

**Iranian Adaptation and Narrative Transformation with
Special Attention to Amir Naderi's Adaptation of Sadeq
Chubak's Tangsir**

Pouyan Nabipour

PhD Candidate
Shiraz University, Iran
pooyan.nabipour@gmail.com

Alireza Anushirvani *

Professor
Shiraz University, Iran
anushir@shirazu.ac.ir

Abstract

This paper, while focused primarily on the narrative transformation of Sadeq Chubak's *Tangsir* from novel to film adaptation, offers a general survey of adaptation history in Iran and also investigates the nature of Iranian adaptation from both foreign and domestic sources. Drawing on Gerard Genette's theories of Narratology, especially his notion of hypertextuality, transpragmatization and transdiegetization, we would discuss the changes made to the hypotextual story from a narratological perspective. This paper strives to demonstrate how adaptations of foreign and domestic sources vary, in that adaptations of foreign sources tend to incline towards diegetic transposition, which entails changes to time and setting and conversely domestic sources lend themselves more to pragmatic transpositions, most of which tend to change and modify certain plot elements for aesthetic and/or socio-political reasons which consequently change or dramatically expand the thematic aspects of the story. The current research investigates both divergences and convergences of the narrative elements of the story such as narrator, point of view, perspective, plot and characterization in a comparative manner between the two mediums, trying to uncover the reasons for narrative transformations. This study also proposes the term director/editor for film directors, who in their adaptations of literary works recline heavily on pragmatic transpositional processes.

Keywords: Hypertextuality, Transpragmatization, Transdiegetization, Iranian adaptation

* Corresponding Author

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Introduction

Christian Metz, one of the early investigators of narrativity and film considers the film medium as one which “tells us continuous stories; it ‘says’ things that could be conveyed also in the language of words; yet it says them differently” (44). Investigating the quiddity and the quality of this difference and what it entails is the crux of our study. The main focus of this study rests on Amir Naderi’s adaptation of Sadeq Chubak’s *Tangsir*. Drawing upon Gerard Genette’s theoretical framework in narratology, we would discuss the changes made to the story from a narratological perspective. However, before our in-depth analysis of the narratological changes in this adaptation, it might be beneficial to provide a survey of the history of film adaptation in Iran and scrutinize the variations in transformational politics of their narrative structure.

Since the invention of cinema, literary works served as inspirations for filmmakers worldwide. Thomas Leitch correctly asserts that, contrary to what modern viewers may consider the primitive innocence of literary inspirations in early film, “cinematic adaptation is as old as cinema itself” (23). Adaptation in Iranian cinema, much in the same way as its Western counterparts, was born almost simultaneously with the introduction of cinema to the country and its early filmmakers. While it was Shakespeare, whose accrued cultural authority for the institution of the cinema in the West, served to legitimize the new medium’s “morally – and culturally – uplifting potential” (Lanier 62); Ferdowsi and Nizami did the same for the Iranian cinema. Abdolhosain Sepanta is generally known as the precursor of cinematic adaptation in Iran. His adaptations reflected the dominant nationalistic discourse of the time (Baharlou). His *Firdausi* (1934) based on the life of the epic poet Abolqasem Ferdowsi, recreated iconic scenes from the mythical battle of Rostam and Sohrab from *Shahnameh*. His *Shirin and Farhad* (1934) and *Laili and Majnun* (1937) were both inspired by Nizami’s famous ballads, recounting ancient love legends (Naficy, 2: 222).

For three decades after that, Iranian cinema in general and adaptations in particular focused more on historical tales and legends with little box office or critical success. Both Abbas Baharlou and Hamid Dabashi consider the late sixties as a turning point for Iranian cinema with two, now classic, adaptations of contemporary Iranian literature. These two works were *Ahu Khanom's Husband*

(originally *Shohar-e Ahu Kbanom*), a novel by Ali Mohammad Afghani which turned into a film of the same name directed by Davud Mollapour and *The Cow* (originally *Gav*), which was part of the collection of interrelated short stories titled *Azadaran-e Bayal* by Gholamhossein Sa'edi, the leading Iranian playwright of the time, which consequently turned into an award winning, critically acclaimed movie *The Cow* (1969) by Dariush Mehrjui. Dabashi praises *Ahu Khanom's Husband* (1968) as a film that “steered clear of all the nauseating clichés of Iranian popular cinema, seeking a realistic portrayal of urban life. It was received with great critical acclaim and demonstrated that Iranian cinema could gradually escape entrapment in catering to the basest instincts of a mass audience” (Close Up 43). He also considers *The Cow* as a film which “dawned a new age in Iranian cinema” (43) and Mehrjui as a director who gave this cinema a character and direction to articulate its potential, in bringing it to the global attention (43). However, this global attention did not result in Iranian cinema turning to literature as its main source of inspiration. Lezgi and Morad Abbasi correctly come to the conclusion that adaptations are a small percentage of the overall product of Iranian cinema so much so that the number of hitherto done adaptations, whether based on foreign or domestic source materials, is under ninety works with Iranian literature contributing less than fifty to the overall tally (86). However, these underwhelming figures, tend to overshadow the fact that the deciding factor which revolutionized the Iranian cinema, was a close relationship between the established literary authors and their fellow filmmakers, some of whom, were actually both. This helped to cement the distinctive character of the modern Iranian cinema and its adaptations which are sometimes considered as poetical or metaphorical. Dabashi, among others underscores this fact by mentioning the critical link between Iranian cinema and modern Persian poetry and fiction, considering the fact that “Forugh Farrokhzad and Ebrahim Golestan, two pioneering figures in Iranian cinema, were themselves prominent members in the pantheon of modern poetry and fiction” (Masters 32). He mentions close collaboration of Dariush Mehrjui and Gholamhossein Saedi,

Bahman Farmanara and Houshang Golshiri, Arby Ovanessian and Ali Mohammad Afghani among others as a sign of Iranian cinema's indebtedness and close relationship with its contemporary literary counterpart. He also mentions the returning of the favor by the Iranian cinema with such works as "Amir Naderi's *Tangsir* (1974) [which] popularized Sadeq Chubak's novel of that name, published in 1963" (32).

There were also many instances of Iranian filmmakers taking up foreign works of literature as source material for their cinematic works. These works usually localized or indigenized plot elements, character names, etc. to make it more palatable for Iranian audiences. Although adapted works from foreign sources started in the fifties with such works as *Ashamed* (1950), *Mistake* (1953), *The Stumble* (1953), *The Miser* (1956) and *Twilight of Love* (1956); the last three based on *La Dame aux Camélias* by Alexandre Dumas fils, *L'Avare* by Molière and *Romeo and Juliet* by Shakespeare respectively, none of them are considered as prominent adaptations. It was not until the late eighties and early nineties that the change in the course of adaptation in Iranian cinema came with directors such as Naser Taghvaei, coming up with *Captain Khorshid* (Nakhoda Khorshid, 1986), a free adaptation based on Ernest Hemingway's *To Have and Have Not* and Dariush Mehrjui making *Sara* (1993) and *Pari* (1995) based on Henrik Ibsen's *A Doll's House* and J.D. Salinger's *Franny and Zooey*.

The main reason for our mentioning foreign and domestic adaptations in Iranian cinema is to underscore the basic transformational differences between these two hypotextual sources. Before our recourse to these differences it might be helpful to revisit certain terminology and definitions that will be utilized from here on out. This paper draws upon the notion of palimpsest as introduced by Gérard Genette and later redefined by Linda Hutcheon, Robert Stam and others to fit their respective theories of adaptation. Genette in his *Palimpsests: Literature in the Second Degree* maps out the processes through which two texts may be related to each other. His concept of transtextuality which includes intertextuality, metatextuality, hypertextuality, architextuality and paratextuality are the basic building blocks of his argument. He believes that "the subject of poetics is transtextuality, or the textual transcendence of the text" (Genette 1). He goes further to define it as "all that sets the text in a relationship, whether obvious

or concealed, with other texts” (1). He enumerates five types of transtextual relationships.¹ Robert Stam, David Bordwell and Linda Hutcheon among others, consequently borrowing from Genette, came up with their own narratological perspective to film theory in general and the adaptation process in particular, giving special attention to discussions about hypertextuality and metatextuality. Leitch maintains that for adaptation theorists like Stam and Raengo, “adaptation was no longer an isolated, exceptional phenomenon; it was merely one particular instance of the intertextual impulse at the heart of every text that sprang from and in turn generated other texts” (Handbook 4).

Before going deeper into theoretical discussions, it has to be mentioned that here we, considering film as text, adopt these terms for adaptation purposes, while Genette considers both hypotext and hypertext primarily as written texts, we consider the hypotext as a literary work and the hypertext as the cinematic adaptation of that work. Among all these hypertextual practices Genette considers transposition or serious transformation, as the most important. The concept of transposition, also gets divided into several categories. These categories include translation, versification, prosification, transtylization, various quantitative transformations and finally the most pertinent to our study, diegetic and pragmatic transposition. Diegetic transposition, or transdiegetization implies a change in the diegesis and pragmatic transposition, is a modification of the events and actions of the plot. Genette employs the term diegesis in its current usage introduced by Etienne Souriau. He considers diegesis as the spatiotemporal world of the narrative or “the world wherein that story occurs” (295). Consequently diegetic transposition is “transferring the same—or almost the same—action into another world” (295). There are also two types of diegetic transposition; One is heterodiegetic transposition which “emphasizes the thematic analogy between its plot and that of its hypotext [and the other] conversely, homodiegetic transposition [which] emphasizes its own freedom of thematic interpretation” (310). Almost all of the Iranian adaptation of foreign works fall under the heterodiegetic transposition category. The aforementioned

works of Mehrjui such as *Sara* and *Pari* are heterodiegetic transpositions. In the case of *Sara*, a Norwegian town during 1870s turns into an Iranian town during the 90s while the struggle of one woman against the patriarchal society as the central theme remains untouched. *Pari* also changes the location of Salinger's story from the United States to Iran. In this latter work, while the difference in time period is less drastic, yet it is important because it showcases a period of time during which an inclination or zest for Eastern spirituality peaks in both countries. *Captain Khorshid* (Nakhoda Khorshid) by Nasser Taghvai also transposes Ernest Hemingway's novel from Cuba to the south of Iran with almost thirty years of time difference between the two while keeping true to the central theme of Hemingway; of a solitary man's moral struggle for survival in a greedy society. The latest example of these diegetic transpositions is Varuzh Karim-Masihi's 2009 adaptation of *Hamlet* called *Tardid*. Proximization is at the heart of diegetic transposition. In this process "the hypertext transposes the diegesis of its hypotext to bring it up to date and closer to its own audience (in temporal, geographic, or social terms)" (Genette 304). It must be mentioned that diegetic transposition inevitably ask for minor pragmatic transposition; as it is not expected that a modernized hypertext/film replicate the same method of killing, means of transport, etc., but what distinguishes one from the other is the prevalence and importance of these changes to the narrative. Diegetic changes might also entail changes to the identity of the characters such as their name, sex, nationality or family background. Genette considers the effect of such transposition to be parody or travesty (296), however, considering the film adaptation as the hypertext, we might add pastiche or homage to the list of effects or even perhaps a filmmaker's belief in universality or appropriateness of the story for his national social or political climate.

Pragmatic transposition as we mentioned before, is a change in the course of the action and in its material support. Genette considers this type of transposition as "an indispensable element, or rather an unavoidable consequence of diegetic transposition" (311). He also mentions that no author of a hypertext is willing to modify the action of a hypotext "without the alibi of a good 'reason': i.e., a cause or a goal" (312). The reason for such a process by an author, Genette believes, is an "intent of correcting possible errors or deficiencies in the hypotext,

with a view to improving its effectiveness and its reception” (312). Genette draws a parallel between this corrective process with that of a *free translation*. If we have to draw our own parallel, we might consider the extremely faithful adaptation as a simple, literal translation and a free adaptation akin to paraphrase or what Genette calls elegant imitation. Scrutinizing the neoclassicization of the Homeric text in translation, Genette enumerates different changes made to the text that might be of use for us to apply to a certain type of adaptation and then add some of our own. These changes are done to the text, according to Genette, for “considerations of morality and taste” (313). The text might have ceaseless repetitions, stereotyped adjectives, idle descriptions, long, incoherent speeches, poorly devised action which destroys suspense, lack of clarity of motivation, lack of logical coherence between actions and the immorality of a character. The changes might have also been done for purely aesthetic considerations (313-317). We might also add, sociopolitical considerations, censorship and medium requirements. This type of transposition is what defines Iranian adaptation of national literature. Evidently, it is not to say all such adaptations adhere to the same process, but there are multiple instances of national adaptations following the same pragmatic transpositions. Mehrjui’s *The Cow* is one example of such pragmatic transposition. Mehrjui cites different reasons for these changes; he mentions the brevity of the source material that had not the capacity for a feature film so he needed to extend the scope of the story by introducing a few extra characters and events. The characters of the madman and Eslam are not in the original story and neither is taking Mashdi Hassan to the hospital and his subsequent death (Jahed, “Negahi”). The same could be said about another adaptation of Mehrjui from Saedi’s works called *The Cycle* (originally *Dayereh Mina*) in which the episodes about Ali working for Dr. Sameri who deals in blood are not as accentuated in Saedi’s work. Masud Kimiai also changed aspects of the events in both *Dash Akol* by Sadegh Hedayat and *The Legend of Baba Sobhan* (originally *Avsaneye Baba Sobhan*) which he turned into a movie called *The Soil* (originally *Khak*). However, an in-depth analysis of all these works to find

instances of these changes and their effects on the overall themes of these source material asks for several separate articles, if not a book, so we decided to settle for a solitary example of Amir Naderi's adaptation of Sadeq Chubak's *Tangsir*.

Tangsir's plot follows Zaar Mohammad, a Tangistani native and a former militia fighter against the English, living a civil life. Based on a true story of a local hero, the story recounts this man's futile attempts to receive compensation and justice against those who have swindled him out of his life savings and his revenge which leads to killing them and fleeing the country with his wife and children. *Tangsir* is considered by many to be a unique phenomenon in Chubak's oeuvre for the fact that, we are no longer dealing with Chubak's trademark decadence and moral ambiguity. Zaar Mohammad is the epitome of a superman; morally upright, physically strong enough to subdue a bull or a shark and invulnerable to the point of extreme which ultimately turns him into a one-dimensional type or a flat character. The publication of the novel, from the very beginning, met with little to no critical acclaim, as many critics bashed it for its sloppy plot structure, underdeveloped characters, unnecessary repetitions and incongruity in narrative voice and dialogue (Shamim Bahar 657-660; Ghasemzadeh 117; Mirabedini 440-442). These characteristics, which bears a close resemblance to what we mentioned before about the problems that the translators of Homer had with his work, makes it ripe for pragmatic transposition. As we mentioned before, all these perceived deficiencies asks for an elegant imitation, which could be achieved through an editor in chief/director who would be able to polish the work to suit his time and the medium of presentation. While some may consider the adapted work a faithful rendition, it might be noteworthy to mention that both Chubak and Ebrahim Golestan, who encouraged Chubak to write the story and procured the film rights to it, disparaged Amir Naderi's adaptation (Jahed, "Negahi"). Chubak went so far as to compare Naderi to an unattended kid in a toy store who destroyed the film (Baharlou). Other critics such as Hamid Dabashi, considering the film adaptation as a revolutionary epic, praised it for its giving a "further momentum to anti-establishment sentiments" (Close up 29). However, a comparative narratological study between the novel and the film that could account for formal as well as thematic transformations of the book is lacking in academic writings about this story.

Any narratological discussion would be incomplete without a close inspection of the narrating agent. *Tangsir* is narrated in most parts using an omniscient third person point of view. Parviz Jahed confuses the point of view with perspective or focalization when he states that Chubak's novel is narrated through Zaar Mohammad's perspective, but the film is narrated using third person omniscient ("Dah Ketab"). The narrative voice in the novel remains stable with one crucial and confusing exception which we will mention later; What changes in the text as well as the movie is the narrative perspective. While the very concept of the cinematic narrator is a point of debate among film narratologists, focalization or the concept of perspective is an indispensable term that can be usefully applied to the film medium (Lothe 43). The dominant perspective, throughout the novel, stays with Zaar Mohammad to solidify his role as the hero on his quest, approximating to the vision of the main character, only to distance itself from him in cutaway scenes both in the book and the movie when we are witnessing the armed government officials (in Persian *Tofangchi*) raiding the village to find him. In those instances the narrative perspective shifts continuously between the two Tofangchi and Shahroo, Zaar Mohammad's wife. In the text, the change in narrative voice from the third person point of view to the first person happens after the murder of Sheikh Abutorab mid-chapter, in an unannounced fashion when the narrator, who is obviously one of the kids playing on the street, witnesses Zaar Mohammad as he says: "[h]e came and passed our door and I saw him for the first time for a little while" (87; My Translation). The first person continues for two paragraphs which follows the only instance of pure dialogues and monologues for two pages without a narrative voice and then the third person takes over again. In addition to destabilizing the consistency in narrative voice, this scene delegitimizes the whole narrative as the first person narrator has no way of knowing about what goes on in the village or more importantly in characters' mind. Naderi, probably considering the intrusive slippage of Chubak has no corresponding scene, except for a quick medium shot of children amidst the crowd and looking from the rooftops. Jacob Lothe

mentioning Knut Hamsun's novel *Hunger*, draws our attention to how Henning Carlsen's adaptation of the novel tries to emulate the subjective first person point of view using close-ups and subjective constant camera movement which for example "focalizes over the shoulder of the main character [...] on a sheet of paper on which he is writing" (44). By contrast, an omniscient third person point of view implies an objective look which could be translated into the filmic medium using relatively static camera movement, long or medium shots, as well as the bird's eye perspective from above or high angle shots all of which dominate Naderi's cinematography. (see fig. 1.)



Fig. 1. Example of objective shot: This continuous take has the camera positioned firm while the object of it (Zaar Mohammad) moves toward it and eventually moves out of the frame.

The next crucial aspect of a narrative is its plot and characterization. As mentioned before several critics mentioned an unbalanced structure of the plot which leads to the lack of suspense and an anticlimactic climax. The redeeming quality of Chubak, which not only makes his work suitable for the visual medium, but also attracts positive reviews from his critics, is his attention and skill in descriptive passages of his stories (Atash-Sevda 193; Green 511). Deborah Miller Mostaghel also while praising Chubak's attention to realistic details of speech and behavior, draws our attention to the way he presents his characters in their struggle for existence. She compares Chubak to a filmmaker who "starts the camera rolling, focuses on one particular incident of that struggle and stops the

camera when the incident is finished. Background details are kept to a minimum, and except for a few lapses, there is no moralizing voice to interpret what we see. We are simply presented the incident in an economical, crisp prose” (228). This unadorned, unpoetic and *crisp* descriptive prose without narratorial intrusion are the qualities that made *Tangsir* a suitable candidate for adaptation. These characteristics coupled with a heroic quest and a revenge story, drenched in political overtones set in the south of Iran prepared an optimal condition for Naderi to pick it up for a film adaptation. The shortcomings of it, however, which needed an editor/director was the unnecessary repetitions and descriptions; scene which did not contribute in furthering the story or establish a believable character with clear motives.

Shamim Bahar considers the opening two chapters which feature ruminations of Zaar Mohammad on superstitious beliefs and his ill fate as well as different scenes, including ants taking a beetle to their colony, a grieving widow wailing and Mohammad’s encounters with a stray dog and the iconic bull taming feat as unnecessary scenes which does nothing for the advancement of the story and if cut, it would not hurt the overall plot structure (657-658). D. A. Shojai also considers the cow taming scene, having “nothing to do with the plot of the rest of the story” (227). It is debatable, however, whether or not Chubak has written this scene to establish Zaar Mohammad as a *Pahlavan* or a legendary hero, but one cannot escape the mythological significance of this scene which reminds us of the Cretan Bull. The Cretan Bull, like the bull in *Tangsir*, is a white bull sent by Poseidon to Minos as a sign of confirmation of his right to the Cretan throne. Minos does not sacrifice it, angering Poseidon, who among other things makes the bull untamable as it “roamed wild throughout Crete and caused much damage until it was captured by Heracles as his seventh Labour and brought to Greece. It was released on the mainland and caused further havoc until it was finally killed by Theseus” (Coleman 253). Amir Naderi in his adaptation of the story, not wanting to cut this memorable and establishing scene, merges the wailing widow scene and character with the bull taming scene and its owner,

having his hero emerging from a well and subduing the bull only to be met with the owner's disdain and rebuke telling him if he is a man he should deal with the people who wronged him. This caustic remark serves as a motivational speech spurring Zaar Mohammad further down the revenge path while at the same time humanizes him and makes the scene relevant to the overall structure of the plot rather than keeping it as an isolated incident. Revealingly enough, Joseph Campbell explaining a hero's journey in myth, mentions the Cretan Bull in a segment dedicated to the stage which he calls *the refusal of the call*. He maintains that: "[t]he myths and folk tales of the whole world make clear that the refusal is essentially a refusal to give up what one takes to be one's own interest. [...] King Minos retained the divine bull, when the sacrifice would have signified submission to the will of the god of his society; for he preferred what he conceived to be his economic advantage" (55). The failure to assume the role of hero proves calamitous as the divinity itself becomes a monstrous terror or the subject himself "loses the power of significant affirmative action and becomes a victim to be saved" (55). In the film version, when a mystical old man hands him a knife, asking him to kill the bull, he refuses to do so. His ambivalence to kill, contrary to the novel, gradually and believably changes to resolve, as he is being scorned repeatedly and we as audience witness these exchanges in real time rather than them being reported to us in conversation that he has with his father-in-law in the book. He is also shown praying and asking for guidance, deliberating in the palm grove, consulting with a mystic fortune teller using the Quran before leaping into action. In Chubak's novel, no reference are made to a court of justice, while in Rasoul Parvizi's rendition of the same story, he mentions that these incidents happened before the introduction of a modern judiciary branch to the country so all lawsuits were referred to a cleric adept in Shariah Law. It is one of these corrupt clerics that helped in swindling Zaar Mohammad. In Naderi's adaptation, while we do not have a direct reference, but the scene that he is asking for justice from Sheikh Abutorab is indicative of him being some sort of a judge.

Thus, the killing in Chubak's novel seems rushed and insufficiently motivated. D. A. Shojai reaffirms this by stating the fact that: "The incredible thing about Mohammad is that he has absolutely no sense of his own culpability.

Not only does he dispatch human lives with a callousness that is chilling, but he takes absolutely no responsibility for his own folly” (228). Naderi, by showing the constant scorn and ridicule directed toward Zaar Mohammad creates an objective correlative for his hero’s fatal anger and revenge. The killings themselves occupy roughly one-tenth of the whole length of the novel and as Shojai mentions, are “as unproblematic a series of killings as any killer could wish. He simply walks up to his victims, puts a rifle to their bodies (to muffle the sound), and shoots them” (228). He meets with no serious opposition and the mission is finished with almost the remaining half of the novel detailing his hideout and prospective escape plan with no action or climactic incident, save for the very end of the novel which recounts Zaar Mohammad’s wrestling with a shark and disarming *Nayeb* and his Tofangchi posse.

In Naderi’s adaptation, he sustains suspense by delaying the final killing to the very end of the novel. The audience is anxious to see whether or not he would be successful in fulfilling his mission and escape. Even the hideout scene is not uneventful as it includes another killing, absent in the book, of Ismail by the government soldiers. Naderi, also cuts the section about killing or possibly maiming Sheikh’s mother and sister to keep his hero unblemished. The other part of the story which some critics believe to have received less than adequate attention in the film is the presence of the British, garrisoned in the area. They believe that these omissions undercut the anti-colonialist sentiments of the novel and probably implemented to avoid censorship (Jahed, “Dah Ketab”; Pourshabanan and Pourshabanan 140). Other critics, on the other hand, consider the repetitive references to the *Tangak Battle* and the British either unnecessary or irrelevant (Sadat Rashidi et al. 44-45; Shamim Bahar 659-660). These discussions, however, tend to forget that another 70s novel called *My Uncle Napoleon* (originally *Dayi Jan Napelon*) published at the same time as the film’s release, ridiculed the conspiracy theories concerning the British. The British are no longer relevant in Iranian politics and including them as the villains of the film diverts the attention from the real problem which many considered to be the Shah

and the perceived corruption within the governmental ranks. However, while Naderi's adaptation sterilizes the British presence altogether, he keeps a portion of discourse, where Zaar Mohammad's valor in battle is praised by an unknown character from amongst the people standing over the dead bodies of his victims. These lines originally belonging to Shahroo, his wife, in the book, details his courage in battle and how he was there with Rais Ali Delvari when he was drawing his last breath. These lines, thought rather than spoken out loud, in an interior monologue of Shahroo is not as important as when Naderi uses it as a battle cry to rally people against the corrupt government officials and the Bushehri elite. In the book, the paradoxical attitude of Zaar Mohammad, who cannot even tolerate the sight of the British flag comes to a sharp contrast with the details of his working and doing odd jobs for the British, even cleaning their toilets. Thus, the statement repeated several times during the story by Zaar Mohammad about how he fought the British or how many of their soldiers he killed becomes a braggadocious claim, void of consequential meaning, contributing nothing of substance to the plot or to the central theme of the story. In the film, Naderi by putting the words in the mouth of an unknown character, rather than creating a mythic hero himself, shows how these myths come to pass and how legends come to captivate the imagination of the people. Therefore, it is evident that the film ascribes more agency to the common people, in contrast to the novel, which is a sort of one man against the whole world kind of story. In the novel the crowd, including the Tangsirs, are passive bystanders, who at best praise *Shir Mohammad* for his bravery, but in Naderi's adaptation, they have assumed multiple roles; at times, of a *helper*, narrator and even the main supporting cast.

The ending of the novel is also different from the film. The novel has Zaar Mohammad coming back home to challenge and defeat one more foe, who is the Nayeb and his Tofangchis, which he successfully accomplishes before escaping with his family in a boat. In the film version the task is more believably accomplished by having the village people themselves overpowering Nayeb and his posse, helping Zaar Mohammad's family escape in hopes of a possible reunion. The film ends in an iconic scene where Zaar Mohammad rushes to the sea and after a lingering look back at the riot on the beach, turns around and

disappears in the night sea. This poetic ending, in a way, reflects the beginning of the film when Zaar Mohammad emerges from the well. It is a more subtle hint at the legendary status of the hero as a sort of a zeitgeist, the symbolic act of a hero who rises from the earth and the timid water of a well to finally join the roaring waves of the sea. The lone dissenter has now become a legion and therefore he is no longer needed to guide the moral compass of the people. From what has been mentioned, we might surmise that Naderi wanted his work to be something of a call to arms. Dabashi believes, however, if not a conscious decision on the part of the director, "The audience that knew about the heroic efforts of the Siyahkal uprising would read far and further into the implications of Naderi's film. This audience, mostly university students in the major cities, did not need such overt celebrations of revolt. Ever simpler incidents were pregnant with suggestion" (Close Up 29). This film, made six years before the Islamic revolution, astonishingly predicts a proletariat revolt against the corrupt elite.

In conclusion, this paper demonstrated how adaptations of foreign and domestic sources vary, in that adaptations of foreign sources tend to incline towards diegetic transposition, which entails changes in time and setting with minor changes to the plot line and theme. On the other hand, pragmatic transpositions which encompass most of the adaptations from domestic sources tend to change certain events of the story for aesthetic and/or socio-political reasons and consequently change or dramatically expand the thematic concerns of the story. Sadeq Chubak's *Tangsir* and Amir Naderi's adaptation of this work served us as an example of the latter type of transformation. In this adaptation Naderi changed certain elements of the novel's plot to fit more perfectly with his revolutionary sympathies and also to present a more coherent and tightly knit plot structure with a hero who is more believable and more relatable. The editor/director in these types of adaptation, strives to correct his perceived errors in the source material to make it more suitable for the medium that he is working with and also more palatable for his audience. In general, Iranian adaptation

utilizes the literary material on historical events not as a means of generating period pieces with accurate portrayals of the conditions of living in said period but rather as an anachronic metaphor for the contemporary struggles and situations.

Note

¹ The first one is intertextuality, borrowed from Julia Kristeva but used in a more restrictive manner to address quoting, plagiarism and allusion. The second type is paratextuality which includes: “a title, a subtitle, intertitles; prefaces, postfaces, notices, forewords, etc.” (Genette 3). Metatextuality is the third type of textual transcendence. It is the relationship of one text to what could be called its commentary. The fourth type of transtextuality is hypertextuality, by which he means “any relationship uniting a text B (which I shall call the hypertext) to an earlier text A (I shall, of course, call it the hypotext), upon which it is grafted in a manner that is not that of commentary” (5). The fifth type of transtextuality is architextuality, which is a problematization of generic perception as he defines it by calling it “a relationship that is completely silent, articulated at most only by a paratextual mention, which can be titular or subtitled and the one which “remains in any case of a purely taxonomic nature” (4).

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