

From Agatha Christie's *The Mirror Crack'd from Side to Side* to Rituparno Ghosh's *Shubho Muharat*: Film Authorship and Transcultural Adaptation

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Abstract

In her book *A Theory of Adaptation* Linda Hutcheon uses the term "transcultural adaptation" to illustrate different context in which literary or other cultural texts are adapted. This relocation of text through adaptation often adds multiple interpretations or alters textual politics. Hutcheon further argues that transcultural adaptation can transform the text in unpredictable direction. The paper seeks to explicate eminent Bengali film director Rituparno Ghosh's (1961-2013) *Shubho Muharat* (The First Day of the Shoot, 2003) which is influenced by Agatha Christie's (1890-1976) novel *The Mirror Crack'd from Side to Side* (1962). The essay untangles Ghosh's strategy to add Indian socio-cultural background in the western text. He expresses authorial intensions when he re-narrates of the novel on screen. The paper argues that the transcultural adaptation creates a "Third Space of enunciation" where the auteur uses the traits of detective film and repeats authorial intention. Following Janet Staiger's reinterpretation of auteurism the essay argues that duplication of authorial impulse is Ghosh's "technique of the self".

Keywords: Transcultural adaptation, Film Authorship, Third Space of enunciation, Detective Film, Rituparno Ghosh

Introduction

In her book *A Theory of Adaptation* Linda Hutcheon (2006) uses the term "transcultural adaptation" to explicate the context in which the text has been adapted. As this type of adaptation often travels to a different socio-cultural fabric, the adaptation shows how hypotext adopts the new culture in an unambiguous way. This type of revision in adaptation often alters the textual politics, for example interpreting racial or gender issues. This type of alteration is made to avoid the copyright infringement suit. Considering multi-dimensional interpretation of a hypotext, Hutcheon states (2006): "...the politics of transcultural adaptations can shift in unpredictable dimensions too" (p. 148). Along with this term, she also uses another term "indigenization" to indicate similar type of revision of a hypotext (p. 148-153). Moreover, Robert Stam (2017) in his

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recent essay "Revisionist Adaptation: Transtextuality, Cross-cultural Dialogism and Performative Infidelities" uses the term "cross-cultural adaptation" to indicate the adaptation of literary texts in different socio cultural scenario and considers subsequent changes in the adaptation as "revision" (p. 239). However, *Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary of Current English* (2005) suggests that the prefix "trans" indicates "across/beyond" (p. 1630) and the term "transcultural" clearly indicates a literary text's travelling beyond the socio-cultural boundary in which it is produced. But other terms like "indigenization" or "cross-cultural adaptation" create ambiguity. This paper uses Hutcheon's term "transcultural adaptation" to analyse the western text's travel to oriental culture.

Apart from this cultural transition of the literary text, the paper also examines the director's authorship. John Caughie (1993) summarizes the crux of auteurism when he says that "a film is more than likely to be the expression of his [director's] individual personality; and that this personality can be traced in a thematic and/or stylistic consistency over all (or almost all) the director's films" (p. 9). In her essay "Authorship Approaches" Janet Staiger (2003) catalogues different authorship strategies (p. 30). Staiger argues that the recent feminist and queer movement and identity politics make the agency of the speaker more important. She asserts that: "the author is reconceptualised as a subject having an ability to act as a conscious analyser of the functionality of citations in historical moments" (p. 49). A film director with his/her camera-pen often portrays the survival of the marginalised as an examination of the citation in specific historical juncture. And this artistic expression is, according to Staiger (2003), an expression of resistance which she justifies with Foucauldian theory of power and resistance. Moreover, she refers Foucault's idea of practice of morality and the birth of "ethical subject" (p. 27) in western sexual discourse to explicate the repetition of the authorial intentions. She also cites the development of individualism in the Hellenistic and Roman world through the philosophy of "The Cultivation of the Self" (p. 41) from *The Care of the Self* to analyse the individualism of the auteur. Foucault (1990) argues that the development of art of living under the theme of care of the self demands "self-knowledge" which is achieved through "recipes, specific forms of examination, and codified exercises" (p. 58). The philosophy of care of the self was considered as "art of existence" (p. 44) in ancient Greece. Staiger (2003) proclaims that an auteur duplicates the same narrative style in his/her oeuvre as the Greeks used to practice morality. The auteur establishes "self-knowledge" through identifying subjective analysis of issues like the practice of "recipes, specific forms of examination, and codified exercises" (p. 58). Thus an auteur takes care of the self through repetition of his/her authorial intentions. As authorship is a type of care of the self, according to Staiger it is "technique of the self" (p. 49). Furthermore, applying Judith Butler's revision of J. L. Austin's speech-act theory, she argues that an auteur's repetition of narrative in the oeuvre is considered as expression of self or performative statement (p. 49-51). As Rituparno Ghosh's (1961-2013) oeuvre portrays the oppressed women of middle class families of Bengal, his authorship should be studied following Staiger's reinterpretation of auteur theory.

The paper intends to explicate Ghosh's National Award winning film *Shubho Muharat* (The First Day of the Shoot, 2003) which is influenced by twentieth century British detective fiction writer Agatha Christie's (1890-1976) *The Mirror Crack'd from Side to Side* (1962), a late creation which presents the renowned female sleuth Miss Jane Marple. Following Linda Hutcheon's definition of transcultural adaptation, the essay analyses Ghosh's adaptation. The essay argues that this transcultural adaptation creates a "Third Space of enunciation" in which the auteur

duplicates his authorial intentions. The argument in this essay refers Jenet Staiger's interpretation of the theory of auteur to analyse Ghosh's "technique of the self" which he exhibits in this detective film.

***Shubho Muharat* as a Transcultural Adaptation**

Christie's novel *The Mirror Cracked from Side to Side* travels to east and adopts the culture of Bengal in Ghosh's film adaptation. As a consequence Miss Jane Marple, the spinster lady of uncertain age from a village, has become Rangapishi, an aged widow who lives alone in her flat with pets in Kolkata. The name "Rangapishi" literally means "crimson aunt" (Mukherjee, 2016, p. 6) and it is a familiar address to an aunt of Bengali family. The film never unveils the name of this lady. Hollywood actress Marina Greg metamorphoses into yesteryear Bengali film star Padmini Chaudhury and she marries film director Sambit Roy, a Bengali counterpart of film producer Jason Rudd. The adaptation informs that after spending many years in United States, Chaudhury returns Kolkata with her husband. However, Sambit is not a very popular film director and he does not find a producer to sponsor his film. The film portrays that Sambit is making a film which is funded by Padmini. The film starts with a massive inauguration ceremony in which the actress Kakoli who essays an important character in Sambit's film, is poisoned and dies afterwards. The actress reminds the character of Heather Badcock who did not have any association with film industry. However, Heather met her many years ago when she was suffering from German measles and as a consequence pregnant Marina was affected in that disease. Later she gives birth to a child who is mentally afflicted. Ghosh follows this narrative in his film with a slight alteration. In the adaptation Padmini gets this disease from Kakoli and like the novel she gives birth to an abnormal child. Ghosh follows the narrative when Padmini poisons Kakoli. She murders the make-up artist Kalpana who was trying to blackmail her, as Marina murdered Giuseppe. Margot Bence, the Personality Photographer who attended Marina's party and her adopted daughter, becomes a freelance photographer Subhankar Chaudhury who is nephew of Padmini. Arindam, the police inspector in the adaptation, replaces the inspector Dermot Craddock of Christie's novel. Moreover, Ghosh adds the character of journalist Mallica Sen who is niece of Rangapishi and the narrative delineates a love triangle between Mallica, Arindam and Subhankar. Apart from this subplot Ghosh adds the character of Sumit, a technician of Sambit's film and his relationship with his wife and Kalpana. Thus Ghosh alters the identity of the characters of Christie's novel for his Bengali audience and adds subplots in the adaptation. He carefully avoids the repeated reference of Victorian poet Tennyson's *The Lady of Shallot* in the novel to simplify the narrative for the Bengali audience.

Ghosh's Authorship in *Shubho Muharat*

Thematically Ghosh's film repeats the plight of the women in patriarchal middle class families in urban areas. Christie's novel provides him a ready-made plot. Ghosh follows the narrative style of "whodunit" novel in his adaptation. Though the character of Miss Jane Marple has been lambasted as "anti-feminist" by Cora Kaplan, she also mentions that the character dismantles traditional gender relations. She adds "Miss Marple could be construed as rescuing the village spinster from

contempt and a radical move to reinstate unmarried women as an independent force" (Makinen, 2006, p. 15). Merja Makinen (2006) states that the character of Miss Marple was introduced to the readers at the beginning of twentieth century when Suffragette Movement was started and debate on the value of "surplus" women, problem of marriage of lone woman and "anti-courtship" novel by New Women was going on (p. 62). Ghosh maroons Miss Marple from this time of cultural tensions to the anxiety of twenty-first century neo-liberal Bengal. In this film Ghosh uses the same women-centric theme with some difference. He adapts Christie's stereotype of "...the nosy, elderly woman spying on her neighbours for her own ends..." (Makinen, 2006, p. 56). Here Rangapishi does not have to fight with patriarchal dominance at home. Like her fictional counterpart, she confines herself within her home. She discovers that apart from cooking, sewing and singing, she can also identify a murderer using her knowledge, intuition and deduction. The film shows that from an ordinary woman of middle-class family she emerges as a detective and she is later encouraged by Padmini. Throughout the film she wears the traditional white *saree* which a widow supposed to wear in Bengal. Thus Rangapishi accepts the social customs, yet she gets ample scope at a juncture of her life to become a female sleuth like Miss Marple. Ghosh is reluctant to call Rangapishi a sleuth, because at the opening credit it is said: "For those Miss Marple who have always understood their son's excuse of Diarrhoea for not going to school, yet they remained silent" and "For those Miss Marple who have always understood the reason when their daughters return from their in-laws with red eyes, yet remained silent only". This statement appreciates middle class women's power of observation and intuition and compares them with Miss Marple. Ghosh tries to indicate that Rangapishi is one among them who was not aware of this ability. Moreover, the film portrays the character of Padmini following the narrative of the novel. At the end of the novel Miss Marple (1962) makes her observation on Marina Greg: "She couldn't let the past go and she could never see the future as it really was, only as she imagined it to be. She was a great actress and a beautiful and very unhappy woman" (p. 349). Padmini's character aptly portrays this melancholy of Greg. The film starts with the voiceover of Padmini. Thus she develops trust in the mind of the audience. It indicates that Ghosh treats the criminal in a different way. However, in the adaptation Padmini's past is primarily unveiled through Subhankar's reminiscence and her own confession at the end. Unlike the novel, the director gives Padmini an opportunity to narrate her suffering and confess her crimes. Thus in the adaptation Padmini does not merely remain as a criminal, rather she becomes a woman who chooses the path of revenge to heal her wound. Srimati Mukherjee (2016) observes that: "Rituparno Ghosh mobilizes cinema to show women's agency and meaningful exchange, not just for women, but between women, in a refreshingly novel way" (p. 6). Unlike Margot Bence who appears in the novel only in Chapter 15, in this adaptation Ghosh offers Subhankar more space so that he can unfold the past of Padmini's life. Apart from that Ghosh portrays the character of Mallica whose parents are looking for a suitable match for her marriage. She falls in love with the police inspector Arindam and at the end of the film she implicitly indicates that she is also interested in Subhankar. The adaptation also portrays the married life of Kakoli who is in love with another man. Her husband, on the other hand, starts dating with another woman immediately after her death. The film portrays in brief the married life of Pramila, the wife of Sumit and an addition in Ghosh's adaptation. The film shows that pregnant Pramila is neglected by her husband and he continues her relationship with his earlier girlfriend Kalpana who is a single mother. Thus Ghosh presents multiple marital relationships in this adaptation which tries to shift the focus from the crime.

In her essay "Invoking love death and elsewhere: Searching the Auteur in Rituparno Ghosh's *Abohoman*" Sangeeta Datta (2016) catalogues the narrative styles which he repeats in his films, for example dinner table conversation, performance of the characters, incorporation of dream and song, use of song with internal meaning, film within film, protagonist's odyssey's to an unknown destination. Ghosh maintains stylistic consistency repeating these devices in this film also. Here Sambit comes to Kolkata with his wife Padmini to work with the talented actress Kakoli and this aspect gives Ghosh an opportunity to repeat his authorial intension of film within film. At the beginning of the film there is a dream sequence in which Padmini dreams of the first day of shooting where her old friends meet and the dream breaks with the accidental fall of a glass. This occasion plays an important role in this film as Kakoli is poisoned in it. However, the dream sequence reminds the influence of Satyajit Ray on Ghosh. In the dream Padmini meets with real-life Bengali actors like Soumitra Chatterjee, Subhendu Chatterjee and they yearn for the untimely death of Rabi Ghosh and absence of Shamit Bhanja. All these five stars are seen together in Ray's film *Aranyer Din Ratri* (Days and Nights in Forests, 1970). Goutam Ghose, another reputed film director from Bengal, is also seen in the party with them. This scene reminds Ghose's sequel of Ray's film which cast all these actors again. Madhabi Mukherjee who essayed the iconic role of Charulata in Ray's film *Charulata*, joins the reunion. When she arrives, Soumitra Chatterjee addresses her as "Charulata" which immediately reminds Ray's classic. Thus this dream sequence reminds the audience the legacy of Ray and makes them nostalgic. Following the narrative style of Ghosh's other films, here the audience find a performer like Padmini and also Kakoli. Few characters pretend to play a role, whereas they have some other intentions. Padmini hides that she returns to Kolkata to take revenge of the death of her mentally afflicted child. Kakoli and her husband used to profess loyal to each other. But Kakoli had an extra-marital affair and her husband was simultaneously interested in another woman. It is unveiled when he starts courting an unnamed lady immediately after the death of Kakoli. The former is Ghosh's addition and the later one is an adaptation of Christie's plot. However, these characters continue a performance of falsehood and the narrative expose their falsity. Similarly there is a dinner table conversation, a familiar narrative style in Ghosh's oeuvre and it is repeated in this film. Rangapishi and Mallika's conversation over dinner reminds the audience the incidents occurred earlier like the inauguration of shooting, Mallika's interest in Arindam and investigation of Kakoli's murder. As a borrowing of Ray's late films, Ghosh repeats this narrative style to question values of middle class families. But in this film this narrative device functions as a reminder of earlier incidents. Apart from Ray, the film also exhibits the influence of Rabindranath Tagore on auteur. At the end of the film, Ghosh adds Tagore's song "Jibono moroner seemana charaye" (Beyond the border of life and death) which was composed in 1918 in *Bihag raag* and describes the narrator's sacred union with the Almighty. It indicates Ghosh's fascination to portray death as an enigma. Unlike the novel Padmini confesses the crime and then she commits suicide. Sangeeta Datta (2016) asserts: "Death is treated as ritual and framed in dense composition" (p. 44). As Binodini in *Chokher Bali* goes in search of her destination, Yashomati in *Antarmahal* has to commit suicide to escape from her husband's torture, in *Abohoman* film director Aniket starts another journey with his death and similarly Harish in *The Last Lear* with the memory of Shakespearean play, similarly Padmini is relived from her melancholia through suicide. This death alleviates the suffering of a mother. Like her favourite Tagore's song which is sung by Subhankar, Padmini goes beyond the suffering of her life through

death. However, after Padmini's unbosoming herself and consequent suicide, the karaoke of Tagore's song "Purano Sei Diner Kotha" (Tales of earlier days) is heard which sums up the whole narrative in Tagore's tone. It again carries the evidence of Tagore's influence on Ghosh. Thus Ghosh repeats the narrative devices in this film.

Transcultural adaptation and the auteur

Ghosh's transcultural adaptation gives local identity to the characters of the western novel. As a transcultural adaptation *Shubho Muharat* follows the literary narrative and alters the ending to express Ghosh's authorship. This adaptation not only sets the locale in an Indian city and alters the identity of the characters, but here Ghosh adds native cultural traditions also with the narrative. Ghosh's adaptation revises the hypotext which is the crux of this type of adaptation according to Robert Stam (2017) and Julia Hoydis (2020).

In his essay "Textual Identity and Adaptive Revision: Editing Adaptation as a Fluid Text" John Bryant (2013) argues "...adaptation may be seen as an epitome of multicultural democracy with its inescapable anxieties over the evolution of one's ethnicity, the threat of assimilation, the forging of a new identity and the retention or forgetting of past identities" (p. 55). Ghosh's transcultural adaptation is a product of multicultural democracy on which Bryant draws our attention and the acculturation of two different cultures in his adaptation needs analysis. In her essay "Hamlet Revision: Bhardwaj's *Haidar* as Crossmapping and Contact Zone" Julia Hoydis (2020) uses Mary Louis Pratt's idea of "contact zone" and Elisabeth Bronfen's concept of "crossmapping" to analyse Vishal Bhardwaj's *Haidar*, a transcultural adaptation of Shakespearean tragedy *Hamlet*. It apparently seems that, like Bhardwaj's Shakespearean adaptation, Ghosh's adaptation creates a contact zone where western and Indian culture meet. Similarly Ghosh's film also seems crossmapping of western texts or "cultural afterlife of a given social energy" (Bronfen, 2018, p. 4). But Hoydis's interpretation of Bhardwaj's adaptation with these theories cannot explain Ghosh's authorial intentions in his transcultural adaptation. In his book *The Location of Culture*, Homi K. Bhabha (2004) uses the term "Third Space of enunciation" which indicates an "occult instability" (p. 56) of cultures. "It is that Third Space", Bhabha argues (2004), "though unrepresentable in itself, which constitutes the discursive conditions of enunciation that ensure that the meaning and symbols of culture have no primordial unity or fixity; that even the same signs can be appropriated, translated, rehistoricized and read anew" (p. 55). This Third Space is established through culture's "hybridity" and negotiation in the "inbetween space" (Bhabha, 2004, p. 56). However, Ghosh's film is a perfect example of hybridity as the western characters of Christie's novel metamorphose into Bengali character. The process of adaptation through screenplay writing is a process of negotiation with the western novel and creates an "inbetween" space. Few aspects of the transcultural adaptation are examined to highlight the Third Space which has been created in this narrative. Firstly, though Ray's *Sonar Kella* influenced Ghosh (Mukherjee, 2016, p. 6), it is a western female sleuth's character which persuaded him to give his protagonist an opportunity to solve a mystery. Except *Unishey April* (19th April, 2002), which represents a dancer's relationship with her daughter and *Asukh* (Malaise, 1999) which represents an actress's life, in other films the women protagonists either fight or compromise within patriarchal family (*Dahan*, 1997; *Utasb*, 2000) or they have to live an isolated life accepting

patriarchal system (*Bariwali*, 1999). And *Titli* (The First Monsoon Day, 2002), though different in tone, presents the relationship between mother and daughter when the ex-boyfriend of the mother appears in the scene. However, Sarojini in *Unishey April* has been blamed throughout the film for being independent and careless. Rohini in *Asukh* fights with her beau for his suspicious activities and takes care of her parents. In these two films the artists are chained with responsibilities which patriarchal society assigns and they have to justify themselves when they neglect them. But in *Shubho Muharat*, Ghosh unshackles her protagonist for the first time and she becomes a true reflection of Miss Marple. Secondly, presenting post-menstrual spinster woman like Miss Marple as a detective, Merja Makinen (2006) argues, Christie tries to prove that unappreciated women like Miss Marple can be useful for the society. Christie endeavours to prove that "inter-female communication" like gossip which is often interpreted in a negative way, can be used to search a criminal (p. 62). Borrowing this idea in his transcultural adaptation, Ghosh presents how isolated and neglected women like Rangapishi can help the society. Before *Shubho Muharat*, Ghosh presented the character of Banalata who is middle aged and has been presented as a victim of patriarchal system. In this film Rangapishi does not have to suppress her abilities and desires like Banalata, Ghosh gives her freedom to become a sleuth. Finally, Anna-Marie Taylor (1990) states that the character of Miss Marple is concurrently progressive and conservative: "progressive in that they give worth to the circumstances of female domestic life, but conservative in that the texts limit women's influence to the domestic" (p. 134–151). Ghosh's adaptation portrays the domestic life of Rangapishi to become progressive and meticulously avoids the conservative attitude of Christie. Ghosh portrays that Rangapishi cooks, spends time in sewing and other mundane works which are usually assigned to women in a Bengali family. Unlike Miss Marple, Rangapishi controls the domestic of her house. These aspects of Ghosh's adaptation indicate how the same narrative style of Christie's novel has been altered and modified. The transcultural adaptation shows that the narrative strategy of western novel and Ghosh's authorship coalesce. This discourse of cultural instability of the Third Space helps Ghosh to enunciate his authorship and introduce a female sleuth like Rangapishi for the first time in his oeuvre. In the earlier mentioned essay John Bryant (2013) encourages to examine the textual identity after "adaptive revision" of the source text. The Third Space of enunciation indicates that Ghosh adapts the textual identity of Christie's novel, yet the boundary of the textual identity of Christie's novel has been destroyed by the auteur in this transcultural adaptation (p. 49).

The amalgamation of the western novel and culture of Bengal and the need to reproduce it in Bengali socio-cultural scenario creates scope of enunciating Ghosh's authorial agency in the Third Space. Following Staiger's re-interpretation of the theory of auteurism, we find that like his other films, Ghosh examines the citation of women centric narrative in this film also. This analysis of the citation is an act of resistance in Tollywood film industry which does not prefer this type of women centric theme. Like the practice of morality in western sexual discourse, as an auteur Ghosh repeats the theme of women centric narrative in his films and this adaptation is not an exception from this tradition. To analyse this citation, Ghosh repeats his narrative style in this film which can be compared with the cultivation of the self through "recipes, specific forms of examination, and codified exercises" (Foucault, 1990, p. 58). This strategy of analysis helps to germinate the "self-knowledge" of the auteur. Like the ancient Greek philosophy Ghosh takes care of his self by

repeating the women centric theme in this film. And duplicating this authorial intention is his "technique of the self".

In her essay "Film Authorship and Adaptation" Shelley Cobb (2012) argues that auteurs exert their originality and paternity in their oeuvre, and as a consequence these adaptations seem like artistic product of the auteur (p. 108). In *Shubho Muharat* Ghosh's duplication of theme and the style are proof of originality and paternity, as a consequence this film hardly seems like adaptation of literary texts. Ghosh's crime film, according to Steve Neale's suggested crime film genres, belongs to detective genre. He uses all the narrative style of the genre like restricted narration, misguiding the audience with an incident and uncertainty in the search of criminal's identity (Benyahia, 2012, 80). Following the novel the film also adds police investigation, though the number of interrogation has been reduced. Arindam interrogates Kakoli's husband and Mallica only in three scenes. The film avoids the use of violence which is a main characteristic of crime films (Benyahia, 2012, 31). In spite of using all these aspects, the film fails to create suspense, because of the intrusion of Mallica's triangle, Sumit's extra-marital affair and expression of authorial intentions. At the end of the film Padmini confesses the crime in front of Rangapisi who promises to keep it secret. Thus Padmini seems less like a criminal, rather a woman who has suffered because of her child's death. Though this film belongs to the "whodunit" genre, thematically it repeats Ghosh's story of middle class women, marriage and a woman's self-discovery. It seems that the film genre could not uproot Ghosh's authorship, rather Ghosh revises the genre with his authorial intentions. Because of the expression of this type of authority and originality which are integral part of an auteur's persona, this adaptation seems like Ghosh's own artistic expression. This type of subjective interpretation of the text announces death of the literary author.

Like his other films, in *Shubho Muharat* Ghosh does not acknowledge the literary source. The opening credit of the film Ghosh uses two statements which compares women of Bengali middle class families with Miss Marple. These utterances indicate that Ghosh presents middle class women as counterpart of Miss Marple and implicitly urges the audience to compare Rangapishi with Marple. In his essay "Paratextual Adaptation: *Heart of Darkness* as *Hearts of Darkness* via *Apocalypse Now*" Jamie Sherry uses the term paratext which was introduced by French cultural theorist Gérard Genette (1997) in his book *Paratexts: Thresholds of Information*. Sherry argues that a paratext like preface, footnote, postscript, illustration, epigraph of a text can adapt a precursor text. Genette (1997) argues that paratext is "a zone between text and off-text, a zone only of transition but also of transaction...an influence on the public, an influence that...is at the service of a better reception for the text" (p. 1). The statements at the beginning of the film function as a preface. This cinematic preface offers a guideline to the audience to understand the film and thus it establishes a zone of transaction between the director and the audience. The statements are partial acknowledgement of the literary source and also an evidence of transcultural adaptation of Agatha Christie's character. Not merely the preface, but the analysis in this essay indicates that the film follows Christie's narrative in *The Mirror Crack'd from Side to Side*. Apart from that the film neither acknowledges Christie nor her novel. May be to avoid complexity of copyright infringement law, Ghosh avoids to acknowledge the source. Ghosh remains silent on this plagiarism in his interviews and articles. This intentional suppression of literary influence steals authority of literary author and establishes the authority of the cinematic

auteur on the film adaptation. Possibly out of insecurity Ghosh tries to project this film adaptation as his own creation, not as adaptation.

Ghosh's adaptation of Christie's novel creates dilemma in the mind of the audience. The pleasure of the reading the novel caused by logophilia resists the reader from enjoying the transcultural adaptation. In his essay "Which Shakespeare to Love? Film, Fidelity, and the Performance of Literature" Timothy Corrigan (2002) argues that the audience is expected to enjoy the performance of the auteur and they should not mournfully recapitulate the brown pages of the dead author's creation. He explicates Kenneth Branagh's Shakespearean adaptation and states that Branagh "draws attention away from the text to the performative virtuosity that we, the audience, are invited to participate in as a shared recognition not of the textual Shakespeare, lost in time, but of the performative Branagh as an agent of the dead, overcoming time" (p. 176). Similarly in this transcultural adaptation Ghosh tries to shift the focus of the audience from the texts to his performance of authorship and the audience is also expected to enjoy the authorial performance. Corrigan (2002) justifies the role of an auteur when he asserts: "auteurs have become, for contemporary viewers, the displaced embodiment of authors within today's image culture" (p. 168). Hence, the auteur is endowed with the authority to make alterations in the literary text in order to express their authorial intentions. As an auteur Ghosh enjoys the license to alter the western text and as a consequence the "text becomes usurped by the (assumed) performative singularity" (p. 176) of the auteur like the adaptations of Kenneth Branagh.

Conclusion

Robert Stam (2012) argues that "An adaptation...is less an attempted resuscitation of an originary word than a turn in an ongoing dialogical process" (p. 81). Jørgen Bruhn (2013) clarifies this type of dialogism with an example: "After the publication of James Joyce's *Ulysses*, the meaning of Homer's *Odyssey* changed, if ever so slightly, and its position in literary history has been altered" (p. 70). The ambivalence of Third Space which is established in this transcultural adaptation, does not resurrect the aged British detective from the brown pages of Christie's novel. The adaptation helps the auteur to enunciate that a Miss Jane Marple's counterpart can be found in every middle class families of Bengal. Susan Rowland (2001) observes that Agatha Christie's delineation of "anti-heroic" detective like Miss Marple is a playful counter to Holmes (p. 19). If Miss Marple challenges Holmesian masculinity, Rangapishi's tricks to identify the criminal defies the masculinity of popular Bengali male sleuths like Satyajit Ray's Feluda, Saradindu Bandyopadhyay's Bymkesh Bakshi to name a few. Madhuja Mukherjee (2016) does not seem to exaggerate when she says that Ghosh has "...markedly intervened with the defined and popular masculine genres like the Bengali detective film" (p. 144) and he "clearly domesticates the genre of detective film by locating the action within lives spaces of middle/upper middle-class homes" (p. 145). Similarly Rohit K. Dasgupta, Sangeeta Datta and Kautav Bakshi (2016) agree with Mukherjee when they argue that this film is "reconstruction of a western hypermasculine genre" (p. 8). The transcultural adaptation re-emphasizes the ability of socially neglected aged women and foregrounds rebellious approach of Christie. Thus *Shubho Muharat* continues a silent dialogue on the necessity of transcultural adaptation and need to express authorship to empower Rangapishi in the Third Space with its

western counterpart. Possibly this type of transcultural adaptation and director's authorship will urge the audience to reconsider Christie's Marple series.

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