consensus on the question when the novel exactly began. Prose narratives were in vogue around the second century B.C. which was written in Greek to be enjoyed by the people of wealth and leisure. Later, Renaissance saw the rise of long prose story encouraged by the growing numbers of literate-people and the invention of printing press. Novel is also indebted to "romance" of the late Middle Age for its narrative. Actually, the form "novel" in most European languages is derived from the medieval form called "romance". However, the English name for the form is derived from Italian term "novella" which meant a short tale in prose. But these earlier works of narrative lack certain essential qualities we expect in the modern novel: credible characters, some of them drawn round; psychological depth; some attention to the larger fabric of the society in which the events take place; and descriptive detail, at least, enough to make us feel that we are witnessing the actual. Nevertheless, some

of the surviving fragments of *The Satyricon* by first century Roman writer Petronius and Miguel Cervantes's *Don Quixote* are closer to modern novel.

The modern novel is said to have emerged in England in the early 18<sup>th</sup> century along with Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* (1719). However, this work is only episodic, and lacks the organized plot that's why the credit of being the first modern novel goes to Samuel Richardson's *Pamela; or Virtue Rewarded*. Along with the popularity of Richardson's *Pamela*, the trend of writing novels increased, and reached its apogee in the Victorian period. And it is equally popular and the most practiced literary genre of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Arguing for the novel's dynamic quality, and reason for its popularity Mikhael Bakhtin writes, "The novel, after all, has no canon of its own. It is by its very nature, not canonic. It is plasticity itself. It is genre that is ever questing, ever examining itself and subjecting its established forms to review"(855).

### **Film and Novel as Distinct Art Forms**

A film is primarily a visual art and then only an aural art, whereas novel is a verbal art. When the film was in its cradle, it was not considered as an art form; it was only sight-seeing tour for audience. Film was originally expected to bring the evolution of photography to satisfy the old age desire to picture the things moving. By 1895 this desire materialized. But the film was far behind to establish itself as an art form. Commenting on the emergence of the film art Erwin Panofsky observes, "It was not an artist argue that gave rise to the discovery and gradual perfection of new technique; it is rather technical invention that gave rise to the discovery and gradual perfection of new art" (233).

In spite of sharing some common features, novel and film differ in many points. Both of them are distinct art forms having their own unique features and strange qualities. They differ in their treatment of time and space, in their way to communicate, in their language and so on. In the novel, author is fully responsible for the characters and events because author

creates the novel. Unlike novel, author is partly responsible in film. Meanwhile producer, director, screenwriter, editor, artists, musician, cameraperson, make up man, spot-boy and light-man work together to produce a film. That is why; the film is an output of mutual co-operation and team work. The novel is composed of words but a motion picture is composed of images which move.

One of the major crucial differences between novel and film, according to Geroge Bluestone, is the percept of visual image in cinema and concept of mental image in novel. On Bluestone's pioneering work in the film- literature field, *Novel into Film*, Bluestone remarks: "Between the percept of the visual image and concept of mental difference lies the root difference between the two media" (47). In this way, he points to the fundamental difference between the ways images are produced in the two media and how they are received.

Similarly, Dudley Andrew also sees the difference between the novel and film in the way the readers and audiences understand them. In the film, the percept of visual images predominates. The visual depiction of events provoke emotion and this provoking of emotion finally leads to an idea or understanding of the subject. But, in novel, readers withdraw temporally into a private of unreal world, participate in the events being read, and see imaginatively through mind. He states:

Generally film is found to work from perception towards signification, from external facts to interior motivation and consequences from givenness of a world to meaning of a story cut out of that world. Literary fiction works oppositely. It begins with signs (graphemes and words) building to propositions, which attempts to develop perception. As a product of human language it naturally treats human motivation and values seeking to throw them out onto external world, elaborating a world out of a story. (424)

## Language and Semiotics of the Film

Language is the system of codes/signs. While the language of the novel (i.e. of literature) consists of phonetics or orthographic symbols, film language is made up of verbal as well as non verbal codes. Film speaks in the language of senses, and the dramatic power of image is extremely important in film. Like verbal and literary language, film language is made up of images or sounds arranged in a certain way so as to generate certain meaning. Charles Eidsvik in his study "Cinema and Literature" explains how the pattern of shots in a film resembles the syntax of verbal language:

The pattern of arranging shots in their "standard" sequence resembles the syntax patterns of speech. A shot establishes the subject; a medium shot conveys the important action, and a close up shows what happened to the "object" in the film sentence. A periodic sentence pattern is achieved by placing the "establishing shot" last in the pattern. The fade-out-in signifies a "paragraph" or a chapter division. The break between the shots in sequence means roughly the same thing as comma. Film syntax involves the distribution of images in a sequence; the sequences frequently resemble the distributional system of verbal language of the filmmaker. (44-45)

In the beginning, film language was purely iconic. But the introduction of narrative techniques in the film demanded the development of the various codes to denote narrative progression. The rules and conventions constitute the essence of film language and allow us to explain the procedures by which cinema denotes such narrative phenomena as successively, priority, temporal breaks, and spatial continuity.

A film has complex system of verbal and non-verbal codes. According to Christian Metz: "The cinema is a composite of language at the very level of its matter of expression. Not only does it have several codes but also several languages in some way are already

contained in it. These languages are distinguished among themselves by their physical definition: moving picture arranged in sequence, phonetic sounds, and musical noise" (qtd in **Stephen** 267).

Metz, a best-known film semiotician, is of the view that a film is like a language because it communicates like verbal or written language, using its own codes and conventions. According to Metz, film has no words as some film semioticians claim. He compares a shot not with a word but with a sentence. Unlike in verbal language where there is a distance between signifier and signified, in film language the signified cannot be disengaged from the signifier. For instance, in a movie sadness is not the concept "sadness", but a child weeping or a man wailing i.e. in a movie sadness is not a concept but an actual situation of attribute of a specific person.

In the film, language analysis – Ferdinand de Saussure's formulation of syntagmatic and paradigmatic relationship between or among the codes/signs – is applicable. Like verbal language, film language communicates in two ways: syntagmatically and paradigmatically. A syntagm is a unit of actual relationship; thus syntagmatic relationships result when the units in the filmic chain follow each other in order. A paradigm, on the other hand, is a unit of potential relationships; thus paradigmatic relationships are associative, not sequential. They are not concerned with order of the link in the chain, but with the meanings we associate with them. Since paradigmatic relationships are independent of the order in which the event occur, they can also exist between scenes taking place at different times within a film.

But it is not easy to analyze film language because it is the language that consists of various types of visual and aural codes. Cautioning us to be careful in the course of film language analysis Bernard F. Dick in his book *Anatomy of Film* writes: "It is not enough for semioticians simply to isolate syntagmas and paradigms; the movie relays its message

through codes that the filmmaker used and that the semiotician must now construct. There are all kinds of codes: codes of dress, color, lighting and so forth" (333).

### **The Bond Between Film and Novel**

Despite, novel and film originated from distinct background, they share some common elements. Both art forms are relatively new comers, having close affinity since the time of film's birth as an art form. First of all, both are narrative works of art; the narrative is the backbones of them. According to Keith Cohen, "Narrative is the most solid median link between novel and cinema, the most pervasive tendency of both verbal and visual language" (qtd. in Andrew 425). Giving the momentous status to the fact of merging cinema and narrativity Christian Metz in his essay "Some Points in the Semiotics of Cinema" writes, "The merging of the cinema and narrativity was not a great fact, which was by no means predestined-nor was it strictly fortuitous. It was a historical and social fact"(169).

Refuting those critics who claimed that the film and the drama are more similar than the film and the novel, Gerald Mast argues:

Indeed, it is not implausible to argue, as Bazin and Sontag have, that the film's deepest affinities with the novel, not with the play. The novel is cinematic in its fluid handling of time and space, in its focused narrative control, in its ability to alternate description with dialogue, and even in the privacy and isolation of its audience. (353)

For Mast, the film is closer with the novel than with the unfolding of the events in a theatrical performance.

Similarly, Susan Sontag in her study justice the affinity between the film and novel in terms of their way to manipulate time and control the attention of the reader or viewer in the following excerpts:

Like the novel, the cinema presents us with a view of the action, which is absolutely under the control of director (writer) at every moment. Our attention cannot wander about the screen, as it does about the stage. When the camera moves, we move, when it remains still we are still. In a similar way, novel presents a selection of the thoughts and descriptions, which are relevant to the writer's conception, and we must follow these serially, as the author leads us; they are not spread out, as a background, for us to contemplate in the order we choose, as in painting or the theater. (243-44)

Another similarity between novel and film lies in the novelistic intention of a writer and the cinematic intention of the director. The often-quoted statements of Joseph Conrad and D.W. Griffith are apt to mention to case. Joseph Conrad, stating the novelistic intention remarks "My task which I am trying to achieve is, by powers of written words, to make you hear, to make you feel- it is before all to make you see" (qtd. in McFarlane 4). The difference is only in the ways of seeing, in the words of George Bluestone "between the percept of visual image and the concept of mental image" (1).

In spite of differences in their ways of presentation, the language of film and novel have underlying similarity i.e., the function of every type of language is to communicate, and both languages do the same. Moreover, film language consists of verbal and/or written language. While language is made up of words, and the words can conjure up anything – image, ideas, feelings, qualities, things etc, the film is made up of any images with some words, sound and music and it is very visual and compelling. Film uses many codes and techniques such as camera, angles, panning, lighting, and the speeds of cuts, color, association of images and so forth-to get its meaning across. However, these features are not found in the novel.

In this way, film and novel share a number of features like narrative, character, point of view, setting and so forth. For that reason Sergei Eisenstein find cinematic qualities in Charles Dickens's novels: "Perhaps the secret lies in Dickens's (as well as cinema's) creation of an extraordinary plasticity. The observation in the novels is extraordinary-as in their optical quality. Character of Dickens's is rounded with means as plastic and slightly exaggerated, as are screen heroes today"(396).

### **Art of Film Adaptation**

Adaptation of literary text into the film is no more a new concept for it dates back to the 1890s. The first adaptations were of the Bible into two films. In Susan Heyward's words:

Literary adaptation to a film is a long established tradition in cinema starting, for example, with early cinema adaption of the bible in 1897 and 1899 by Lumiere brothers (*La vie et passion de Christ*, 1897) and Alice Guy (*La vie de Christ*, 1899). By 1910s, adaption of the established literary canon had become marketing ploy by which producers and exhibitors could legitimize cinema going as a venue of taste and thus attract the middle class to their theaters.

Literary adaption gave cinema the respectable cachet of entertainment as art.

(3)

For Heyward, literary adaptation to film is not new but is a long established tradition.

Adapted cinemas could attract the middle class people too. In the past only elite, privileged and high class people used to go the theater. The adaptation made the area of theater or cinema broad. Because of literary adaption, the film became a respectable art.

Almost all the best-selling novels have been adapted into films. Adaptation does not mean simply to change a novel/play into film. An adaptation is a work in one medium that derives its impulse as well as varying number of its elements from a work in different medium. Sometimes adaptations are loose, borrowing a general situation, an episode, a

character, or even a title as the inspiration for the work whereas sometimes adaptations try to be 'literal', presenting the original story, characters, and even dialogue as exactly as possible. But, film being a separate medium with its own aesthetic and techniques, the original work must be transformed into what are essentially a different and a unique form. Joseph M. Boggs and Dennis W. Petrie suggest us to keep in mind the following things to judge the film adaptation fairly: "Although a novel, a film, or a play can tell same story, each medium is a work of art in its own right, and despite some properties that all three share, each medium has its own distinctive techniques, conventions, consciousness and view point "(370).

According to them, in the process of adaption there come changes not only in medium but also on creative minds. Therefore there are some kinds of creative shifts in almost all kinds of adaptations. So, it is incorrect to expect an exact carry-over from one medium to another when different creative artists are involved.

Similarly, some critics and screen writers take adaptation as a creative art. For instance, De Witt Bodeen, a well-known scriptwriter opines in his *'The Adopting Art'*, "Adopting literary works to film, without doubt, is a creative undertaking but the task requires a kind of selective interpretation, along with the ability to the recreate and sustain an established mood" (349).

The most frequent and most tiresome discussion of adaptation concerns with fidelity issues because in this, the original work becomes the standard against which the film version is compared. Fidelity critic, which makes up a great deal of literary criticism, focuses on the notion of equivalence. Many critics have their own vision about the issue of fidelity. Few writers have specially questioned the possibility of fidelity though some claimed not to embrace it: they still regard it as viable choice for the film-maker and criterion for the critic. Beja, a film critic asks: "what relationship should a film have to the original source? Should it be faithful? Can it be? To what? (qtd. in McFarlane 9). So there is not hard and fast rule on it.

Christipher Orr has noted: "The concern with the fidelity of the adapted film in letter and spirit to its literary source has questionably dominated the discourse on adaption" (qtd. in McFarlane 10).

It is not sufficient to show the difference between the texts through the fidelity criticism. Susan Heyward, in this regard, writes:

It does not suffice to do a textual analysis based on a demonstration of how the film renders the language the style of the original through editing, techniques, the symbolic use of images, finally the sound track and music. We need to understand the meaning of these differences within a socio political, economic and historical context. We need to understand the sign of these differences.

Adaptations are synergy between the desires for sameness and reproduced on the one hand, and on the other hand, the acknowledgement of difference. (6)

In this way, the difference between film and original text may occur because of the technical aspects and the social context of the film. So, the exactness is not possible. To advocate on the fidelity of cinema is not so praiseworthy work because the adaptation itself is the acknowledgement of difference.

McFarlane prefers other approaches of adaptation, such as intertextuality, to fidelity approach. For him, "Modern critical notions of intertextuality represent a more sophisticated approach, in relation to adaptation, to the idea of original novel as a resource" (10). In this regard, Christopher Orr remarks, "within the critical context (i.e. of intertextuality), the issue is not whether the adapted film is faithful to its source, but how the choice of specific source and how the approach to that source serves the film's ideology" (72).

Similarly, Geoffrey Wagner suggests three possible categories, which pose challenge to the hegemony of fidelity approach. The first of Wagner's three categories is "transposition" "in which a novel is given directly on the screen with a minimum apparent interference"

(qtd.in McFarlane 10). His second category is "commentary" "where an original is taken and either purposely or inadvertently altered in some respect" (qtd. in McFarlane 10). And the last one is, what he calls, "analogy" "which must represent a fairly considerable departure for the sake of making another work of art" (qtd. in McFarlane 11).

Moreover, various kinds of actual relations exist between film and novel; some of which are amenable to adaptation while some others are not. To analyze the film adaption of novel more clearly, we must examine the specific challenges posed by each medium. So, we should take the various techniques, such as narrative technique, point of views, and the treatment of time and subject matter of both art forms in consideration.

In the novel, as well as the film, narrative plays a central role. Christian Metz, discussing film narrative, says "Film tells us continuous stories; it 'says' things that would be conveyed also in languages of words; yet it says them differently. There is a reason for the possibility as well as for necessity of adaptation" (qtd. in McFarlane 12).

In this regard, we can say that the most striking common feature of novel and film is the potential and propensity for narrative. It is not the chief transferrable element but the most of the criticisms written about the film adopted from the novels have emerged from the perception of tempering with the original narrative. In the opinion of Brain McFarlane:"Such dissatisfaction resonate with complex set of misapprehensions about the workings of narrative in the two media, about the irreducible differences between the two, and from failure to distinguish what can from what cannot be transferred" (12).By this he means that before discussing about adaptation a distinction should be made between what may be transferred from one narrative medium to another and what necessarily requires adaptation proper.

Ronald Barthes' distinction between distributional functions and integrational functions of narrative is valuable in sorting out what may be transferred (from novel to film) from that which only is adapted. The distributional functions denote to action and events which are strung together throughout the text while the integrational functions refer to more or less diffuse concept which nevertheless is necessary to the meaning of the story. The most important kinds of transfer is possible from novel to film are located in the distributional functions rather than in the integrational functions.

In the same way, another distinction should be made between various narrative modes that appear in the novel, which are difficult to sustain in the film narrative. The point of view controls and dictates the form and shape of literary work and determines its emphasis, tone, strengths and limitations. Novelistic narrative modes consist of the first person point of view, third person point of view; third person limited point of view, dramatic or objective point of view and stream of consciousness. Among these five points of views possible in the novel, the omniscient, the third person limited, and the stream of consciousness require the narrator to look inside a character's mind to see what he/she is thinking. They all stress the thoughts, concept or reflections of a character, which are difficult to depict cinematically. These three points of views have no natural cinematic equivalents. George Bluestone discusses this problem in his *Novel into Film*:

The rendition of mental states –memory, dream and imagination—cannot be adequately represented by film as language [...]. The film, by arranging external scenes for our visual perception, or by presenting us with dialogue, can lead us to infer. But it cannot show us thought directly. It can show characters thinking, feeling, thought and speaking, but it cannot show us their thought and feeling. A film is not thought, it is perceived. (47-48)

Similarly, three of the novelistic point of view, namely first person, omniscient and third person limited, make us aware of the narrator. This scene of narrative can be imposed on a film through voice over narration added to the sound track. But it is not natural cinematic element. In film we simply see the story unfold. That is why the dramatic point of view is the only literary point of view that can be directly translated into cinema.

Likewise, due to the limitations imposed on the length of a film and on the amount of material it can successfully treat, a film is forced to suggest pictorially a great many things that a novel can explore in deep. Novelist and screen writer William Goldman sums up the problem this way:

When people say, "Is it like a book?" the answer is, "There has never in the history of the world had been a movie that's really been like a book." Everybody says how faithful *Gone with the Wind* was. Well, *Gone with the Wind* was a three and half hour movie, which means you are talking about maybe a two hundred-page screen play of a nine hundred-page in which the novel has, say, five hundred words per page; and the screen play has maybe forty, maybe sixty, depending on what's on the screen, maybe one hundred and fifty words per page. But you are taking a little, teeny slice, you are just extracting little teeny essences of scenes. All you can ever be in an adaptation is faithful in spirit. (qtd. in Boggs and Petrie 380)

To conclude, apart from these elements proper attentions should be given to other novelistic elements, such as summary of the character's past, literary past tense, descriptive details and so forth, while analyzing film adaptation of novels.

### **Film as Hybrid and Corporate Art**

In the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century a new art form, namely film, rose to prominence. It borrowed from older arts and shared characteristics with them along with its development.

Early as 1915, film used to be compared to paintings, but in recent times these comparisons have been extended to all the other arts. In short, like opera, a film is a hybrid art. Like opera that draws on the other arts like theater, painting, music, dance and mime, film can draw on all these; it is also outgrow of another art, photography. Joseph M. Boggs and Dennis W. Petrie have talked about film's hybrid quality in their book *The Art of Watching Film* as:

Film enjoys the compositional elements of the visual arts: line, form, mass, volume and texture. Like painting and photography, film exploits the subtle interplay of the light and shadow. Like sculpture, film manipulates three-dimensional space. But like, pantomime, film focuses in moving images, and as in dance, the moving images in the film have rhythm. The complex rhythms of film resemble those of music and poetry, and like poetry in particular, film communicates through imagery, metaphor and symbol. Like the drama, film communicates visually and verbally; visually through action and gesture; verbally through dialogue. Finally, like the novel, expands and compresses time and space, travelling back and forth freely within their wide borders. (2)

Unlike novel, film is corporate art and a single person cannot be held responsible for its production. It is a technological art and no other art form interposes technical know-how between the artist and its audience. In other words, film is the collaborative work in that it requires the talents of the vast number of specialists. In this regard, Gerald Mast in *Film Theory and Criticism* writes, "Panofsky specially compares the making of a film to a building of cathedral, for the cathedral was built for the greater glory of god and was result of the collective labor of as many specialists as a Hollywood film" (580). Thus, a cinema is a collaborative work of a director, a scriptwriter, a cameraman, a producer and many more people, who give the final shape to a film.

In this way, novel and film, despite sharing a number of elements, is distinct works of art. Both of them are narrative works of art, having characters, plot, setting and dialogue and so on. The narratives unfold essentially in a different ways in these two works of art. While the narrative of novel unfolds through written words (i.e. descriptions and sometimes dialogues), the narrative in the film unfolds through actions and images. The film is basically a visual work of art. Similarly, they treat time and space differently. That is, the novel generally deals with past events and the film is shot in present. In the same way, the novel is primarily representational medium whereas the film is primarily a presentational medium. Moreover, the film is the unique medium in its constant motion. There is a continuous interplay of sight, sound and motion in the film. So, while examining the film adaptation of the novel, we should take all these things into consideration. We should consider what elements of the novel can be transferred as they are in the film and what elements should be adapted.

### III. The Namesake: From Narrative to Audio-Visual

The film *The Namesake* is an adaptation of Jhumpa Lahiri's best-selling novel *The Namesake*. The film was released on the United States, Canada, United Kingdom and India in March 2007. Mira Nair is the director of film whereas Sooni Taraporevala wrote the screen play. The producers Mira Nair and Lydia Dean Pilcher take the leading stars of the Bollywood and Hollywood including Tabu, Irrfan Khan, Kal Penn, Zuleikha in the film *The Namesake*. This film is about the struggles and hardships of a Bengali couple, Ashima and Ashoke, who immigrate to the United States, and the identity crisis of the protagonist, Gogol, which to highlight the struggle of those second-generation.

Although being different artistic medias, the novel '*The Namesake*' and its film adaptation move around the same theme such as identity crisis, the struggle and complexities of the immigrant experience and foreignness. The main spirit of the novel has not been distorted in the film. But to make film commercial, the director has modified some characters, scenes, events etc so that it could be pattern movie in Hollywood as well as Bollywood. To make it accordance to the taste of the viewers and the demand of time, such as modification, distortion, addition, and deletion are acceptable and it is inevitable regarding the commercial aspects of cinema. Because being different artistic genera, such deviations are obvious. So, Mira Nair, as the director of the film, has modified and interpreted the novel with the rhythm of its screen play.

The early phase of the novel is set in the early 1968 in Boston (1970s in New York City in the film). It begins with the delivery of the first child by Ashima Ganguli, a young bride of Ashoke Ganguli, a doctoral candidate in electrical engineering of Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) in America. Ashoke and Ashima, having pet names, as such, Mithu and Monu, are waiting to receive an official name from Ashima's grandmother for the newly born baby, but are obliged to discharge the baby with a pet name 'Gogol' for in

America " a baby cannot be released from the hospital without a birth certificate and that the birth certificate needs a name" (27).



Figure1: Ashoke and Ashima at hospital with their newly born baby

The birth of baby creates problem even from the naming process. Ashoke names the baby 'Gogol' in an honor of the Russian author by the same name with Nikolai Gogol.

The novel follows the life of Gogol Ganguli from birth until middle age, chronicling his struggle to discover who he is as a second-generation immigrant. The story begins as Ashoke and Ashima leave Calcutta, India and settle in Central Square, at Cambridge, Massachusetts. Ashoke was born in Alipore as a grandson of a former professor of European literature at Calcutta University. He has the habit and ability to read while walking. He has six siblings. His devotion to book inspired by his grandfather makes him deaf and blind to the world around him. Ashoke has a serious accident on train while going to visit his grandfather in Jamshedpur. Many visitors and doctors come to meet including his blind grandfather. After the treatment of that accident, he applies for engineering studies abroad.



Figure 2: Accident scene of Ashoke in Calcutta

But this early part of the novel is excluded in its film adaptation. Though the exclusion is obviously an injustice to its original text, it is the limited time, length and boundary of the film that make the exclusion obvious. Unlike the novel, its film version begins with Ashoke train journey to Jamshedpur carrying two suitcases. He acquaintances with Ghosh and inspired to go abroad with Ghosh conversation. On the other, Ashima keeps herself busy on singing without caring about the recent politics. Ashoke with his parents goes to see Ashima for marriage. She accepts him as her husband. Before Ashoke, Ashima was watched by other two persons; first, a widower with four children and second, a newspaper cartoonist with one hand, but both are rejected and both are off seen in the film. Except, these finger counting scene, Mira Nair's film adapts none of the remaining events of source novel. Some characters like Ashoke's grandfather, his six siblings are absent in the film.



Figure 3: Ashoke with his parents to ask for Ashima's hand

Ashoke travels back to Calcutta to find a wife, Ashima, who comes from a traditional Bengali/Indian family. As she prepares to give birth, she realizes how isolated she becomes. She wants to be in Calcutta with her baby in nostalgic way. The baby is named 'Gogol' in honor of the Ashoke's favorite Russian author Nikolai Gogol in the absence of the letter send by Ashima's grandmother to give public and private name. They choose 'Gogol' for the private use. However, the innocent behavior of Gogol, private name takes place of public. The below extract from the novel shows the reason for choosing the name 'Gogol':

He remembers the page crumpled tightly in his fingers, the sudden shock of the lantern's glare in his eyes. But for the first time he thinks of that moment not with terror but with gratitude. "Hello, Gogol" he whispers, leaning over his son's haughty face, his tightly bundled body. "Gogol" he repeats, satisfied. The baby turns his head with an expression of extreme consternation and yawns.

(28)

Ashima approves the name for she is aware that the name stands not only for her son's life, but her husband's. She knows the story of the accident, a story she first heard with polite newlywed sympathy, but the thought of which now, now especially, makes her blood go cold.

At the very time of delivery, there come three visitors, all Bengali: Maya and Dilip Nandi, and Dr. Gupta. But these visitors are off the screen in the film. We find less descriptive scene in the time of delivery in the film.

Ashoke and Ashima have hoped to find her grandmother's letter in order to rename and to continue Bengali tradition. But untimely demise of her grandmother loses their wish to find public name to the baby. But the death of grandmother is code off. Apart from this, death of Ashoke's parents from cancer and Ashima's mother from kidney disease are clueless in the film unlike in the novel. The characters like Montgomerys (the neighbor), Amber and

Clover, and Judy from the novel are off the screen in the film. In this circumstance, director, Mira Nair seems disloyal toward the source novel.

When Gogol is six months old, Gogol's annaprasan (rice ceremony) managed with Bengali staffs and their neighbors are not mention in the film. The film also does not offer any clue of the birth of the second child Sonia. Even the dialogues in the Gogol annaprasan are used at the time of annaprasan of Sonia. Such as;

"Put the money in his hand!" Someone in the group calls out. "An American boy must be rich!" "No!" his father protests. "The pen. Gogol, take the pen." Gogol regards the plate doubtfully. Dozens of dark heads hover expectantly. The material of the Punjabi pajama set begins to scratch his skin. "Go on, Gogol; take something, "Dilip Nandi says, drawing the plate close. Gogol frowns, and his lower lip trembles. (40)



Figure 4: Sonia's annaprasan

Not a single code is present about Sonia's birth in the film. Gogol is played by his parents. Ashoke takes Gogol to show University library, Ashoke teaches to American students and Ashima sells samosas but are not mentioned in the film. The below extract is about Sonia's birth in the novel: "Sometimes Gogol lies beside her in his parents' bedroom, reading a picture book, or coloring with crayons. "You're going to be an older brother," she tells him one day. "There'll be someone to call you Dada. Won't that be exciting?" (44).

Now the novel moves forward describing the activities and behaviors of Gogol than others. Gogol in the elementary school, his journey to India with his parents, his visit to the university library with his father and 'Graveyard trip' with his friends and teacher but are not pictured in the film. However, viewers of its film adaptation get hardly any chance to watch these resembling scenes. The Graveyard trip in the novel is described as follows:

They take a few minutes wandering from stone to stone, among thick and thin tablets, some leaning back as if pressed by a wind. The stones are square and arched, black and gray, more often plain than shiny, caked with lichen and moss. On many of the stones the inscriptions have faded. They find the stone that bears the poet's name. "Line up," the teachers say, "it's time for a project." The students are each given several sheets of newsprint and thick colored crayons whose labels have been peeled. (68-69)

Ashoke presents the book *The Collected Tales of Nikolai Gogol* to Gogol and tries to explain the significance of his name but he senses that Gogol is not old enough to understand in his fourteenth birthday. This event is presented exactly even in the film as in the novel. But Gogol's friends as well as Bengali's aunts and uncles are not mentioned in the film. Gogol visits many parties with his friends and expresses his sensual desire with many girls including married as well. Except Maxine and Moushumi, others are not in the film. Exclusion of some major characters like Kim, Ruth, a married woman, Bridget and so on is a remarkable point about being unfaithful to the original source. However, the point is, if the director tries to show all sensual relations of Gogol, those scenes might be censored. Likewise in his birthday Moushumi is introduced in the novel whereas she comes later in the film. Moreover, the novel contains the passages about the relationship between Gogol and Ruth:

He begins to meet her after her classes, remembering her schedule, looking up at the buildings and hovering casually under archways. She always seems

pleased to see him, stepping away from her girlfriends to say hello. "Of course she likes you," Jonathan tells Gogol, patiently listening to a minute account of their acquaintance one night in the dining hall. A few days later, following Ruth back to her room because she's forgotten a book she needs for a class, he places his hand over hers as she reaches for the doorknob. (113)

Moreover, the whole family takes a trip to India for eight months. Before going to India, their parents are called by their teachers to discuss on Gogol and Sonia's study and Ashima does shopping to her relatives but the shopping act is not seen in the film. Though the earlier trip to India is mentioned, details are not given in the film. They tour Agra, and are stunned by the beauty of Taj Mahal and its surroundings, including architecture and creativity. They admire its perfect symmetry and stay at a hotel, eat in restaurants. Somewhere in Bihar, in the middle of the night, a business man is stabbed and robbed which is totally excluded in the film.



Figure 5: Whole family trip to Agra

In his youth, Gogol visits many parties with his friends i.e. Colin, Jason, Mare. Some glamorous scene when Gogol kisses and loses his virginity for the first time with Kim and a girl respectively are off the screened. In the same way, a long description with the characters with Ruth and Kim is missed from film. The relation of Gogol with Ruth is significant to circle the American way of life, but it does not appear in the film. He changes his name as

Nikhil by talking with his parents, once; he gets information about that Russian author in his class by Mr. Lawson. Then the rate of hating his name increase day by day. He often confesses his grief and sadness with his family members about his name. After the change of his name, he inwardly feels happy though his familiar relatives and family call him as usual. Moreover, he wants to create a new world with his new name. Once Ashima goes India for cousin's weddings with Sonia, at that very time, Ashoke tells the significance of the name 'Gogol' to his son when they are about to go Pemberton Road in the film.



Figure 6: Ashoke tells the reason behind the name 'Gogol' to his son

Gogol becomes busy on job and more than that he occupies himself on girlfriends. He rarely goes to his parents' apartment; rather he spends more time with his new girl friend Maxine. He meets her on a party and falls in love romantically. Maxine invites him to her parents' home in Chelsea in the novel. But unlike the novel, Maxine's birthday is celebrated when Gogol sees her for the first time in the film. Maxine's birthday is addition in the film. Gogol finds Maxine's step mother, Lydia and father, Gerald opposite of his parents in the case of frankness, sophistication and in the choice of foods. Gogol plans to trip at New Hampshire with Maxine rather than going to his parents. Before leaving he takes Maxine to his home to introduce with his parents. While meeting with Ashima and Ashoke, Maxine kisses Ashoke besides Ashima which is not shown in the novel. Maxine admires the way Ashima puts clothes and tasty foods she cooks. Ashima shows only formality on Maxine's

arrival not to accept as daughter in law. Meanwhile, Ashoke tells the reason of choosing 'Gogol' as a name to his son in the film.



Figure 7: Gogol takes Maxine to his parents' apartment

At New Hampshire Gogol admires the place, scene and shares emotional and private matters with Maxine. They enjoy each other and Gogol forgets his mother is loneliness when Ashoke goes to Cleveland for a project. Gogol's twenty-seventh birthday is managed among Maxine's whole family including her grandparents, Edith and Hank and a number of friends from around the lake. Meanwhile, Ashima wishes Gogol alone by drawing card for him. But in the film Maxine's grandparents and others are not involved on the Gogol's birthday. In the novel Edith and Hank tell Gogol "We never got as far as India,". "We would certainly have loved to have seen that". (153)



Figure 8: Gogol with Maxine in New Hampshire

On the way to Cleveland, Ashoke gets massive heart attack and dies. Ashima screams alone at the time of Christmas over the death of her husband, Ashoke. Unlike other parts of novel, Nair seems much more generous to this part, because this part has not been distorted in the film. Sudden and unexpected news about the death makes Ashima disheartened. This scene is presented as follows in the novel:

She begins to shiver violently, the house instantly feeling twenty degree colder. She pulls her sari tightly around her shoulders, like a shawl. She gets up and walks systematically through the rooms of the house, turning on all the light switches, turning on the lamppost on the lawn and the floodlight over the garage, as it she and Ashoke are expecting company. She returns to the kitchen and stares at the pile of cards on the table in the red envelopes it had pleased her so much to buy, most of them ready to be dropped in the mailbox.

(169)



Figure 9: Dead Body of Ashoke

Sonia flies back from San Francisco to be with Ashima. Gogol flies from La Guardia to Cleveland alone and recognizes and receives the dead body of his father. He realizes the moment of his father's last minutes where he was alone. He takes his father's wallet, money, credit cards and dress and other materials from the hospital but this act of taking clothes and other material is not included in the film. Meanwhile Maxine expresses her eagerness to help

Gogol after the death of his father but Gogol rejects thinking that it is not appropriate to be with someone who barely knew his father. He goes Ashoke's apartment called Baron's Court, and sees everything minutely. But his recent visit with Maxine is not mentioned in the film. She was with him at that time," You were with me," he tells her. "What?" "The Last time I saw my father. You were there." "I know, I 'm so sorry, Nick. Just promise me you'll go to a hotel" "Yeah. I promise" (177).

Gogol boards to Boston. Before going he shaves his hair totally as he remembers his father does when he was a child. This part of shaving his hair is added in the film. Funeral process is finished along with a few friends of the family. Ashima changes her dress in white color and shampoos the vermilion from her part. On the eleventh day; many friends are invited to mark the end of the mourning period and Maxine too comes with the clothes and other things of Gogol. Maxine is hurried about their plan on New Year's Eve however, Gogol replies not to be with her anymore. The funeral process runs in the New York in the novel whereas in the film, it is screened in the near the Ganges river in India to throw the ashes of Ashoke. After that there is no mark of meeting between Gogol and Maxine. Shortly after, she gets engaged with another man and married to him who is excluded from the film.



Figure 10: Funeral Ceremony in Ganges

Even after the departure from Maxine, Gogol enjoys with a married woman named Bridget but it too is not included in the film. Ashima, after some time, encourages Gogol to

contact Moushumi whom he knows from his own childhood. She has had the unfortunate experience of having planned a wedding only to have her intended groom change his mind at the last minute. Likewise, the previous serious discussion between Moushumi and Graham is not included into the film. However, a long description of a talk between them exists in the novel:

On their walk home from the restaurant, she brought it up, saying that his comments had upset her, why hadn't he told her these things? Was he only pretending to enjoy himself all that time? They'd begun to argue, a chasm opening up between them, swallowing them, and suddenly, in a rage, she had removed his grandmother's ring from her finger and tossed it into the street, into oncoming traffic, and then Graham had struck her on the face as pedestrians watched. (217)

Gogol and Moushumi are attracted to one another in the short period and become ready to marry in order to make their parents, being from the same Bengali origin, happy. They share emotional and private matter of their previous life. The wedding is arranged in Bengali traditional. At the time of marriage Ashima keeps smile on her face and remembers Ashoke of her own marriage, which is a flashback added to the film.



Figure 11: Wedding of Moushumi and Gogol in Bengali Tradition

At the initial phase, days are passed peacefully. But gradually Moushumi gives less time to Gogol rather she gives more value to her study and job. Her teaching job and paper presentation are not mentioned into the film. Moreover, some disturbance adds tension to Gogol when Moushumi makes fun with her friends on Gogol to change his name. Meanwhile Gogol comes to know about her ex-fiancé in more details. However, he is not occupied by it anymore. By the end of their first year of marriage, Moushumi becomes restless. She feels tied down by marriage and begins to regret what she has done. Occasionally Moushumi visits Dimitri and passes night with him many times without taking care of Gogol. However, these are not pictured in the film:

It had been the first date of her life, strategically planned on an evening, her parents were at a party, she recalled nothing of the movie, had eaten nothing at the restaurant, part of a small shopping complex off Route 1. And then, after watching Dimitri eats both of their fortune cookies without reading either prediction, she had made her error: She had asked him to be her date to her senior prom. He had declined, drives her home, kissed her lightly on her cheek in the driveway, and then he never called her again. (259)

Again she refreshes her ex-lover, Dimitri and wants to move to Paris giving divorce to Gogol. But in the film, Dimitri is replaced by the name of Pierre. With the maturity of Gogol and Sonia, Ashima has to face loneliness in the absence of Ashoke. So, she decides to sell the house and makes plan to live six months in India with her sibling and relatives and six months with her son and daughter. It is her wish as her name suggests, Ashima means without boarder or limitless. Before selling the house she closes her eyes to decide what to do as suggested by her librarian friend, which is an additional part in the film. Sonia is preparing to marry with an American boy named Ben. The absence of Moushumi makes Gogol alone, but Gogol has to come to accept his name as he picks up a book presented by his father "The

Short Stories" on his birthday. He searches that book and reads carefully while Ashima is giving her last party at her house on the Christmas day.

The ending is also little bit different than the novel, Gogol feels satisfied on reading the book on train in the film whereas in the novel he is studying in his home which is about to be sold.

### **The Film as an Art Form**

When a work of art in linguistic mode of fiction is transformed into the visual mode of cinema, both of them become autonomous works of art. Unlike novel, the film has the visual and the aural elements. The artistic use of the visual and aural qualities and properties of the film medium determine the effectiveness of a motion picture. If the novel is written to be read, a film is made to be seen and heard, to appeal our visual and aural senses. So, while analyzing a film, we should examine the film maker's use of camera angles and camera movement, focus, framing, setting, editing, special effects, dialogue and music.

As explained in the earlier chapter, *The Namesake* as a film deals with the same themes as the novel. Not only that, its structure, narrative pattern, and even the dialogues are almost similar to that of the novel. Though, the film is being a snooze largely because the screenwriter tried to cram Lahiri's book as much as possible onto the screen.

The film opens at the Ashoke's train journey to visit his grandfather in Jamshedpur. The story involves the life of Gogol Ganguli from birth until middle age, chronicling his struggle to discover who he is as a second-generation immigrant, that gives the audiences high visual effects and make the film very interesting. As the story progresses, the audiences are introduced to Ashoke's arrival to see Ashima for marriage and their settlement in New York.

Like the plot of the novel, the plot of the film moves in the high and low motion. Sometimes the story moves slowly but sometimes there is great drama in small issues too.

Like in the novel, film deals with flirting and changing mind of Gogol, Gogol's hatred to his name, changing girl-friends, his inconsistent habit, tour to India, untimely demise of Ashoke and Ashima's decision to sell the house and her wish to be without borders. Being a distinct art form, film follows story of the novel but presents it in its own way.

The setting of both the novel and the film is Calcutta and New York where Ashoke and Ashima settle down with their children. The novel begins with Ashima is about to deliver her first child in the hospital in Massachusetts and her discomfort in new land but the film chronologically begins with train accident of Ashoke and turns back to Calcutta to get married to aspiring singer, Ashima. Thereafter they return home to New York. Shortly thereafter they become parents of a boy, who they initially name Gogol, and a few years later both give birth to Sonia. They travel to India for the first time when Gogol is born and second time when Gogol and Sonia are in their late teens. But in the film, they visit India when Sonia too is born. Gogol keeps relation with many girls named Kim, Ruth, Maxine, Bridget and Moushumi but only Maxine Ratliff and Moushumi are screened into the film. Although the setting of novel and film is almost same, the ways they establish it differ in each art form.

The novel is a written work of art where a novelist establishes it through written words and the reader imaginatively construct it in their minds. But being a visual art, the film presents it directly through a series of visual image. And through the perception of visual images, we understand the film medium. For instance, the uninvolved of Ashima in fascist politics in 1977 at Calcutta denotes her disinterest over the politics. The dark but close view of Ashima while Ashoke is heading for his job signals to her loneliness in the new land. The mark of snake with open mouth on the wall refers to something disasterous event that refers to Ashima's father's death.

In the novel, places, characters and the events are exposed mostly through descriptive passage, but they are exposed directly through images and actions in the film. Sometimes just

a single shot is enough to replace a page or more descriptive passages of the novel. For instance the new house purchased by Ashima and Ashoke in Pemberton Road is described in the following description:

No trees grow on the property; no shrubs flank the front door, so that the cement of the foundation is clearly visible to the eye. And so for the first few months, four-year old Gogol plays on an uneven, dirt-covered yard littered with stones and sticks, soiling his sneakers, leaving footprints in his path. (52)

In this way, in the novel, this scene is described through the passage but in the film, only a camera shot is enough to expose it.

Music is an essential element in the cinema which plays an important role in a film in that it creates and directs emotions of audience. It amplifies the emotional content of the scene. Music in the film is generally categorized into two groups: motivated and non-motivated. The motivated use of music give the audience sense of naturalness for such music seems to be a part of the scene itself. Non-motivated music is imposed upon the scene from outside.

Music of the film *The Namesake* is composed by Nitin Sawhey. The music of this film gives the audience the impression of being fragmented, isolated, incompleteness. The songs of the film also indicate the mood of the characters and the development of the story. Actually, music tells us the things that the words or images cannot tell. There are few and less songs in the film *The Namesake* in comparison to other films. The songs are not much more remarkable. Ashima sings some melodious songs in the beginning and at the end while she stays in Calcutta in her classic music that refers to her peaceful mind in her own homeland. The party songs related to Gogol's life are rap type of music which is in more romantic mood concerned with physical body. That means Gogol's physical and sensual desire with many

girls which heads into incompleteness. The language of songs in the film is Bengali and English, that denotes bilingual character of Ashoke's family members.

In this way, the novel *The Namesake* and the film bearing the same name become the autonomous work of art adopting the artistic qualities specific to their respective medium. The film keeps its fidelity with the spirit of the novel but to make the film appropriate to the taste of audience, deviations, distortions, modifications, additions and deletions of some scenes, characters and events become obvious. The deviation in the film from the original can also be because of the difference in the creative mind of the writer and the director. Such modifications are inevitable and essential for the commercialization of the film and are the part and parcel of the film as different media or form of expression.

#### IV. Conclusion

This research paper examines the relationship between the novel and its film adaptation with special references to Jhumpa Lahiri's *The Namesake* and its film adaptation directed by Mira Nair. Being the adaptation, the film violates many scenes and the events of its original source, but keeps its fidelity in its thematic aspects. But such violations are obvious because film and novel are two different medias. Despite sharing a number of elements, the novel and film are two distinct and autonomous works of art, and thus their way of presentation is also different.

This research paper studies the emergence, development, the similarities as well as differences between novel and the film. Literary tradition is the source of the origin of the novel whereas the plastic art and the photography is the origin of the film. Novel is literary genre and film is artistic genre but both are young genres in their relative field. Film is the outcome of rapid scientific and technological development of 19<sup>th</sup> century. D.W.Griffith is one who established film as a work of art.

Thus, this research paper, on the one hand, exposes the close affinity that the film and the novel have. On the other, it succinctly observes those properties that make them unique artistic media. Both the art forms have in common a number of elements, such as story, characters, setting, plot, imaginative quality and so on. But these elements are presented necessarily in a different mode. That is, novel emerged from the traditions of written language and essentially is a literary genre. But the film emerged from the tradition of visual arts such as painting and photography. A reader must imaginatively construct a fictional world out of the written words while reading novel. However, in a film the viewers only perceive the already fictional world through the visual image and sound. Their dealing with time and space is also different. Most of the novels deal with the past but film always deals

with present. They differ in their language. Thus, the film and the novel are autonomous works of art though they share many things.

Fidelity is the main issue in adaptation. There is not any clear cut rule on this issue but most of the critics agree in one point that the adaptation should keep its fidelity to the spirit or the theme of the source. Film, being a separate medium with its own codes and conventions, the original work must be transformed into what is essentially a different and unique form. There is more economic consideration in the film than in the novel. In this regard, this thesis comparatively studies Jhumpa Lahiri's sprawling first novel *The Namesake* and its film adaptation penned by Sooni Taraporevala. The director has made '*The Namesake*' a sensitive, touching and interesting film that triggers an authentic collection of emotions from joy to despair with dashes of convincingly real everyday humor and chance. Nair made a film that shapes the unwieldy story of two generations of a Bengali family who come to America. She is also the filmmaker of *Monsoon Wedding*, *Vanity Fair* and other various films. In the meantime this research paper observes the elements that are transferred to the film as they are in novel and those that are adapted so as to make them fit-to the film medium. It finds that in the adaptation of the novel '*The Namesake*', all the characters, themes, plot, narrative technique setting (though there is slightly change in it) are transferred as they are in the novel.

As the film is more dramatic work of art it avoids the descriptive passage of the novel. It presents rather than describing. With the help of visual images it tells us much more than the novel. That is how it becomes possible to transform the 291 pages novel *The Namesake* into one hour forty-three minutes long film. Since the visual images and the actions instead of description and narration are dominant in the film, the narrative unfolds through images and actions. While in the novel the story is told from a particular point of view and it is consistent all over the novel, a film contains various points of view within a single film or even in a single scene. Cinematic points of view are quite different from novelistic point of view in that

the cinematic viewpoints are imposed on the images themselves with the help of camera lenses. The research paper also includes some figures from the film *The Namesake* so as to support the basic argument.

Thus, this research paper observes the distinctive artistic features of novel and film, and at the same time examines the common features they share with reference to the novel *The Namesake* and its film adaptation bearing the same name. The researcher comes up with the conclusion that the film adaptation of the novel *The Namesake* is truly faithful to the novel in respect to themes, plot, narrative styles, setting, and characters and even to dialogue. But it is inherently different work of art, having dramatic, visual and aural qualities that the novel lacks.

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