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Angrezi Agastya in Madna:
A Comparative Study of the Literary and Cinematic Texts of *English*,
August

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By
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CERTIFICATE

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Chapter One

Introduction

1.1. Introduction

Literary scholarship and film studies have had different trajectories in India. There has not yet been a concerted interdisciplinary attempt to discuss the adaptation of literary texts into films in the Indian context. Film directors presumably work according to the demands of the markets they cater to. By a detailed and critical comparison of *English, August* in both the literary and film versions, the novel *English, August: An Indian Story* (1988) by Upamanyu Chatterjee and the film *English, August* (1994) by Dev Benegal, I intend to problematize notions of adaptability in the Indian context

Film adaptation studies have been a part of the Western discourse on film since the 1950s, but in India film criticism is still struggling to find a proper space in literary studies pedagogies/curricula. Many film critics like Ravi Vasudevan, Lalitha Gopalan, Aruna Vasudev, and Ashis Nandy have explored some of the terrains of film criticism but barring a few exceptions like Satyajit Ray, no one has written on film adaptation. Thus, as far as I know, this is the first M. Phil on film adaptation in the Indian context. In the absence of a substantial corpus on film adaptation in India, I will rely on the insights of Western film critics like Christian Metz, André Bazin, and Andrew Dudley. Simultaneously I will also try to explore the differences and similarities, if any, between Western and Indian adaptation practices.

Many metaphors used in adaptation studies to understand the relationship of the cinematic text to the literary one. One of the most popular metaphors is that of the original/primary and final/secondary. At the outset, I would like to clarify that without giving any preference to either text, I will consider both the texts of *English, August* as individual artistic products. Using these as examples, I will show how adaptation is a form of “transcreation,” to use P. Lal’s formulation. Transcreation, as defined by Lal, is a creative translation of a text that produces a new version of the original work (Mukherjee 43). Some of the issues I will discuss are: is perfect translatability possible? Is it necessary? Is translation

always a loss or might gains also result in the process? Insights from Walter Benjamin and Roman Jakobson will be used to clarify some of these issues of translatability and originality.

The title "*Angrezi Agastya in Madna: A Comparative Study of the Literary and Cinematic Texts of English, August*," needs some explanation. "*Angrezi Agastya in Madna*" will compare the literary and the cinematic texts of *English, August* to see how literature and cinema respectively construct "Englishness," "India" and "Agastya/August." *English, August*, novel and film, both deal with the subject matter of the protagonist Agastya/August's coming of age, or falling apart, in the microcosm of the "India" that is Madna. "*Angrezi*," the Hindi equivalent of "English," has been strategically placed in the title of this dissertation because I intend to focus on the Indianness of English along with Englishness of India through Agastya's and August's dilemmas of belonging in India. The texts that I study dissect "August's" dilemmas with "India," and "Agastya's" dilemmas with "English," as they manifest themselves during his tenure as a member of Indian Administrative Service of the (fictitious) district of Madna. "August" (the urban-reared Agastya's nickname), is out of place in very rural, and very Indian Madna. He is, as it were, "*chutnified*" as Rushdie would say, through the different personalities and "languages" he is forced to adopt in order to belong there. Agastya's unbelonging is subject matter for both Chatterjee and Benegal, and a close comparison of their texts will turn up several revealing differences in their conceptualization of the same dilemma. I will also carefully examine the shooting and the post-production scripts of the film to understand the process of the film's making better.

I shall explore the issues involved in the production and consumption processes of both the literary and the cinematic versions. One fundamental question that will have to be addressed is: is there such a thing as a perfect adaptation or total adaptation? In all, I will attempt to arrive at a theory of cinematic adaptations of literary texts in India through a survey of various examples, and then closely study the chosen texts in particular to see generalizations may be made. Theoretical insights, Western or Indian, that prove useful will also be used.

1.2 Situating *English, August*

Upamanyu Chatterjee who belongs to the "new" generation of Indian writers in English was born in 1959 at Patna, Bihar. After studying English literature at St. Stephens, Delhi

University, he joined the Indian Administrative Service in 1983. In 1990, he lived as Writer in Residence, at the University of Kent, United Kingdom. In 1998, he was appointed Director (Languages) in the Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India. Chatterjee has written a handful of short stories including “The Assassination of Indira Gandhi.” His best-selling novel, *English, August: An Indian Story* was published in 1988 and has since been reprinted several times. His second novel, *The Last Burden*, appeared in 1993. This novel recreates life in an Indian family at the end of the twentieth century. It is a fascinating portrayal of the Indian middle class. *Mammaries of the Welfare State* was published at the end of 2000 as a sequel to *English, August*. His latest novel, *Weight Loss*, a dark comedy, was published in 2006.

The emergence of this “new” generation of Indian writers is marked by the rise of the “new” Indian novel in English in the eighties. The most significant landmark of the “new” novel is the rise of those who have been collectively called the writers of the “Stephanian school,” including Amitav Ghosh, Allan Sealy, Shashi Tharoor, Anurag Mathur and Makarand Paranjape, besides Upamanyu Chatterjee. The prose of these writers can be said to have three qualities: first, a global outlook, second, a general note of disenchantment, and finally, the English they use is *chutnified* in contrast to that of early Indian English writers. Harish Trivedi, stressing the rootless position of these “new” generation writers, comments that the St. Stephens’s “golden gate is only for the deracine to pass through, for those who have erased their antecedents” (Trivedi 7).

The global outlook, or what Leela Gandhi calls “enlightened post nationalism,” contrasts with the nativistic philosophy evident in early Indian English writings. Early writers, starting from K. S. Venkataramani (1891-1951), who wrote two novels *Murugan the Tiller* (1927) and *Kandan the Patriot* (1932), to Raja Rao (1908-2006), who wrote *Kanthapura* (1938), discovered the patriotism hidden in the native tradition instead of adhering solely to English conventions and subjects. With this discourse of nativism, these writers tried to deconstruct the voice of the early Indian English poets. Poets like Kashiprasad Ghose (1809-1873), Shoshee Chunder Dutt (1824-1885), and Michael Madhusudan Dutt (1824-1873) were fully mesmerized by the Western sensibility, and flaunted Westernized airs with their mediocre verse in English. These poets fit properly in the mould of “native elite” as suggested by Jean Paul Sartre (1905-1980) in his Preface to Franz Fanon’s (1925-1961) *The Wretched of the Earth*:

The European elite undertook to manufacture a native elite. They picked out promising adolescents; they branded them, as with a red-hot iron, with the principles of Western culture; they stuffed their mouths full with high-sounding phrases, grand glutinous words that stuck to the teeth. After a short stay in the walking lies had nothing left to say to their brothers; they only echoed. (Fanon 2)

The nativist has tried to do the reverse, and for them literature is one of the forces of resistance to “Europeanisation.” Nativism in the work of these writers is a weapon augmenting the significance and value of Indian tradition and culture for its people. Nativism is a philosophy of reestablishment or perpetuation of native cultural traits, especially in opposition to acculturation, which was marked by a new wave of Westernization among the *Bhadralok* of the Bengal, the social class *angrezi* Agastya belongs to. Nativism clearly asks the readers to go back to their roots instead of embracing the alien culture represented by the British. Bhalchandra Nemade, the Marathi writer and critic in his famous essay on “Nativism in Literature” (“*Sahityateel Deshiyata*”), quotes Ralph Linton, who in turn, had defined nativism, in his essay “Nativistic Movements,” as a strategic and symbolic mode of protest adopted by groups that feel inferior or threatened by the onslaught of more powerful or dominant cultures. Linton had identified four primary types of nativism: revivalistic magical, revivalistic rational, perpetuative magical and perpetuative rational (Linton 177).

Linton argues that in contrast to the revivalistic mode in which “extinct or moribund elements of culture gain prominence,” in the perpetuative mode, “current elements of native culture are projected vigorously” (ibid). There are yet other strategies. For instance, magical nativism generally originates with an individual who takes the role of a prophet, and leans toward the supernatural, with apocalyptic and millennial aspects, while rational nativism, Linton shows, is different, mainly in motivation – “the usage is psychological, not magical” and is aimed at bringing back a happier, easier time during a period of frustration in society” (ibid). These ideas are very useful in helping us understand the strategies of early Indian writers writing in English, because a number of them were using several of these nativistic strategies, using their affirmation of their own culture as a political weapon to create an alternative to English political and cultural hegemony.

In contrast to the nativism of the early writers of the Indian novel in English, “new” generation writers are experiment with “enlightened postnationalism.” Drawing on Edward Said’s subsequent works, Leela Gandhi offers a vision of an “enlightened postnationalism” that is analogous to post-exilic positionality in that it accounts for one’s detachment from the country of origin. The prefix “post” here suggests “cognitive mastery – a detached perspective or vantage point from which it is possible to discern and to name the completed and clear shape of the past” (Gandhi 173). Such detachment allows for a lucid national consciousness, which is not nationalism (124); it also clears a space for postnational and post-ethnic voices. Writers of the “new” generation, rather than focusing on one specific locale like R. K. Narayan’s Malgudi or Krishnaswamy Nagarajan’s Coromandel Coast of the *Chronicles of Kedaram*, meander from one place to another, exhibiting their detachment from place. For instance, the story of Amitav Ghosh’s *The Shadow Lines* ambles between Calcutta, Delhi, London, Dhaka, Africa and Sri Lanka. Upamanyu Chatterjee’s *English, August* meanders between Madna, Delhi, Darjeeling, and Calcutta.

The second feature of the “new” writers of Indian English is disenchantment often represented through sexual fantasy. The reason for the use of voyeuristic paraphernalia as represented in *English, August* through breast ogling scenes is the disenchantment that has invaded the psyche of these writers. Sex in the novels of these writers changes from a “private” metaphor of physical attraction to a “public” symbol of disenchantment. This feeling of disillusionment abundant in these writers can be discussed in the context of Sigmund Freud’s definition of mourning and melancholia. The process of mourning and melancholia as defined by Freud is:

In mourning we found that the inhibition and loss of interest are fully accounted for by the work of mourning in which the ego is absorbed. In melancholia, the unknown loss will result in a similar internal work and will therefore be responsible for the melancholic inhibition. The difference is that the inhibition of the melancholic seems puzzling to us because we cannot see what it is that is absorbing him so entirely....In mourning it is the world which become poor and empty; in melancholia it is the ego itself. (Freud 269)

This state of dislocation as represented in the “new” writers in Indian English is the result of intense melancholia. Unlike the mourning, where the object of pain is visible, in melancholia

object of pain becomes invisible. Thus in contrast to the early writers, who were mourning for nativism or decolonization, the sensibility of these “new” writers is divided between conventional Indian ideals and Western mores leading to the invisibility of the object of pain. For instance in *English, August*, Agastya’s disenchanted state throughout the novel is the result of untraceability of the object of pain. Chatterjee presents a large variety of objects of pain for the reader to choose from in *English, August* without any final consensus. Some of these objects, which presumably emptied the “ego” of Agastya, are Madna, mosquitoes, Indian Administrative Service, food, heat, lack of women.

The third and the last feature of “new” Indian writers in English is *chutnified* English. Unlike the early writers of Indian English novel who were using English language with an Indian idiom, the “new” writers in English are using Queen’s English hybridized with native Indian languages. The early writers tried to fashion an Indian English which included elements of the “vernacular” through “translation” into English. The phrases, figures of speech, words, were Indian and symbolized Indian context and “Indianness,” and were an Indian presence in the English language. In other words, in this initial phase Indian writing in English vernacularises the English language. *Chutnified* or *khichdi* English that started with Govinddas Vishnoodas Desani (*All About H. Hatterr*) reached new heights with the linguistic endeavors of Salman Rushdie. This new language has been embraced by Stephanian school of writers. *Chutnified* English is different from the Indian idiom utilized by early Indian writers in English. In *chutnified* English, the words are incorporated from various languages like Urdu, Hindi but the “idiom” of the language remains English only. By idiom, I mean that the language remains no more a translated version of local language into English but it serves as a testimony to the excellence of “standard” English used by the local writer. To use Anurag Mathur’s words:

What seems very much in common among the Stephanian novels is the felicity with words, an obvious if not arrogance in the use of the language, and often an outsider’s perspective – on life, people and events in India. To paraphrase what was said about a British viceroy to India, they are writings by ‘a superior person.’
(Mathur 25)

Most of the Stephanian writers belong to the upper echelons of society and can lay claim to the vantage point of affluence. Upamanyu Chatterjee’s writing is marked by all these attributes – a

global positioning with a post-nationalistic political philosophy, the use of sex as a disenchantment metaphor, and finally, the use of *chutnified* English.

1.3. Dev Benegal: Bridging the Gap between Mainstream and Art Cinema

Dev Benegal belongs to what can be called the second-generation of “art” film-makers in India, a generation in which he has played a pioneering role. He seems to have bridged the gap between what used to be designated as the “Mainstream” and “Art” sections of Indian cinema. I shall refer to Benegal’s style as “popart” in that he uses elements from both the “popular” and “art” schools of film-making. Benegal’s youth (he was born in 1960) has probably helped him to make the crossover, given that “art” cinema has slowly but surely lost currency among audiences now. A brief history of cinema in India is necessary before we can assess Benegal’s contribution.

The Lumière brothers’ film *Arrival of a Train at a Ciotat Station* was shown in Bombay on July 7, 1896, just six months after it was projected on a screen in France. In 1901, a Marathi photographer from Bombay Sakharam Bhatvadekar made his own newsreel, *The Return of Wrangler Paranjpye to India*, echoing national sentiments, kick-starting an entire industry. *Raja Harishchandra* (1913), the first full-length feature, by Dadasaheb Phalke, marks the official birth of the industry. Early Indian cinema had its origins in Urdu-Parsi theatre, which used to be filmed and exhibited in halls like Madan Theatre of Kolkata. These “films” reflected the theatre of those days, which focused on classic epics, mythologicals, and Parsi historicals, with lively folk music and dance traditions.

Thus, though cinema technology came from the West, the esthetic principles of Indian cinema derive from its own theater. Even today, the average Indian film adheres in some measure to the tenets outlined by Bharata in his classic treatise on theater, the *Natyashastra* (second century B.C.). Bharata’s *Rasa* theory states that dramatic action should enfold song and dance, conflict, and a happy or redemptive ending. The mainstream or masala film even today exemplifies these four qualities of dramatic action, song-dance sequences, conflict of good and evil and finally, the happy ending with the victory of the good. These *masala* films cheerfully toss in several genres – romance, melodrama, comedy, spectacle, action, adventure – according to the permutation and combination of these four qualities. They are characterized by a *joie de vivre*, a celebratory attitude towards life, despite all the knocks of destiny. The pining of the

masses belonging to the lower strata of the society for an escapist entertainment finds its voice in the mainstream cinema of Bollywood.

Many Indian directors find the term “Bollywood” to address Indian movie experience offensive. The reason is clearly stated by Meenakshi Shedde, a well-known Bollywood critic, when she writes that “in contrast to the Hollywood musical, a specific genre that essentially evolved as an antidote to the great Depression of 1929, the Indian musical – and dancical – is generic, predates the Hollywood musical and grew independently from its own cultural roots” (Shedde 25).

The latter half of the 1970s marked the inception of “New Indian Cinema,” or what is now popularly known as art cinema. Directors like Satyajit Ray (1921-1992), Ritwik Ghatak (1925-1976), and Mrinal Sen (1923-) refused to follow the aesthetic yardsticks of commercial and mainstream cinema of the 1960s and 1970s. Dissatisfied with the fantastical or melodramatic plots of mainstream cinema, with their superficial psychological portrayal of characters, and idealization of post-Independence India, these directors carved realistic plots with in-depth psychological portrayal of characters, and which also took an anti-establishment stance towards the social and political systems of society. In addition, these films also engaged explicitly with sexuality, in contrast to the implied scenes in commercial cinema. Further, these films also eschewed the use of songs and dances, thus saving more time for the development of the plot.

However, paradoxically, as Aruna Vasudev notes in *The New Indian Cinema*, she writes that “this new movement was born of a governmental decision and not from the impetus of filmmakers rebelling against the existing popular cinema” (Vasudev 2). In this connection the role played by Film Societies in the heyday of the Film Society Movement, the Pune and Television Institute, National Film Archives and International Film Festivals is important. Initially, the Film Finance Corporation, later re-designated as National Film Development Corporation (NFDC), and the National Film Awards also promoted art cinema, by funding the people with ideas and skills – the latter was not always obvious – to help them create in celluloid.

But despite these paradoxes, this art cinema did represent a radical break with the past. Coinciding with a revolution in the structures of finance and technical means of production, this

New Indian Cinema led to such a profound renewal of cinematic forms and practices that the very roles hitherto assigned to cinema had to be redefined.

Rarely has an aesthetic movement been so innovative and so literary, creating a space in which experimentation with numerous cinematographic forms was made possible. The films produced ranged from those that are most abstruse, demanding a high level of understanding from the viewer, to those which revived a commercial cinema reminiscent of the cinema of quality of the 1950s, films with a sociological rather than an aesthetic intent. Changes in art cinema were happening on two levels: artistic and economic.

On the artistic level, unlike popular cinema, art cinema was almost always concerned with the plight of the common man. The heroes are not supermen with meta-texts like *Mahabharata* and *Ramayana* providing the background for their extraordinary ambition, men who have to rise from poverty, tame the rich girl and fight the evil landlord. The heroes of art cinema are ordinary men and women acting under the pressures of ordinary living, and these heroes are individualized as the characters no longer have to represent icons of society like the "suffering wife" or the "evil mother-in-law" or the "angry young man". The form of these films is usually neo-realistic, though there is great variety in the films of different directors. Art cinema also saw an awakening in regional cinema with the trend going local rather than global. Girish Karnad, who has made his influence widely felt both in theater and cinema, was at the forefront of the Kannada "New Wave." Further south, in Kerala, Adoor Gopalakrishnan, who also began as a theater personality, tackled bold subjects like feudal life in Kerala and love in jail through his films *Elippathayam* (The Rat Trap) and *Mathilukal* (Walls) respectively. Unlike the directors of the past who underwent a long technical apprenticeship with an established director, art cinema directors received their training of cinema in a film school.

In terms of economics, art cinema had small budgets, small crews, shorter time of shooting, non-professional (or non-star) actors, natural settings, which were often outdoors and natural lighting, instead of expensive sets. These express sufficiently the ways in which the new cinema emancipated film from the earlier set of corporate codes and work habits. What is more, as a result of these changed conditions, film-making became more accessible to new comers.

Benegal's first feature *English, August* was an instant hit as it catered to the fantasies of Generation X and cultural critics simultaneously with a *chutnification* of the commercial cinema

with the art cinema. A humorous and oblique study of bureaucracy and the Indian Generation X, *English, August* won the Silver Grand Prix and the Gilberto Martinez Solares prize for the Best First Film at the Festival des 3 continents, Nantes and the Special Jury Award at the Torino International Film Festival. *English, August* became the first Indian independent film to be acquired by Twentieth Century Fox and became a theatrical success in the country.

Benegal's second feature film *Split Wide Open* gives a microcosmic version of the Fourth World War, in the form of water wars in Bombay and looks at repressed sexuality in modern India and how our notions of morality are challenged when sex and poverty collide. The Official Selection at the Venice International Film Festival, the film also won the Grand Prix at the Turnhout, Belgium International Film Festival 2000, the Best Actor and Special Jury Award at the Singapore International Film Festival 2000. It was again distributed by Twentieth Century Fox in a major nationwide release across India. The film has become the top three highest grossing art house films in India. His screenplay for *Ravan & Eddie* was the first Indian script to be selected for the famous eQuinoxe script workshops in France. *Road, Movie* his new screenplay is an official selection in the Atelier du Cannes section of the Cannes International Film Festival, 2006. Benegal's films are set in contemporary India. The power of his films has been their humor, his characters and his unique style combining Indian narrative and western genre. His films focus on the hybridity of the culture and how this hybridity is rooted in the day to day undertakings of life.

1.4. New Canons and Anti-canons

In the earlier part of the chapter, I outlined how Bollywood is categorized in two kinds of cinema. One is called mainstream that privileges four rules based on Bharata's *Natyashastra*, and the other is art cinema, a politically generated cinema. Mainstream cinema is often thought of as establishing patriarchal order through the instrument of the male gaze. The conditions of screening (the darkened room) and the narrative conventions of mainstream cinema essentially make the film viewer a voyeur. Phil Powrie and Keith Reader outline the basic narrative conventions of the mainstream cinema: first, continuity editing is used as a means of effacing the methods of production, and second, actors do not generally, while speaking, directly address the

camera thus making the cinema a store house of escapist fantasy where a spectator becomes a fugitive running away from his day to day social problem (Powrie 27).

In opposition to the escapist idiom is an art cinema that started as a reaction to bourgeois aesthetics that favours escapism to actual engagement with real issues. But though it started as a cinema for the masses, by and by, art cinema has become so technical and eclectic that the people for whom it was created decided to avoid it because of its techno-elitist jargonized quality.

Benegal's cinema bridges the gap that has emerged between the existing categories, creating a "new" cinema, which I shall refer to as "pop-art" cinema. On the one hand, through the rejection of continuous shots, Benegal debunks the escapism associated with the mainstream cinema – he let the characters communicate directly with the camera, thus breaking the illusion of seamless "realism" as in the last scene of *English, August*, where the characters summarise their viewpoints on Agastya. On the other hand, his use of melodramatic scenes and the incorporation of sexual fantasy through masturbation scenes, he is also taking a dig at the art cinema that has become obsolete because of its serious realistic objectivity.

Furthermore, unlike Govind Nihalani or Mrinal Sen, who believed in instructing the audience through the use of satire, Benegal uses the concept of pastiche in a postmodern sense. Well-known academic Fredric Jameson defines pastiche in a postmodern sense as "blank parody" (Jameson 21), especially with reference to the postmodern parodic practices of self-reflexivity and intertextuality. By this is meant that rather than being a jocular but still respectful imitation of another style, pastiche in the postmodern era has become a "dead language," without any political or historical content, and so has also become unable to satirize in any effective way. Where pastiche used to be a humorous literary style, it has, in postmodernism, become "devoid of laughter" (22). First, pastiche, as used by Benegal in *English August*, gives him the freedom to not preach to or instruct the audience. Second, Benegal uses pastiche as a experimental cinematic device whereby he can pay homage to another filmmaker's style and use of cinematography, including camera angles, lighting, and *mise en scène*: *English August's* ending, for instance, seems to be a pastiche of Stanley Donen's *Blame it on Rio* (1984) and the discontinuous shots strategy adopted by Benegal resembles the style of Godard.

If on the one hand Benegal negates the demerits of commercial cinema and art cinema, then on the other he remakes the merits associated with them. For instance, Benegal understands the gravity of the national metaphor of “unity in diversity”, and tries to manifest it in the polyphony of various languages and different dialects – English, Hindi, and Telugu. Equally important are his “artistic” story-telling skills, a trait usually found in the art cinema: the capacity to create credible characters (human or otherwise, like Dadru, the frog) and cultures, skilful scene-setting, mastery of pace and timing, and power of imagination.

The novel also creates a new “canon” for the Indian novel in English, fashioning a new idiom for Indian writing in English through a pastiche of conventional novels in English. Madna itself is a cleverly-designed pastiche of R. K. Narayan’s Malgudi and, in turn, of his theme of nativism. Narayan created Malgudi as a utopia because of the inhabitants’ innate ability to relish the nativistic qualities present in Malgudi while Chatterjee portrays Madna as a dystopia because of the inability of the characters like Mohan Gandhi and Agastya to enjoy the nativistic tendencies of Madna.

Another point of departure from the conventional Indian novel in English is in the use of language. Upamanyu Chatterjee uses language in a manner similar to Rushdie’s play with words and his style, which is “robustly extroverted, rejecting nuance, delicacy and inwardness for multiplicity ... and moreover, the propensity of his imagination towards magic, fairy tales and fantasy, and the apparent non-linearity of his narratives – all these are seen to be emblematic of a non-Western mode of discourse, of apprehension, that is at once contemporaneously post-colonial and anciently, inescapably Indian,” says Amit Chaudhuri (xxv). Throughout the novel, his purpose is to make the audience hear the polyphony of linguistic instruments as he *chutnifies* Indian English in his turn.

Chatterjee flouts the advice of first generation Indian writers in English who believed that writers should concentrate on great action and great characters. Even without creating either great characters or great action, Chatterjee manages to construct the idiom of great nation by throwing light on the real face of the creators of the Independent nation that is the Indian Administrative Service (IAS) and its officers. Through the metaphor of IAS, Chatterjee also highlights on the role of *Bhadralok* community. Indian English critic M. Prabha discussing the connection between the *Bhadralok* and IAS writes:

Bhadralok knowledge of English literature, their espousal of Christianity, their connections with the British and their voyages to England facilitated their grabbing the plums of office as well as domination of the sociocultural scene. Out of these prevailing circumstances was born the Indian Civil Service some years later. A mere glance at the gazettes of yore [as Benegal shows in the movie] will reveal the preponderance of '*bhadralok*' that graced thus august service. (Prabha 6-7)

The novel by showing IAS Agastya's father as the former Governor of Calcutta makes the IAS as hereditary tradition and thus questions the eligibility criteria required to be an IAS.

Thus, in this section, I have shown how the new anti-canons are created. Chatterjee's cult novel rejects the conventional canon of Indian writing in English and becomes one of the pioneers of the new canon which is known as "new" Indian novel in English. Benegal's cinema rejects the existing canons of "mainstream cinema" and "art cinema" and creates a blend of the mainstream cinema and art cinema.

1.5. Cinematic Adaptations: Theoretical Perspectives

Film adaptation is marked by a desire to capture the "quintessence" of the literary text without sacrificing its "spirit." Depending on the degree of "quintessence" captured by an adapted text, Michael Klein and Gillian Parker identify three types of adaptation: first, "most films of classic novels attempt to give the impression of being faithful that is literal, translations"; their second category "retains the core of the structure of the narrative while significantly re-interpreting or in some cases de-constructing the source text"; and the third "regards the source merely as raw material, as simply the occasion for an original work" (Klein 9-10). Discussing the deconstructive nature of adaptation as represented in Klein's second category, Keith Cohen writes:

Adaptation is a truly artistic feat only when the new version carries with it a hidden criticism of its model, or at least renders implicit (through the process we should call "deconstruction") certain key contradictions implanted or glossed over in the original ... the adaptations must subvert its original, perform a double and

paradoxical job of masking and unveiling its source, or else the pleasure it provides will be nothing more than that of seeing words changed into images. (Cohen 245)

The subversive adaptation principle of Cohen brings one to the inevitable question of fidelity. Is it a foolish expectation or a valid one? Dudley Andrew called for a moratorium on criticism that narrowly applies the “discourse of fidelity” (Andrew 51). Fidelity of the film to the original work is always associated with a bunch of platitudes – how each film needs to function as an autonomous artwork, how fidelity to the spirit rather than to the letter is important, about the inevitability and even necessity of change from one medium to another in the age of technological reproduction. Alexander Payne, a well known director of film adaptations of *Election*, *About Schmidt* and *Sideways*, divulges his views on fidelity by recalling about his “screenwriting professor at UCLA used to ask us, “When adapting a piece of literature, what do you owe the original writer?” We were trained to call out in unison, “Nothing!” Yes, one is adapting because one admires the original, but one is creating a piece of cinema, adapting often means marauding” (Lopate 39). The people who pine for the “literal translation” of the novel into the film in opposition to Payne’s views of “marauding” should embrace the logic given by Tim Krabbé in the name of fidelity:

If you liked the book, don’t see the film. Why let the images that the words stirred up be overruled by some director? No matter how painstakingly a writer describes his heroine, each reader sees her differently.... As the [Truffaut’s] goat said after it had eaten a few reels of film, “I like the book better” The book is always better – but why? Perhaps films cost more and must cater to a wider audience. (37)

Presently one can see how the question of fidelity for a director has become less a question of ideology than of personal preference.

The cinematic terminology is diverse from the literary parlance. A system of social, political and cultural credence has to be adopted to promote the politics of each of the media – the narrative and the cinematic. This adoption of literary paraphernalia (plot, jargon) leads to a process of secondary conception where a director becomes a surrogate mother who conceives the future of the child (narrative) as he brings it up. The whole process of adaptation presupposes certain basic alterations of both the transmitting and receiving intentions of the concerned

agencies. By definition itself, adaptation is moving one step away from the original text as it does not mark the replication of the original text but it “re-presents” it. It gets all the more complicated if there is a change in the nature of the text itself as the literariness of the text gets transformed into the audio-visual mode. The literary text involves in a “symbolic” communication between the author and the reader while in audio-visual text “iconic and indexical signs predominate.” C. S. Peirce brought out the difference between the icon, index and symbol:

An icon is a sign which represents an object mainly by its similarity to it.... An index is a sign that points to another object; in other words, it suggests an existential bond between itself and its object ... the symbol can only be understood by convention; it does not resemble its object, nor possess any bond.
(Giddings 5)

The process of adaptation, with its pros and cons, is not entirely different from the process of translation. Even if there is no literal translation that takes place during the process of adaptation, yet there is a translation that takes place as one moves from the author of a literary text to the auteur of an audio-visual text. Even if one considers that both are same as in some odd examples, yet there has to be this basic translation of language: from written words to an audio-visual mode. At several places one encounters this hugely overrated assumption that something is inevitably lost during translation and that is precisely the reason why translated piece of work is generally considered to be inferior in comparison with the original. However, as one observes over here that something might be lost in the process of translation, yet there is inevitably a gain through it.

Adaptation, by its very definition, suggests a reworking of the narrative strategies (that include change of location, characterization, and language) to accommodate the thematic vision of the writer in a different medium, and perhaps a different context. Thus one tends to think that adaptation is actually a translation of same thoughts and ideas through different narrative strategies.

Audio-visual adaptations of literary texts have a very respectable ancestry in Indian cinema, as some of the oldest films, e.g., *Raja Harishchandra*, and some of the most popular TV soaps, e.g., *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata*, have been adaptations of “texts” – mythical and

culturally significant literary texts, even if orally preserved. A number of these adaptations have been great commercial successes, like *Guide* (1965) from R. K. Narayan's novel of the same name, or *Devdas* (2002) based on Sarat Chandra Chatterjee. Others have had more niche audiences, like *The Namesake* (2006) by Mira Nair based on Jhumpa Lahiri, *Anita and Me* (2002) by Metin Huseyin based on Meera Syal, James Ivory's *Heat and Dust* (1983) from Ruth Jhabvala's book, all of them are English-language adaptations of texts in English.

Other well-known adaptations in Bollywood are:

Movie	Literary Text	Author	Auteur (Director)
<i>Devdas</i> (1936)	<i>Devdas</i>	Sarat Chandra Chatterjee	P. C. Barua
<i>Parineeta</i> (1953)	<i>Parineeta</i>	Sarat Chandra Chatterjee	Bimal Roy
<i>Gaban</i> (1966)	<i>Gaban</i>	Munshi Premchand	Krishan Chopra and Hrishikesh Mukherjee
<i>Shatranj Ke Khiladi</i> (1977)	"Shatranj Ke Khiladi"	Munshi Premchand	Satyajit Ray
<i>Junoon</i> (1978)	<i>A Flight of Pigeons</i>	Ruskin Bond	Shyam Benegal
<i>Aakrosh</i> (1980)	<i>Little Eyolf</i>	Henrik Ibsen	Govind Nihalani
<i>Man Pasand</i> (1980)	<i>Pygmalion</i>	George Bernard Shaw	Basu Chatterjee
<i>Sadgati</i> (1981)	"Sadgati"	Munshi Premchand	Satyajit Ray
<i>Umrao Jaan</i> (1981)	<i>Umrao Jaan</i>	Mirza Muhammad	Muzaffar Ali

		Hadi Ruswa	
<i>Angoor</i> (1982)	<i>Comedy of Errors</i>	William Shakespeare	Sampoorn Singh
<i>Tamas</i> (1986)	<i>Tamas</i>	Bhisham Sahni	Govind Nihalani
<i>Rukmavati Ki Haveli</i> (1991)	<i>The House of Bernarda Alba</i>	Federico Garcia Lorca	Govind Nihalani
<i>Rudaali</i> (1993)	<i>Rudaali</i>	Mahasweta Devi	Kalpana Lazmi
<i>Suraj Ka Satvan Ghoda</i> (1993)	<i>Suraj Ka Satvan Ghoda</i>	Dharmvir Bharati	Shyam Benegal
<i>Hazaar Chaurasi Ki Maa</i> (1997)	<i>Hazaar Chaurasi Ki Maa</i>	Mahasweta Devi	Govind Nihalani
<i>Train to Pakistan</i> (1998)	<i>Train to Pakistan</i>	Khuswant Singh	Pamela Rooks
<i>Maqbool</i> (2003)	<i>Macbeth</i>	William Shakespeare	Vishal Bhardawaj
<i>Pinjar</i> (2003)	<i>Pinjar</i>	Amrita Pritam	Chandra Prakash Dwivedi
<i>Bride and Prejudice</i> (2004)	<i>Pride and Prejudice</i>	Jane Austen	Gurinder Chadha
<i>Raincoat</i> (2004)	"The Gift of the Magi"	O. Henry	Rituparno Ghosh
<i>Parineeta</i> (2005)	<i>Parineeta</i>	Sarat Chandra Chatterjee	Pradeep Sarkar

<i>Omkaara</i> (2006)	<i>Othello</i>	William Shakespeare	Vishal Bharadwaj
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From among these, I will take into account three recent adaptations in Bollywood of literary texts into films. With the help of these three adaptations, I will try to distinguish between art and mainstream cinema adaptations in India. Through this comparison, I will also underline the reasons for choosing *English, August*.

Art films, by and large, deal with political themes explicitly or implicitly, by depicting how characters grapple with the consequences of the political stances they make or are forced to make. To represent art cinema, I have chosen *Hazaar Chaurasi Ki Maa* (Mother of 1084) by Mahasweta Devi, adapted by Govind Nihalani (*Hazaar Chaurasi Ki Maa*, 1997). *Parineeta* by Sarat Chandra Chattopadhyay, directed by Pradeep Sarkar (2005), and *Othello* by William Shakespeare directed by Vishal Bharadwaj (*Omkaara*, 2006) will represent mainstream cinematic adaptations, and as will be evident here, these films adhere to the ground rules of their genre, and are directed more towards commercial box-office success than to artistic integrity.

In *Hazaar Chaurasi Ki Maa*, Govind Nihalani, an important figure of the New Cinema movement in India, focuses on the psychological implications of political actions in a drama set in Calcutta in 1972, when the whole State of Bengal was swept by the militant leftist movement known as the “Naxalbari Movement.” The movie is one of the landmarks in art cinema as it has all the qualities of what is thought to be art cinema.

Through its “realistic” understanding of a society marred by poverty and subjugation of the poor by the rich, the film candidly presents the need of politically charged human beings embracing Naxalism. The novel by Mahasweta Devi also highlights the same need. So the director takes on the philosophy of the writer without deconstructing it. Art cinema directors like Mrinal Sen, Ritwik Ghatak and Govind Nihalani are marked by their political affiliation to the Leftist groups. Thus, the movie is a socialist investigation into the political functioning of the bourgeois society that has killed the Naxalite son of Sujata, the female protagonist. The use of the number 1084 in place of the name of the son is suggestive of the commodification of the human in the wake of utilitarian principles practised by the bourgeois society. Hence the film becomes a sociological adaptation of the novel.

The film proceeds on a slow and reflective pace to imitate the conversational approach of the novel, which is of such a length that all characters gradually open their minds and hearts to viewers regarding their lamentable family loss in particular, and the state of their society, in general. This conversational mode is typical of the art cinema. The purpose behind the use of the conversationalist mode is to jolt the masses out of their escapist fantasies in opposition to what happens in the commercial cinema.

The scene at the Chatterjee House celebrating the engagement of Bratti's sister on the eve of his second death anniversary is the zenith of the satire. The dialogue narrated by Sujata in the background shows the intense condition of her state of mind. The satire engages itself to show the naked reality of the capitalist system and becomes extremely critical against the attitudes of the elite class.

There is not a trace of melodrama, a device commonly utilized by commercial cinema. Generally, art cinema works on the formula of realism as a result the art directors try to alienate themselves from melodramatic tendencies prevalent in mainstream cinema. This avoidance of melodrama and devotion towards realism is the result of art cinema's philosophy of seeking politically correct stances. Thus, the movie clearly presents the same realistic perspective as the use of number 1084 instead of the name Bratti, which is present in the novel without adding a bit of melodrama.

The bane of many filmed novels is the episodic that hurrying-along effort to cram in so many scenes from the book that high points get flattened and details blur. Nihalani, however, offers extensive coverage to the need of socialist philosophy in the wake of exploitative bourgeois ideals. This coverage is in-depth. Every shot highlights the need of socialism.

Nevertheless, the movie becomes an adaptation of the philosophy of socialism embraced by the writer Mahasweta Devi and Bratti without any extensive analysis of the characters. All these characteristics – political engagement, a conversational or expository approach, marked by satire, the avoidance of melodrama, and finally, a gritty realism – are hallmarks of parallel or art cinema in India, and in this movie, help indicate the director's point of view. We understand, because of these strategies, his affinity and sympathy with the ideological standpoints of the novel, which are communicated through his deployment of the story.



Parineeta is, on the other hand, a Bollywood “big-budget” musical adaptation of the 1914 Bengali novel by Sarat Chandra Chattopadhyay. It is directed by Pradeep Sarkar, based upon a screenplay by Vidhu Vinod Chopra. Sarkar unlike Chattopadhyay has set his film in the Calcutta of 1960s, because at first, in this age of flyovers, multiplex cinemas and extravagant shopping malls, it’s next to impossible to recreate the Calcutta of 1914 and secondly, the Indian masses whether in the country or abroad will find difficult to relate to the Calcutta of 1914. Is this change of the decade suggestive of commercial aspect of cinema as Sarkar is thought to be inspired by the resounding success of Sanjay Leela Bhansali’s *Devdas* (2002) at the box office?

Furthermore, the movie uses various tools to titillate the audience. Not only does Sarkar introduce an item number featuring yesteryears star Rekha, of *Umrao Jaan* fame, but he also goes one step further to defuse some of the tension in the novel by narrowing the age-differenece between the main characters, as audiences today are unlikely to be sympathetic to a fifteen-year gap in age between the characters. Also, Lalita is older in the film than she is in the book, another strategic refusal to upset audiences with an “under-age” and thus dangerous sexuality. Audiences are more likely to accept a sexual chemistry between characters in the same age group than they will if the characters belong almost to different generations, thus raising questions whose answers cannot in any way be “popular” with large audiences.

Moreover, the movie employs songs, which of course, are absent in the novel. The songs pretend to add Bengali cultural sensibility as they explore the hidden emotions within the subconscious of the actors though in reality they infuse melodramatic strains, which seem to be a part and parcel of any mainstream film. The transformation of Shekhar from lawyer (in the text) to guitarist (in the movie) is to show how Chopra gives in to the demand of the commercial market rather than the artistic integrity one may expect from the director of an adapted film version.

Omkara is also, like *Parineeta*, a big-budget Bollywood film, which employs, in Shakespearean skin the Bollywood masala formulas for catering to the box-office. But regardless, it adapts Othello bringing it home to the badlands of India’s Hindi-speaking hinterland. The valiant moor of the Shakespeare’s play becomes a *baahubali* (political enforcer). The arguable greatness of the movie lies only in “popularizing” Shakespeare by recreating the idiom of “jealousy” that is the hamartia of Othello / *Omkara*.

The “classical language” of the bard is indigenized into the Hindi of the Meerut region – cow-belt Hindi devoid of poetry, punctured with (unimaginative) expletives. But ultimately, one is forced to ask why he does this. Oliver Parker, who adapted Shakespeare’s *Othello*, says that “the poetry, the stylization should be embraced and reflected in the film. Otherwise, why do Shakespeare in the first place?” (Lucia 52) One should ask the same question of Bharadwaj because his film completely lacks the artistic felicity of Shakespeare and does not attempt to create it either. So why do Shakespeare? Bharadwaj pretends to use the idiom of the new found discourse of expletives to show the heinous world of political gangsters, but covertly he proposes to address the slum dwellers that form mainstream cinema. These slum dwellers can make or unmake a movie as noted by Ashis Nandy in his book *The Secret Politics of Our Desires*. This tool of expletives to attract the attention of the lower strata backfired, as it made it difficult to market the film in the family cinema niche, thus hampering the film’s box-office reach.

However, the film’s casting is a deliberate attempt at wooing this same box-office. It is star-studded, to say the least, as the bill of fare includes Saif Ali Khan, Ajay Devgan, Kareena Kapoor, Bipasha Basu, and Vivek Oberoi, in addition to actors like Konkana Sen who are ostensibly more “arty.” But despite these pseudo-arty presences, the film is wooing assiduously the mainstream audience, slum-dwelling or otherwise, with its heavy-duty item numbers, filmed around the thrusting body of Bipasha Basu.

Baz Luhrmann, one of the Shakespearean directors discussing adaptations tells that his philosophy in adapting Shakespeare for the screen is to reveal “Shakespeare’s lyrical, romantic, sweet, sexy, musical, violent, rude, rough, rowdy, rambunctious storytelling through his richly invented language” (48). Luhrmann’s *Romeo and Juliet* had as Romeo the then up-and-coming boy-hero Leonardo DiCaprio, and it had songs aplenty, but its narrativisation of the Shakespearean story was less frivolous, less unbalanced and less gimmicky than Bharadwaj’s. The latter’s film fails if we judge him on the basis of Luhrmann’s criteria, which are rather reasonable, as an adaptation, though it is less displeasing if we evaluate it as just another movie, with no comparisons to any source text. Bharadwaj frivolous attitude towards his interpretation of Shakespeare cuts down to a baseless commercial venture without any artistic spirit.

Most adaptations in India seem to belong exclusively to any one category, mainstream or art. *English, August* is an exception to the rule, and spans the divide, embracing both sets of qualities. It is low-budget, and allows careful development of mental processes of characters, using irony and pastiche, in true art cinema style. At the same time, it has commercial aspirations, explores melodrama and some of its scenes seem full of titillations, in true mainstream fashion. This intermingling of attributes gives this film a unique status and it has pioneered a new tradition in Bollywood resulting in movies like *Mumbai Matinee* (2003) and *Jhankar Beats* (2003).

Besides, the hybrid status of *English, August*, the other factors that led me go for *English, August* are:

English, August is an anti-canonical text, not like *Guide*, not even like *Flight of Pigeons* or *Train to Pakistan* - it is not about a social crisis or catastrophe. So the film made out of it is not a family viewing film about an individual finding herself. But it is a film about a national problem that is as yet unnoticed, not like partition, visible to everyone, but all pervasive and thus invisible.

R. K. Narayan, Ruskin Bond, and Khushwant Singh have been writing very realistically, and thus there are fewer obvious challenges in transcreating their texts in film. However, with *English, August*, there are so many technical and stylistical requirements because of Chatterjee's style itself. That necessitates a film that is realistic, because of the subject matter, but at the same time, a film that uses techniques beyond realism because of the nature of the treatment of the subject, and also because some of the subject matter - the travails of consciousness - cannot be treated realistically alone because of how Chatterjee has conceived his character. So Devdas's drinking can serve as a metaphor for his collapse, but Agastya doesn't have the luxury of collapse in the first place, and then again, he is collapsing in a different way so drink alone cannot serve.

English, August is the only post-modern or non-realistic adaptation from among the entire brood. It is one of the very few "arty" type films unfunded by the government and independently made by Benegal. So Dev Benegal follows the same trajectory, which was once followed by Satyajit Ray. *English, August* uses non-realistic elements in its shooting strategy where films like *Rukmavati Ki Haveli* and *Suraj Ka Satvan Ghoda* use expressionistic content - like the

apocalyptic horse in *Suraj Ka Satvan Ghoda* or the darkness of the *haveli* even at noon in *Rukmavati Ki Haveli*. But *English, August* is using techniques that are very popular in the age of technological reproduction like the kind of animation it uses is seen in say, *Ally McBeal* or in American sitcoms. So it is also incorporating "mainstream" American techniques into Indian non-mainstream cinema. Benegal though this polygamous use of technique creates an authentic urban idiom for an authentic urban disaffection text.

Thus, as is evident from the above, *English, August* is a watershed for different reasons, in the history of cinematic adaptations of literary texts. Its artistic merits coupled with its commercial viability have made it a phenomenon worth analyzing in its own regard. Further, very few adapted texts have had the blessings of their authors for the film version. Dev Benegal, having received Chatterjee's active cooperation, thus stands in a special place all by himself, and one wonders what this means for his film version. What are the merits or otherwise of such active collaborations? Do they make for better films?

The second chapter "Transformation" discusses cinematic theories of adaptation in respect to the texts of *English, August*. Here, I will highlight differences in narratorial voice, time mechanism and plot techniques in the two versions. In order to capture the nuances of this transformation, rather than confining myself to just a bald examination of the differences between novel and film, I will analyze the intermediate categories of the shooting script and the post-production script as well.

Once the structural aspects of the transformation have been documented, I shall focus on thematic concerns in the third chapter "Comparison," and shall examine how film and novel respectively treat the same content. Agastya's solipsistic relationship with India / Madna will come in for analysis, as shall the nature of India itself in the wake of departure of the British. This chapter will try to provide an insightful account of Agastya's penile/existentialist monologues, whereby I will try to show how the protagonist is a sheer function of his penis, rather than vice versa. I will also study how Indian adaptations function in terms of Western theoretical categories, and I shall also try to list the areas in which Western adaptations differ from Indian ones.

In the last chapter, I will judge the efficacy of the film in terms of its ability to function according to the paradigms charted out in the previous chapter. Does Indian cinema have a

formula for adaptations? Can we arrive at any generalizations? I argue that the death of “New Wave” led Benegal to embrace the techniques of both mainstream and art cinema for *English, August*. This chapter will also offer a detailed account of the conclusions and findings of the research.

Chapter Two

Transformation

Adaptability as the essential requirement for survival has its roots in biology. This biological thread is also present in a phenomenon called transformation. Transformation is the change undergone by cell upon contact with the pathogen. In the context of *English, August*, the literary text is the “cell” that is transformed by the “pathogen,” the film director. In other words, the film director functions as a translator to convert the literary novel into the audio-visual film.

Roman Jakobson (1896-1982) discussing the concept of translation formulates three kinds of translation: Intralingual, Interlingual and Intersemiotic. Intralingual translation is one when the translation is taking place in the same language while interlingual marks the translation from one language to another. Adaptation of a novel into a film as defined by Roman Jakobson is the process of “intersemiotic translation or transmutation” (Jakobson 233) as the medium changes from literary to cinematic. At this level, when Chatterjee’s English text is represented in Benegal’s English text with a collage of many languages like Hindi, Telugu, Bengali, Urdu, and English, intralingual translation often becomes closely interwoven with intersemiotic translation through immediate auditory signs of language. These cultural transfers, often achieved through actors’ use of language, tend to render the translation invisible and, to borrow a term from Lawrence Venuti, to “domesticate” the source text in order to: “give the reader unobstructed ‘access to great thoughts,’ to what is ‘present in the original’” (Venuti 5). The purpose of the invisible translation is to maintain a natural effect: “producing the illusory effect of transparency that simultaneously masks its status as an illusion: the translated text seems ‘natural,’ i.e. not translated” (ibid). This “invisible” quality present in the transmutation of *English, August* that changes the singular language of the novel into the plural language of the film makes it an intelligent translation. As Walter Benjamin has also argued that “translations [transmutations] that are more than transmissions of subject matter ... do not so much serve the work as owe their existence to it. The life of the originals attains in them to its ever-renewed latest and most abundant flowering” (Benjamin 72). In the wake of the process of translation that takes place as a novel transforms into a film, I hereby in this chapter try to formulate the cinematic theories of adaptation:

A basic assumption [is ...] I make it that both words and images are sets of signs that belong to systems and that, at a certain level of abstraction, these systems bear resemblances to one another. More specifically, within each such system there are many different codes (perceptual, referential, symbolic). What makes possible, then, a study of the relation between two separate sign systems, like novel and film, is the fact that the same codes may reappear in more than one system (Metz 1991: 54).

A thorough understanding of the nuances of the media of the texts – pre- and post-adaptation – is absolutely essential in order to evaluate the extent to which the adaptation has realized the potentialities embodied by the primary text of *English, August*. Even when media change, their semiotic systems might not be very different from one another, as Christian Metz, quoted above, notes. If there is a close correspondence between the media, then one can undertake a comparison, a “matching,” as Gombrich calls it (Gombrich), of adapted text to pre-adaptation text.

The film transforms the “code” of the novel into visual images, into a visual language, as it were, giving a physical manifestation to the “signified” image, which the novelist can leave behind as merely a squiggle of ink on the page for the reader to decrypt. Perhaps, the task of the film-maker is a little harder, as he/she has to “fix” signification for each squiggle on the page. This chapter will examine the modifications effected upon the novel’s “narrative discourse” and narrator-choices by Dev Benegal’s conversion of Upamanyu Chatterjee’s novel into film. How faithful to the “spirit” of the original is the transformed end product? What effects did the transformation have upon the accessibility of the novel, and what is the nature of access the film permits audiences in India? How does the “eye” of the director compare with the “pen” of the novelist? Does the director also “write” his film? And finally, how does one film an English text in India? These are some of the other questions that will be studied below.

To show the minutest details present in the process of transformation I plan to capture the snapshots of two intermediary forms of transformation as the novel transforms into a film. These metamorphosis-states between the novel and the film of *English, August* are shooting script and post-production script.

2.1. Shooting and Post-Production Script

The screenplay, which is either a condensed form (as in the case of *English, August*) or an expansion of the novel (as it happens in the case of *Shatranj Ke Khiladi* or *Parineeta*), is accomplished either by simply cutting the extra portions that do not align with the mainstream thread or adding some portions to the main text respectively. After the screenplay writer (or sometimes director in collaboration with the author of the novel as it happens in *English, August*) is done with the spatial editing of the written script of the novel, the script is handed over to the director. The director along with the screenplay writer revises the script in terms of its technical requirements and thus produces the shooting script. The shooting script or *decoupage* refers to the more or less precise breakdown of a narrative action into separate shots and sequences before filming. The shooting script underlines various technical nuances that a director and other members of the crew (like choreographer) have to keep into account while shooting the script. Furthermore, it is a written description of the action, dialogue, and camera placements for a film. It won't be wrong to say that the shooting script is the blue-print for making the film.

Post-production script on the other hand is the last stage of the written script as it marks the final blending of visual and the written versions of the story. It is the transcript of the celluloid production. Though it seems that post-production script is only the dummy of the celluloid version, its forte lies in its "edited" state. Unlike the shooting script, which is a joint venture of the director and the screenplay writer, post-production script is the true vision of the director. To be more precise, one can determine the strength of the post-production script by calling it the director's child. The director, here sieves every shot and edits it to give it a larger than life dimension. The post-production script underlines the director's ambitions and weaknesses. Unlike the shooting script, which leaves scope for further improvement in the form of the post-production script, the post-production script is the closed version of the script meant only for critics and audiences to comment on.

2.2. Author and Auteur

The ancient magical quill of the writer has become a camera in the modern times. This change is reflective of the technological reproduction of pen into camera. Alexandre Astruc's notion of the *caméra-stylo* or "camera-pen," a key element of *auteur* theory (the concept of

which was suggested by Francois Truffaut, inspired, in turn, by the works of André Bazin), can help us make a few very useful distinctions in the transformations voice undergoes in the movement from paper to celluloid. Astruc's notion was that directors should wield their cameras like writers use their pens, and thus, should not feel hampered by the traditional conventions of storytelling.

Many of the first theorists of cinema were themselves directors. Louis Delluc, originally a drama critic, was one of the first to theorize on the role of the director – his term was *cinéaste* – in film-making, thus laying the foundation for André Bazin's later *politique des auteurs*. Writing in *Le Film*, one of the earliest journals to deal with the theoretical representation of cinema, Delluc coined the term “photogénie,” a term he used to suggest the way in which reality was transformed by the camera through lighting, framing and so on. “Photogénie,” in other words, was what made cinema special for Delluc: “the cinema was a photogenic or revelatory medium of absorption and defamiliarization, whether it focused on inanimate objects, faces, or landscapes” (Delluc 57). Thus, the camera in itself functions like the “pen” of the director, giving new shape to the literary text.

In his quest for “pure cinema” (photogénie) as conceived by Louis Delluc, the director using his camera-pen must painstakingly construct the movie – frame by frame – to produce the desired emotional response from the audience. In other words, the art of *photogénie* requires producing cinematic meaning through the purely visual medium rather than the literary. But both media involve “writing” – if not literally, then intuitively. Benegal, working in collaboration with Chatterjee, “wrote” his movie with the camera in mind, and through intervention, dialogue, instruction, invention, and story boarding, Benegal knew exactly where to place his “self-conscious, self-mocking” camera. Though the camera is seemingly objective and neutral, the continuous interference of the director makes it a subjective vehicle. Dev Benegal tellingly refers to film-making as a form of writing (*écriture*) and the director as a writer (*auteur*). The metaphor of “writing,” to follow the *Cahiers du Cinema* critics, serves to unite both film-making and novel-making, which are but analogs in this view, as the director leaves his signature in the narrative in much the same way as the traditional author does. The complementarity of these two genres and media is something that cannot, by this yardstick, be dismissed *a priori*.

2.3. Effects of the Audience

The purpose of the film unlike the novel is to show rather than tell. When one restructures a novel thus giving it the form of a film, to understand the taste of the mainstream cinemagoer becomes one's responsibility. Neither, the adapted film is the director's mouthpiece, nor is the direct representation of what the author presented in his book. An adaptation like *English, August* is filtered through the eyes of the director first and colored by the perception of the audience's expectations. Scenes that may be enjoyed by the readers of the novel may have to be deleted in the post-production script because of the non-literary nature of the movie's audience. The scene where Srivastava's son Shekhar pisses in his trousers and says to Menon, pointing to the middle of his shorts, "Piss comes from here" (Benegal 127) is morally and culturally perverse. The popular perception in India is that children are synonymous with innocence and it could have raised fingers on Benegal to show a child behaving in this way in the midst of a family gathering. Hence, one has to understand that writing a shooting script is an individual act while writing a post production script requires a mass sensibility as one has to give heed to the expectations of the audience.

One of the issues in adaptations is the nature of the audience, which both the author and the auteur have in mind. Upamanyu Chatterjee the novelist, by his very act of writing fiction, has confined himself to a limited literate audience. While one may argue that there is a level of freedom within that confined section, such as it is not necessary that only a person from English Literature acquainted with critical jargon would only read it. People from other sections of society too would have access to the film, and they too enjoy it, albeit in different ways. However, one has to admit that the literary writer limits his work to a particular stratum of people and this stratum may be defined in terms of literary interest or literacy. However, when Dev Benegal adapts this narrative to the audio-visual mode, he opens it up to other sections of the society as well. Benegal has to make his work accessible to all kinds of audience, even if he does not share commercial motivations. Directors like Benegal who are catering to the demands of the mainstream cinema goers alongside art cinema goers cannot risk alienating a large section of his potential audience. At the same time, he has to preserve the uniqueness of the vision originally intended by Chatterjee.

2.4. Exigencies of Cinematic Production

Not only economic liberalization of 1970s opened markets to a range of television programs and videos, but it also facilitated, however slowly, access to state-of-the-art film technology for film makers. Within the industry there have been discernible changes in the production process. According to Manmohan Shetty, who runs a film-processing business, Adlabs, a sea change occurred in 1978 when Kodak introduced a negative film that could be processed at high ambient temperatures (105° Fahrenheit), improving color resolution (Shetty 112). At about the same time, professionally trained technicians in editing, cinematography and lighting began entering the commercial industry film institutes in Pune and Chennai, vastly improving the quality of film production as well as increasing costs. In this section, I would like to stress on two kinds of exigencies, which made film production in India more complex than the production of novel. These exigencies are film finances and censorship.

Film Finances

Film Finances were always a problem in Bollywood as most of the “illegal” money is coming through either underworld mafias or diamond and cotton merchants who charge hefty rates of interest. With the announcement of Bollywood as an “industry” in 2000 by the government, legalized investment poured in from various banks like IDBI, Exim Bank, Yes Bank giving respite to the directors. By and by, banks have started financing films as Shyam G. Menon reveals in *Business Line*:

With Bollywood gaining notoriety for its flings with dirty money and underworld dons over the last few years, the Reserve Bank of India’s (RBI) decision of 2001, allowing bank financing for films was received with all round optimism. (Menon)

In the earlier days of cinema, film financing problems were mostly faced by the mainstream films, which carry heavy budgets. Fewer problems were confronted by the art films as most of them were funded by government agencies. But things deteriorated in the later phase as due to the lack of initiative from Government, these art directors have to fend for themselves either through their own money or through some foreign source. Being an independent film director, Benegal was lucky to have Twenty Century Fox as the distributor for *English, August*. Had it

been that Benegal failed to get the aid from Twentieth Century Fox, we would have watched the movie *English, August*. Thus total dependence on the outside source to finance the film makes the task of the director more difficult than the novelist. Novel writing is never a matter of financing because it is an individual act as the writer has to communicate individually with the paper through pen. Though a later act of publishing of the book requires funds but with the emergence of publishing houses like Penguin India or Ravi Dayal, it becomes easier. Again, one should not forget that the book *English, August* is written by an IAS Chatterjee not by some ordinary Indian. That position is powerful enough to attract many suitors.

In the realm of finance exigencies, one can see in Bollywood a rise of private studios. For instance, Yash Raj Studios financed movies like Kabir Khan's directed *Kabul Express* (2006) while Vidhu Vinod Chopra studios financed films like Pradeep Sarkar's *Parineeta*.

Censorship Rules

In the Indian context, censorship rules came into existence during the British rule. Censorship rules were not created to cut adult material including violence and obscenity from the film but the reason for their existence was to safeguard the vested interests of the British. On the model of the Cinematograph Act of 1909 in Britain, the Indian Cinematograph Act of 1918 provided for pre-censorship of films. According to the statement of objects and reasons, it was designed to ensure proper control of cinematographic exhibitions and to prevent presentation to the public of improper or objectionable films (Baskaran 129).

Even before the arrival of Cinematograph Act of 1909, the British Government was imposing censorship in various forms like the Indian Electricity Act of 1910 (as lime-lights gave place to electric lamps in the projection of films, the British government made the permission of the district authorities obligatory for all shows) and "Rules to Govern Cinematographic Exhibition in *Moffusil*" (as touring cinema began to hold shows in small towns, government checked their untoward growth in the name of preventing the outbreak of fire) (130). With the arrival of the first Indian talkie *Alam Ara* (1931), and the beginning of Civil Disobedience Movement, the censorship rules were revamped to control the outpouring of the nationalist sentiments as the movie were made in local languages, thus making the cinema escapist. The same rules of censorship are not faced by the novelist. He is free to express himself in whatever

way, he likes. George Bluestone in his magnum opus *Novels into Film*, writes discussing the same case of censorship in the context of film adaptation:

The reputable novel, generally speaking, has been supported by a small, literate audience, has been produced by an individual writer, and has remained relatively free of rigid censorship. The film, on the other hand, has been supported by a mass audience, produced co-operatively under industrial conditions, and restricted by a self-imposed Production Code.

In modern times, Censorship is used to control the film from the violent and obscene material. In the film *English, August*, scenes like Mohan Gandhi raping a tribal girl or the politics of Baba Ramanna *ashram* were not picturized. These scenes with their pregnant suggestions would have led to the tussle with the censorship board. Thus movie making is more difficult than a novel as the director has to limit his work according to the conventions of the censorship board unlike the novelist who enjoys a fair amount of freedom.

2.5. Collaborative Script

English, August by Upamanyu Chatterjee is an autobiographical novel. Who can make a screenplay better than the guy who has written the autobiography. Benegal's collaboration with Chatterjee is helpful in giving the film proximity with the spirit of the novel. With the help of Chatterjee, Benegal is able to create new metaphors to show the same autobiographical nature of the text. For instance, the first scene in the film where the budding writer is struggling amidst producers is not present in the novel but the construction of this scene in the movie is helpful in depicting the autobiographical nature of the novel, which cannot be represented otherwise.

This collaboration between the writer and the director is not a recent phenomenon but it is a legendary practice of yore. Bapsi Sidwa also worked with Deepa Mehta for the movie on *Ice-Candy Man*'s screen version *Earth. The Guide*'s fame R. K. Narayan worked with Vijay Anand to create the metaphor of Dev Anand's *The Guide*.

2.6. Narrative Techniques: Literary and Cinematic

The cinema presents a spectacle composed of disparate elements – images, voices, sound effects, music, and writing – which the director, in its broadest sense, organizes and aims at the body of the spectator, the sensory receptacle of the various stimuli. Visual art in film depends primarily on two things – compositions and *mise-en-scène*, that is, on how objects and people inside a frame are brought together into a mutual relation, and on the texture of details in which such mutual relations are fore-grounded. Originally the French term *mise-en-scène* literally meant “place on stage” and referred to the arrangement of all visual elements in a theatre production. In a film it is used as an umbrella term for the various elements that constitute the frame, including camera distance, camera angles, lenses, lighting, as well as the positioning of persons and objects in relation to each other. Lyotard refers to classical *mise-en-scène* (in both the theater and the cinema) as a kind of somatography, or inscription on the body:

The *mise-en-scène* turns written signifiers into speech, song and movements executed by bodies capable of moving, singing, speaking; and this transcription is intended for other living bodies – the spectators – capable of being moved by these songs, movements, and words. It is this transcribing on and for bodies, considered as multi-sensory potentialities, which is the work characteristic of the *mise-en-scène*. Its elementary unity is polyesthetic like the human body: capacity to see, to hear, to touch, to move.... The idea of performance ... even if it remains vague, seems linked to the idea of inscription on the body (Lyotard 88).

This quality of *mise-en-scène* draws a line of difference that demarcates a novel and a film. So gradually, here in this section we will discuss the various types of techniques that are present either in the novel or in the film *English, August*. These techniques certainly encompass the author’s and director’s signature as they work through composition of the novel/film set and *mise-en-scène*.

Louis Giannetti and Scott Eyman in *Flashback: A Brief History of Film* write, “the cinematic equivalent to the voice of the literary narrator is the ‘eye’ of the camera” (Giannetti 10). Dev Benegal, through the sophisticated use of various camera angles and camera movements, is able to infuse life in the literary narrative. The point of view of the character in the novel is evenly and quite minutely captured by the camera. “Point of view,” when used by

novelists to designate the narrator's relationship to the story, is an optical metaphor, the visual consciousness of which manifests itself in the varied examples of literary equivalents of the cinematic "long shots", "close-ups", and "mid-shots", and so on.

This optical metaphor is furthered by the "eye" of the camera, through its various angles, serving as the "eye" of the protagonist Ogu. "Oblique/canted angle" tactics can be employed, for instance, to characterize, as when the canted angle is employed in the scene where the eye of the camera/protagonist draws, using animation techniques, Malti Srivastava's black bra. In another instance, the "Eye Level" technique is employed by Benegal when he shows the game of hide and seek as it happens between Ogu and the frog Dadru. Here the camera is positioned such that it is level with the actor's head, so it seems as though it this character who is actually observing the scene.

Camera movements are also illustrative of how the "eye" of the director works, and has "written" the movie. In the masturbation scenes, the camera, placed on a tripod, which operates as a stationary axis point as the camera is turned, itself moves repetitively from a higher to a lower plane in a vertical manner in order to simulate the act of masturbation itself. In the background will play an orgasmic groan which marks the culmination of the fantasy.

Dolly shots are also called trucking or tracking shots as the camera is placed on a moving vehicle and moves alongside the action, generally following a moving figure or object. They are elegantly employed by Benegal to depict Agastya jogging at odd hours. In the film, one can suspect that the camera might be hidden in the car which follows Agastya through all his night-jogs, when he revisits memories of the past when he was relishing the cup of life in the company of Dhruvo and Neera. Zoom shots, on the other hand, have been used to show the extreme heat that devours the city of Madna as the camera zooms in on the carcass of the dead crow. This zeroing in on the crow using zoom shot is relevant to the narrative of the film as through the use of the zoom shot, the director is able emphasize on the underlying nuances present in the plot.

And finally, there is the use of Montage. Generally speaking, "montage" has two distinct though allied meanings. The first deals with the stylistics, the way one shot is joined to another. Montage, or editing, in this sense, is concerned with the formal relations of shots; it includes such "rules" of continuity editing and corresponding positions of objects within the frame alongside Eisenstein's principles of conflict among the graphic elements of shots. Technically

speaking, “montage” is the French term for editing or cutting; its sense is that shot A is “mounted” next to shot B, etc. Sergei Eisenstein uses the term “dialectical montage” to mean that shot A collides with shot B to generate C, a concept in the mind of the viewer. For example, Chaplin’s *Modern Times* (1936) has sheep coming out from the gate (Shot A), “mounted” on Shot B, the workers coming out of the factory, thus giving rise to concept C in the mind of the viewer – the dire state of workers, as they are mere pawns in the hands of capitalist class (Shot C). Benegal does not employ “dialectical montage” in this sense. Towards the end of the movie, Benegal uses a technique of multiple narrations in order to throw light on Ogu’s character, and in doing so, he employs the tool of montage in non-stereotypical manner, a technique Somdatta Mandal in *Film and Fiction: Word into Image* has commented upon as an eclectic way to accomplish montage (Mandal). Dev Benegal, almost instantaneously, connects various points in time and place through parallel editing just as he literally superimposes different time and periods through the use of “multiple exposure.” This continual shifting of angle and distance in the camera-set-ups of cinematic narration results in the use of the montage technique. Benegal use of montage technique reminds one of the experimental nature of *Cahiers du cinema auteurs* like Godard or Truffaut.

Montage can also mean the fashion in which scenes or events are ordered in a film. This meaning, favored by Rudolph Arnheim, V. I. Pudovkin, Christian Metz, and others, is based on narrative order, not in terms of shot relations per se. Correspondences and close analogies can be easily established between film and prose fiction if one follows this definition. For instance, the claustrophobia of Madna, illustrated by the claustrophobia of Ogu’s room, is directly contrasted with the backwaters of the place, which present a portrait of the serene and the tranquil.

Another advantage film has over literary text is what I. A. Richards calls “tone,” which he defines as the speaker’s “attitude to his [or her] listener” (Richards 11). Movie actors can adopt various tonal effects to create the nuance the situation requires. This tonal activity is more pronounced in the movie as compared to the novel. For instance in the case of *English, August:*

Scenes	Novel	Film
<p>Ogu's first visit to Srivastava's house.</p>	<p>Ogu tells Malti Srivastava that everyone in his family calls him either Ogu or August; then: "She laughed. 'August. That's nice'" (Chatterjee 54). Here the act itself is jarring as Agastya himself becomes a laughing stock in the process of revealing his anglicized name.</p>	<p>Malti's laughter is often portrayed with a sense of satisfaction not only for Malti but also for Agastya. In this particular scene, the satisfaction for Agastya came in from the fact that he is able to, after a long time, ogle at the breasts of someone worth appreciating. So unlike the novel, there are two kinds of laughter going on simultaneously. First is the laughter of Malti and second is Agastya's ogling laughter. But one point worth recording here is though the director has created two kinds of laughter yet at the same time, he has imposed his imagination on the audience. So according to me, the film narrows the interpretation to the very hegemonic monopoly vision of the film maker. Not much room for me to see it from Malti's side in the film is there, since she's portrayed as</p>

		<p>a pompous bureaucratic wife of no great worth, and someone to whom the audience must necessarily not ascribe much seriousness. I find the film limiting there. Reading the book, I have more room to see what a loser Agastya himself is, in that he has to ogle at collector wives.</p>
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There are implicit metaphors in the novel specially designed to catch the eye of an Indian reader, which the outsider finds himself automatically excluded from, not being in possession of sufficient facts with which to judge the situation. The film through an act of representation makes the job easier for the outsider as he is able to see the unimagined metaphor. For example: The hysterical squalor and the poverty of Madna, alongside the skin-rending heat that is part and parcel of its milieu is something the novel can only describe in its magic realist way, but the film can actually represent the lived hysteria of this place, and the brutalization it would produce on a person sent to live there against his will.

2.7. Narrative Voice

“Narrative discourse” signifies the text itself – the actual arrangement of signifiers that communicate the story: words in literature, moving images in films. It is only through this means of expression that we come in contact with either the story or the act of narrating. The story is an imaginary construction that the spectator or reader creates while reading the narrative discourse of the actual text.

French film critic Gérard Genette distinguishes three different meanings for the term narrative (*récit* in French). First, narrative can refer to the actual language of a text that tells a story, that is, the means by which the narrative context is communicated. The focus on this

meaning seems to pivot around the plot. The second meaning of narrative refers to the content communicated by the discourse, “the succession of events, real or fictitious, that are the subject of this discourse” (Genette 25) and which may be studied “without regard to the medium, linguistic or other” (ibid) in which they are expressed. Here, the emphasis is on the various narrative strategies employed to amplify the approach of the text. The third meaning refers to the event of “someone recounting something, the act of narrating in itself” (27). This category circles around the role of the narrator. Genette analyzes narrative from these three perspectives: the means of expression, the events conveyed by these means and the act of enunciation that expresses them.

Narrative is, thus, an organization of text, actualized in words in the case of the novel, and in talking images in the context of a film. No novel is ever directly iconic, while any film, as a series of photographic representative signs or visual images, always is. While in the narrative language of the novel, as Genette points out, “showing can only be a way of telling” (166), film in contrast can *show* more immediately than it can *tell*, but across the chasm between showing and telling, the two narrative discourses seem to signal each other as through the metaphor of Tamse’s rest-house painting “a sunset, and water, and therefore two sunsets, a boat, a boatman in a Japanese conical hat, on the shore two trees, like giant mushrooms” (Chatterjee 8) and the statue of “*hazaar* fucked” (1) Gandhi, Chatterjee decides to use the discourse of “showing” rather than “telling.”

In literature the impression (or as Genette would put it, the illusion) of showing is the result of a narrator’s consciously chosen and carefully-devised strategy. As Metz says, “The film will always be better at showing things, while books will always be better at saying them, and perhaps neither will ever break beyond this evenly matched contest” (Metz 1973: 69).

The third-person narrative in Chatterjee’s version of *English, August* lends the narrative of the novel greater objectivity (and reliability as well), and allows various characters to participate. Benegal’s *English, August* uses individual point-of-view tactics where the emphasis is on their subjective outlooks on life rather than on the detached perspective. The film’s doing away with the third person narrator makes it different from the novel; the movie’s narrative is thus loosened from easily achievable or facile moorings to truth value – it is difficult for the

viewers to believe in the reliability of the characters, as there is no touchstone in the film against which the viewer can judge the authenticity characters' narratives.

Hereby, the film *English, August* does attempt to duplicate the novel's perspective precisely, or to focalize the film around the novel's rigorous third-person perspective. Instead, it dialogically imagines its characters. The dialogic, as conceptualized by Mikhail Bakhtin (1895-1975), uses heteroglossia – multiple voices, idioms, and dialects as they converge in any text – to provide a multi-focal perspective, which then serves as the most efficient mode of resistance to monoglossic, often pompous narrational voices that would otherwise monopolize the narrative. *English, August* the film exemplifies Bakhtin's dialogism in its heteroglossia, defying the novel's single-perspective third-person narration. This quality of heteroglossia present in the film is a result of the Benegal's use of pastiche, thus making the film post-modernist.

Where *English, August* the novel has a linear trajectory, the film does not. Lalitha Gopalan in her book *Cinema of Interruptions: Action Genres in Contemporary Indian Cinema* (2002) outlines a new framework for understanding the distinctiveness of Indian cinema within a global context dominated by Hollywood. Gopalan calls Indian cinema a "cinema of interruptions," with its sudden explosions into song-and-dance sequences, half-time intermissions, and heavy traces of censorship (Gopalan). To the uninitiated viewer, raised on the seamless linear plotting of the Hollywood movie narrative, or the linear plotting of the novel from which the film is adapted as is the case here, this unexpected tendency towards digression may appear random and superfluous. But random and superfluous it is not, as these digressions give the reader/viewer an opportunity to meditate on the movie itself, while they are watching it, and in this, the interruptions resemble Brecht's epic theatre technique.

Benegal's use of the flashback method (narrative discourse) is unlike Chatterjee's: Benegal gives a fragmented postmodernist character to the movie by the continuous use of flashbacks. These flashbacks promote what Seymour Chatman calls "discourse time," which he defines as "the time of the presentation of those [plot] events in the text" (436), thus bringing the movie closer to the novel. In flashbacks, the discourse time seizes the story-time, and hence the situation and characters are turned into *tableau vivant* or freeze frames. Hence, the method of flashback may be duly employed to interrupt and freeze the timeline of the story, thus giving a movie the same "descriptive" quality that is present in novels. The novel, with its third-person

narrative, has the freedom to dwell on anything in detail, while the movie, due to the limitations of running discourse time, does not have that liberty. Thus, the technique of flashback is a respite for the director desirous of purchasing more time for detailing events within the movie.

The “flashback” method has close connections with the dream narrative, typically represented by the use of “fog” prop, which devours the present and transports the viewers to the past. While here, the past and present run simultaneously without two hoots. The Bergsonian idea of “regressive memory,” (Bergson 79) may be employed fruitfully here, to understand a situation where one is haunted by a memory without one’s making any deliberate effort to recall the memory. This “regressive memory,” is not associated with any prolongation, but as Bergson says, with “recording” perceptual images (83). In fact one may even say that these flashbacks are not flashbacks in the conventional sense, but they are “flash concurrences”:

CAMERA follows Agastya as he runs. The town is silent and quite dead at night. Agastya runs full circle. He paces himself, extremely happy to be on the move and alone. The town is bathed in the amber glow of the rising moon. An eerie though beautiful feeling.

MOVING Past the Old Circuit House. Past Madna Club.

A Volkswagen Beetle appears in the distance. Agastya runs closer to it. As he approaches he notices Dhruvo, Neera and Agastya sitting and smoking inside. (Benegal 124-125)

The Bergsonian idea of “voluntary memory” may be used to understand the novel at this juncture. Voluntary memory is a memory which is recalled through deliberate efforts on the part of the person. When Multani gives him sleeping pills, Agastya can read lines from *Macbeth* on each of the pill-packets, lines that remind him of his English head of department Dr Upadhyay, to whom he writes: “Dear Sir, Absurdity again, someone in Ulhasnagar has found some use for Eng. Lit.’s most famous insomniac. I thought you’d find this more interesting than L. H. Myers” (Chatterjee 96). In other words, the novel, unlike the film is Newtonian in its search for cause and effect and thus employs the metaphor of Bergson’s primary memory. Action is followed by reaction, and every incident in the present has its counterpart in the past, which is invoked automatically given the right stimuli.

The multi-vocal commentary on Agastya's character towards the end of the movie and, the interior monologue and voice over flashback speak more or less directly to the spectator, thus producing the third person narrative constituting him/her as an empty space to be "filled" with knowledge about events, character psychology, etc. More frequently, in the film version of *English, August*, the use of synchronous dialogue and voice-off presuppose a spectator who overhears and, overhearing, is unheard and unseen himself. This deployment of sound track is not unlike the voyeurism often exploited by the cinematic image. The use of the voice thus in the cinema appeals to the spectator's desire to hear, or what Lacan refers to as the invocatory drive. According to Lacan, drives differ from biological needs as they can never be satisfied because they do not aim at an object but rather circle perpetually round it. Thus the real purpose of the drive is not some mythical goal of full satisfaction, but to return to its circular path, and the real source of enjoyment is the repetitive movement of this closed circuit. While discussing drives, Lacan defines four kinds of partial drives: Oral, Anal, Scopic, and Invocatory. The first two drives deal with the demand of partial object: Breast and Faeces respectively while the next two drives desire for Gaze and Voice respectively (Lacan).

2.8. Plot Differences

The "fidelity" of an adaptation is conventionally gauged in two ways: fidelity to the "letter" and to the "spirit" of the text (Andrew 50). So much of the book's power comes from the evocation of Madna – a place that remains in the mind rather more than the characters or the story do, at least as far as the present reader is concerned. The effect is cumulative built up slowly throughout the book, so it one can choose any passage to illustrate:

Then the naib tehsildar said that the Collector had told him to tell the cook to boil Agastya's drinking water as there was endemic jaundice and epidemic cholera in Madna, and that he had already done so and that may he now take his leave, sir.

Ten o' clock. Agastya was on the veranda outside his room. Around the tube-light wheeled a hundred different insects. The frequent plop of careless lizards falling on the floor. (Chatterjee 6)

However, the film is unable to replicate the “spirit” of the original in a number of instances as the focus of the novel is to create unparalleled Madna with the inhabitants suffering from existentialistic angst while the movie wants to carve the character of unforgettable Agastya along with his solipsistic pleasure drives only. There are many instances of differences in the plot. Some of these are:

Scenes	Novel	Shooting Script	Post-Production Script
1) Arrival at Madna	Morning	Night	Night
2) Use of the Mosquito Net	Compulsory	Absent	Absent
3) Scene of a manuscript writer (Ogu) going from one office to another with the hope that some producer will finally accept his manuscript for film production. In fact, Ogu goes to six producers: English Producer, Young Producer, European Producer, American Producer, Avant Garde Producer, and Indian TV Producer.	Absent	Present	Present but with a distillation (Out of six producers, four producers are absent: Young Producer, European Producer, Avant Garde Producer, and Indian TV Producer).
4) Scene with an old woman who comes to Agastya for help	Present	Present	Absent
5) Scene at Gorapak where Sathe focuses on “obscure legends” (Chatterjee 280), thus giving the mythical reason behind the holiness of the place and in turn defines the mythological importance of the name Agastya.	Present	Absent	Absent

Instance 1: Arrival at Madna: Chatterjee wants to show the rural traits and drudgery of Madna amplified by the sheet of darkness as he writes:

Cigarette-and-pan dhabas, disreputable food stalls, both lit by fierce kerosene lamps, cattle and clanging rickshaws on the road, and the rich sound of trucks in slush from an overflowing drain; he felt as though he was living someone else's life. (Chatterjee 5)

In the film, the first shot shows Agastya at station in his jeans and T-shirt. The second shot shows his meeting with naib tehsildar. The third shot shows the jeep which will take him to the Government Rest House. The fourth shot shows his room. Benegal does not at all describe the jeep journey from station to the government Rest House because his focus is to show Agastya throughout the movie is to carve the trajectory of solipsism in Agastya's life rather than Madna.

Instance 2: Use of the Mosquito Net: Mosquito net in the novel not only saves Agastya from the mosquito bites but also provides a space for Agastya to safeguard himself from the squalor of Madna represented through the buzz of mosquitoes. Through a deliberate removal of mosquito net, Benegal wants to show Agastya unguarded and comfortless in Madna, thus triggering his yearning for the erstwhile pleasures of the past.

Instance 3: Scene of a manuscript writer: The novel written by Chatterjee himself does not have to explicitly declare the autobiographical traits present in it while Benegal by introducing the scene innovatively wants to acknowledge his source material.

Instance 4: Scene of an old woman: Why are the scenes where Agastya is taught Telugu explicitly picturized, especially when he fails to comprehend the language of the old woman who came to him for help? What is the purpose of learning a new language then? Does the duty of an IAS officer entail learning a language so that he can command his domestic help or subordinates, or should that learning encompass his understanding of the people for whose development he is responsible? Though, the scene with the old woman is present in the shooting script but it has been scrapped in the post-production script. One can add that Benegal by deleting this scene wants to accentuate that the novel is not about woman's rights/ people's rights but the plight of

“anchorlessness” (24) of Agastya man who is caught between the self-proclaimed socialist Nehruvian morality of the Indian culture and the colonial immorality.

Instance 5: Scenes at Gorapak: Novel uses it to focus on the idea of nationalist India but Benegal scraps it to show the secular nature of his work.

2.9. Characterization

Dev Benegal discussing *English, August* wrote “when in doubt, cut it out!” (Benegal 111) This statement registers the hit formula for the success of *English, August*. This formula states that the shooting script needs to be distilled thoroughly before it is converted to celluloid, and any character, which adds to confusion or fails to emphasize the director’s agenda, should be deleted at this stage without mercy. Benegalian directorial debut states that the post-production script should only focus on a major theme as decided by the director and anything out of context should be scrapped. The filmmaker is surely aware of what he wants from the movie and how the movie addresses the major issues.

“Flat characters,” E. M. Forster (1879-1970) says in his *Aspects of the Novel* (1927), “are sometimes called types and sometimes caricatures. In their purest form they are constructed round a single idea or quality: when there is more than one factor in them, we get the beginning of a curve toward the round. The really flat characters can be expressed in one sentence” (Forster 135-36). Round characters on the other hand are characterized by the “incalculability of life” (38) about them. The rationale behind the distillation process in any shooting script is to get rid of the “flatness.” This flatness, if injected in the plot, happens to hamper the clarity of the plot or director’s agenda, thus making it ambiguous.

In the post-production script the minor characters are denied their rightful existence, as their existence is dependent on the extent to which they can highlight the director’s agenda, which is to showcase the character of the protagonist. Discrepancies in terms of character description become evident as one compares the film with the novel (for instance, “fat” (Chatterjee 27) Shankar of the novel becomes “skinny” in the film or “short and fat” (14) Srivastava of the novel changes to a guy of average weight and height in the film), which focuses on all the characters giving them due time and space in which to show their individuality, while

the post-production script introduces radical changes as it pivots only around the character of Agastya. The novel provides proper space to the minor characters thus giving them a sizeable space in which to flaunt their “individual” existence. The post-production script has only psychologically defined goal-oriented characters. Every minor character is born with a purpose. A law of Calvinistic predestination binds the lives of minor characters. Their purpose in life is to throw light on Agastya. Minor characters like Malti and Kumar are allowed space only to the extent that they help in revealing Agastya’s personality. Malti serves as an apt example of woman as commodity thus making it possible to characterize Agastya’s male gaze while Kumar serves as a catalyst to ignite the sexual fire as he invites Agastya to watch “blue films” (Benegal 153). Lines in the novel that throw light on Malti’s character by showing how she sees herself at par with her IAS husband have been deliberately deleted from the post-production script:

Malti (looking at Agastya): It’s such a large house, they can’t even hear.... It’s so difficult to decorate also... such a problem.... But of course being a service lady I’m used to it, all this shifting about... transfers....

Malti’s role is cut down mercilessly. The reason for cutting down the role of Malti is that the director wants to project all the women in the post-production script only in one light, that of “objects.” Not only is Malti’s individual existence is maneuvered to show Agastya’s sexuality, which is craving to express itself, but the director also cuts entirely the scene showing the “very old, small, bespectacled village woman” (164) (as she does not fit in the plan to excite Agastya) who comes to ask for Agastya’s help:

She [the old woman] begins to BABBLE in a language that Agastya does not follow. Agastya listens for a second or two and then presses the bell....

Agastya (to the peon): What does she want?

Peon (airily): She? Nothing!

This inability of both men to understand the language of an old woman shows how the “old” woman fails to emphasize her rights, first as a subject and second as a woman.

In the same way, the character of Kumar in the shooting script is not only an instrument to promote Agastya’s sexuality but he is also a man who awakens the psyche of the readers via the most pragmatic statement in the text: “This is India, bhai, an Independent country, not the

Raj, we are the servants of the people” (Chatterjee 23). Although the statement is specially designed by Upamanyu Chatterjee as a dig at the deteriorating civil services, at the same time it also zeroes in on Kumar’s awareness, unlike other civil servants, of his duties. The shooting script projects Kumar as the awakened civil servant while the post-production script shows Kumar only in one light and that is of a sleeping civil servant, as Srivastava asks Kumar over the phone: “Hahn, Kumar saab, did I wake you up??” He is presumably caught napping always, as typified by the above line.

Besides these characters, the “subjective” voices of Prakash Rao, Mandy, Tonic, and Avery are toned and characters like Mohan Gandhi, Baba Ramanna are completely scrapped to show the director’s determination to map the trajectory of only the protagonist.

2.10. Telling Time

After looking at various instances of editing in the shooting script or the post-production script, one has to conclude that the time frame should be attended to as the movie has to showcase all the major events present in the novel in the tenure of couple of hours. The movie *English, August* runs only for one hour and forty-six minutes. In *English, August*, undue passages with excessive “description” have been deleted from the shooting script as well as the post-production script. Here I would like to divert one’s attention to the word “detail” rather than description. The camera effect is fit to generate detail. Camera can focus on the minutest details present in the given set of objects. Description is a property assigned to words rather than to camera effect. The characters present in the film acquire the task of describing things in terms of dialogue while the task of producing “details” is handled by the camera. The shooting script describes Agastya’s entire train journey including the changing landscapes:

CAMERA reveals life along the tracks as the train cuts through the changing landscapes, from city to satellite towns to village clusters and then the vast open fields dotted with small huts and shacks. Images seem to repeat themselves and some even freeze in their movement. (Benegal 113)

This description of the train journey is nothing more than minuscule if it is compared to the novel because in the film camera will produce the details automatically rather than affected by

external stimulus. Unlike the novelist who has to create the picture of the scene through words, the camera pushes the viewer to see and imagine things for himself. Time is never a binding factor with regard to the novel but film is always limited in this dimension. So part of the problem in the case of the *English, August* that how to condense such a big novel into a short shooting script to make it compatible to the given time frame has been solved by the camera effect that works according to the law of “details” rather than description.

In the post production script of *English, August*, those scenes are deleted by Benegal that serve no special purpose for the movie and in this way he has made room for retaining other important aspects as both could not have been accommodated simultaneously. The main purpose of both the film is to portray Agastya in the tenure of his government service, and to study through him the making of the Indian bureaucracy while the novel at the same time focuses on other characters as well.

Unlike the novel, where the time of the reader is more significant than the time of the script – the reader is free to go at his own pace – things are different in the realm of the film. The duration of the movie/its shots is more important than the subjectivity of the viewer. The viewer has to follow the narrative according to the pace it has been set by the director. The disparity in the time duration and how it is finally solved can clearly be seen by looking at this example:

Characters/Scenes	Novel	Shooting Script	Post-production Script/Film
Visit to Dhrubo’s house after joining the service.	When Ogu reaches the house of Dhrubo then he finds that Dhrubo is not at home: “Dhrubo’s mother opened the door, looking tired and sexy. ‘Oh hello Ogu come in... you’ve lost a lot of	Here, the director makes Dhrubo available at home: “Dhrubo’s Mother: Ogu!! Come come! You’ve lost a lot of weight. I’m glad you could make it....Dhrubo walks past him drinks in	The entire scene is absent.

	weight...I'm leaving for Khartoum this afternoon, to join your Kaka, hence all this mess in the house, just don't look at it...' Dhrubo hadn't returned'" (Chatterjee 151).	hand" (Benegal 160-61). One can guess the reason for this drastic change as Benegal does not want Ogu to wait for Dhrubo's return because this will not only make the movie boring but also it will also defy the time duration pattern, which is cleverly chosen by him.	
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2.11. Music, Marijuana and Masala

The soundtrack of the movie is a complex fabric of Agastya's memories interwoven with crude reminders of his present-day life in Madna. To protect his own state of mind, Agastya clings desperately to the few memories he has physically been able to bring to Madna: cassettes of Pink Floyd, Ella Fitzgerald, Miles Davis, Queen, Traffic, Bach and Vivaldi figure prominently among his talismans against amnesia. Their works are links to what he sees as having been his constructive and civilized years in the metropolitan world. They are flags reminding him not to lose his individuality in the confusing and treacherous swamp of Madna. The film's actual soundtrack, aside from its symbolism for Agastya, is an ensemble of Western and Indian instruments and passages. The composer D. Wood, trained in Western and Indian Classical music, created a haunting soundtrack for *English, August* out of "bansuri" (Indian flute), fretless bass, Indian percussion instruments and electric guitars.

The idea of performance either shown through the songs of *thumri* singer Shankar or the background music amplifies the vision of the story in the film. The sound element present in the film *English, August* adds an edge to it thus helping Benegal to captivate the imagination of the audience easily.

Marijuana: Ogu's constant use of marijuana (Indian hemp) has important implications for the nation's self-image. Marijuana is a prop used differently by the novel and the film. In the novel, the idea of marijuana has links with the bacchanalia that surrounds the lives of the rich or the member of the elite class, invoking at the same time, its connection with the Orient. The timeless association of marijuana with the Orient meant that the drug was not only seen as a product of that region, but as a channel through which Orientalism could affect the Occident. De Quincey, for example, celebrates Indian hemp in his *Confessions of an English Opium Eater* as a celestial manna in whose "abyss of divine enjoyment" lies the secret of human happiness. But at the same time he is deeply fearful of its findings of individual identity (De Quincey 178). For De Quincey the Orient is where human life originated, and a vestige of that original identity lies not so deeply buried within the English character. Cannabis is a kind of infernal archaeological tool that reaches back into the palimpsest of the human mind (De Quincey's most enduring metaphor for the unconscious) to exhume the Oriental within us (Milligan 123). In his *Confessions*, De Quincey is transported to Oriental scenes where the desired division between self and other, West and East, disintegrates. The same metaphor is also visible in Coleridge. In this way, marijuana is a formidable subversionary force that tears apart the very notion of British identity, generating Ogu's delirium in the novel.

In the movie however, the dominant association this prop generates is not of connection to exclusive elite-class revelries, but paradoxically, with a popular representation of what might be elite-class revelry – Zeenat Aman's prescription of marijuana as the panacea for all ills: "*Dum Maro Dum, Mit Jaye Gum*," as the song goes.

Masala: There are many other reasons for Ogu's restlessness in the novel. The blandness of the food is one. Due to various outbreaks of water-related epidemics and excessive heat (which make Madna a breeding ground for bacteria and viruses) and of course the un-cleanliness of Vasant, Ogu's cook, Ogu can eat only boiled food in his own house. He visits Srivastava often simply to eat spicy food at his house.

Benegal conveys this dearth of spicy food in the wake of Vasant's uncleanness, but fails to go beyond the obvious. Spices are almost always additional ingredients, blended together or stirred into blander stuff to create a more powerful dish or scene. Derived from the Latin species, spice is a collective rather than specific term, applicable to any one of an exciting array of aromatic pods, seeds, and roots, and encompassing them all. Its full meaning, however, is not easily contained in botanical, culinary, or etymological categories, because of the long standing cultural significance of spice. A key element of religious ritual, an ancient preservative, a component of medicinal and magical brews, a means of economic exchange, a luxury consumable, a racial marker, and, in the end, an everyday domestic item, spice is a remarkably unfixed term. And it is the very fluidity of meaning that makes it such a rich, if elusive, subject for literary and cultural analysis.

Timothy Morton is more than alert to the slipperiness of the meaning of spice, as he observes with characteristic eloquence: "Spice is a complex and contradictory marker: of figure and ground, sign and referent, species and genus; of love and death, epithalamion and epitaph, sacred and profane, medicine and poison, Orient and occident; and of the traffic between these terms" (Morton 9). Thus, spice becomes a 'signifier' signifying the Oriental ideology at work within the language at Madna. Chatterjee employs this idiom of spice with its "Orient"alizing connotations, which however, the film fails to make cultural capital out of.

2.12. Literary Language and Cinematic Language

Literary language that circles round the novel generally fails to find a counterpart in mainstream cinema where the vernacular used by the hoi polloi is the buzzword. The reason for this failure to accommodate literariness goes to the commercial nature of the cinema as rather than the interests of the limited, it has to cater to the demands of the mass audience. The cinematic language of an adapted work like *English, August* not only emulates the literary quality of the novel but at the same time it also employs cinematic language.

Literariness is understood in terms of defamiliarization, as a series of deviations from "ordinary" language (Erich). This emulation of the literary is carried out in *English, August* through the use of English as a medium of communication.

Moreover, the primary purpose of the cinematic language is to manifest the abstract ideas or characters into material forms and characters, thus making the unreal real. André Bazin

talking about the art of making unreal real through the use of visual images discusses the presence of the “psychological underpinnings” (Bazin 16) in the film unlike the novel.

Films give us the feeling that we are witnessing an almost real spectacle – to a much greater extent than does a novel and that’s the reason it is called bioscope because it imitates life. Film with its impression of reality, its very direct hold on perception, has the power to draw crowds (Bazin 22).

This presence of “reality” in the cinematic language unlike the literary language is created through the use of movement. Metz writes emphasizing the notion of movement present in the film:

Motion imparts corporality to objects and gives them an autonomy their still representation could not have; it draws them from the flat surfaces to which they were confined, allowing them to stand out better as figures against a background. Freed from its setting, the object is “substantiated.” Movement brings us volume and volume suggests life.” (Metz 1991: 7)

The movement as a metaphor of reality effect is present in the movie *English, August*. Thus, *English, August* is accessible not only to illiterate hooligans but also to literary giants by virtue of its visuality and Englishness respectively. This blend of literary language and cinematic language as shown by *English, August* is a rare phenomenon in Bollywood.

Chapter Three

Comparisons

This chapter is an enquiry into the thematic concerns of the literary and cinematic texts of *English, August*. The other question that will be discussed in the span of this chapter is Can one make such a film like *English, August* within existing cinematic frameworks, or will one necessarily invent a third way for representing one's material thus? At the same time, I will put forth the theory of Indian adaptation in contrast to the Western adaptation theory, which fails to determine the true potential of Indian adaptation and rationale behind an act of adaptation.

3.1. Thematic Concerns

Thematic representation is always a significant part of any narrative. Now the course of this section, I will try to show two thematic concerns that remained inalienable to *English, August* and they are:

Female Gaze

Rahul Bose's Grecian body is enough to attract the wild fantasy of any woman. The orientation of the market towards a female spectator/consumer opened up a potential gap among traditional patriarchal ideologies on the one hand and the recognition of female experience needs fantasies on the other, albeit for the purposes of immediate commercial exploitation and eventual containment. It is in this gap that the Bose phenomenon deserves to be read, as a significant yet precarious moment in the changing discourse on femininity and sexuality.

The idea of gaze that is missing in the novel enlivens here as Benegal makes Bose do some of the fiery nude scenes. The repetitive masturbation scenes add fuel to the fire and amplify the approach towards male objectification. These male "nude" scenes are quite a recent phenomenon as they have not been performed before in Bollywood. These male nude scenes

instigate the idea of female gaze thus objectifying male body under the voyeuristic gaze of a female audience:

He smokes a joint slowly. The ash gently falls on his naked body. He doesn't bother to remove it instead lets his hand carelessly wander over his body as the camera follows. His hand moves down to his crotch and beneath the sheet. Suddenly he whips his hand away, jumps up and rushes to the table nude. (Benegal 124)

By carving Bose in this mould, Benegal unlike his literary counterpart Chatterjee presents a challenge to feminist film theory, in particular as it developed during the 1970s within the framework of psychoanalysis and semiology. This debate inescapably returns to Laura Mulvey's essay on "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema" which first spelled out the implications of Lacanian-Althusserian models of spectatorship for a critique of patriarchal cinema. Whatever its limitations and blind spots, the significance of Mulvey's argument lies in her description of the way in which the classical Hollywood (or Bollywood in our case) film perpetuates sexual imbalance in the very conventions through which it engages its viewer as subject – its modes of organizing vision and structuring narratives. These conventions, drawing on psychic mechanisms of voyeurism, fetishism and narcissism, depend upon and reproduce the conventional polarity of the male as the agent of the "look" and the image of woman as object of both spectacle and narrative. In aligning spectatorial pleasure with a hierarchical system of sexual difference, classical cinema inevitably entails without Mulvey calls "a 'masculinization' of the spectator position, regardless of the actual sex of any real life movie-goer" (Mulvey 10). In this new cinema of Benegal, traditional patriarchal position has been renounced for good to promulgate equality of sexes.

Mahatma Gandhi: Villain and Saint

Chatterjee's position is ambivalent throughout the text towards the British. His use of "khichdi" language makes him an Indian sympathizer while his misrepresentation of the father of the nation through Mohan Gandhi makes him a foe to Indian sensibility and a friend of the British. Benegal on the other hand, sidelined the character of Mohan Gandhi, thus not inviting any controversy on the issue. This process of demonization on the part of Chatterjee is also a part and parcel of *Gunga Din* (1939) where the film cast the guru in the physical look of Gandhi

(Gunga Din). *Gunga Din* collapses the actor and personality of Gandhi into one. For the white audience, this affected a closure between the real person and villain in the film, but for the Indian audience, it opened up the imperialist's motivated misrepresentation. The portrayal of Gandhi as the chief villain highlighted the dichotomous perceptions of the two different audiences, Western and Indian.

According to Martin A. Jackson, these images of Gandhi were of 'a peculiar Oriental who had outlandish ideas about Independence' (Jackson 226). In portraying the image of Gandhi as villain and oppressor of woman, colonial nationalism was not ignored but played down. It was trivialized and treated as a minor development confined to a few isolated high-caste individuals, Bhadrak and religious fanatics – who represented none but themselves. More importantly, this nationalism was designated as Hindu nationalism in which the professedly saintly and pacifist figure of the Hindu villain had a hidden agenda to violently overthrow the British and impose Hindu rule. The Indian political leadership is opened not only to caricature and ridicule but more importantly to the subversion of its ideological programme, which is shown to be unacceptable to the great mass of India. This portrayal of Gandhi as a rapist effectively establishes and justifies the white man's sense of responsibility towards India.

3.2. *Angrezi-ness*

Angrezi culture is the part and parcel of India. The ghostly metaphor of *angrezi* never let the British die from our memories even after they had left the country at least 50 years back. The two important gifts of the British rule in India, which are fairly analyzed in *English, August* texts:

- (a) A full-blown bureaucratic web, and
- (b) an institutionalized English education within the framework of the Macaulay's system of education;

In both these gifts bestowed upon us by the British, *angrezi* continues to be the dominant language. The British rule in India survived for so long because of the literary device of English utilized by the British to exploit the Indians culturally as well as socially. In the post-1947 India, Indian elites who struggled to oust the British have established their power over the vast majority through the use of English only.

There is a continuum of English: from “Bazaar-English,” “Butler-English,” “Baboo-English” to “near native English.” In the social domain, particularly in the recent past, English has induced what may be called the ‘imitative function’ – a tendency to imitate the successful English-educated elite. English and English education have been with a section of the urban population so long that it has uprooted quite a few, and the result is that they are neither here nor there; this section of the population represented through the character of Agastya has no mother tongue and no cultural roots in the conventional sense; they are comfortable only with English but that English is not “native.” In fact, they are English type as Dhiraj Kumar tells Agastya that he is an “English type” because he can speak “English more fluently than he speaks any Indian language” (Benegal 121). These displaced people – linguistically and otherwise – are in their “camps” or “settlements” in the urban areas and such settlements are on the increase. There is nothing derogatory about dislocation or creation of the hybrid culture. These constructions are products of attempts to integrate cultures and languages; maybe, such people do not adopt the modular strategies of the common people. The distinguishing feature of Agastya, if to use a phrase from Homi Bhabha is “camouflage mimicry,” (Bhabha 86) which outlines that how a man embraces transition in the hands of an alien empire in order to avoid extinction. This transformation helps him to fight back against the alien empire.

Both the texts (literary as well as the cinematic) duly employ the intermingled version of local languages and English instead of giving in to the Queen’s English. Srivastava, also, throws light on this aspect of the language when he says: “The English we speak is not the English we read in English books, and, anyway, those are two different things. Our English should be just a vehicle of communication, other people find it funny, but how we speak shouldn’t matter as long as we get the idea across” (Chatterjee 59). This *chutnification* gives a new dimension to the text as it becomes a hallmark of the Indian writers writing in English and directors making a pop-art cinema.

The nature of English representation in the film *English, August* highlights the contradiction between colonial ideology and cinematic practice, articulating as it does a conflict between the ideological effects of cinema and the economic pressure exercised by the market. As an ideological apparatus cinema, especially has as compared to other forms of cultural production, has to realize its position as a large scale commercial enterprise within a capitalistic system where market forces are paramount. Because of its prohibitive costs, film production and

its ideological thrust need to negotiate with the economics and ideologies of the market. The film version argues that the market reception, even under a bureaucratic (an offshoot of colonial enterprise) set-up with its well defined structures of domination and subordination, created the possibility of accommodating a subversive even oppositional point of view as well as the ability to reshape the dominant ideological thrust of the visual production.

The novel provides a derisive criticism of English education by showing the futility of the canonical English language in modern day India. This extensive criticism also finds a voice in the film through the metaphor of “chutnification” of many languages. The futility of English and English education is shown in *English, August* through two approaches.

1) **Inanity of English:** The shooting script provides candid evidence for the extreme uselessness of English and English-perpetuating institutions through the words of Dr Upadhyay, August’s teacher at Stephen’s College:

This place (waves his hands around) is like a parody, a complete farce. They’re trying to build another Cambridge here. (Pause.) At my old university I used to teach Macbeth to my MA English classes in Hindi. (Benegal 122)

These words of Upadhyay clearly question the utility of building another Cambridge in the form of St. Stephen’s. These words of Upadhyay highlight the pointlessness of English and of all institutions spreading English. Nevertheless, Upadhyay’s discourse is set in contrast to earlier idea of English education. English education was once considered to be nation building language by the colonizers. Shourie commenting on the nation building power of English education writes:

The clear object [of English education]: to perpetuate British rule into the indefinite future. The definite instrument to instruct the natives in Western learning, to inculcate in them Western values so that they come to perceive their own interest in the perpetuation of British rule. (Shourie 80)

By and by, English has lost the nation building power and becomes merely a “farce” of the old decayed theoretical assumptions.

The instance of teaching a canonical text like Macbeth in Hindi shows on a superficial level that how English loses its cultural superiority after the Britishers have left the country and how English texts are subverted in Hindi language. This is a direct dig at Thomas Babington

Macaulay's infamous "Minute on Indian Education," which dictated that the British "have to educate a people who cannot at present be educated by means of their mother-tongue" (Sharp 116). Macaulay's rabid colonial rhetoric is shrewdly turned on its head by showing the helplessness of the English text like Macbeth that needs the support of Hindi in its teaching. But Chatterjee in this mockery of the English language employs another ploy as he indirectly poses a rhetorical question: Isn't it equally pointless to teach Macbeth in Hindi? Thus though this rhetorical question, Chatterjee mocks at the Indian Education system as a sheer imitation of English education system.

2) **Impractical Approach of English:** The satire on the futility of English is stretched to such an extent that English perpetually takes the form of an unreal language that is only good as a hypothesis rather than as a language that has any practical value with which to face real situation. As Upadhyay retorts: "I wanted to join the civil services too. Give this exam. I should have. Instead (looks around at his room) But now you, you'll get out of here to a more real situation" (Benegal 123). These instances proclaim. English institutions to be tombstones specially designed to keep in place the hypothetical "corpses" created by the English language. But at the same the overemphasis on the greatness of IAS is set as an irony as Chatterjee shows how the whole institution of IAS is dwindling. Rather than creating great leaders like Gandhi and Nehru, IAS creates disillusioned souls like Agastya. In other words, IAS is no more the steel frame of the nation.

The question that has been addressed by *English, August* is how to exorcise the ghost of English. "Khichdi language" or what Rushdie calls as "chutnification" is exploited by Chatterjee to oust the demon of "legitimate" English that still caters to the colonizers. This "legitimate" English even after the departure of the English dominates the nook and cranny of our bureaucratic system. Srivastava's well gyrated remark towards the end of the film while throwing light on Agastya's character: "One year to think!! In three months I learnt English!" is a pastiche of the politics of English education and "legitimate" English as bestowed upon us by Macaulay. The use of English gives the required "confidence" (Chatterjee 60) and thus helps in exploiting the masses unaware of the power of the English.

Dev Benegal following the tradition of the novel also adopts a stance to debunk the notion of Macaulay who declares in his infamous Minute that he "never found one among them

who could deny that a single shelf of a good European library was worth the whole native literature of India and Arabia” (Sharp 120). This deconstruction of English is accomplished through the use of vernaculars like Telugu, Hindi to create the narrative of the film. Amitava Kumar, discussing the same issue of “*angreziness*” of *English, August* writes:

Instead, it is the quality of the burlesque: the staidness of colonial English tickled, harassed, abused, and caressed by proper as well as improper Indians: this is the world where memories, with a shift in the accent, get easily transmuted into mammaries. (Kumar 124)

This verbal jugglery interspersed with faulty pronunciation is beautifully carved by Benegal in the film. Some of the lines which lurk with the audience years after they have seen the movie would be: “So?... Agastya, what kind of name is Agastya, bhai?,” says Srivastava (Benegal 116) or as Dhruvo retorts in the last line of the film: “In two words, *Hazaar* Fucked” (172). These lines spoken by the actor in his peculiar tonality seem to haunt the imagination of the viewers, thus giving them a new perspective towards English language.

3.3. Representation of Madna

The picture painted by Tamse, the architect of Madna was a deliberate endeavor on the part of Chatterjee to show that Madna like the painting makes no sense as it offers no visual or conceptual imagination and it flouts all the laws of aesthetics and reason:

High up on the wall facing him, amid the lizards, hung what he [Agastya] would later call the usual improbable Rest-House painting – a sunset, and water, and therefore two sunsets, a boat, a boatman in a Japanese conical hat, on the shore two trees, like giant mushrooms. As he went higher, he relaxed more, and grew more amazed, in an objective way, at the absence of imagination in the painting. (Chatterjee 8)

Chatterjee through Agastya’s words wanted to show the utter lack of imagination in the architecture of Madna and he wished that the modern day architect should internalize the demand for legibility, calling for an aesthetic that spoke to the eyes, so that each monument, each space, each street might be read by the citizen as denoting its role, nature, and aesthetic purpose.

Chatterjee challenges all the values in Madna that put an affront to Enlightenment values: unhygienic, ill-serviced, badly planned, and visually incoherent, it was the very image of disorder and irrationality. Put in another way, what Michel Foucault characterized as the Enlightenment utopia of “transparent space” (Foucault 153) was in Chatterjee’s Madna confronted by its apparent opposite, a world of “darkened spaces, of the pall of gloom which prevents the full visibility of things, men and truths” (153-154).

For Chatterjee, Madna is the focus of the narrative; while for Benegal Agastya is the focus of the film. For Chatterjee, it’s the cultural and architectural drudgery of Madna that infected characters like Agastya and Mohan Gandhi. The evidence is given as Chatterjee let the *chutney* speak to Agastya in a party, “Hi, my name is cholera, what’s yours?” (Chatterjee 24) In contrast, Benegal shows that Agastya’s deterioration is rooted in his own solipsistic pleasure. Not for a single instance, spectator feels while watching the movie that Agastya’s decay is the result of Madna’s incorrigibility to comfort Agastya. It is his own nostalgia for Englishness present in the urban surroundings that made him suffer. When all the people were working in the office then Agastya was either masturbating or doping with Sathe or drinking liquor in the company of Shankar. For Benegal, Agastya’s plight has nothing to do with Madna. As he clearly tells that the reason behind Agastya’s plight is his own humor. Madna becomes pain-inflicting for Agastya because of the fact that Agastya is not able to indulge in luxuries of life. But the moment, he gets these luxuries the same environment of Madna invokes pleasure in him. Here are some of the situations, when Agastya finds pleasure in Madna:

- a) Masturbation (Voyeurism through the act of ogling the breasts of Malti)
- b) Dope (with Shankar, Bhatia or Sathe)
- c) Englishness (Company of John Avery, Sita or Bhatia)
- d) Spicy food (with Srivastavas)

For Chatterjee unlike Benegal who deleted the characters like Mohan Gandhi and Baba Ramanna, every character is a product of naturalistic surroundings. Thus, Madna makes them suffer. Here, unlike the film, where the suffering is only inflicted on Agastya, suffering becomes universal and existential. For instance, how the suffering is inflicted on Mohan Gandhi after his act of raping the tribal girl. Thus, Madna depicted in the novel can generate existential suffering

for one and all. While Madna depicted by Benegal can only trigger penile drives in Agastya. Here the point to be considered is that the penile monologues of Agastya are set in contrast to what the founding fathers of the nation thought them to be. Gandhi and other leaders gave nation as the first priority while Agastya gives his masturbation monologues as first.

Benegal is sarcastic about Agastya's dislocation, which he reads as a metaphor for India's (elite's) dislocation and bankruptcy. Chatterjee is less sarcastic and more melancholic when he discusses this attitude towards the elite class. Thus, one can see how Benegal brings in a deliberate change in the narrative by adopting a change of voice (from melancholic to sarcastic). The film is the whole sole representation of Agastya's eye-view where he promotes the English-sensibility and rejects anything and everything that deals with an Indian sensibility. Thus, the film showcases Agastya as a mere puppet in the hands of his own selfishness.

The novel shows Madna not only as a rural hearth but also as a town aspiring to be a city kitted out with all the amenities of a modern day city. Showing how Madna was once a port town, and how the recent discovery of limestone, mica has brought various industries here substantiates this aspiration. Post-production script focuses only on Madna, which is projected as a savage hub challenging the sophisticated ways of a civilized chap like Agastya. To put it simply, Madna (representing India) in the post production script becomes a 'hub of savages' bereft of any culture. This culture can be imparted to these savages either through Avery or "English type" like Agastya. The same dialogue of the savage and the civilized is discussed by Michael Dirda in his article in the *Washington Post* where he writes:

There are two favorite themes in comic fiction, each the obverse of the other: The goodhearted innocent or Noble Savage who unexpectedly finds himself in the dazzling big city and the urban sophisticate somehow trapped among provincial hicks. (Dirda)

Thus Madna in Benegal does not invoke nationalistic spirit. This lack of nationalist spirit is created through the deletion of two scenes in the post-production script that can serve as testimony to cultural nationalism. Cultural nationalism derives its strengths from the past—mainly folk traditions, religion, and rural dialects—in order to demonstrate cultural uniqueness and thereby stimulate national consciousness. India is known world wide for its magic and thirty three crore gods and goddesses. Dev Benegal decides not to represent this variety of cultural

nationalism as he dismisses Madna only as a 'hub of savages'. Thus to accomplish this mission of showing Madna as bereft of nationalistic spirits, Benegal deletes these two scenes from the post-production script.

a) Scene with Magician in Front of Dhrubo's House:

The magician looks up, notices Agastya approaching, smiles and pulls out a large steel ball from his mouth. Agastya smiles and sits down beside him.

Agastya: How d'you do that?

The magician smiles, nods knowingly and packs his things inside his bag. Agastya looks on as he gathers his belongings.

Magician: Thinking a lot? Haven't you?

Agastya (amazed): How d'you know? (Benegal 163)

b) Ram Lila Grounds Evening:

Electric blue sky. Magic hour light. A distant, LOW RUMBLE is heard.

Ten heads of RAVANA magically appear one by one, in a CLOSE VIEW.

CAMERA circles around the colourful effigy in a widening circle, slowly revealing the figure. RAVANA – the ten headed demon king from the epic Ramayana.

HUGE CROWDS swell up in front of the effigy. CAMERA follows AGASTYA, DHRUBO & NEERA as they walk through the crowds to a photo stall. (113)

For Benegal, rural Madna only serves as antithesis to urban abode of Agastya. Thus Madna is set in contrast either to Delhi or to Calcutta (present day Kolkata).

3.4. The Middle Path or the Third Space

What made John Avery to come to India? Upon this seemingly simple question hangs the entire tale of the novel. Did he really come to find out more about his grandfather, or is it because these English people have enough time and money to explore places round the world? Or Chatterjee wants us to understand that at least these Britishers still have something like the

couch of the past to rest upon when, in contrast, English-educated Indians are dangling in a limbo because neither do they have the security of the English nor any “Indian” ambitions to make their country a better place to live in. The departure of the British has created a vacuum, and the exploration of this is what interests Chatterjee.

The novel represents the transition, hitherto unnoticed from British India to “Indian” India. The novel neither represents a golden dream of India prosperous now that the British have gone, nor represents the grief-stricken woefulness of certain classes after the British departure. Instead, it constructs India, which is caught in the winds of change, thereby devising a *third way* of looking at India.

Even the ideals of *Swaraj*, or the statue of Gandhi, which earlier was able to provide directions to thousands of directionless Indians, fail to provide anything after the British have left. The long-harbored dream of making India a paradise once we Indians have attained self-rule has already shattered. Chatterjee’s decision to let the Administrative officer go back to Calcutta is a strong statement of the fact that the time has come when Indians must self-critically ponder now on the issue of self-rule with an eye to cure the malady rather than simply being plaintive about the different issues of life.

The civil service left over by the departed English is itself transformed, by Chatterjee’s satire, from the pivotal institution we imagine it to be to a purgatorial post-colonial or post-everything waiting room peopled by vague outlines in transit, their acts ranging from the oddly self-defeating to the self-abusive; he gives us a landscape in which noble gestures towards withdrawal, listening to rock music in solitude, and masturbation are seen to be at least as important as more direct forms of activism and social conscience in constituting our unnameable democratic life. (Chaudhuri 547)

The novel is simply representing the third way of projection, which marks the essence of the real India.

The idea of the “third space” also has important insights to yield in understanding the text’s transformation from novel to film. “Pop-art” cinema as discussed earlier in the introduction in India has fashioned for itself an idiom in English, unlike either mainstream or art film, showing a “third way,” of independent artistic enquiry is possible in Bollywood cinema.

The purpose of this cinema is to “jolt” the audience out of their slumber. Movies like *Mr. and Mrs. Iyer*, *Split Wide Open* and *English, August* have tried to remodel the rules of the industry. How to create an authentic Indian idiom in the English language is a question these films have had to tackle. Benegal’s use of English works at both the literal and figurative levels. English can be added as the fourth to Lalitha Gopalan’s set of three interruptions mentioned earlier. So where song-and-dance sequences, intermissions or censorship can be counted on to interrupt the run-of-the-mill mainstream film, English, in *English, August* routinely emerges as a disturbingly omnipresent reminder of our ugly colonial past, which reduced us to penury – nationally and individually – even as it fed our comprador elites. *English, August* forces us to think, even as the movie plays on, what its linguistic choices might mean in a nation of primarily non-English movie-goers.

Thus one can see how the novel and the film *English, August* are able to create the third space.

3.5. Existentialist Cinema versus Experimental Cinema

The “New Wave” came into existence in India in 1970s with the re-introduction of realism by filmmakers like Shyam Benegal and Govind Nihalani. Shyam Benegal’s debut film *Ankur (The Seedling, 1974)* was rekindled the dying flame of the art house cinema. With its feet steeped in the parallel Indian cinema tradition, it shattered the foundation of popular Hindi cinema, which is merely based on the parade of big star cast and huge money turnovers. Without a star cast, without a song and without melodrama, *Ankur* was produced with a paltry sum of Rs. 5 lacs but fetched more than a crore for producer Lalit M. Bijlani (Joshi). The meaning of new wave cinema is well expressed in the words of Nihalani:

The spirit of new cinema was to look at our own society with new eyes, with a different kind of vision. It was a vision of questioning and finding new answers. It was an effort to find a new language to talk to the new generation of our own society about the new issues that were then emerging. (Joshi)

The same quest of realist vision at the outset seems to be the motto of Dev Benegal but as one moves further in the terrain of *English, August*, one finds that Dev Benegal, instead of

incorporating the themes of the Indian new wave is only giving them a cursory glance or in other words, he is only creating a spoof of them.

The focus of this “new wave” cinema is to adhere to the realism rather than the fantastic elements of the mainstream cinema where the Godly hero kills the demonic villain. The characters work on polarity principle that is either they are good or evil. There is no ambiguity in their personality. Like tales by Hans Christian Anderson (1805-1875) or the Grimm brothers or for that matter Sir Thomas Malory, films of the popular or commercial genre were peopled by fantastic figures who were either ugly, cruel and contemptible knaves or beautiful, virtuous and noble knights and damsels. Commercial filmmakers steered clear of picking “existentialist” themes that might remind viewers of their daily lives by concentrating on wealth, sex, beauty, romance, dance and song. The purpose of any commercial movie is to create only a mirage of escape from the mundane realities of life, and thus in turn giving the viewer a feeling of enjoyment. Even if forced by the storyline to show poverty, sickness, disease or sadness, they scrupulously avoided spoiling the fun of viewers by not giving them an overdose of any such negative aspects of real life. The dance, song and steamy scenes are carefully designed to give respite to the audience from the overabundance of negative aspects in the plot of the movie. No matter what negative aspects are poured on the psyche of the audience during the course of the movie but at the end, the director of the mainstream cinema restores the happiness, thus making popular cinema as an escapist venture.

New wave filmmakers, on the other hand, were inspired by the social and political reality around them. They have a leftist political bent. This political affiliation to the reality of life always steeped them into existentialist themes thus expanding the canvas of a movie from mere entertainment as exploited by the commercial film makers to battlefield of reformation. Existentialist angle which has its roots in the natural soil of the human psyche has been fully grounded in the directors of “new wave.”

Being an experimental director who brings into Bollywood, the new tradition of pop-art (blending of art and commercial cinema), Benegal substitutes existentialist themes for solipsistic pleasures in *English, August* as per the demands of the commercial cinema. Thus, Chatterjee’s autobiographical narrative of existentialist angst becomes a solipsistic indulgence of Agastya in Benegal’s movie.

3.6. Fusion Therapy

Indian Adaptation has become a part and parcel of Film Studies in non-academic circles in India but in academic circles, it still fails to interest the Indian film theorists and critics. As a result, not a single attempt was made in the past to throw light on the intricacies of Indian adaptation. Film critics without understanding the difference between the Western adaptation and Indian adaptation were borrowing theories from the West to comprehend the inner working of Indian adaptation. So in the light of past failures and mistakes on the part of Indian film critics, my proposition of Indian adaptation theory, in opposition to Western adaptation theory becomes more relevant. Here I propose four points, which demarcate the Indian adaptation from the Western adaptation and thus led to the founding of Indian adaptation theory.

a) **Family Viewership or the Box Office:** Bollywood adaptation cinema unlike Hollywood cinema is a family cinema. Here, the themes adopted for film adaptations are generally dictated by the family audience. Though the adapted movies have family values but to dub Indian adaptation theory as a fall out of family syndrome would be wrong. This family-ideals-preservation tactics as suggested by Bollywood directors like Vidhu Vinod Chopra and Leela Bhansali is a ploy to mask the artistic and commercial aspect of adaptation. The directors trying their hands in the complex terrain of adaptation often found commenting that they change the artistic literariness and professional wackiness to adjust the popular discourse of the layman. Though in reality, the idea behind embracing family values is the propagandist perpetuated by the directors for the commercial success of the film at the box office.

b) **Adaptation of the Classics:** Though adaptation has been a part of Bollywood since 1960s when movies like Vijay Anand's *Guide* were made but recently only its sudden upsurge in Bollywood with movies like Chadha's *Bride and Prejudice* and Mira Nair's *The Namesake* it took a form of proper tradition in Indian cinema. In the West unlike India, adaptation of all kinds of popular as well as classic novels, short stories and plays is happening on regular basis from time immemorial like Godard's *Contempt* and Truffaut's *Shoot the Piano Teacher*. As in the case of Western cinema, film adaptation has been in prevalence from quite some time as a result they have lost their fetish with the classics. In contrast, Indian directors are not able to give up their

adherence to the classics still now. A quick look at the ten most famous adapted films can serve as evidence.

1. R. K. Narayan's *The Guide* (English) into Vijay Anand's *Guide* (Hindi)
2. Shakespeare's *Comedy of Errors* (English) into Sampooran Singh Gulzar's *Angoor* (Hindi)
3. Khuswant Singh's *Train to Pakistan* (English) into Pamela Rooks's *Train to Pakistan* (Hindi)
4. Shakespeare's *Macbeth* (English) into Vishal Bhardawaj's *Maqbool* (Hindi)
5. Shakespeare's *Othello* (English) into Vishal Bharadwaj's *Omkaara* (Hindi)
6. Sarat Chandra Chatterjee's *Parineeta* (Bengali) into Pradeep Sarkar's *Parineeta* (Hindi)
7. Sarat Chandra Chatterjee's *Devdas* (Bengali) into Leela Bhansali's *Devdas* (Hindi)
8. O. Henry's *The Gift of the Magi* (English) into Rituparno Ghosh's *Raincoat* (Hindi)
9. Ruskin Bond's *A Flight of Pigeons* (English) into Shyam Benegal's *Junoona* (Hindi)
10. Amrita Pritam's *Pinjar* (Punjabi) into Chandra Prakash Dwivedi's *Pinjar* (Hindi)

The ten adaptations mentioned above clearly show that all these films are adapted from classics. The word "classics" has its etymological roots in the word "class." Thus classics can be defined as any texts that have followers belonging to a particular class. For instance, *Train to Pakistan* is a classic as it has followers who belonged to that class that underwent trauma during the time of partition. The same thing is applicable on *English, August*, the classic of Upamanyu Chatterjee that has cult following amongst the youth. Though, there can be one or two instances in Bollywood where the writer of the novel is unknown but they serve as an exception when one is discussing the idea of the entire corpus on adaptation.

c) Adaptation of the Language: In Bollywood, unlike Hollywood, adaptation is happening on three levels. First level is the translation of novel's language into Hindi, second level is the translation of the novel into a screenplay/shooting script and third level is the translation of the screenplay into the movie. Tom Leitch discussing Hollywood adaptation theory:

Because films depend on screenplays which in turn often depend on literary source material, in fact, they are doubly performative. Actors and actresses are translating into performance a written script which is itself an adaptation of a prior literary

source, with the important difference that the script is a performance text—a text that requires interpretation first by its performers and then by its audience for completion—whereas a literary text requires only interpretation by its readers. (Leitch 150)

As Leitch points out, direct communication from writer to reader is not the same in film adaptation. At first, adaptation is complicated by the mediation first by a screenplay and then by the actors' performance of that screenplay, thereby imposing two layers of adaptation between the audience and the original source. This is a phenomenon taking place in Hollywood where the lingual translation is not happening between the source text and the targeted text. A past account of the adapted movies in Bollywood shows a divergent trend as the director has to grapple with the lingual aspect of adaptation also. The above example of the ten films shows how in almost all the instances, there is a difference between the source language and the targeted language (Hindi). Though exception to the rules is the text of *English, August* where the source text and the targeted text are both in the same language, thus cutting the three fold adaptation process into two.

d) Diasporic Audience: The Indian diaspora today has a significant role in Bollywood industry. The Indian diaspora is a result of two “moments in the history of capital” (Mishra 26). The first is the moment of classic capitalism, “before the world was thoroughly consolidated as transnational” (Spivak 245), which marks the dispersion of cheap labour in Britain and Europe. These Indians were taken over as indentured labor to far-flung parts of the world in the nineteenth-century. The “second moment” marks the beginning of late capitalism with economic migrants and refugees entering the metropolitan centres of the ex-Empire as well as the New World and Australasia. This moment came into existence after the Second World War. The migrants of the “first moment” broke contact with India while the refugees of the “second moment” are still connected to us through travel, films, digital technology (Mishra 26).

These affluent “second moment” diasporic Indians assert control over Bollywood in two ways: either by funding the movie directors or by watching the movie (the average ticket in any theatre abroad is \$5 unlike India where one can watch movies for Rs 50), thus determining the success of Indian movies overseas. Discussing the same idea of diasporic finance, Makarand Paranjape writes that the Indian diaspora “was indeed like a nation of 20 million, though scattered across 70 countries. It was capable of behaving as a coherent unit when it came to its

appreciation and support for Bombay Cinema. With overseas returns of upwards of 30 million dollars (about Rs 130 crores) in the first few weeks, recent films like *Kabhi Alvida Na Kehna* have demonstrated that what a film earns abroad can add substantially to what it earns in India or even offset losses on its Indian sales” (Paranjape). The past graph of Indian adaptation shows that Indian directors in order to please these Diasporic Indians are making movies which deal in issues faced by these people. These issues are 1) nostalgia for the homeland (*The Namesake, Anita and Me*), 2) issues particular to Indians sensibility like partition (*Tamas, Pinjar, Train to Pakistan*), 3) Indian Wedding (Bride and Prejudice), 4) Foreign Culture versus Indian culture (*Parineeta, Devdas*). As a result, only those novels are adapted which have their roots in either of these themes.

In the course of this chapter, I have analyzed how Agastya feels alienated either due to the drudgery of Madna or his socio-economic superiority in contrast to the poverty manifested in the tribal people. Tabish Khair stressing on these differences writes: “In the context of Indian English literature, the socio-economic line of division has been conceptualized in terms of the opposition between Coolie (subaltern) and Babu classes” (Khair ix). In addition to this alienation characterized by Agastya in Madna, I have formulated an Indian adaptation theory distinguishing between the Indian adaptation and the Western adaptation.

Chapter Four

Conclusion

One thread that runs throughout the research is that the success of Chatterjee's *English, August: An Indian Story* and Benegal's *English, August* is rooted in their nouvelle forms or creation of a third space. Both these forms were newly created to highlight the change in the sensibility and environment of the world they represent. Chatterjee's *English, August* represents the emergence of a global outlook and chutnified English, while Benegal's *English, August* marks the trend of harmonizing diverse conflicting discourses: realism and melodrama, narrative and spectacle, low brow and high brow, experimental and commercial, tradition and modernity in his cinema. Ultimately, this mélange of discourses led to both a widening of the range of experience on offer for the audience and a sense of commercial and artistic security on the part of the director. In the final analysis, Benegal's cinema is a blend of both mainstream and art cinema.

In the course of the dissertation, I have tried to show how the novel *English, August: An Indian Story* is transformed into the film *English, August* and how film is "found to work from perception towards signification, from external facts to interior motivations and consequences, from the givenness of a world to the meaning of a story cut out of that world" (Andrew 101). In contrast, literary fiction:

works oppositely. It begins with signs (graphemes and words) building to propositions which attempt to develop perception. As a product of human language it naturally treats human motivation and values, seeking to throw them out onto the external world, elaborating a world out of a story. (Andrew 101)

English, August, as I have already shown, is a rare text as it constitutes itself out of both mainstream cinema and art cinema. Thus it draws an iconoclastic trajectory for itself.

4.1. The Parallel Cinema in India: An Obituary

To understand, why a particular theme has been preserved and why another does not make it to the celluloid version of the novel, one has to understand the values of the director, who is often the final stamp of approval on the script. Dev Benegal's experimental cinema is a pastiche of many cinemas. Some of the features of Benegal's cinema have their counterpart in the "New Wave", though as I stated earlier, one should not confuse Benegal's cinema with the "New Wave", which has its basis in the socialist reformation of the society. Though, Benegal's cinema of pastiche is a reaction against the cinema of the 1970s, which is an Indian version of the "New Wave" French cinema and which highlights "didacticism and programmatic" (Evam 110). The term "New Wave" was coined by the French journalist Françoise Giroud. The five "core" directors in the French "New Wave" are Claude Chabrol, François Truffaut, Jean-Luc Godard, Éric Rohmer and Jacques Rivette. The source of inspiration for all the five core members is the critic André Bazin, "a passionate advocate of realism, mise-en-scène, and deep focus (which he saw in opposition to montage)" (Powrie 21). Though, on a superficial level one feels that Benegal techniques are a part of this "New Wave" cinema, a closer look at Benegal's cinema will show the other side of the coin. Here in this section, I will investigate how two of Benegal's devices – narrative intransitivity and fusion of mainstream and art cinema – clearly mark the end of "New Wave" cinema in Bollywood.

(a) **Narrative Intransitivity:** Narrative transitivity, as embraced by mainstream cinema, follows a casual chain of events: a) Exposition, b) Peripety, c) Climax, and d) Denouement. The purpose behind this fixed pattern is the straight forwardness, which keeps the plot of the film intact. Benegal challenges this continuity. His purpose, throughout *English, August* is to break the fetters of continuity and linearity, which are religiously followed by the mainstream cinema and often by art cinema. He splits the narrative open by:

finding the right cinematic equivalence. What came to mind were the early broadcasts of Doordarshan where every (interesting) program would be interrupted at critical junctures with a title card saying 'Rukavat ke liye khed,' (apologies for the interruption). Since for me the narrative was rock solid I thought the aesthetic of interruption seemed to be the right cinematic equivalence

to Upamanyu's writing; a fragmentary, hallucinatory journey in the mind of a young reluctant civil servant. (Evam 109-110).

Unlike, the "New Wave" directors who sided with narrative intransitivity as a form of social protest against the cinema of quality, Benegal uses narrative intransitivity as a cinematic device only to catch the disenchantment of the male protagonist.

(b) **Fusion:** Furthermore, Benegal shuns the "New Wave" cinema of political and social protest by making Popart cinema that is a blend of mainstream and art cinema. This decision to blend is a very significant one in the present context where the success of the movie at the box-office is not the end but the beginning of innumerable television screenings by various satellite channels. Ziya Salam, discussing the television screening aspect of cinema in a recent newspaper article, says that while major box office hits like *Rang De Basanti*, *Lage Raho Munna Bhai*, *Krrish*, *Dhoom-2*, *Phir Hera Pheri*, and *Don* have been acquired by television channels for sums as large as Rs 15 crore, no channel is ready to push the envelope for serious cinema, with the result that "Parallel cinema is dying a second death" (Salam 1).

Having lost out in the box office popularity stakes, worthies like Shyam Benegal, Mrinal Sen, Goutam Ghose, Kalpana Lajmi and others are being given the cold shoulder by satellite channels. Almost all the movie channels including Set Max, Zee Cinema, B4U and Filmy show four films a day, but on a safe average only about six parallel cinema films a month. In the face of different star festivals like Amitabh Bachchan's *Navrasa* at Zee Cinema in April-May and Set Max had "*Ab Tak* Bachchan." There are no festivals on Mrinal Sen or Shyam Benegal films.

No wonder Kalpana Lajmi, who has directed films like *Ek Pal* and *Darmiyan*, rues, "The channels only want films of the last five years. I am known to the new generation by some of my weaker films. Even I cannot see my favorite films like *Ek Pal* on television anymore. The classics are lost" (ibid). At this juncture, what should an intelligent director do? Benegal's decision to incorporate both the mainstream and art is a decision guided by the need of the hour. These decisions on the part of the satellite channels on the one hand necessitate decisions like Benegal's, and on the other hand, they also spell the end of the Indian "New Wave" with its esoteric small-budget aspirations.

Dev Benegal's style of film-making thus needs to be located within four other variables:

- a) Family Viewership or the Box Office, b) Adaptation of Classics, c) Adaptation of Language, d) Diasporic Audience.

a) **Family Viewership or the Box Office:** Often, directors invoke the "family audience" as the reason for their shying away from contentious subjects. But in truth, this family audience is only a shibboleth invoked to garner the maximum profits possible out of a process of speculation which aims to seduce the audience by pleasing it at all times. *English, August* does not embark upon this superficial venture, and instead boldly deals with issues, like voyeurism and masturbation, in addition to mental collapse, that most "family films" cannot venture to discuss. Further, Benegal seems to cash in on the cult classic status of the novel, thus promoting individualistic and anti-puritan values in contrast to family ideals. Knowing the complex nature of the novel *English, August* in terms of "anti-social" chapters with frank sexual content, Benegal intelligently shifts sides and decides to woo audiences belonging to the elite class, and which have artistic exposure, rather than the hoi polloi that uses cinema as a means of escaping the mundane realities of life. The experimental nature of Benegal's cinema confirms to the elite and popular expectations of a non-mainstream film.

b) **Adaptation of a non-canonical Classic:** The novel does not appeal to the popular and puritanical taste of the middle class with their hidden sexuality or what Sudhir and Katharina Kakkar call as "dark ages of sexuality," characterized by a lack of "erotic grace which frees sexual activity from the imperatives of biology, uniting the partners in sensual delight and metaphysical openness" (Kakkar 121). However, the novel is proclaimed as a cult classic by the elite class including the Stephanian school of writers. Benegal in his experimental project decides to promote this hip and happening nature of the cult classic by making the film fit to woo the interests and hankerings of the elite class and the X generation.

c) **Adaptation of Language:** As Benegal's *English, August* is specially characterized by its innate ability to woo the elite class so obviously it has to embrace the medium of communication (that is English) used by this class. Though the move in itself is driven by the motives to woo the elite class but luckily it initiated a new tradition of Indian English in Indian cinema resulting in movies like *Bride and Prejudice* (2004), and *The Namesake* (2006).

d) **Diasporic Audience:** The use of English automatically promoted the popularity of *English, August* among the Diasporic audiences. These audiences look for themes that remind them both of their Indian roots and the disenchantment caused by the Western surroundings. By showing the dislocation of the male protagonist Agastya and the clash of Indian values and Western ideals through the metaphor of Madna, Benegal is able to create the themes which sell amidst Diasporic audiences. Not only Benegal's English August attracted the diasporic audience but the use of the English language serves as a token of multiculturalism, thus giving a chance to Benegal to woo the English speaking gentry of the West.

4.2. Findings

I have discussed in the course of the dissertation how *English, August: An Indian Story* is the member of the "new" class of the novel that emerged in the India with the advent of Stephanian school of writers. This "new" novel employs three attributes at the outset and they are: global outlook, disenchantment, and *chutnification* of language. Simultaneously, I have also discussed film adaptation's respectable place in Indian cinematic history and have placed *English, August's* film version in a matrix determined by four factors: the director is almost always influenced by the potential "family audience" in his choice of theme, content and treatment; often, this leads to the choice of "classic" texts, which have already had high levels of reader acceptance, an acceptance the film-makers hope will translate into a film viewership also. Linguistic choices are also determined by the nature of the audience the film-makers have in mind, since English films in India have a very different viewership from Hindi, which in turn commands a different viewership from other Indian languages, though currently, the diasporic audience is gradually becoming a major influence both in terms of thematic and linguistic choices.

To sum up, we have seen in the course of the dissertation how the transformation of the novel into the film of *English, August* necessitated changes on several levels: a) thematic, b) linguistic, c) the audience, d) censorship, e) commercial, f) ideological, and g) cinematic.

I have analyzed the major thematic shift that takes us from the existentialist motive of the novel to the solipsistic pleasure of the male protagonist Agastya in the film. This theme of essential happiness (in the garb of the ultimate spoof of existentialism) becomes a milestone in the life of Agastya in the cinematic text as confirmed by Shankar when he says: "Sen saab and I

are similar. Men without ambition. All we want is to be happy” (Benegal 171). Further confirmation of the essentialist themes that are present in the cinematic version comes from Pultu Kaku when he retorts: “All he wants is to be happy. To be happy!” (172) These themes of essential happiness have been underlined time and again by Benegal but Chatterjee only shows the existential aspect of humanity in the course of the novel.

Secondly, the nationalist status of the novel is dismissed in the film through the deletion of scenes projecting it. But still the gap between the colonized and the colonizer is discussed carefully by Benegal. Despite the presence of hybridity in what are theoretically considered by orientalists to be homogenous sets, the binary opposition colonial-self/colonized-other as encoded in colonialist discourse is reflected carefully by Benegal. The colonizers (the British) and their sympathizers are portrayed as hip and happening and in order to create that mirage a special care is taken by Dev Benegal (unlike Chatterjee) as he makes Agastya “beard”-less. Perennial bouts of pot-smoking and the insatiable need to masturbate make Agastya a class of his own. This establishes the crucial interconnection of colonial politics and popular culture, not only as it shaped mass opinion in the imperial centre, but also in its quite different impact on the popular consciousness of the colonized.

Linguistically I have showed how the film has adapted the spirit of the novel by infusing various vernacular languages to produce the same effect that Chatterjee produces through the use of phrases like “hazaar fucked.” Thus, Benegal also accomplishes the “*chutnification*” of languages Chatterjee achieves in his text.

Various factors, like the non-literariness of the plot, indicate how the film *English, August* caters to a larger audience unlike the novel, whose literariness makes it a niche literary text. The thumri songs sung by Shankar also serve to attract the attention of the audience, this being one instance where the film adheres to the mainstream song-and-dance “cinema of interruptions” as Lalitha Gopalan put it.

Censorship is always part of cinema. Various scenes or characters that would have been controversial either politically or culturally have been deleted meticulously from the film. Two major instances that I have analyzed are those that deal with Baba Ramanna and Mohan Gandhi. The question worth asking at this juncture is: if the purpose of Central Board of Film Certification (earlier called as Central Board of Film Censors) is to control obscenity and

violence in the movies, then what are masturbation scenes doing in *English, August*? How come they were not censored? The answer seems to be hidden in the revised guidelines issued by the Central Government in January, 1978 saying: "Films have to be judged according to the total effect they produce on the viewer and not on the basis of individual scenes" (Vilanilam 73).

Commercially, film is a larger and more complex phenomenon. The director has to garner huge funds before he can make a movie. In regard to the fund business, the role of distributors becomes important. Twentieth Century Fox was the distributor of *English, August*. Although nobody is sure how much money is being invested in the movie business in India, it is estimated by some researchers that the total investment in the early 1980s was about Rs. 800 crores (Fox 25). Today, it could be anywhere between Rs. 1,500 crores and Rs. 2,000 crores annually. Ticket sales must be of the order of Rs. 1.5 crores a day now, which means an annual sale of not less than Rs. 500 crores (Vilanilam 60). The novel *English, August* does not need an elaborate distribution apparatus with huge capital outlays, on the other hand; being a literary text, its costs of production are infinitely lower.

In the case of English fiction in India, the market size varies considerably. Sandip Roy Chowdhury, one of the founder members of Penguin Books India, discussing this aspect of English fiction in India writes:

I would put it at 6 or 7 million. Of that 6-7 million probably about 1 million would be a real market – I mean bankers and venture capitalists might not really be reading novels. You scale down from 1 million to maybe 100,000 who regularly buy one or two books a year. A decent sale in India is 2,000 copies. A bestseller would be between 5-10,000 copies. A humungous seller would be above 10,000. (Chowdhury)

This clearly shows how the market of the film industry differs considerably from the English fiction market. One thing, which we have to keep into account, is that a good adaptation of a literary text is enough to rejuvenate the interest of the readers into the literary text and thus giving the literary text a new lease of life.

Ideologically, novel fits in with the Stephanian school and its preoccupation with of a global positioning, its disenchantment with the world, and its *chutnification* of language. The film, being a blend of art and commercial cinema, brings changes to the entire texture of the

novel accordingly. Thus, on the one hand, it uses narrative intransitivity and conversational mode to show the artistic nature of the project, and on the other, it employs melodrama and sexual titillation to woo commercial cinema-goers. In Bollywood, where the movies are generally made for the family viewership, the presence of “A” certificate (as issued in the case of *English, August*) ensures enough titillation for the audience and in many cases it becomes the only reason for the male audience to seek a movie.

Cinematically, the metaphysical signs and signifiers used by the novel have to be signified in flesh blood characters and physical scenarios on film, and the director’s camera is his “pen,” fleshing out, with a three-dimensional physicality that the literary text cannot have, the characters and their experiences. This colourful mélange of tangibility is a carefully and dexterously created camera “text” that showcases the inner tumult of Agastya. Anuradha Parikh, the producer, architect and visualizer of *English, August* speaks of this function of colour and camerawork:

The tension that exists between August’s public profile and inner sanctum of imagination are reflected in the use of color and sound. As a polite poker-faced civil servant, August’s world explodes into a hot palette of Indian colors. From intense orange to a glowing lime green- bright, rich, dense in the devastating heat of Madna. The sheer cacophony of radios blaring popular songs mixed with the unrestrained horns of local traffic become a background tapestry of confusion threatening to invade and take over his life.... In direct contrast is August’s private world. The glare is less blinding and when filtered through magenta and blue colored glass windows, light becomes more ambiguous and mixed. We are drawn into a secret and intimate world swathed in an amber glow of summer moonlight and are privy to his introspections- both erotic and disturbing. The raucous sounds of Madna recede temporarily to the start of a new day. (Parikh)

What I have found most remarkable is the female gaze or what can be called arguably as gaze of the gay camera used by Dev Benegal. I call it a remarkable achievement, because for the first time in Indian adaptation, the director has managed to infuse both the gazes (female and the male gaze) at the same time. Arguably gay gaze of the camera used by Benegal is able to bring out the nuance of the homoerotic desire in the movie. This “gay” gaze in contrast to the Mulvey’s idea

of female gaze somehow gives a new dimension to the movie and infuses a new lease of life in the novel *English, August: An Indian Story*.

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