

A Resume for the Ph.D. Degree Registration

ON

**CINEMATIC ADAPTATIONS OF WORLD FICTION
SHOWCASING AGRARIANETHOS AND PATHOS:
WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO SELECT FICTION BY JOHN
STEINBECK, PEARL BUCK, PREMCHAND, VYANKATESH
MADGULKARAND SADANAND DESHMUKH**

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Abstract

Film theory or cinema studies is an academic discipline that aims to explore the essence of the cinema and provides conceptual frameworks for understanding film's relationship to reality, the other arts, individual viewers, and society at large. A film adaptation is the transfer of a written work, in whole or in part, to a feature film. Although often considered a type of derivative work, recent academic developments by scholars such as Robert Stam conceptualize film adaptation as a dialogic process. A common form of film adaptation is the use of a novel as the basis of a feature film. Other works adapted into films include non-fiction (including journalism), autobiography, comic books, scriptures, plays, historical sources, and even other films. From the earliest days of cinema, in nineteenth-century Europe, adaptation from such diverse resources has been a ubiquitous practice of filmmaking.

Most plays and movies are enacted as if they are happening in the present. The scripts are almost invariably written in the present tense. The first person or third person narrator is telling about something that happened in the past. Movie is effective because we see things happening right before our eyes. Novelists have the problem of writing about something that happened in the past but making the reader visualize the characters and events as if he or she is witnessing them in the present. Considering the importance of the study of the novels and their screen adaptations, it has been attempted to study cinematic adaptations of novels such as *The Grapes of Wrath* by John Steinbeck, *The Good Earth* by Pearl Buck, *Godan* by Premchand, *Baromaas* by Sadanand Deshmukh and *Bangarwadi* by Vyankatesh Madgulkar.

Movie is a narrative like novel which combines both theatrical and dramatic elements. The novel and the movie imitate life. To a great extent, the novel and the movie are complementary to each other as they are basically fictitious creations. However, both are independent forms of art. In cinematic adaptation of these novels 'Agrarian Ethos and Pathos' is a core concept found deeply in the writings of the writers.

Nature of Problem

1. How is agrarian ethos portrayed in the select fiction?
2. How is agrarian ethos adapted on screen in the select fiction?
3. Does any dynamic development take place while adapting the novel?
4. Does the cinema serve the same purpose as the novel while presenting the agrarian culture?
5. What is the difference between a novel and a cinema while presenting the agrarian ethos and pathos?

Hypothesis

1. The novel and its screen adaptations have remarkable resemblance and dissemblance in so many different ways.
2. The process of adaptation of a work of art from one medium to another like literature into film involves a certain degree of artistic licence.
3. The novel is a product of a single author; whereas the film is a complex interplay of various minds.
4. The novel-reader relationship is different from that of the film-viewer relationship.
5. The novel ends with a call to action, indicating that the struggle will continue. The film however, leaves viewers with a satisfying happy ending.

Objectives

1. To understand the techniques and sequences used in screen adaptation that reflects the theme.
2. To demonstrate this understanding through discussion, presentation and their writing project.
3. To study the differences between the novel and film.
4. To project how they would adapt a particular text.
5. To study the representations of farmers problems through a screen adaption.
6. To understand the conventions and freedom that an author of a novel has over a director.
7. To develop presentation skills through the development of a presentation.

Research Methodology

This proposed research project decisively aims at exploring the vital changes brought in the process of film adaptation. Therefore the methods of research have been descriptive, interpretive, analytical, comparative, critical and evaluative. These methods would be employed as per the issues taken for deliberation and reference.

Scope and Limitations of Research

This research would deal with the literary contribution of five authors including John Steinbeck, Pearl S. Buck, Munshi Premchand, Sadanand Deshmukh and Vyankatesh Madgulkar's fiction. The select fiction comprises *The Grapes of Wrath* by John Steinbeck, *The Good Earth* by Pearl S. Buck, *Godan* by Munshi Premchand and translated into English by Jai Ratan and P.Lal, *Baromaas* by Sadanand Deshmukh, and translated into English as *Twelve Enduring Months* by Vilas Salunke and *Bangarwadi* by Vyankatesh Madgulkar & translated into English as *The Village had no Walls* by Ram Deshmukh.

Consequently, an attempt would be made to study screen adaptation of the select world fiction and how it reflects, showcases agrarian ethos on screen.

Contribution to the Branch of Knowledge

The present exploration of novels in the perspective of screen adaptation would be widely essential to comprehend the importance of adapting burning issues of farmers on screen. There are diverse approaches to the study of literature, however, screen adaptation; a recently emerged approach to fiction would generate consciousness about the contemporary literature. This study would expose the difference between cinematic adaptation and the original text. Thus this research would be helpful to for the study of film studies.

Chapter Scheme

The dissertation would be divided in following five chapters

1. Introduction
2. Thematic Analysis: The Agrarian Ethos and Pathos
3. Screen Adaptation Of The Select Novels Presenting The Agrarian Ethos And Pathos.
4. Comparative Analysis of a Novel and a Cinema Presenting the Social, Cultural, Political, Economical Milieu.
5. Conclusion

1. INTRODUCTION

This introductory chapter would be divided into three sections. The first section would introduce the concept of ‘novel’ as a literary form. A novel is a book of long narrative in literary prose. The novel is genre of fiction, and fiction may be defined as the art or craft of contriving, through the written word, representations of human life that instruct or divert or both. A play deals with the language of dramatic action. A screenplay transform from print medium to audio-visual form. It deals with externals, with details. Adapting a book into a screenplay means to change one (book) into another (screenplay), not to superimpose one onto another.

The present study aims to explore the rural, rustic and agrarian ethos across the cultures and the pathos that emerges thereof, similiarly it also highlights or brings to light how the agrarian problems created ultimately affect the lives of the people in it-pathetically and drastically and the tragedy born consequently, resulting in strained human relations, the evoking intense pity and human suffering may it be in John Steinbeck’s *The Grapes of Wrath* in Ameriaca, Pearl Buck’s Chinese milieu in *The Good Earth* or Indian *Godan* by Premchand under colonial yoke or Vyankatesh Madgulkar’s idyllic *Bangarwadi* or Sadanand Deshmukh’s modern *Baromaas*. The fiction set against different backdrop of race, moment and milieu as the theorist Hipoline Taine argues evoke universal intense human pathos, suffering, pain, tragedy that ultimately erupts when, as the study explores and subsequently

reveals emerging from the drastic agrarian rural, rustic ethos trapped in the various cultural influences like migration in *The Grapes of Wrath*, urbanization and industrialization in *The Good Earth*, exploitation at the hands of money lenders, colonial or aristocratic middlemen as in *Godan* and *Baromaas*, or natural disaster or calamities in idyllic *Bangarwadi*. Natural and manmade calamities subsequently give rise to intense tragic human sufferings causing cleavage, rift in social human relations- filial, marital and others.

The second section would delineate and map how agrarian, rural and rustic ethos and the pathos in it have been explored in the world fiction. The survey would highlight taking a sweeping account of the agrarian issues at the backdrop of rural, ethnic and cultural milieu.

Whereas the last and the third section deals with the survey of five adaptations such as *The Grapes of Wrath*, *The Good earth*, *Godan*, *Baromaas* and *Bangarwadi* in terms of literature on film adaptation. All the films are interpreted from the agrarian ethos and pathos perspective.

2. THEMATIC ANALYSIS: THE AGRARIAN ETHOS AND PATHOS

Premchand has drawn a realistic picture of the poor peasants exploited by the village zamindar and the greedy moneylenders. The zamindars collected the revenue and imposed fine. Here, Rai Saheb fined Hori for the death of the cow, though he did not kill it. The peasants are unable to pay the debts in time and it gets multiplied with the passage of time. They are caught in a debt trap and they suffer, like Hori, until their end. The author is advocating the need to end the feudal system that existed in the country in colonial era.

In *The Grapes of Wrath* John Steinbeck depicted very massive phenomenon of migration to California. As circumstances changed in Oklahoma and elsewhere, sending hundreds of thousands of people to find work in other parts of the country, this also caused massive changes in California, where people were hoping to re-start their lives. Steinbeck represents the migration as a force of nature: massive waves rolling on over California. And like waves, these migration patterns could be destructive and frightening for the people being hit by them, and were ultimately unavoidable and unstoppable. Put in these terms, it is easy to see how those already in California might feel overwhelmed and powerless in the face of economic changes that are having an impact on them as well.

Most of *The Grapes of Wrath* focuses on the human experience of the mass migration: the lives of the migrants themselves. We get to know the Joads in particular, but through their experiences we also get a sense of the hundreds of thousands like them. Steinbeck describes the impact of mass migration, and its attendant struggles on the migrants.

Steinbeck describes these circumstances (hunger, highways, etc.) as forces that have a significant impact on the people and bring about substantial changes in them. We get the sense that all the people involved, both the migrants and the townspeople, are at the mercy of a changing country that they don't understand. This is often how the migrants are portrayed in the book: as objects that are formed and altered by forces out of their control.

The Grapes of Wrath is the story of one farmer's family, driven from their fields by natural disasters and economic changes beyond anyone's control and their great journey in search of peace, security, and another home. In the central part of the United States of America lies a limited area called 'the Dust Bowl', because of its lack of rains. Here drought and poverty combined to deprive many farmers from their land.

In *Baromaas*, they want to mortgage their land and they borrow money from the moneylenders but ultimately Madhu, the protagonist doesn't get that job. Thus both land and money are gone and he became landless. Hence the protagonist father attempts suicide. In the beginning he is saved but later on ultimately in the end of the novel he disappears. This disappearance indicates that he is no more.

In *Godan* Hori is shown as a typical poor peasant who is the victim of circumstances and possess all the deficiencies of common man. He is shown

dead partially satisfied and partially unsatisfied. Hori suffers under the rising debt. Dhania has never known a life of peace and comfort, as throughout the novel we see her struggling along with her husband for a livelihood. The Brahmin priest represents the uppermost caste; he exploits the lower caste villagers with his various religious sanctions. Hori, the peasant purchased a cow, the priest asked him to donate the image of the cow which is made up of gold when it dies. When the priest preaches all the ethics and morality to Hori and his wife Dhania, she scolds the priest what about his own behavior.

Problems arise due to industrialization. Growth of capitalistic greedy industrialist who exploit the labor class. Migration of youngsters from the villages to cities, conflicts and tensions in cities are some of the problems.

3. SCREEN ADAPTATION OF THE SELECT NOVELS PRESENTING THE AGRARIAN ETHOS AND PATHOS

The screenwriter conveys narrative thought through visual and verbal means. Because film is a visual medium and tells us much more than the novel possibly could about the physical nature of people, places and things, the filmmaker is more limited than the novelist in the images he presents, but has much more control over how his audience receives such images.

The Grapes of Wrath is the classic John Ford –directed adaptation of the classic John Steinbeck novel. There are some brief moments of violence throughout the film: A woman is accidentally shot and killed by a police officer, police and “Okies” do battle with fists and billy clubs, and a man threatens to kill another man with a rifle as he's on the verge of bulldozing his home. Also, as it's a movie from 1940 set during the Great Depression. Overall, for 21st century families, this film is still an all important chronicle of a difficult time in American history and raises still relevant questions about poverty, farm work, and the enormous gaps between the rich and the poor, in this country and throughout the world.

The Good Earth is a 1937 American drama film about Chinese farmers who struggle to survive. It was adapted by Talbot Jennings, Tess Slesinger, and Claudine West from the play by Owen Davis and Donald Davis, which was in itself based on the 1931 novel of the same name by

Nobel Prize winning author Pearl Buck. The film was directed by Sidney Franklin, with uncredited contributions by Victor Fleming and Gustav Machaty.

Godan was made into a Hindi film in 1963, starring Rajkumar, Mehmood and Shashikala. In 2004, *Godan* was part of the 26-episode TV series, *Tehreer....Munshi Premchand Ki*, based on the writing of Premchand, starring Pankaj Kapur and Surekha Sikri, directed by Guljar and produced by Doordarshan.

Baromaas directed by Dhiraj Meshram, a graduate from the Film and Television of India (FTII), portrays the plight of farmers and youth residing in rural India. *Baromaas* uses Vidarbha as a backdrop to highlight the problem of unemployment among the educated in the region. The film opens with a shot that shows a social activist engaging in talks with farmers, who have innumerable worries written all over their wrinkled faces from unpredictable weather to debts to low prices fetched by crops.

Baromaas is the story of two farmer brothers, who take up the issue in contrasting ways. While it is the story of a farmer and his family entwined with conflicts, confusions and compassion, it looks at a much larger picture. The film also shows how a family copes with the situation in Vidarbha region. It also touches larger issues of corruption, unemployment, methods of farming, and farmers' suicides amidst harsh socio-economic conditions through the story of a family.

Bangarwadi is a Marathi film directed by Amol Palekar. It is based on an eponymous novel written by Vyankatesh Madgulkar and published in 1955. It is the story of a young school teacher and his experiences in a small village of shepherds in the princely state of Aundh during the 1940s. The story revolves around the struggles a young schoolteacher goes through jungles to bring education and progress to a small to reach the small hamlet named '*Bangarwadi*', inhabited by a few shepherds, peasants and some members of a criminal tribe known as Ramoshis. After the initial trauma, he finds the milieu and the environment very inspiring and educative. But then he is transferred to some other school. What remains with him is the memory of the simple folk and their pure nature.

4. COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF A NOVEL AND A CINEMA PRESENTING THE SOCIAL MILIEU

In The *Grapes of Wrath* one can already notice in this opening lines of the film that the director's attempted to carefully avoid attaching specific blame in this potentially controversial film. The possibility of social change wrought by violent conflict suggested in the novel will not even be hinted at. The movie only focuses on the Joads, a migrant family from the Dust Bowl region, while the novel's focus shifts from the Joads to the situation of all the migrants who went to California

The Grapes of Wrath as a novel argues that in order to survive spiritually and physically on the planet man must commit himself to man and environment, whereas the film version focuses on the traditional figure of the isolated individual who will make things 'right'.

In the movie *The Good Earth*, the main characters were not even played by Chinese actors in a story about Chinese peasants. Wang Lung and O-lan have 5 children, the eldest boy, the second boy, the poor fool, and the twins (1 boy and 1 girl). But in the movie They have 3

children. The twins are eliminated. O-lan kills her fourth child after it's birth. But in the movie the child dies in childbirth. Wang Lung's uncle is a rotten despicable man who uses his power with gang members to get Wang Lung to do what he wants. In the movie, he is just a fat bumbler who steals food, but doesn't threaten Wang Lung or his family. Wang Lung's cousin is a constant source of tension in Wang Lung's house, even trying to rape his second cousin. He eventually joins an army. In the movie he only has a brief appearance in the beginning. No mention is made of him joining the Chinese army. The second half of the film was re-written and seemed to tell a different story altogether from the book's second half.

5. CONCLUSION

From time immemorial the farmer who feeds the whole world has been neglected, he has been side lined, nobody looks after or cares for his problems, his grief. It may be the problem of migration in John Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath*, it may be in Pearl Buck's *The Good Earth*.

In *The Good Earth*, the two sons of the farmer reject the values that made their father rich. They do not take farming as their profession. They do not have that much affection for the land that the protagonist has. So ultimately on his last day he has to suffer.

In *The Grapes of Wrath*, the migration also causes suffering in the entire family. They leave their lives, they frustrate, and they die. In the climax of this novel the dying man is nursed by the mother instead of that baby.

Similarly we can also point out in Premchand's *Godan*. Same problem when it was in British Empire. With the urbanization, new technology the grief doesn't lessen, nor come to an end but it is continued. It changed the form, aspects and the dimensions. We can point out with education, liberalization and globalization. They are not decreasing the problems or grief but they are boosting these problems and grief of the farmer.

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Shelves: fiction. I can see why John Steinbeck is a celebrated author. He catches human emotion and pain, in a raw, honest light. If you have already ventured into the world of Steinbeck, I think you should check out this powerful little novella. The Moon is Down 4/5 stars. Synopsis: The Moon is Down was written by John Steinbeck and published in 1942. This book is about a small town during World War II that gets conquered and occupied by its enemy. I was only somewhat familiar with John Steinbeck's written words prior to reading this collection of six short novels, some of which are his most famous titles. There's not much new I could possibly say about this author. It's obvious to me why he is one of America's most famous and well read. The Pearl by John Steinbeck. "In the town they tell the story of the great pearl - how it was found and how it was lost again. They tell of Kino, the fisherman, and of his wife, Juana, and of the baby, Coyotito. And because the story has been told so often, it has taken root in every man's mind. Kino and Juana came slowly down to the beach and to Kino's canoe, which was the one thing of value he owned in the world. It was very old. Kino's grandfather had brought it from Nayarit, and he had given it to Kino's father, and so it had come to Kino. It was at once property and source of food, for a man with a boat can guarantee a woman that she will eat something. It is the bulwark against starvation. Jones described it as a world away from Steinbeck's realist representations of the Great Depression, which may explain why he wrote this one under a pen name, Peter Pym. "Even though it is very different from Steinbeck's other work, in a totally different genre, it actually relates to his interest in violent human transformation - the kind of human-animal connection that you find all over his work; his interest in mob violence and how humans are capable of other states of being, including particularly violent murderers. It's certainly not Steinbeck the realist, but it is Steinbeck the natural... It's a whole new Steinbeck - one that predicts Californian noir detective fiction. It is an unsettling story whose atmosphere is one of fog-bound, malicious, malignant secrecy. The Pearl is a novella written by John Steinbeck. Steinbeck relies on pearl mythology as he builds suspense and creates mystery and intrigue. Step into his world where the scorpion's sting will lead you from stereotypes and discrimination to greed and murder. What lessons can be learned? Do these lessons come at a price too great?"