3 Idiots (2009)

In this essay, I will be analyzing [' *3 idiots'* by (2009)] contexts of production and consumption, using the theory of adaptation and the theory of songs, dance, and exaggeration. The theory of adaptation film describes the transfer of a story or work in whole or part to feature in a film (Mcfarlane, 2004). *3 idiots* is a very popular Bollywood film adapted from 'Five Point Someone, a popular novel by Chetan Bhagat (Giri, 2022). The adaptation concept used in producing *3 idiots* is quite interesting because the film was adapted not from any literary text; instead, it was adapted from a novel that was already famous. Considering the popularity and the compliance of the novel with the taste of its readers, the producers of *3 idiots* had to ensure the same compliance of taste to its audience; hence they added, accepted, and rejected content from the novel because the film was going mainstream and reach a larger audience.

The *Five Point Someone* novel focuses on three college friends, Ryan, Alok and Hari, students at one of India's most prestigious educational institutions, the IIT Delhi. Students in the institute had to 'mug' a lot to maintain higher grades. However, the three friends decided to use another strategy, of not studying for more than 3 hours a day; instead, live their life at the institution to the fullest (Bhagat, 2014). Their choice comes with a consequence where various troubles befall them, at the expense of enjoying their life to the fullest. Compared to *3 idiots* film, the producers made some significant changes in the role played by central characters in the film. For instance, in the novel, Ryan was the decision-maker among the three, and in the film, was renamed Rancho, a role that the famous Aamir Khan starred. Rancho was an important character in the film, and was given an extra powerful role. Besides, the producers increased the character's relevance and introduced new stories about Rancho's past and present.

Another notable change in the film was that, in the novel, we see the character of Neha, who is portrayed as Hari's girlfriend. In the film, the character was adopted by Piya, who now became Rancho's girlfriend. As a character in the novel, Hari also underwent significant changes, as he was introduced as Farhan, a Muslim in the film. In the novel, Hari's love and passion is Neha; however, this was changed in the film, as his role, played by Farhan, was reintroduced as someone who loves photography. Other characters and accompanying incidences were added in the film, which was not present in the novel.

The adaptation process makes the story more harmonious with the stereotyped gender roles in the film. In the novel, *Five Point Someone,* Neha is portrayed as a more independent woman; however, her character, played by Piya, has been stereotyped in the film. Neha is a fashion designing student, and her relationship with Hari advances mainly because of her initiatives. In the novel, Hari falls in love with Neha, who takes much time to approve the relationship (Rahman, 2017). In the film, the producers alter the equation by making Piya the first one to fall in love with Rancho, and Rancho takes much time to approve the relationship. Piya is often pleased with Rancho's wisdom. Piya, the protagonist female in the film, plays both the traditional and modern woman in the movie. The traditional part comes in when her father sets up an arranged wedding for her, which she initially agrees to. In the entire film, the traditional part almost wins; however, the film creators give some space to modernity (Vaishnav, 2020). When Piya rides a scooter, rejects the marriage proposal to Suhash two times. She goes against her father's authority by stealing the office keys to help Raju are some of the traits of modern women in India. Besides, she is given the traits of a modern woman when she slaps Rancho and later in the film, when she kisses Rancho, which gives the film's audience some modern thoughts. The mixture of traditional and modern features given to the female protagonist is a common style used in creating many popular Bollywood films today.

The adaptation of *3 idiots* also complies with the socio-religious background of India. In the film, the makers adopted one of the central characters from the novel as a 'Muslim', despite the change of religion not being a key requirement of the film's plot. In the novel, Hari is a young boy from a Hindu who falls in love with Neha, and he is the narrator of the story. In the film, the makers maintain the story's narration from Hari's point of view; however, they adapt the character in different ways (Rahman, 2017). Further analysis of the *3 idiots* story indicates that presenting Hari as Farhan is not a direct plot requirement. It implies that Hari or any Hindu character could also do anything that was done by Farhan. Presenting Farhan as a Muslim added a Muslim interior, including various Urdu influenced dialects in some of the film's scenes, which revealed some dissimilarity in the film's appeal as a spectacle.

According to Islam (2007), Bollywood films have gradually marginalized Muslims as minor and stereotyped characters. Muslim characters have often acted as sidekicks of central characters. Between the 1970s and 1980s, Muslim characters were depicted as underworld

characters in Mumbai. Muslims have been portrayed as terrorists; the rivalry between India and Pakistan has been revealed to trigger these interpretations about Muslims. Besides, in most Bollywood films, Muslim characters are often presented as people who do not go to the office, whose career paths do not follow the normal arch of human endeavour or individuals who never smile. According to Islam & Rashid (2022), such fictional images about Muslims began to sound real in contemporary society. However, in *3 idiots* films, the makers twisted presented an opposite view about Muslims. In the film, the Muslim character played by Farhan is a normal human, who leads a normal life, and is not presented in any conspicuous way because of his religion.

The makers of *3 idiots* represent Farhan and his family as a normal Indian family with its dreams and common worries. By presenting Farhan as a simple and normal person, the film denies the common stereotyping of Muslims and resists the dominant ideology, largely based on Hinduism and tradition. Nonetheless, the film did give a Muslim character a hero or central protagonist. Ryan from the novel remains a Hindu, and he is adopted in the film as Rancho. The significance and weight of the character were increased by creating a shift in the love relationship between Hari and Neha from the novel, to Rancho and Piya in the film. Otherwise, giving a Muslim boy a central role where he is flirting with a Hindu girl would have created key challenges for the film creators. Farhan is, however, presented as a norm Indian Muslim but still works as the film's central protagonist's sidekick. The representation of the Muslim character conflicts with tradition and modernity because as much as the film attempts to avoid the traditional representation, it fails to go against the dominant hegemony entirely.

The adaptation process also carries the essence of 'Bollywoodization', which is seen in the attempts made by the creators to make the story more similar to the content and form two Indian classical epics. However, various critics found this move as both a conscious and unconscious influence of classical epics on the normal structure of most Bollywood films. Neha, in the novel, does not have a sibling but has both of her parents alive. Piya, who plays Neha's role, has a deceased mother and an elder sister in the film. The addition of a pregnant elder sister in the film is a requirement of the film's plot because her pregnancy and labor pain arise at the film's climax and plays; hence, it is an integral subplot. However, the significance of not including a mother in the picture is not a direct demand for the film's plot. Nevertheless,

questions arise on why the change came along. Many Hindu films have been described to contain a lot of fantasy, which now relates to the filmmakers removing the mother figure, instead portraying a father-daughter relationship between Piya and her father.

In relation to the theory of songs, dance and exaggeration, the musical art in the film promote plot development, and the form of singing and dancing balances the film's mood. The use of exaggeration increases the film's sense of humour, which seemingly attracted a huge viewership and success of the film (Chatterjee, 2016). In 3 idiots, music relies on the characteristics of the film to feedback the picture and create the atmosphere of the picture. As the film begins, the makers use a music which sounds on Raju and Farhan looking for Rancho. The picture presented as the film begins includes winding hills on a mountain highway, which Rancho's friends were travelling as they went on to search for him. The song's lyrics expressed the character traits of Rancho. The lyrics describe him as one who is free as the wind and one who is warm and full of power, which is his real demeanor of Rancho in the film.

As much as music appeared insignificant in concrete expression, it still played a big role in generalising the characters' deeper psychological transformations, indirect and emotional states. For instance, in the second half of the film, Raju attempts to commit suicide by jumping off a building. Rancho, Farhan and Raju's friends and family came together to ensure that his health was restored. When the music plays in the scene, the lyrics of not giving up on their friend appear, demonstrating the good friendship that the trio had. The music also plays another role in connecting scattered dancing and singing shots, which further promotes the development of the film's plot.

The film's music also incorporates a range of oblique compositions and metaphorically presents the unreasonable education system. For instance, the lyrics' Little Chickens Will Not Know the Fate of Eggs' are metaphorical and reflect the film's contradictions as it attempts to differentiate the notions of most Indian parents and Rancho's innovative ideas, promoting the in-depth development of the film's storyline. The colourful singing and dancing scenes presented in the film represent the basic characteristics of Bollywood films. The singing and dancing scenes convey the dreamlike atmosphere of the film. The gorgeous modelling of actors and performances of large groups of people singing create an atmosphere that makes the audience to

break away from the typical busy, boring and tiresome life and get relief and relation of the mind and body.

The film incorporates exaggeration in both the visuals and characterization. For instance, upon hearing that there was a chance to meet their friend Rancho again, Raju rushes out of the house quickly, forgetting to wear his paths. Another form of exaggeration is depicted when Rancho decides to complete his bath in the campus gardens in front of other students and teachers instead of waiting in a long queue for the bathroom as the rest of the students did. Another exaggeration is seen when Rancho takes Raju's father, who needs emergency medication, to a hospital on a scooter and in a sandwiched position between himself and Piya. Besides, he rides the scooter inside the hospital building, passes the receptions, goes directly inside the ward, and stops in front of the doctor on duty. The concept of exaggeration in Bollywood films is both accepted and appreciated. Hindu films are often comparable to fairy tales because they both concentrate on central features of fantasy, destruction of enemies, humbling competitors, and fulfilment of wishes (Dayal, 2015). As much as most Hindu films may be unreal in the rational sense, they are not certainly fallacious.

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