

## Translation as Allegory: Adaptation of Premchand's "Shatranj Ke Khilari" into Film

Omendra Kumar Singh<sup>1</sup>  
Govt. P.G. College, Dausa, Rajasthan, India

### Abstract

Roman Jakobson's idea that adaptation is a kind of translation has been further expanded by functionalist theorists who claim that translation necessarily involves interpretation. Premised on this view, the present paper argues that the adaptation of Premchand's short story "Shatranj ke Khilari" into film of that name by Satyajit Ray is an allegorical interpretation. The idea of allegorical interpretation is based on that ultimate four-fold schema of interpretation which Dante suggests to his friend, Can Grande della Scala, for interpretation of his poem *Divine Comedy*. This interpretive scheme is suitable for interpreting contemporary reality with a little modification. As Walter Benjamin believes that a translation issues from the original – not so much from its life as from its after-life – it is argued here that in Satyajit Ray's adaptation Premchand's short story undergoes a living renewal and becomes a purposeful manifestation of its essence. The film not only depicts the social and political condition of Awadh during the reign of Wajid Ali Shah but also opens space for engaging with the contemporary political reality of India in 1977.

### Keywords

Translation, adaptation, interpretation, allegory, film, *mise-en-scene*

Translation at its broadest is understood as transference of meaning between different natural languages. However, functionalists expanded the concept of translation to include interpretation as its necessary form which postulates the production of a functionalist target text maintaining relationship with a given source text. In "On Linguistic Aspects of Translation" Roman Jakobson distinguishes three kinds of translation: First, intra-lingual translation or rewording which involves the interpretation of verbal signs by means of other signs in the same language; second, inter-lingual translation which is an interpretation of verbal signs by means of other language signs; and third, inter-semiotic translation or transmutation which is an interpretation of verbal signs

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<sup>1</sup> Omendra Kumar Singh teaches English at Govt. P.G. College, Dausa, Rajasthan, India. He has authored *D.H. Lawrence: Prophet of New Life and Art* and published scholarly articles in *Journal of Contemporary Thought*, *South Asian Review*, *Asiatic*, *JSL*, *Litterit* and *IRWLE*. He has presented research papers at a number of national and international conferences. His area of interest includes contemporary literary and cultural theories and postcolonial literatures.

by means of non-verbal signs system. In Jakobson's classification, inter-semiotic translation or transmutation incorporates adaptation of literary work into film. Jakobson's study in film adaptation has urged a reconsideration of notions such as fidelity and the original, and acknowledges the effects of the social, cultural and historical elements that are involved in the process of adaptation (114-18). Translation of a verbal text into the medium of film can be said to be an imitation, creative transposition or an appropriation, which are all forms of interpretation. Building on this premise that adaptation is a kind of translation, I propose to argue in this paper that Satyajit Ray's adaptation of "Shatranj ke Khilari," a classic short story by Hindi writer Premchand, into the film of that name is an allegorical interpretation. The idea of allegorical interpretation in this paper refers to the four dimensional interpretive method which Dante suggests his friend, Can Grande della Scala, should apply for interpreting his poem *Divine Comedy*.

The inter-semiotic translation, that is, from linguistic to visual mode essentially requires consideration of a set of different tools of interpretation analogous to the new mode of transference. Though a number of cinematic techniques have been appropriated by novelists in their fictional works, differences between the two modes of expression still persist. Nevertheless, the two can be seen as comparable processes as both film and literature employ the basic concept of sign for the production of meaning. In literature, words are used as signifiers to convey the meaning, while in film, this function is served by something called *frame*. If a word on the paper produces a mental image, the *frame* presents the image directly to the eye. One of the basic differences between the two modes of expression is the role played by camera in film in the process of production of meaning. Each angle and each shot is significant in the production of meaning. The meaning thus produced can be further enriched by such devices as lighting, music and acting. Involvement of these technical properties in visual mode renders the critical tools of literary analysis inadequate for the analysis of an adapted work. Interpretation of an adapted film, then, necessitates a *mise-en-scene* analysis which examines the use of cinematic techniques like setting of scenes, functions of camera, props, costume, colours, lighting, body language as well as positioning of people and things in relation to one another in the *frame*. Satyajit Ray effectively makes use of narrator's voice, animation effect, lighting effect, music and body-language in his adaptation of "Shatranj ke Khilari."

The proposed argument that Satyajit Ray's adaptation of Premchand's short story "Shatranj ke Khilari" lends itself to be interpreted as allegory requires us to formulate our idea of allegory. According to Fredric Jameson, allegorical construction indicates a set of parallel, discontinuous levels of mediation. These levels are not without resemblance to that ultimate model of

allegorical composition described by Dante in his letter to his friend, Can Grande della Scala. Dante advises him to read *Divine Comedy* at four levels to grasp its full essence: the literal (his hero's adventures in the after world), the allegorical (in which his encounters indicate one aspect or another of the life of Christ), the moral (the ultimate fate of his soul), and the anagogical (where his own drama foreshadows the progress of the human race itself toward the last judgment) (*Marxism and Form* 60-61). Jameson's reflections on the competence of this method for interpreting contemporary realities leads him to make slight modifications in this scheme. He suggests that the allegorical mode can be effectively used for literary and cultural analysis if for literal we simply read the general and the surface meaning of the text which does not go beyond the strict limits of the word on the page; if for the dominant archetypal pattern of the life of Christ we substitute religion in the broadest sense, the religion of art, seeing the incarnation now as the incarnation of meaning in verbal signs; if we maintain the moral level as showing the ultimate fate of the soul of the hero; and finally, if we replace theology with politics and make Dante's eschatology an earthly one, where the human race finds its salvation not in eternity but in history itself (*Marxism and Form* 60-61). We will accept Jameson's modifications in our analysis of Satyajit Ray's adaptation of *Shatranj ke Khilari* with the proviso that here we will look for the incarnation of meaning in aural/visual instead of verbal signs.

When Satyajit Ray's adaptation *Shatranj Ke Khilari* is subjected to this four level scheme of allegorical interpretation, it becomes evident that at the first level of interpretation Satyajit Ray preserves the literality of the original text, that is, in Ray's adaptation Premchand's short story serves as a historical background. In the setting of the film, Ray faithfully captures the spirit of the short story in the portrayal of the contemporary social reality of Lucknow in the mid nineteenth century. In Premchand's short story, the narrator begins by telling us that "It was the era of Wajid Ali Shah" (182) and goes on to describe sarcastically the social life of Lucknow whose every aspect was steeped in luxury and idleness. Indifferent to the world outside, the people of Lucknow are passionately absorbed in activities like kite-flying, cock-fighting, dance, music, festive parties and other activities of merry making. The story revolves around the obsessive passion of two *Jagirdars* of Lucknow, Mir Raushan Ali and Mirza Sajjad Ali, who represent the nobility of Awadh. In the short story, Premchand uses the game of chess not only as an innocent pastime of the elite class, but also one that has serious political implications. About the obsessive passion of Mir and Mirza for playing chess in the short story, Fatima Rizvi notes, "The game of chess may be viewed as a metaphor for the larger political annexation and for the games being played within the *zananas* of their households" (Rizvi 211). Continuing her argument, Rizvi adds that in Premchand's ironic presentation, the game of chess played by Mir and Mirza seems, in fact, only to

be a leisurely pastime if it is compared to the shrewd game played by the British East India Company for annexation of the vast and wealthy kingdom of Awadh "under the cover of the allegations of misrule" (Rizvi 211). Satyajit Ray effectively captures Premchand's ironic comment and condemnatory tone about the profligate ruler of Awadh and his pleasure loving nobility and amplifies them in his adaptation. The tone and tenor of the narrator's (Amitabh Bachchan's) voice in the film explicitly describes the pride and glory of Lucknow and its subsequent degeneration. The omniscient narrator's voice gives us to understand that when the Mughal authority in Delhi became weak, Lucknow became the cultural capital of India. But the increasing cultural glory of Lucknow and the high sounding titles conferred on them by the British made the rulers of Awadh vainglorious. They started taking to an extravagant life style which reached its culmination in the reign of Wajid Ali Shah. Using animation effects, Ray creates comical portrayals of the rulers of Awadh who readily made themselves of service to the British and tried to placate their implacable greed by ceding some part of their State to them.

But in the scheme of allegorical interpretation, the force of the present paper's argument, that Satyajit Ray's adaptation of Premchand's short story "Shatranj Ke Khilari" into film is an allegorical construction, is grasped in full measure at the second or allegorical level of interpretation. We, therefore, need to have a comprehensive understanding of the term "allegorical" in order to build our argument. Fredric Jameson informs us that allegorical interpretation begins first and foremost by acknowledging the impossibility of interpretation in the older sense. In an allegorical interpretation it is the allegorical level which becomes the master narrative in its own right when its master code or allegorical key is enlarged. In other words, allegory here is "the opening up of the text to multiple meanings, to successive writings and over writings which are generated as so many levels and as so many supplementary interpretations" (*Political Unconscious* 14). Quoting from Walter Benjamin's work *Schriften I*, Jameson says, "allegories are in the realm of thoughts what ruins are in the realm of things" (61). Once the object becomes allegorical, the life flows out of it and the object remains behind, dead. It lies before the allegorist, given over to him utterly, for good or ill. In other words, the object itself is henceforth incapable of projecting any meaning on its own; it can only take on that meaning which the allegorist wishes to lend it. Jameson insists that an allegorist instills the text "with his own meaning; he himself descends to inhabit it." He concludes the nature of allegory in Walter Benjamin's words: "In his hands the thing in question becomes something else, speaks of something else, becomes for him the key to some realm of hidden knowledge, as whose emblem he honors it. This is what constitutes the nature of allegory as script" (*Marxism and Form* 71-72).

In order to invest Premchand's short story with a new meaning, Satyajit Ray in his adaptation creates a new historical character in the form of Wajid Ali Shah. This new character is then encrypted with the possibility of multiple interpretations as Ray installs Wajid Ali Shah at the centre of his film. Marilyn Gaddis Rose's idea of translation helps us understand this break with Premchand's short story. According to Marilyn Gaddis Rose, translation is a kind of literary criticism wherein the translator working on his critical faculty privileges certain aspects of the text over others. But these transformations should not be viewed as defects. Rose argues that those very aspects of the original text where translation seems to "miss" the point, in fact, are not the "failings" of the translator or defects but, rather, they offer opportunities to explore the new horizons of meaning (7). If we make a slight change in Rose's terms by reading "miss" and "failings" as "additions" and "creations," we can say that Satyajit Ray ingeniously appropriates the latent possibilities in Premchand's text to provide an expanded understanding of the prevailing cultural and political conditions in mid nineteenth century India. With the creation of Wajid Ali Shah's character the trans-individual dimensions of the first narrative are drastically reduced to the purely biographical narrative of Wajid Ali Shah. In other words, the multiple reality of the first level finds expression here in the character and biographical incidents of Wajid Ali Shah, significantly, in such a way that does not permit us to hold Wajid Ali Shah guilty of abdicating his throne cowardly or of outright moral depravity of which he stands accused. Rather in this new emerging understanding, Wajid Ali Shah appears as an endearing ruler for his appreciation of fine arts, promotion of cultural traditions and display of moral courage. In fact, making a shift from the position taken by Premchand in his short story, Ray, in *Shatranj ke Khilari*, does not blame the profligacy of Wajid Ali Shah so much as the greed and treacherous colonial machinations of the British for the downfall of Awadh. The narrating voice in Premchand's short story informs us that "it was the era of Wajid Ali Shah. Lucknow was plunged deep in luxurious living. Exalted and humble, rich and poor, all were sunk in luxury" (182). Dwelling upon the ubiquitous decadence in the life of Lucknow, the narrator moves on towards the end of the short story to conclude tersely on the fate of Nawab Wajid Ali Shah: "Nawab Wajid Ali had been taken prisoner and the army was conducting him to some unknown destination" (189). The omniscient narrator in "Shatranj ke Khilari" also tells us that all the wealth of the countryside had been drawn into Lucknow to be squandered on whores, clowns and the satisfaction of every kind of vice while "the debt of the East India Company kept on growing day by day and the general misery was getting harder to bear" (187). But, what Premchand most severely criticises is what he calls the cowardliness of the king. He makes an acidic comment on Wajid Ali Shah's abdicating his throne without resistance:

In the city there was no commotion, no massacre, not a drop of blood was spilled. Until now no king of an independent country could ever have been overthrown so peacefully, without the least bloodshed. This was not the non-violence which delights the gods, but rather the sort of cowardice which makes even great cowards shed tears. The king of the vast country of Oudh was leaving it a captive, and Lucknow remained deep in its sensual slumber. This was the final stage of political decadence. (189)

But Satyajit Ray rejects these charges of outright moral depravity and cowardliness against Wajid Ali Shah, for Premchand not only ignores the more positive aspects of Wajid Ali Shah's personality but also betrays a lack of historical understanding of the Indian political scenario in the mid nineteenth century. Premchand's allegations appear to have been based on the popular opinion of his age, not on the historical facts. His concern in his short story remains the depiction of all embracing perversion in society which he tries to capture through the decadent lifestyle of two chess players, Mir Raushan Ali and Mirza Sajjad Ali, members of the landed aristocracy of Lucknow. In Premchand's scheme of things the decadent life style of the people of Lucknow happens to be the sole reason of the fall of Awadh. But contemporary historians do not seem to validate this view. Fatima Rizvi, drawing on contemporary history, observes that Premchand's "authorial interventions, in the form of narrator's criticism of the decadent, social fabric of the city, seem to ignore the flourishing trade and commerce in the bourgeoisie power-centre, which pinnacle in creative and ingenious productivity and was representative of both its capitalist and its feudal culture" (Rizvi 210). Abdul Halim Sharar, a contemporary historian, argues that the reason Wajid Ali Shah became the target for the abuse of all thinking people and was held responsible for the downfall of the kingdom of Awadh was simply that monarchy came to an end in his reign (61). Drawing our attention to the prevailing political conditions in India, Sharar informs us that when Wajid Ali Shah lost his monarchy, "the national powers throughout India were breaking up and their rulers and governments, both good and bad, were disappearing" (61). Sharar rhetorically asks why the Sikhs of the Punjab, the Marathas of the Deccan, the Mughal Emperors of Delhi and the Governors of Bengal were uprooted when there was no Wajid Ali Shah at any of these four courts. He blames the entire population of India for the unfortunate political developments in the country. Sharar concludes that the "truth of the matter is that the cup of negligence and foolishness of the people of India was near to overflowing" (61). Sharar maintains that the British "were entitled to reap the fruits of their efforts and their advanced civilizations" (62). It becomes clear then that Sharar identifies

two equally important reasons that spelled the doom for Awadh: one, the ignorance of the people of India about the changing political winds over the world horizon, and two, the superiority of British powers and their political prowess. Sharar defends Wajid Ali Shah by pointing out the fact that the downfall of Awadh happened to be one of many similar incidents in India. But Satyajit Ray differs from both Premchand and Sharar, and offers a more nuanced and historically balanced understanding of the situation which we will see presently at the third or moral level of allegorical interpretation.

At the third level of allegorical interpretation Premchand's text can further be rewritten in terms of the ultimate fate of Wajid Ali Shah: his personal thralldom and release from the preoccupations with the charms of royalty. Having reduced the richness of the lived reality of daily life, social and political, of Lucknow to the biographical sketch of Wajid Ali Shah and showing his absorption in sensuous pleasures, Satyajit Ray here sets out to redeem Wajid Ali Shah's sullied image by stressing his fine artistic tastes, dignified royal conduct, and moral courage of choosing to renounce all royal luxury for the sake of stately honour. In contradiction to Premchand's sarcasm on Wajid Ali Shah's abdication without protest, Satyajit Ray creatively situates Wajid Ali Shah in the moment of abdication to reveal the dignity of his behaviour that rises indisputably to the occasion. In the event of the sudden confiscation of his State, in Ray's film, Wajid Ali Shah unexpectedly assumes dignity of character and moral courage that had remained unnoticed previously. Calmly, yet firmly, he addresses the British Resident, General Outram, in the following words: "Mr. Resident you can take my State but not my signature" on the new treaty. In one of the shots when Wajid Ali Shah decides not to sign the new treaty, Ray tries to redeem the positive aspects of his personality with the use of special lighting effects. He captures Wajid Ali Shah's thoughtful face half in dark and half in bright light, clearly to underline the force of his personality.

While Premchand targets the ruler of Awadh for overlooking the priorities of the State and indulging in pleasure loving activities, Ray in his adaptation shifts the focus of attention to the more insidious and historically tenable reason that accounts for the annexation of Awadh. He exposes British colonial greed and their conspiratorial designs to confiscate the princely States of India. The film shows that the British imperial policy in India set out to annex one after another princely State on one pretext or the other. The kingdom of Awadh also fell prey to this policy of confiscation. The British invented charges of misrule against the ruler of Awadh to annex his State, without taking the trouble to substantiate them. Partially agreeing with Sharar, Satyajit Ray does not blame the reversal of priorities in the governance of the princely State of Awadh, where Wajid Ali Shah is said to have privileged writing poetry over administering justice, as the sole reason for its downfall. Rather, responding to the text in the spirit of Balfour who maintains that "translation is

fated to highlight the specificity of the literary original... it is a pointed critical finite response of one 'text' to another, a kind of reading and a kind of literary study in advance of the literary studies to come" (975), Ray illuminates the historical significance of Premchand's short story. In his adaptation, Ray pointedly focuses on the machinations and impatience with which the British rulers worked to annex the State of Awadh. They confiscated the State of Awadh without serving any prior notice on the king, ruling out the possibility of any chance for Wajid Ali Shah to defend his position. The film powerfully demonstrates the betrayal of the ruler of Awadh and the shock and humiliation he and the courtiers suffered. Stunned by the news of confiscation, Wajid Ali Shah addresses his court in an emotionally charged voice. More in agony than in anger he reminisces about his friendly relations with and loyalty to the British who finally betrayed him. The film expands the inadequate historical understanding offered by Premchand's short story, by dramatising the incident of confiscation in detail, opening up the space for the ruler of Awadh and his mother to explain the royal position. In the moment of betrayal, Wajid Ali Shah argues that there had been no complaint of misrule in his State; nor had his subjects ever rebelled. In the course of unfolding the incidents of confiscation, the film exposes British colonial greed which led them to abrogate unilaterally the terms of the old treaty of mutual respect, and to propose a new one that obliges the ruler to abdicate in order to receive an annual pension.

As Marciniak insists that an adaptation is "a specific and original vision of a literary text" (60), Satyajit Ray in his adaptation shows up the treacherous British designs for colonial expansion in India. To expose the dishonest intentions of the British, Ray depicts the scenes in which British Resident, General Outram, finds himself in an uncomfortable position for taking an immoral stand in confiscating the state of Awadh. When the queen mother of Awadh questions the British Resident's decision to confiscate the State of Awadh without warning, he appears to have no confident answers to her straightforward questions. She wants to know why the king was not helped out by the British if he was going wrong. Why was he not warned in time if he was guilty of neglecting his official duties? The queen mother fixes the British Resident in a morally tight corner by reminding him that Wajid Ali Shah ascended the throne only with the consent of the British. The uncomfortable position of General Outram in this whole episode clearly shows his guilt. General Outram's personal opinion that "we have even less justification of confiscation here than in Sind" and his confession "I don't like it at all... yet I have to go through with it" are the instances Satyajit Ray has adduced to attenuate the faults of Wajid Ali Shah and highlight the British deceit. Satyajit Ray, like Premchand, does not spare the aristocracy represented by the two chess players of Lucknow, Mirza Sajjad Ali and Mir Raushan Ali, for their

incriminating indifference to the affairs of the State. But Ray's criticism of the elite of Lucknow is more intensified and satiric than that of Premchand. Mirza Sajjad Ali and Mir Raushan Ali have enjoyed the fruits of their rich *jagirs* granted to their ancestors by the rulers of Awadh but they fail in their duties to stand by the kingdom of Awadh in the face of the approaching crisis. Indifferent to what happens around them, in their homes and the world outside, they are passionately absorbed in the wasteful game of chess. The visual presentation of their passion for chess caricatures them, turning them into degenerate boastful cowards and disgusting impotents. These two chess players who register victory on each other every day in the game of chess, which is also said to be a game that sharpens wit, flee from their houses to the outskirts of the city of Lucknow in the face of a minor threat of conscription.

But this third or moral level that deals with the destiny of Wajid Ali Shah remains insufficient by itself, and at once begs interpretation at the fourth or anagogical level at which the text undergoes its ultimate rewriting in terms of the collective condition of the people at the national level at the time of its reproduction. Satyajit Ray's film attains this collective dimension by throwing up the possibilities of interpretation of the life and times of the people of Lucknow in 1856 in relation to the political realities of India in 1977. Ray makes this feat possible by restructuring the ending of Premchand's short story in his adaptation. In the short story the two chess players were passionately playing their game of chess on the outskirts of Lucknow on the fateful day of the annexation of Awadh. Having lost repeatedly to Mir Raushan Ali, Mirza Sajjad Ali got furious but concealed his exasperation. But as Mirza's game worsened and as an overjoyed Mir sang a ghazal and snapped his fingers from sheer high spirits, Mirza's patience started slipping out of control until it reached the point where he started getting angry at everything Mir said and every move Mir made. Soon it grew into a quarrel which got worse. "The two friends drew their swords from their belts.... They challenged one another formally, the swords flashed; there was a sound of clanging. Both fell wounded and both writhed and expired on the spot" (192). Defending this seemingly unconvincing ending, Amrit Rai maintains that Premchand's short story was meant to serve as a wakeup call for the populace in regard to their politically indolent response to India's ongoing freedom struggle, to shake it out of its complacency (209-10). But Fatima Rizvi finds the ending unconvincing in relation to the background of the decadent and indolent life of Lucknow as depicted by Premchand. She wonders how it is possible for the decadent people of Awadh, right from the ruler to the ordinary man, who remain passive spectators to the shameful act of forced abdication, to be provoked by minor issues, such as aspersions cast on each other's lineage and frustrations due to deceitful moves in the game of chess, and to rise in arms to confront and kill each other. "The irony is unmistakable. This kind of *duex ex machina*

denouement seems implausible, keeping in mind the indolence that characterizes Premchand's protagonists and the laid back attitude of the people of Lucknow. Premchand's justification of the sudden rush of blood is realistically unconvincing for a people given over to leisurely lifestyles" (212).

Ray reconstructs the ending of the short story enabling it to interact with the present without losing its original essence. His adaptation offers us an opportunity to see the political spectacle in the era of Wajid Ali Shah translated into the period of political emergency in India. In Ray's film Mir Raushan Ali wounds Mirza Sajjad Ali's arm with the bullet he fires from his country made revolver. But the friends reconcile and become friends again then and there for fear of losing company in the game of chess. Satyajit Ray makes this radical change in his adaptation to give Premchand's short story its contemporary relevance. Walter Benjamin believed that in the hands of a good translator the original work undergoes a living renewal and becomes a purposeful manifestation of its significance, for, enabled by changes in the reception of language and culture, each generation rediscovers an infinite variety of meanings embedded in the original (17-18). Ray confirms this belief in his adaptation of "Shatranj ke Khilari" by enabling the short story to rediscover its meaning in the present perspective. In 1924 when Premchand wrote "Shatranj ke Khilari," he envisioned the beginning of a new era. His dream of a free India led him to imagine the ending of his short story that suggested the end of the old power game played by the British. But this utopian vision gave way to public despondency, alienation and angst in the seventies as the political leaders of India busied themselves making shrewd political moves to keep themselves in power, jettisoning public interests. The political state of affairs at the national level was strongly reminiscent of Lucknow in 1856. The idealism of the Nehruvian era degenerated into a shameful game of power politics. The country slipped into the grip of venal politicians and an arrogant bureaucracy. Money power and muscle power decided the electoral fate of the politicians. The shameless game of power politics reached its climax in the imposition of political emergency in the country following the verdict of the Allahabad High Court that declared the parliamentary election of the then prime minister Indira Gandhi illegal. Mrs Gandhi took this precipitate decision of imposing emergency in the country to keep herself in power: "She made sweeping amendments in the Constitution and the Representation of People's Act which were enforceable with retrospective effect" (Ranjan 252). Jaiprakash Narayan, a veteran socialist leader and freedom fighter, issued a call for Total Revolution in protest against the prevailing corruption, poverty, injustice and lawlessness in the country and forced the government to seek a fresh mandate. To bring Premchand's short story into a dialogue with this political reality of his time, Satyajit Ray transforms the ending of his adapted film. Ray, therefore, keeps

both the friends alive in his adaptation in order to suggest that the old political game of power continues in India. Only the players have been replaced. The new incumbents are playing their game of power at a bigger and higher level while, unaware of and indifferent to their crafty moves, people at the lower level busy themselves with their mundane businesses for existential survival. The whole political structure in the country works towards maintaining the *status quo*. Satyajit Ray's project to engage Premchand's short story with the contemporary political realities of his time upholds R. Radhakrishnan's view that there are no "innocent or disinterested translators.... Translation is simultaneously the most natural and the most self conscious of all practices and activities" (84).

Satyajit Ray's adaptation of Premchand's short story "Shatranj ke Khilari" into film presents its nuanced interpretation by illuminating the meanings embedded in the text and the subtext. In Ray's hands the adaptation of the short story emerges as a work of visual art, coherent and convincing, displaying subtlety of meanings and internal logic in the new vision. What seems to be uncontested about Salman Rushdie's view that the film *The Wizard of Oz* surpasses, as a work of art, the book on which it was based (14), seems equally true about Satyajit Ray's adapted film *Shatranj ke Khilari*. In his adaptation, Ray, following the patterns of his imagination, certainly enriches Premchand's short story in terms of art and meaning. We can conclude the following about the way Satyajit Ray has taken liberties with Premchand's text in the words of Marciniak: "Even if the film makers' reading of a given literary text clashes with our reading, we are willing to forgive all the alterations when they spring from a well thought out scheme and can lend a persuasive new sense of the text" (61).

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