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**AKALE: ANHONEST TRANSPOSITION OF *THE GLASS MENAGERIE***

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**ABSTRACT**

When approaching a film adaptation of a novel, it is important to consider the various differences between the two mediums. Adaptations are mostly criticised on the basis of the film's fidelity to the original events of the novel references are constantly made to what is left out or changed, instead of what is there. More than often a three hundred page novel is made into a two-three hour movie, and a great deal of content is sacrificed. Screenwriters and filmmakers may attempt to remain faithful to the source novel, they must meet the requirements of the mass film public. Each novel is written with a distinctive structure, led by particular points of view, following characters with particular personalities, which the filmmaker must decide whether to directly recreate or alter to meet the demands of the medium. Novels use words to verbalize a story, while films are visual and count on images to do the same. Adaptations should be treated as a literary art form of their own and should be treated accordingly. The main objective of this paper is to analyze the Malayalam movie 'Akale' directed by Shyamaprasad is an aptation of the novel 'The Glass Menagerie' by the American playwright Tennessee Williams and seeks to determine how faithful and successful he was in his endeavour. The focus is laid on mise-en-scene which includes cinematography, lighting, costume etc and also on the storyline to compare and contrast the film and the play.

**Keywords:** The Glass Menagerie, Adaptation, Film, Play

Novels use words to verbalize a story, while films are visual and count on images to do the same. Adaptations should be treated as a literary art form of their own and should be treated accordingly. Literature adaptations, needs to be divided according to some kind of differences; some film directors or adaptors stick, as much as they can to the original source, trying to re-create it rather than to re-make it and this is what was defined as faithful adaptation of literature-to-movie adaptation theories; unfaithful adaptation, on the other side, only get inspired by it and make a movie only based on the original source.

'The Glass Menagerie' is a memory play by the American playwright Tennessee Williams. He is

considered as one the prominent playwright of 20th Century along with Eugene O'Neill and Arthur Miller. 'Akale', a 2004 Malayalam film directed by Shyamaprasad is the first Indian adaptation of the play. 'Akale' is one of the finest films ever made in any Indian languages. Emotionally wrenching, the film takes one into the nuances of emotional conflicts, raw sources of human feelings, untamed angst and the eternal quest of souls to seek out their destinies.

Scripts are almost identical to one another and there are only a few segments in which the movie drifts from what is written in the book. He has made only slight changes in the mode of narration and the climax. Shyamaprasad preserved

almost all dialogues and monologues from the original as they were written; he also added almost all narration parts in the movie.

Shyamaprasad also succeeded in presenting an apt setting for Akale. It is the story of an Anglo-Indian family settled in Kerala and nearly all the major events happen in the 1970s. The main characters in the film are Neil (Tom in Glass menagerie) Rose (Laura) Margaret(Amanda) and Freddy (Jim) and a minor character, Kamala who is the wife of Neil. This character is absent in the play. 'Akale' is the story of a woman who is obsessed by glass, figurines. The menagerie depicts the imaginative milieu to which Rose dedicates herself, a world that is vibrant and alluring but based on frail illusions.

Cuckoo Parameshwaran's costumes lend authenticity to the Anglo-Indian settings of the 1970s. All the costumes of the characters have been carefully selected to accord with the story and the period. Neil, the son of Margaret appears in the first scene as a middle-aged man with beard and spectacles. His overall appearance imparts a sombre look which reflects his life and problems. As he starts writing, the audience is taken to his past where he is young. Neil, in his young age, wears printed light coloured shirts and bell-bottom pants which were generally worn by men during 1970s. He has long hair which is unkempt and shabby and his long moustache also resembles men during the 70s. Rose's dresses are apt for her character. She wears long loose dresses which reach till her toe and are plain without any designs on it. Margaret wears undecorated long frocks which are dull in colour. Freddy is Neil's friend and Even though he appears only in a few numbers of scenes, he is one of the most important characters in the film. He has a similar appearance as that of Neil. He appears in an off-white shirt and bell-bottom pants.

.Shyamaprasad brought out a favourable outcome in casting fitting actors for each role. All the characters were living out their roles in the film. Prithviraj plays the role of frustrated young man Neil. He succeeded in presenting the angst, frustration and disappointment of a youngster who is caught up in a boring job and a nagging mother. He could bring out his feelings on his face. The

abhorrence with which he abuses his mother was exemplary. Even in acting out the role of the middle-aged person, he has done an excellent job. The poignancy with which he remembers his sister Rose makes the audience feel empathetic. Geethu Mohandas as Rose is admittedly the preeminent star of the film. She has brilliantly portrayed a fragile and sensitive young woman with an inferiority complex who hides her thoughts amongst her glass figurines. As Rose, Geethu Mohandas has got a role that will authenticate her as a serious actress with bright prospects. Her role has been etched out well. Her large expressive eyes convey all her emotions. She could exhibit the vulnerable, fragile, uncertain demeanour of the girl in a very endearing manner. She doesn't have much to say in the film, but her expressions say it all. Veteran actor Sheela as Margaret is a demanding and possessive mother, who has her traumatic past to deal with. She has got into the skin of the character. As the old lady with full grey hair and wrinkles, she excels in her role. Tom George played Freddy's role well and with seemingly pleasant naturality. The Bengali actress SreelekhaMitra as Kamala has given a short but appraisable performance. The film reached heights because of the invincible performance by the actors.

M. Jayachandran has done the music and background score for Akale. The film opens with background music. The western instrumental music throughout the film is in tune with the mood. Music is used to emphasize emotions and events during the plot. There is no song in of the movie but a music video inspired by the movie was later released which was hugely appraised.

Cinematography and its basic methods can contribute to creating an eye-catching and artistic result of various shots and scenes. S. Kumar has done the cinematography for 'Akale' and he succeeded in creating the mood of a lost era with sepia-tinted images. The film lacks brightness and liveliness. The whole film has a colour tone which is kind of old and nostalgic. Low key lighting has been used throughout the film to bring out the mood of a lost era and the scenes in the film are very long which adds to the realistic appeal of the film.

The film opens itself with close up of a glass figurine hanging in a car which Neil and Kamala

travels and Tom is conversing with his wife about his intention to write a book on the life of his sister which he has promised to give to a publisher. He bids her farewell in the shipyard and as he leaves he sees a familiar face and that very sight provokes a sudden outflow of memories and then he starts writing about his life story. In the play, however, this scene is absent. Neil introduces himself as the narrator and a character in the play and the actions unfolds through his memory. The rest of the storyline remains the same. Shyamaprasad preserved almost all dialogues and monologues from the original as they were written; he also added almost all narration parts in the movie. However, there is some difference in the climax. In the play, Amanda accuses him of being a selfish dreamer and Tom leaves slamming the door. Tom delivers his passionate closing monologue as Amanda inaudibly comforts Laura. He tells the audience that for all of the years since he left, he has been pursued by his sister's memory and finishes by imploring his memory of Laura to blow out her candles "for nowadays the world is lit by lightning." When Tom has finished speaking, Laura blows out the candle thereby ending the play. In the film, we get to know that familiar face which he saw at the beginning of the film was Freddy's. He goes in search of him and invites him to the dinner. Freddy meets old Margaret and then it is revealed that Rose was admitted to a mental hospital in Madurai and she died of nervous attack seven years ago. The last shot is framed, with Neil, Margaret, Freddy and his family sitting for supper, saying Grace, with Rose's picture, hung outside. Just like how her life had been, at the sidelines. The movie ends with a beautiful quote – "Nothing is eternal in this world, Rose. But there is love, compassion and mercy. And for now, that is enough."

From all these analyses it can be concluded that Shyamaprasad was able to faithfully recreate the play into a movie. 'Akale' has proved that Shyamaprasad is a rare kind of artist who can blend the organic elements of his vision into a perfect synthesis, for brilliant cathartic results. And movie adaptations gave the dramatic play a new (visual) dimension.

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