



The Tempest: An examination of varied film adaptations as representative of contemporary socio-cultural ethos

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Abstract

Like all art, movies are a representation of the society and vice versa. Among other things, movies entertain, educate, and inspire us, giving us role models or themes to follow. Accordingly, the ingredients that go into the making of a movie need to agree with and appeal to the cultural ethos of the viewers it is intended for. In book adaptations of movies, the very multiplicity of readings renders a variety of meanings to a text, giving it dimensions that were perhaps not envisaged by the original writer. This paper is an extended discussion and examination of kinds of alterations seen in two adaptations of Shakespeare's play, *The Tempest: The Forbidden Planet* in (1956) as directed by Fred Wilcox, and *The Tempest* in (2010) as directed by Julie Taymor. These two versions are set apart by almost six decades, yet what brings them in close proximity is their interest with gender roles and their portrayal. These are tackled very differently as where the former tends to stay close to the mores of a male centric American society of 1950s while at the same time giving the viewers a good dose of a newfound love of science fiction, the latter indulges in completely feministic fantasy with a central figure like Prospero being portrayed as a female. Although the two versions can be compared and contrasted on many counts apart from this centrality, for ease of inquiry the current discussion was more focused on the representations of the main characters, Caliban, Ariel, and Prospero and their varied physical characteristics from one film to the other. This study examined the verbal and physical adaptations of these characters as mediums of interaction with the viewers throughout the showing mode. The study finally shines the spotlight on the contemporary political issues that are represented in yet another version of the same play, *Prospero's Books* (1991). The study argues that *The Tempest*, in each of these film versions, represents different cultural agendas.

Key Words: Shakespeare; adaptation; culture; criticism; film; Wilcox; Taymor

1. Introduction

In her book, *Adaptation and Appropriation*, Julie Sanders (2006) suggests that, "studies of Shakespearean adaptation and appropriation become a complex means of measuring and recording multiple acts of mediation and filtration" (p. 62). After four centuries, the worth of Shakespeare's work has been widely conventionalized as a masterpiece of art that reflects and shapes part of the world's realities, in some sense. As we continue to see his plays interpreted by generations of artists, however, Sanders (2006) provides our essential key for understanding the continuing influence of

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Shakespeare on our culture. That key is to consider Shakespeare's work as it appears through each new lens by determining the nature, extent, and purpose of these acts of mediation and filtration. *The Tempest* (Shakespeare, 2000) is among Shakespeare's most well-known plays, a significant work that has been adopted and appropriated to several movies during different time periods. This paper is an extended discussion and examination of the kinds of alterations we may see in two adaptations of Shakespeare's play, *The Tempest: Forbidden Planet* in 1956 as directed by Fred Wilcox, *Prospero's Books* in 1991 as directed by Peter Greenaway, and *The Tempest* in 2010 as directed by Julie Taymor (2010). The discussion of every movie is focused on the representations of the main characters, Caliban, Ariel, and Prospero (1991), who are given different physical characteristics in each film. This paper, hence, will examine the different adaptations of the characters' verbal and physical appearance as mediums of interaction with the viewers. These differences provide a focus for commentary on the contextual issues that differ in every film. *The Tempest*, in every film version, represents different cultural agendas particular to specific viewers' culture, supporting issues of gender and social equality in ways novel to the contexts of the original text. The result is that the adaptation of Shakespeare, in each case, is a further step away from Shakespeare in ways which are measurable, making the continued alteration of *The Tempest* a productive model for understanding not only the technical process of adaptation, but also the real nature of our relationship with heritage texts. As stated earlier, the paper puts forth the argument that *The Tempest*, in each of the film versions under study, typifies different cultural agendas. The following sections, thus, critically discuss the background of *The Tempest*, as a piece of art, *Forbidden Planet* as one of the adapted film versions of *The Tempest*, and Peter Greenway's 1991 version, *Prospero's Books* as discussions and examinations of types of variations seen in two adaptations of Shakespeare's play.

2. Literature Review

The Tempest: A Brief Background

The very status of *The Tempest* as a heritage text establishes the paradox which evokes the questions fundamental to this study. As a piece of large-L Literature, *The Tempest*, like so much of Shakespeare (2000), is considered inherently significant to our culture. Yet, the reverence which secures the play's value does not ensure its status as an immutable icon. Instead, replications of the play in film, have a long history of using Shakespeare's foundations more as a springboard than a blueprint. Discussing the theory of adaptation, Hutcheon (2013) addresses several possible reasons that may cause the adaptation of a literary work. Hutcheon elaborates on economic motivations, legal constraint, cultural capital, or personal and political motives that "can be used to engage in a larger social or cultural critique" (p. 94). Knowing these general motivations and intentions in the process of the adaptation may lead to the other important question: why Shakespeare in particular, in the first place? Sanders (2006) discusses how the dramatic adaptation of Shakespearean plays has become a kind of routine since the time of the Restoration in England in 1660. Sanders (2006) responds to our adopting the adaptation Shakespeare as our central literary figure in Western culture by remarking:

The adaptation of Shakespeare invariably makes him 'fit' for new cultural contexts and different political ideologies to those of his own age. As a result, a historiographical approach to Shakespearean appropriation becomes in many respects a study of theoretical movements; many theories which had their intellectual foundation in recent decades, such as feminism, postmodernism, structuralism, gay and lesbian studies or queer theory, and postcolonialism, have had a profound effect on the modes and mythologies of adapting Shakespeare (p. 46).

Sanders' characterization of the adaptation of Shakespeare as a means of studying theoretical movements has been examined here by comparing two film versions of *The Tempest* and presenting an analysis of the profoundly contemporary tone of yet another one. The premise used in this is that the adaptation of Shakespeare may differ based upon what the adaptor is seeking to attach to the Shakespearean work (2000). Sanders argues that some adaptors "are seen to be more iconoclastic in intention, rewriting or 'talking back' to Shakespeare as an embodiment of the conservative politics, imperialism, and patriarchalism of a previous age" (p. 46). Therefore, the two film versions of *The Tempest* examined here are taken to have been scripted and performed differently based on the ideological stances that vary from one adaptor to another.

Forbidden Planet (1956)

Forbidden Planet (1956) is one of the adapted film versions of *The Tempest* by Shakespeare. This is a 1956 science fiction film that was directed by Fred M. Wilcox, the screenplay was by Cyril Hume, starring Walter Pidgeon, Anne Francis, and Leslie Nielsen. It represents the adaptation of main characters of the original play, who are the servant figures, Ariel and Caliban, into the two main characters in the film, Robby the Robot and the monster from the id that terrorizes the human beings on the planet Altair IV. Id is, of course, one of the three selves or minds of a person, i.e., ego, superego and id. The last of these is a representation of the primitive and instinctual self, comprising aggressive and sexual desires. The representation of Ariel and Caliban as the main characters in this film do not simply repeat the roles in the original play. Instead, Robby and the id monster in this film can be seen as replications of Ariel and Caliban. The replication of these characters represents Hutcheon's (2013) notions of "disembodying," "deracializing," or "indigenizing" specific characters in the adaptation that may transform the story of the adapted text to be told again to a different audience. Hutcheon explains that, "adaptation across cultures is not simply a matter of translating words. For audience experiencing an adaptation in showing or interacting modes of engagements, cultural and social meaning has to be conveyed and adapted to a new environment" (p.149). That leaves us to consider what kind of cultural and social meaning *Forbidden Planet* represented to its contemporary audience.

The movie portrays Robby, the robot, a character that gained fame in pop culture as a servant of Morbius, the human originally stranded on the planet Altair IV. Morbius and Robby represent Prospero and his servant, Ariel, in *The Tempest*. This representation can be seen through Robby's communication with the human visitors who landed on Altair IV as part of the command that he was given by his master. The initial scene introducing Robby emphasizes how the robot is controlled by his master, which is a clear parallel of Prospero's power over Ariel who was commanded to meet the humans on the island. Robby's power is exclusively at the disposal and direction of Morbius, so the effect is that the robot is essentially powerless to other humans, his abilities unavailable to them. Just like Ariel, Robby is not a human, but has supernatural features that humans do not have. His master is the only one who can manage to deal with his features. Therefore, Morbius mentions in the film that he made his version of Ariel harmless to the humans. He made Robby's weakness a feature that causes the robot's system to stop working when it attacks humans. This element of adaptation for Ariel's character in the film speaks to a focus on the relationship technology has with the culture of the US in the fifties. With the recent advent of nuclear technology and the commencement of the Cold War, the presentation of a powerful weapon with distinctly inherent safeguards would surely speak to the desires of the original audience of *Forbidden Planet*. Yet, the presciently advanced nature of what Robby can do connects science mystically to magic, so that the robot continues to strongly parallel the role filled by Shakespeare's Ariel. Therefore, the interpretation of Ariel's character, as adopted in the film, is conveyed into a new meaning for the society.

What makes *Forbidden Planet* of the special interest as an adapted version of *The Tempest*, however, is the variation which screenwriter Cyril Hume brings to the representation of Caliban, one of the most important characters in the original play. Caliban is a second servant for Prospero, who finds Caliban already inhabiting the island when he arrives there in exile. Prospero describes the background for Caliban, the son of Sycorax in the play, saying:

Imprisoned thou didst painfully remain
 A dozen years, within which space she died
 And left thee there, where thou didst vent thy groans
 As fast as millwheels strike. Then was this island
 (Save for the son that she did litter here,
 A freckled whelp, hag-born) not honored with
 A human shape.
 (I. ii. p. 278-284)

These lines in *The Tempest* show that Sycorax is a female creature, as the pronoun “she” describes her as the mother to a “son,” Caliban. It is clear that Sycorax is meant to be unpleasantly ill-favored, as is her child whose very humanity is left in doubt by Shakespeare’s phrasing. Yet, in *Forbidden Planet* (1956), this character takes on a unique aspect while also playing on ideas which question what it is to be human. Caliban is not adapted in the film as a creature or human being, having no physical appearance to mirror that of Robby/Ariel, the robot. Instead, Caliban in the *Forbidden Planet* is represented through the mind of his master. Caliban is identified as the id monster that remains unseen on the planet. Caliban is never fully represented, only hinted at as he interfaces with elements, he attempts to destroy like the security fencing built around the visiting spaceship.

The disembodiment of Caliban in the film speaks directly to Hutcheon’s notions of embodiment in the process of adaptation and appropriation. *Forbidden Planet* offers another vision for the audience to identify the source of fear among the visiting humans on the planet. In Shakespeare’s play, it is Caliban the physical monster who creates fear for the people on the island. Trinculo calls him a monster in *The Tempest*:

By this good light, this is a very shallow
 monster. I afraid of him? Avery weak monster. The
 man I’th’ moon? A most poor credulous monster! Well
 drawn, monster, in good sooth.
 (II. ii. p. 141-144)

Removing the material reality of the monster in *Forbidden Planet* inherently alters the relationship of the other characters to it, and, importantly, it alters the relationship of the audience to it, as well. The pointed lack-of-embodiment of Caliban, his personification as an element of consciousness, might be considered as a way of interaction with the viewer’s mind. This interaction could be a means of creating a psychological motivation for the audience during that time to be afraid of the unknown, and this concept has very particular associations for the initial audience of *Forbidden Planet*. We see in the film that Dr. Mobius’s subconscious is the invisible place for the id monster that causes the terror across Altair IV. Given the contemporary focus on nationalism still prevalent behind international government structures, and given the still recent cataclysm of World War II which was clearly connected to such nationalism, this is clearly a message for the audience showing the danger of the unknown that is associated with the alienation of humanity as divided by nations and ideologies.

The invisibility of Caliban as a monster in the film is emblematic of a kind of terror of the unseen of that which is not present but still threatens, a common enough occurrence during the cold war. More, this portion of the film may be an indicator of what Hutcheon terms “Americanization.” She mentions that when plays are adapted over the course of time, a key element in orienting the script is for adaptors to fit the narrative to default expected audiences. She writes, “In the name of relevance,

adapters seek the ‘right’ resetting or recontextualizing” (p.146). It happens that the default audience has regularly been the American one, so the “right” setting is one which conforms to US expectations and needs. In this case, the film gives an opportunity to look back at a previous iteration of US culture during a period of remarkable stress. Interestingly, the id-monster version of Caliban gives us a sense of self-reflective awareness from 1950s America about its precarious position.

The Tempest (2010)

What we see in the other film versions. Taymor’s purpose in this adaptation is fundamentally progressive, supporting the ongoing debate of the equality of genders and suggesting the strong inherent rights of indigenous peoples, including the right to resist western zeal to ‘civilize’ them.

Adaptation has explicit connections to concepts connected with post-colonial viewpoints. Hutcheon states that, “[w]hen stories travel – as they do when they adapted in across media, time, and place – they end up bringing together what Edward Said called different ‘ process of representation and institutionalization’”(p.150). Hutcheon continues to interpret Said, suggesting that when ideas travel, they result in the transformation of the idea in its new time and place” (p.150). Time is the essential factor in all this, demonstrating how evolving contexts demand representation in texts which originate in times where such contexts are unavailable. The result is a need to alter the text to meet the needs of current contexts. In this case, Taymor’s (2010) *The Tempest* is a commentary on political agendas reflecting on racial inequality and the role of women as leaders.

That women can be in a position of power is illustrated immediately in Taymor’s film, since Mirren’s Prospera is shown as the ruler of the island. This is a significant shift, emphasizing the transformation of gender roles since the date of the original source or the earlier adaptations such as the *Forbidden Planet* which completely ignores the female characters, typical of the American society at the time. The chain of power due to Prospera is slightly confused, however. Prospera is represented as the exiled wife of the Duke, accused of killing her husband Prospero. However, practically, Mirren is given that same power that Prospero has in the original play. This kind of strength makes her able to control the spirit Ariel and the indigenous creature Caliban. Mirren seems to be aware of representing the power that women should have as she plots the marriage between her daughter Miranda and the prince Ferdinand by saying, “to restore power to my daughter.” The inclusion of the standard marriage-plot, however, calls into question the limits of women’s power in this fictional world. That fact, however, only adds to the characterization of Prospera’s gender role in this film as a kind of resistance to the patriarchal oppression against females. Prospera’s role in this film is a kind of critique to the current situation where women must continue to work to achieve positions of influence and power. Therefore, the transformation of Prospera can be interpreted through the feminist lens as a new alteration that reflects an alternate social reality that could happen during our particular time in history.

Gender, however, is not the only cultural critique on hand from Taymor (2010). The depiction of Caliban in this film constitutes a similar transformation of how those “othered” because of race might be seen in new contexts. Caliban, as the only person of color among the whites who make up the rest of the cast, represents that indigenous identity. In considering how this fit into the adaptation process, Hutcheon offers the notion of “indigenization,” something that refers to a kind of intercultural encounter and accommodation (p.150). Taymor’s adaptation gives Caliban a kind of agency that represents the indigenous identity as a strong physical being, and this is fairly unique among the film adaptations of this play. Although we see Prospera is the dominant figure on the island, Caliban is not demonstrated to be inherently inferior to her. For example, we see him resisting her commands immediately during the first time she meets him in the film. Instead, he postures to show his disregard for her, emphasizing his own strong physicality by yelling at her and showing his muscles. In addition,

the color of Caliban's skin may represent his indigenous nature by suggesting a direct connection between him and the soil of his land. He is a black man, and he is said to hide under the black rocks of the mountain. Caliban, as played by the only African American actor represents a literal minority on the screen, indicating that he is the "other" among the white Western people who dominate his island. To make a further visual point, Caliban is depicted with some white spots on his body, a visual metaphor for the impact of colonization on his physical body. Hutcheon concept of indigenization, points to the progressive nature of representing those who have traditionally been "othered," and she suggests that this tends to favor expressions of equality and democratization (p.151). In contrast to the *Forbidden Planet*, Taymor's adaptation of *The Tempest* boldly takes on the issues of the marginalized sections of the western society, notably that of race by holding the bull by the horns. The film implies some agencies that give the marginalized figures a chance to represent the need for the equality of genders and the need for the colonized to represent their identity.

Prospero's Books (1991)

A third dimension in film adaptation of literature is offered by Peter Greenway's 1991 version, *Prospero's Books*. Foremost in showing Greenaway's fresh response is the fact that this film has different representations of the main characters from the original play. Here, Prospero plays a significant function with his servants Ariel and Caliban in the film. *Prospero's Books*, released in 1991, was both written and directed by Peter Greenaway and starred John Gielgud (1991), who plays the role of Prospero. Gielgud, a near legendary figure in twentieth-century Shakespearean theater brings a sense of significance to Prospero, validating his position as the most important character in the film. As Prospero, Gielgud communicates with the audience through his self-reflexive narration as well as through interaction with the voices of other story characters. Self-reflexivity is an essential technique as used in this film, which is not to be found in the other two versions considered here. The plot of the film demonstrates Prospero involved in the creation of his own story, leaning into the presentation of a metanarrative where the viewer finds that Prospero stands in for Shakespeare who is seen writing and telling the story's action as it progresses.

The focus on the written word and its relationship with reality is at the heart of Greenaway's adaptation. In speaking of this version of *The Tempest*, Sanders suggests: "[a]ny study of Shakespeare's adaptation of sources indicates the rich intertextual readings such incorporation makes possible, although in an effort to stress Shakespeare's creativity as well as dependency, critics have been anxious to identify those moments where that dramatist supplements or amplifies his sources" (p. 47). Greenaway's demonstration of how Prospero controls and edits his reality through the written word is a significant reflection on this process, extrapolating from the usual approach to describing the author as a creative force. It suggests the part played in creativity by outside the office of authorship.

At the same time, Greenaway (1991) valorizes the role that the written word plays in relation to personal knowledge, personal empowerment. The film emphasizes the importance of the books that Prospero has saved from the tempest. He prizes them more than his dukedom as he wonders about what pages and books have been flooded by the water. Greenaway demonstrates the validity of this valuation by Prospero in his adapted representations of the play by creating Prospero's cinematic island world through books and connecting the images of written pages as a kind of self-reflexive citation of the original play. Prospero's self-reflexivity in the film is a process of interacting with the audience to help the viewer identify the significance of these books. Hutcheon describes Greenaway's adaptation as, "a work clearly marked by his own postmodern aesthetic of self-referentiality and citation," and this philosophical worldview is essential for understanding the direction which this version of *The Tempest* takes (p. 82).

Self-reference is another way of talking about the nature of relativity which invests the postmodern perspective (Kumar, 2020), and Greenaway's vision of Shakespeare is a pageant presenting this viewpoint. Interestingly, this is something of a limitation on the success of this film version. Hutcheon argues that, "for an adaptation to be successful in its own right, it must be so for both knowing and unknowing audiences" (p. 121). For an audience which is open to the possibilities of the variability of truth, for the significance of the individual consciousness as a fulcrum to move meaning from here to there, Greenaway's film makes a good deal of sense and presents a visually poetic version of this lesson. However, the film may be problematic for audiences seeking narrative grounded in more conventional ideas of cause and effect. The elements of self-reflexivity used in the film can work to emphasize the view of reality as a human construct. In essence, the images and illusions that represent the world of Prospero are not so very different from the images (and illusions) which crowd the minds of audience members and are taken as the truth of human existence. Greenaway emphasizes this possibility by filming most of the scenes in *Prospero's Books* in darkness, an extended conceit where the viewer is placed inside the skull of the narrator. This mirrors the experience of most film-viewers who come to the play with representations of what they already know about *The Tempest*, something which can play backwards and forwards and change in accord with their individual imaginations. Greenaway (1991) encourages participation in this way by modeling it through the narrative style for the film. This other element of self-reflexivity in the film features Prospero's direct communication with the audience. Siska (1979) identifies self-reflexivity as one of the cinematic elements in the modernist films which he calls "consciousness turning back on itself" (p.285). That is precisely what Greenaway (1991) aims for by encouraging the narrative voice of his film, personified in the character of Prospero, to speak directly to the narrative voice inside each member of his audience, demanding that each recognize his/her part in the production of story, whether this is fantasy world or what we term reality.

The process of self-reflection in *Prospero's Books* as a means to encourage self-reflection in viewers is well integrated through the film. A 1991 interview with Greenaway by Marlene Rogers describes how Greenaway (1991) incorporates varied sources in the film like operatic music, song, and dance that represents settings of Renaissance architecture, and naked spirits based on the classical mythology or Western art (p.11). Rogers argues that, "the film is highly literary and self-referential in its constant reminders that *The Tempest* is text" (p.11). Self-referentiality is a strong feature in this film and a strategy that represents Greenaway's imaginative choices in his adaptation of *The Tempest* that emphasize Shakespeare's reference to Prospero's magical books. The lines from Shakespeare read:

Knowing I loved my books, he furnish'd me
 From mine own library with volumes that
 I prize above my dukedom.
 (I. ii. p. 166-168)

The significance of this is emphasized to the viewer from the start with these lines as an epigraph displayed on the screen. More, however, Prospero's voice relates this passage through Gielgud's voice as a self-reflexive element that tells the audience about the interpretation of Shakespeare. The words are read with the eye, taken into thought, but they are also voiced by the actor who echoes the words written centuries in the past and spoken on thousands of stages since then. Far from speaking to the universal nature of the Bard, Greenaway (1991) seeks to show the variability of the text, how it lives different lives in every mind.

The idea of variability and relativity extends to the imagining of the characters of Ariel and Caliban in Greenaway's film, a feature completely varied from *Forbidden Planet* and *The Tempest*. In *Prospero's Books*, four human actors play the role of Ariel. Three of them are gymnasts who represent Ariel as a boy, a teenager, and a youth; the fourth representation of Ariel is as a boy singer. In contrast,

Caliban is portrayed in a single manner by one actor; he is portrayed by the dancer Michael Clark in this film, which means that Caliban is also clearly less monster and more human. In fact, the humanity of both characters in this film is strongly emphasized since both are shown nude, something which may indicate Greenaway's intention to show these characters as less sophisticated, perhaps even barbaric, but which leaves us with little doubt as to their basic human-ness.

The various depictions of humanity in *Prospero's Books* works well as a visual demonstration of Greenaway's postmodern view. It may well elicit the question: what is human? However, these philosophical questions also have political applications. The depiction of Ariel and Caliban as Prospero's spirits who work under his command may represent a postcolonial reading. Prospero's alienation of them can be interpreted as making them the "others" who are dominated by Western power, as represented by the quintessentially English Gielgud. Prospero works through language, has strong attachment to his books. In contrast, Caliban is alienated from these means of expression and instead portrays his language through his physical body motions. The nudity of his figure underscores the physicality of his communication. On the other hand, Prospero is portrayed as colorfully well-dressed, a figure that represents the aristocratic class. Greenaway ((1991) makes Caliban express himself through his body language as he moves, swims, and dances in order to be identified as a marginalized other, as someone quite apart from the world of books. It is easy to read this distinction in *Prospero's Books* as a representation of the uncivilized nations who are regarded as savages for being unable to use the dominant language to communicate with the colonizer. The inclusion of this political element provides yet another hint about the relativity inherent in the world-view Greenaway espouses. Even though Prospero is presented as the author of what we see, the audience is free to judge him by interpreting what is shown according to exterior contexts.

In essence, Greenaway's purpose in his adaptation of *Prospero's Books* is to showcase the variability of meaning, an essential element in adaptation. As Hutcheon indicates: "adaptations of the same play that are even decades apart can and should differ: cultures change over time" (p.146). The representation of Gielgud portraying the role of Prospero commences the exercise in self-reflection Greenaway crafts his cerebral adaptation with the aim of demonstrating the illusory nature of meaning even when considering a text which is commonly consumed. In doing so, he presents a viewpoint which is particularly pertinent to the moment of the adaptation's execution when post-structural thought dominated all academic considerations, overshadowing even the political elements which intrude into the periphery.

3. Method

The method used in this study is two-fold: it is both analytical and descriptive in nature. It analyses the adaptation of two films: *The Forbidden Planet* in (1956) as directed by Fred Wilcox, and *The Tempest* in (2010) as directed by Julie Taymor to Shakespeare's play "The Tempest" and critically describes the role of minority characters used therein with specific attention paid to the agency of gender roles and marginalization indigenous people they played, which reinforces the socio-cultural consciousness.

4. Result and Discussion

Adapting *the Tempest* to film in all its various forms over the last three-quarters of a century demonstrates Julie Sanders' point about the part that Shakespeare continues to play in our culture (Jameson, 2013; Memmi, 2013). Sanders write, "Studies of Shakespearean adaptation and appropriation become a complex means of measuring and recording multiple acts of mediation and filtration" (p.62). *The Forbidden Planet*, *Prospero's Books*, and Taymor's *The Tempest*, are

adaptations *that* have gone through complex acts of filtration and alterations. Different reasons for every adaptation and each film can be seen as a need for representing new cultural contexts and different socio-political ideologies, particular to the time in which each film was produced. Therefore, we see that the Shakespearean appropriation to the observed film versions become more than a study of Shakespeare. Instead, they provoke a study of different theoretical movements, which reflect psychoanalytical, postcolonial, or feminist criticism (Lazarus, 2011; Harlow, 2012; Leitch, 2008). The analysis of these films shows that every film has a specific representation that supports either the equality of genders or suggests the belonging of the indigenous to their land and their right to resist the Western domination against them (Bahri, 2004; Harlow, 2012). Different though equally true, peeps into the changing ethos of the western world are offered by the three versions dealt with here.

5. Conclusion

Contemporary socio-politico-cultural upheavals that were touching America and England during the making of the films find subtle expression in each case whether it be the question of gender or racial equality, angst and hopelessness as humanity grappled with questions and doubts of the meaning of life, or man's struggle to find a place on the globe in the wake of hyper-nationalism and age of science, each of the film versions of Shakespeare's play are able to weave together a compelling narrative (Wallerstein, 2006; Frus & Williams, 2010; Whittington, 2008). However, future critical studies can include other versions of the play to take the inquiry deeper into the assumption that films adapt stories to their audience (Larsson, 2014). Human values and the subtle changes that they undergo with the passage of time can also be an area of inquiry as future studies fathom the distance between fiction and film.

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