

Literature and Cinema: A Study of *Two Virgins*

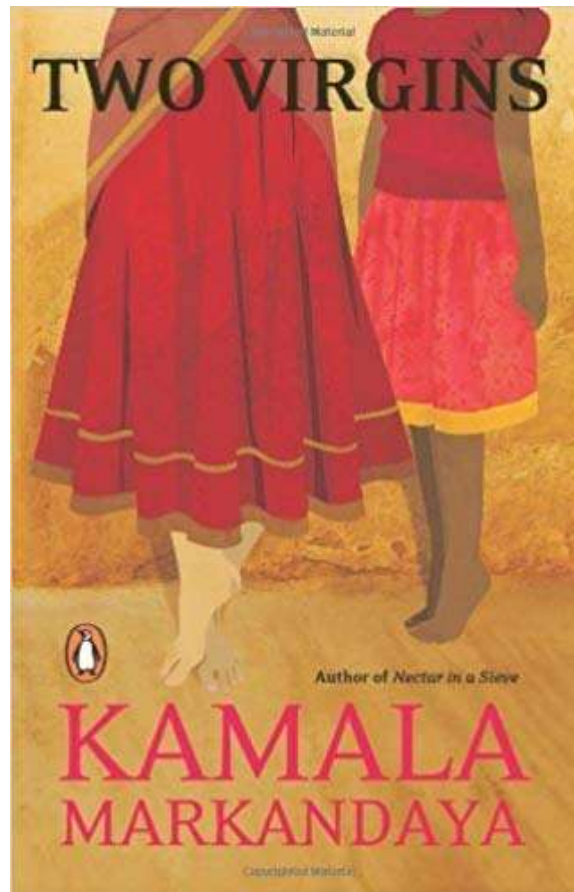
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Courtesy: https://www.amazon.com/Two-Virgins-Kamala-Markandaya-2010-09-06/dp/B01A0BJ6US/ref=sr_1_fkmr0_1?keywords=two+virgins+kamala+markandaya+novel&qid=1562604220&s=books&sr=1-1-fkmr0

Abstract

In this paper I am going to talk about literature and cinema. Both the media represent the reality of society. I am going to talk about how both these media are interconnected to each other. And I will also compare one of the novels of Kamala Markandaya *Two Virgins* with the movie 'Fashion' directed by Madhur Bhandarkar. Not only does cinema adopt the story from the novel,

but there are some old stories, whose plot and direction are somewhat similar to present day films. Literature prevails upon their readers to think and imagine the characters, situations, and scenes using their imagination. While making a cinema, directors try to serve everything readymade on the plate for the viewers. Cinematography by directors in cinema and imageries created by writers in fiction both are incomparable. It's difficult to picturize the views and scenes captured by camera through their writing skills.

Keywords: Literature and cinema, *Two Virgins*, Kamala Markandaya, *Fashion* movie, Cinematography, Fiction writing, Imagination and film.

Literature and Cinema are two different forms of knowledge, and yet they are connected to each other. There are so many films which are based on adaptation from literature. Cinema and fiction are just a mirror of society. They are the reflection of our lifestyles. The young generation is very fond of cinema.

Literature existed from very long ago in the form of manuscripts, holy books etc. Cinema is a result of technology so that it's not too old. When technology was not there, people used to entertain themselves with indoor games, reading, gardening, stories, poems, and so on. Storytelling has been the best pastime for the traveler during journey. In *The Canterbury Tales* of Geoffrey Chaucer, where each traveler was assigned to tell one story on going onward and one story on their return. In old days children used to listen to bed-time stories from their grandmothers. Now time has changed, and bed-time stories are not in trend. Once there was a golden period for literature, when it was the main thing people used for recreation, entertainment and amusement.

Time has changed and now technology has helped spread their wings wider. Existence of literature has become limited to scholars, literary critics, students and academicians. There are people who read literature for the entertainment, but their number is less when compared to people who watch cinema for entertainment. In this fast moving life people find it difficult to open a book, novel or fiction and go through the words and decipher the meaning of the text. Contrary to this watching cinema is easy, more attractive and more convenient.

While you are reading a book, it needs your brain to put an effort to draw the picture of an image or scene that the writer wants to show. It's like giving way to your imagination. Every reader will decode or imagine the fiction differently according to their imagination. According to reader-response theory, every individual or reader while reading a book, extract a different version of fiction from other readers. How a reader will understand the story also depends upon the experience of the reader in his life. He/she will decipher the text with their understanding. A book is a collection of pages, where writers uses different tactics to keep up the interest of the story. While in cinema, people don't need to use their imagination. Audience has been presented with

everything. They just have to sit and watch. In cinema and films, audience are given everything on the screen, like food served on a plate.



Courtesy: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fashion_\(2008_film\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fashion_(2008_film))

- Cinema also mirrors our society in the same way Literature does. Directors pick situations from the daily life's reality and film it. Reality attracts audience. Likewise, authors also choose the characters from among the people around them and fit them into their story. There are so many instances where cinema (films) is inspired from literature. Some films based on books are such as *The Jungle Book*, *Alice Through the Looking Glass*, *Parineeta*, *Three Idiots*, *The Guide*, *Pinjar* and *The Namesake* etc. *Three Idiots* is based on Chetan Bahagat's novel *Five Point Someone*, and *The Namesake* is based on Kamala Markanadaya's novel *The Nowhere Man*, 1947 *The Earth* is based on Bapsi Sidhwa's novel *Ice candy Man* which depicts a true and harsh picture of the India-Pakistan partition.

One way or the other Literature and Cinema, draw on the reality of our lives. There are so many books chanting the democracy of old kings, picture of wars, story of warriors, moral and ethical stories. These brave stories are only able to live through books by writers of that particular age, who praise their bravery for future generations to read. These historical books are a source of the rich heritage of history, whereas now through cinema, people are able to re-enact those scripts of warriors and their stories for people.

For example, recently one of the films ‘Kesari’ which is based on the true Sikh warriors and how they fought in the Battle of Saragarhi. It was filmed to present their unsung story to the people. Not every film is based on a book. There are only few adaptations. But there is fiction whose plot and story show the same kind of incidents as those in the movie.

The fiction I am taking for consideration in this paper is *Two Virgins* by Kamala Markandaya. *Two Virgins* is a post-independence fiction published in 1973. It is the story of two sisters Lalita and Saroja and it centers on the aspirations and desires of Lalita. Lalita is a very charming and beautiful girl. She knows how to dance and is very proud of herself. While contrary to her, Saroja is a plain and simple looking girl, very docile. She knows her sister Lalita is very beautiful but never envies her. Lalita dreams big of becoming a star in the films and wants to live a lavish lifestyle. She finds herself a misfit in the village. She considers herself as one who deserves to live in the city. Their father also favours Lalita because he believes she’ll make something big in life. It is only Lalita who was placed in English medium school, while Saroja and her brothers were sent to normal school.

Saroja being the younger sister never retaliated against Lalita’s dominating nature. All the household chores are done by Saroja because Lalita does not want to hamper her beauty by doing all these household works. Saroja does not have big dreams like Lalita. She finds happiness in small things. She always finds pleasure in trivial things. Their story revolves around the desires and aspirations of Lalita but is seen through the eyes of Saroja. Saroja is used as third person omniscient narrator by the novelist. She is the youngest narrator used by Kamala Markandaya.

One day one documentary film unit comes to their village for shooting. Lalita’s schoolteacher knows about the talent of Lalita; so, she invites the producer of the film Mr. Gupta to her home where he gets attracted towards Lalita. Mr. Gupta offers a part for Lalita to act in his documentary film. Lalita feels like her dream has come true. Her parents were also feeling very proud of her. After completing the shooting of the documentary film, the whole unit including Mr. Gupta return to city. He gives hope to Lalita that on reaching the city he would arrange something for her and call her there and make her a star. Days, weeks and months pass and no reply from Mr. Gupta comes and this disappoints Lalita.

One day without telling her parents she ran away to Mr. Gupta in city. Her family keep on searching for her for months but no news of her. Then one day a letter from Lalita puts a halt to their search. Lalita in her letter mentioned all the luxurious and lavish lifestyle Mr. Gupta bestowed on her. Her parents without getting angry at her, were happy that their daughter is living like a queen in city.

Then after a few months Lalita returns to her village. But to their despair she also brings a big problem with her or we can say big shame to herself and her family. She is pregnant. A girl getting pregnant without marrying is not acceptable. Her parents take her to Mr. Gupta in the city and request him to marry her, but he refuses. He is ready to bear all the expenses of abortion but is not ready to marry her. After abortion is done, they return to the village exhausted and devastated.

One day Lalita again runs away to the city. And this time she leaves a note warning not to search for her. She has seen the shiny and glittering lifestyle of film industry very closely. Now living in the village seems distasteful to her. Lalita was always a very ambitious girl. After being a victim in the hands of Mr. Gupta, one thing she does not lose is her dream of being a film star.

Movies are really a glimpse of our worldly reality. A Bollywood film by Madhur Bhandarkar 'Fashion' has similar looking plot or character as that in *Two Virgins*. In the film Lalita's counterpart is played by Priyanka Chopra as Megha Mathur. Megha Mathur goes to Mumbai to become a model in the fashion world against her parents' will. Glamour and success make her blind and she becomes unethical. She also gets exploited and gets pregnant. She returns to her parents. They look after her. As soon she recovers, she again leaves for the fashion world. After losing everything like Lalita, Megha also returns to the attractive world of fashion.

Kamala Markandaya is a far sighted woman. Markandaya was aware of the rising film industry and the attraction it was creating amongst the teenage girls and boys. Markandaya has portrayed the post-independence scenario. After Independence India has shown the drastic change in development. Every field has seen growth after independence including the film industry. Markandaya knows the impact of the glamour world on young people. Fascination towards this shiny industry actually makes you blind towards its hidden black pits and holes.

Both the girls Lalita in *Two Virgins* and Megha in the movie 'Fashion' have been dazzled by the shiny, glamorous industry of fashion and film. And in moving towards their aspirations they forget to see blind holes in their paths and ended in exploiting themselves. This is the reality of most of the young girls and boys who are very fond the fashion world and glamour. Only a few get success and the rest get exploited, depressed and left unnoticed.

Literature and Cinema, both portray the harsh reality of the world. Any fiction written represents the reality of that era, unless it is a historical book. With the growth of technology and equipments Cinema has excelled in its techniques and making film. As there is no more scope for technique in writing, the only thing writers can do is making their writing more creative. Literature and cinema both are interconnected to each other. In 2006 Brito points out "In the era of interdisciplinary, nothing is healthier than trying to see the literature's verbleness from the perspective of cinema and movie iconicity from the perspective of literature". (Brito 131)

Both mediums mutually influence each other. Motifs of both are also the same that is narrative, story- telling and inspiring. Aim of a film director is the same as that of a writer, both want to convey their story or idea to people. Both mediums have different levels of perception for the people. It can be a mental or visual perception. Films have wider reach and they also touch our visual, auditory and emotional perception. While books only stimulate mental perception or the psyche of readers. Readers need to imagine most of the things in their head while reading. While watching cinema, there is no need to imagine much, they are already viewing the director's visualizing of all the incidents on the screen.

There are so many movie directors that have taken up the adaptation of many works of fiction to make movies. Adaptation of a novel is just the making of a film based on a book, to fit that novel or the play into the new destination, new generation and new target. While reading a book, it is possible that every reader will understand the story from his point of view, but in cinema there's very little chance of changed understanding. In literature readers are left to fill in the blank space left by writers. Two readers will not see same thing or feel the same thing. But in cinema they are already provided readymade characters of blood and flesh. Every audience will in most cases, capture the same feelings and understand the same in cinema. Comparing their viewers, cinema has huge audiences while literature has less readers. Then also the search for text as source is increasing, it is implied from the great success of *The Da Vinci Code*, *The Lord of the Rings* and *Harry Potter*. Films before coming on screen need a script written by writer.

Literature and cinema both are two kinds of media which eventually depend on each other. They differ in executing time and space in their narrative. Most of the time writers include characters and situations of novels inspired from their lives. Authors infuse the story through their observations. And cinema includes the ideology of the director woven into the story. It is true that literature is the older form and it still exists. Cinema has definitely learned the narrative thing from novels and fiction. Literature and cinema both are works of art using imagination. In literature the writer gives words to his imagination. And readers decode the text through their imagination. In the cinema, it is the director's efficient presentation of the story to viewers, with good acting and technological support; in literature characters are left to the imagination of the readers, while readers draw pictures in their heads with the help of the description given by the writer in the text. Nowadays cinema has become the favourite choice of the audience. Cinema has the capability for a lively presentation of action live. So surely, it has more impact on the viewers' mind.

My main aim in this paper is showing how literature and cinema are interconnected. I have also brought in the plot of fiction *Two Virgins* to compare it with the movie based on the fashion industry. Both media are just impressions of reality. The author or director pick out the plot of the story from real life. They are just depictions of reality. In *Two Virgins* Lalita is so blind about her

dreams and success that she fails to understand the tactics of shrewd people and at the end she was exploited. Keeping at stake the honor of her family and her self-esteem, retaining still the hangover-glamour of the city, that does not get wiped out from her mind, she again runs away to the dangerous city. Likewise, our protagonist Megha in the movie 'Fashion' goes through not so decent a path to be at the top of the model industry. At the end she also gets ruined and lost in this industry. There are so many people who become blind in the achievement of success and they end up ruining themselves. Kamala Markandaya has only tried to depict the reality of life.

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