



The Inception of the Film Adaptations Based on the Novels, in the Sri Lankan Cinema

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ABSTRACT

Filmmakers often pursue other source materials to discover inspiration for their narratives and create feature filmmaking in an important way on true events and fictional stories. A film adaptation is a cinematic work, adapted from a work of fiction or nonfiction. Common fiction source materials include novels, short stories, stage plays, radio plays, television series, comics, or video games, while nonfiction sources are memoirs, biographies, or works of journalism. International filmmaking regularly uses an existing work of art as inspiration for their art, and the Film Awards even have an entire screenwriting category devoted to film adaptations such as Best Adapted Screenplay Award. In Sri Lanka, the film adaptation has been practiced for seven decades to date, and its inception is marked in 1953 with the film 'Kela Handa' alias "The Wild Moon" based on the novel of the same name first published in 1933. There are 10 film adaptations from 1953 to 1959 and seems 'Kela Handa' has created a trend-setting introduction. Where Sri Lankan Cinema has a span of 1350 locally produced films released since 1947 to date, the film adaptations are over 100 in the list. 'Kela Handa' adapts the best-selling novel of the same name and reflects the interplay between the two mediums, without compromising the prominent egos of the Sri Lankan first filmmaker and the Sri Lankan best-selling novelist.

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1. Introduction

Film adaptations have been a popular form of storytelling for many years, with numerous films based on other various literary works, and can offer unique opportunities to bring such format stories to cinematic life, presenting the subject by capturing the essence of the source material according to the language of film.

Film adaptation refers to the process of transforming a work of literature, such as a novel, play, or short story, into a screenplay to create a film. It involves a process of encoding-decoding the story, characters, and themes from the original source material into a film language, using the unique elements of filmmaking, such as cinematography, sound design, and editing, to bring the story to life on screen.

Film adaptations can occupy various forms, ranging from loyal reproductions of the source material to creative re-imaginings that may deviate from the original story. The process of adapting a work for film often requires making decisions about what elements to retain or modify, how to condense or expand the story following the constraints of a cinematic format, and how to capture the essence of the original work while also taking advantage of the visual and auditory aspects of the film medium.

Researching the film adaptation is important for several reasons:

- Understanding storytelling techniques: Film adaptations provide an opportunity to gain insights into storytelling techniques and examine the choices made by filmmakers in transforming source material into a visual medium.
- Appreciating different artistic approaches: Research on film adaptations allows for the understanding of how filmmakers interpret and reinterpret stories, characters, and themes.

- Examining the relationship between literature and film: Research on film adaptation allows for a deeper understanding of the interplay between literature and film.

It offers a unique perspective on storytelling, artistic expression, the relationship between literature and film, critical thinking skills, and cultural and social contexts. It provides a rich field for exploration and analysis, allowing a deeper understanding of both the source material and the film adaptation and the dynamic interplay between different artistic mediums.

1.1 Literature Review

1.1.1 Film adaptation

The film adaptation is the transforming of content or a work of art in part or totally into a feature film.

“While the most common form of film adaptation is the use of a novel as the basis, other works adapted into films include non-fiction (including journalism), autobiographical works, comic books, scriptures, plays, historical sources, and even other films. Adaptation from such diverse resources has been a ubiquitous practice of filmmaking since the earliest days of cinema in nineteenth-century Europe. In contrast to when making a remake, movie directors usually take more creative liberties when creating a film adaptation (Lavigne, 2014).”

Annette Kuhn and Guy Westwell describe Film Adaptation in 2020 in their contribution on “Adaptation” in *A Dictionary of Film Studies* as follows.

“A pre-existing work that has been made into a film. Adaptations are often of literary or theatrical works, but musical theatre, best-selling fiction and non-fiction, comic books, computer games, children’s toys, and so on have also been

regularly adapted for the cinema. Adaptations of well-known literary and theatrical texts were common in the silent era (silent cinema; costume drama; epic film; history film) and have been a staple of virtually all national cinemas through the 20th and 21st centuries. Bram Stoker's *Dracula* (1897) and Arthur Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes stories (1887–1927) have been adapted in a range of national contexts but probably the most adapted author is Shakespeare, whose plays have appeared in film form as a large-budget Hollywood musical (*West Side Story* (Jerome Robbins and Robert Wise, US, 1961)), a historical epic set in feudal Japan (*Kumonosu-jo/Throne of Blood* (Akira Kurosawa, Japan, 1957)), a Bollywood musical (*Angoor* (Gulzar, India, 1982)), and a children's animation (*The Lion King* (Roger Allers and Rob Minkoff, US, 1994)), to name but a few. Adaptations often sit within cycles associated with a particular time and place, as with the British heritage film in the 1980s. It is claimed that adaptations account for up to 50 percent of all Hollywood films and are consistently rated amongst the highest-grossing at the box office, as aptly demonstrated by the commercial success of recent adaptations of the novels of J.R.R. Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings* trilogy and J.K. Rowling's *Harry Potter* series. Other varied US adaptations include computer games (*Resident Evil* (Paul W.S. Anderson, 2002)), graphic novels (*Ghost World* (Terry Zwigoff, 2001)), comic books (*The Avengers* (Joss Whedon, 2012)); cinematic universe; superhero film), and children's toys (*Transformers: The Last Knight* (Michael Bay, 2017)). A number of films also display a certain level of self-reflexivity regarding the process of adaptation, as can be seen in *Adaptation* (Spike Jonze, US, 2002) and *The LEGO Movie* (Phil Lord and Christopher Miller, 2012). A property

ripe for adaptation is referred to as pre-sold; older works in particular are attractive to film producers because they are often out of copyright (Kuhn and Westwell, 2020)."

Annette Kuhn and Guy Westwell describe *Film Adaptation in 2020* in their contribution on "Adaptation" in *A Dictionary of Film Studies* as follows.

James Naremore's in his *Film adaptation in 2000*, provides an accessible historical overview of the field and reveals the importance of adaptation study to the many different academic disciplines now attracted to the analysis of film as a commodity, document, and cultural artifact. Also, he raises fundamental questions about cinema and adaptation: what is the nature of the "literary" and the "cinematic"? Why do so many of the films described as adaptations seem to derive from canonical literature rather than from other sources? How do the different media affect the ways stories are told?

1.1.2 Enquiry of originality

While often considered an unoriginal work in the past years, the film adaptation has recently been conceptualized by academic scholars such as American film theorist Robert Stam as a conceptual process. *Film Semiotics and Comparative Literature* are the key research areas of Stam, a professor at New York University.

"The assumption that film is inherently inferior to literature is problematic and pervasive, not just in the classroom but in the collective consciousness. Robert Stam believes that much adaptation scholarship has perpetuated "the axiomatic superiority of literature to film." These "deeply rooted and often unconscious assumptions about the relations between the two arts" are partly linked to the "valorization of historical anteriority and seniority: the

assumption, that is, that older arts are necessarily better arts (Kooyman, 2013)."

In Robert Stam's Introduction to Literature and Film titled "The Theory and Practice of Adaptation," published in 2000, he addresses and discusses the numerous differences, limits, and elements of adaptation in film and the source novel. One of the topics in theory that he discusses towards the end of the introduction is the "point of view" and its impact on adaptation.

Stam claims that when discussing "point of view" in the context of an adaptation, issues will arise due to the instability of the term as it transforms into cinematic vocabulary and takes on meaning in the context of the camera.

"I would like to go a different angle than he does, and claim that this label, however, is not a limiting factor in adaptation; rather it is an expansive component that when adapted and portrayed properly can give the camera human-like qualities causing the audience to feel like they are uncovering the true characters of the story, the source novel (Stam, 2000: 64)."

In a key contribution to the theory of adaptation significantly entitled "The Dialogics of Adaptation", Robert Stam describes adaptation as 'intertextual dialogism', thus referring to 'the infinite and open-ended possibilities generated by all the discursive practices of a culture, the entire matrix of communicative utterances within which the artistic text is situated, which reach the text not only through recognizable influences but also through a subtle process of dissemination' (Stam, 2000: 64).

"Stam has also been a major figure within the "transtextual turn" in adaptation and intertextuality studies. Stam's later work in literature and film formed part of and helped advance the

field of adaptation studies, which has been undergoing a boom since the turn of the 21st century. Stam's essay "Beyond Fidelity," included in the James Naremore 1999 anthology *Film Adaptation*, called for a larger paradigm shift moved from a binary novel-film fidelity approach to a more open transtextual approach (Prabhakar, 2020)."

Correspondingly, Deborah Cartmell and Imelda Whelehan in their 'Adaptations' in 2007 consider the theoretical and practical difficulties surrounding the translation of a text into film, and the reverse process; the novelization of films. They examine the key debates surrounding adaptations: whether screen versions of literary classics can be faithful to the text and do adaptations remake their parent text to reflect contemporary ideas and concerns. Tracing the complex alterations which texts experience between different media, Adaptation is a unique exploration of the relationship between text and film.

2. Materials and Methods

Research methods used in film adaptation studies refer to the strategies, techniques, and approaches used to conduct research and collect data in a systematic manner.

- Literary analysis: Literary analysis examines the themes, characters, plot, style, and other literary elements of source material in relation to the film adaptation.
- Film analysis: Film analysis focuses on visual, aural, and narrative elements to understand how adaptations are realized on screen.
- Historical research: Historical research examines historical, social, and cultural factors that influence film adaptations to provide insights into the process.
- Content analysis: Content analysis of media content can provide insights into

the cultural, social, and ideological aspects of film adaptation.

- Case study: Case study research provides detailed insights into specific adaptations to better understand the process.
- Comparative analysis: Comparative analysis reveals similarities, differences, and patterns in adaptations, providing insights into how adaptations vary and evolve across different contexts.

The above research methods in relation to studies on 'film adaptation' explore, how '*Kele Handa*,' the novel's literary text is transformed into '*Kele Handa*' the film's visual narrative. It examines the impact on the narrative structure, by the choices made by the film director, through the character development, and thematic elements.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Commencement of Sri Lankan Cinema

The Sri Lankan Cinema commenced its 97 years of history with its ever first local Silent film screening of "*Rajakeeya Wikramaya*" alias "The Royal Adventure" in 1925 (Dissanayake and Ratnavibhushana, 2000). In 1947, with the screening of the ever first local talkies, "*Kadawunu Poronduwa*" the alias "Broken Promise" (Wimalaratne, 1988), the Sri Lankan Talkies completed the history of 75 years in 2022. During the 75 years of history of Sri Lankan Talkies, the ever first novel adaptation was '*Kela Handa*' alias "The Wild Moon" which was screened in 1953 based on the same-titled novel by W.A. Silva, published in 1933 (Wimalaratne, 1994). '*Kela Handa*' is the 18th Sinhala Talkie released in history. It is acknowledged that the first film adaptation was '*Kela Handa*' which screened on March 27, 1953, in Sri Lanka, then Ceylon.

The ever first film based on a novel in the world was "Alice in Wonderland" (1903), the British Silent film, adapted from "Alice's Adventures in Wonderland" (1865) and "Through the Looking-Glass" (1871) by English author Lewis Carroll (Jaques and

Giddens, 2016). Thus, the World's Cinema has 120 years and Sri Lankan Cinema has 70 years of experience in film adaptations based on novels.

Since the inception of the Sri Lankan Cinema, the ever first of the Talkies, "*Kadawunu Poronduwa*" was a film adaptation based on the same-titled stage play by B.A.W. Jayamanna (1908-1965), the writer of the film. Before being associated with filmmaking, Jayamanna was into stage play productions with his Minerva Theatre Company.

"Bernard Aloysius Wanniarachchi Jayamanne who was better known as B.A.W. Jayamanne or Aloy was approached by South Indian producer S. M. Nayagam to adapt Aloy's popular stage play "*Kadawunu Poronduwa*" into a film. Nayagam, the owner of Chithrakala Movietone Co. had noted the stage play's popularity over 800 shows and concluded that it would be a fairly viable investment. Although having misgivings initially, Aloy relented, and the film was produced and released to commercial success in April 1947. Aloy subsequently oversaw the adaptation of a couple of his other stage plays before trying his hand at directing with "*Hadisi Vinishchaya*" in 1950. Due to the infancy of the film industry, Aloy managed to dominate the box office with minimal competition over the following years. "*Sangawunu Pilithura*" was released in 1951 and "*Umathu Wishwasaya*" in 1952. Aloy had one of his biggest hits with '*Kela Handa*' in 1953; it made Sri Lankan film history the first direct literary adaptation. His subsequent film directions include "*Iranganie*" (1954), "*Mathabedaya*" (1955), "*Daiva Vipakaya*" (1956), "*Wanaliya*" (1958), "*Hadisi Vivahaya*" (1959), "*Kawata Andare*" (1960), "*Jeewithe Poojawa*" (1961), "*Mangalika*" (1963) and "*Magul Poruwa*" (1967) (Savarimutthu, 1977)."

3.2 Ever first film adaptation in Sri Lankan cinema

Since there is not any academic research on film adaptations from novels or novel based filmmaking in Sri Lanka, this research article has to be sourced from contemporary newspapers and magazines, especially refereeing to its commencement in the 1950s.

After gathering filmmaking experiences by working with Indian film directors, Jayamanna started directing films independently in the years of 1950. The critics acknowledge '*Kela Handa*' as Jayamanna's finest film direction, it is also a historical distinction that it was the first Sri Lankan film based on a novel. The film was also elected by the coupon votes as the most popular film in the "Rangamandala Film Competition" held in 1953 by *Dinamina*, the national newspaper.

3.2.1 *Kele Handa*, the novel: source

Popular novel is a genre in every country. Popular novels create an impactful influence on attracting the public to the world of readers. W. A. Silva attracted concurrent readers to the Sinhala novel, which was a new art medium of the contemporary time.

Wellawattarachchige Abraham Silva or W. A. Silva (1890- 1957) is acknowledged by the public as a key personality in the modern storytelling of the time period for his success in adding the flavor of the Sanskrit language into the Sinhala novel in the early twentieth century. Also, the influence of the narrative methods of *Jathaka Katha*, or the anthology of 550 stories based on the previous lives of Buddha has affected Silva's style of works of art. Silva was mostly known and appreciated for his novels which indicates the popularity of contemporary Sinhala literature.

Silva was a best-selling author of Sinhala literature, the main language of Sri Lanka which is used by over 75% of the population. Silva wrote his first novel, "*Siriyalatha*", at the

age of 16., and after studying Sinhala and Sanskrit Languages and reading world literature in his spare time while working as a clerk, Silva wrote his second novel, *Lakshmi*, in 1922. Later he continued to write popular novels and short story collections.

"Silva edited the "*Siri Sara*" (1919–1923) and "*Nuwana*" (1940–1946), the periodical magazines, as well as "*Lanka Samaya*" (1933), a weekly newspaper. After his death, High Street in Wellawatte, Colombo where he resided was renamed as W. A. Silva Mawatha in his honor. Including '*Kela Handa*', several of Silva's novels became film adaptations (Dissanayake, 2009): they are: "*Siriyalata*" (1907), "*Hingana Kolla*" (1923), "*Deiyange Rate*" (1926), "*Daivayogaya*" (1936), "*Vijayaba Kollaya*" (1938), and "*Handapaana*" (1941). In 1951, '*Kela Handa*' has become more famous because it was recommended in the literature subject of the Sinhala and English examinations in the country. On December 14, 1952, "*Irida Lankadeepa*", the Sunday newspaper published about the first time in the country that the adaptation of a novel into a film, '*Kela Handa*' by the title of, "Sinhala novel to be made into a film" as front-page news (Widanapathirana, 2021)."

3.2.2 *Kele Handa*, the plot

Storytelling has always had a visual element in Sri Lanka, be it through dance and folk theatre, and, since the 20th century, through film and television. For decades, many novels have been beautifully and expressively brought to life through film and teledramas. Readers and spectators have a love-hate relationship with the screen adaptations of their favorite novels. Either the retelling exceeds their expectations, or it does not meet their expectations at all.

"The plot of '*Kela Handa*' is a love story of Malani, a village girl who goes to town

to see the Vel festival and falls in love with John Jayapala, a rich young gentleman who pretends himself to her as a commoner. The story of well-born, bred, and wealthy John Jayapala is the folly of falling in love with a poor but beautiful village girl, depicting the inevitable class struggle. The village people are rubber tree collectors and are prosperous during the festival time and after that, become poor again. A very young John Jayapala, an idealist, pursued, wooed, and wins the love of Malani. Ada Jayapala, John Jayapala's mother never forgives the heir to the Jayapala inheritance. She never let go of her ambitions for her son who was well-educated both locally and abroad. At this time there was much nationalism displayed in the country hitherto governed by the British and the rumbles of independence were forming. The country is poised for a great future and the proud matriarch had great political ambitions for her son. Malani learns the life of the city, in a mansion alone with only Mrs. Daniel who was her English lessons and music tutor, while her young husband is abroad. Malani falls on the floor and bows at Ada Jayapala's feet and begs her not to separate John from her love and life. But there is no sympathy in Ada's heart. So, Ada Jayapala, her society, and the family environment do not allow the love to grow or to end in marriage. Later, John Jayapala marries an upper-class girl named Daisy Attanayake and Malani finds out that and gives up hope on John Jayapala and goes to India to learn dance. Later she returns to Sri Lanka as renowned Vishnu Bhai, an Indian celebrity dancer. After seeing her performance in a theater, John Jayapala realizes that this is the Malani he had loved, and he's going for her creating complications for the Jayapala family's honor, especially John's pregnant wife. Ada Jayapala falls on the floor and bows at Malani's feet

and begs her not to separate John from the Jayapala family and from John's pregnant wife. Malani's heart feels sorry for John's wife's crucial situation. In the end, Malani inherits everything else but does not win her love. She suffers a great loss spiritually. In the end, she jumps into the river and commits a painful death, marking the end of her love story with a tragic end. The novel ends with Daisy, who is impressed by Malani's noble sacrifice, creating a memorial monument for Malini as a sincere appreciation

(https://www.imdb.com/title/tt2977842/plotsummary?ref_=tt_ov_pl).

3.2.3 *Kele Handa*: readers' response

Ranjini Obeyesekere describes the inception of the Sinhala novel in 1987 in her research article on "Sinhala and Tamil Writing from Sri Lanka" in the *Journal of South Asian Literature* as follows.

"The literature of Sri Lanka, that which is in Sinhala, has traditionally been closely connected to the religion Buddhism and to the politics of the Sinhala nation-state. Much of the early literature written between the first and fifteenth centuries (or most of what has been preserved) is thus essentially a religious literature. Even when geared to lay audiences it consisted either of historical chronicles of events and kings who helped establish Buddhism and the Sinhala state, or of prose and poetic works profoundly influenced by Buddhist ideas and intended to further them. By the mid-twentieth century, the effect of colonial conquest, the pressures of modernization, westernization, and the needs of a growing, multi-religious, multi-linguistic nation-state considerably modified this traditional connection between history, religion, and literature. But till as late as the nineteenth century and the early twentieth century, Sinhala literature

was strongly nationalist and Buddhist (Obeyesekere, 1987).”

When considering the commencement and early evolution of the Sinhala prose, the following three opinions are recognized evidently.

- The Sinhala prose emerged through traditional storytelling in dhamma sermons.
- The Sinhala prose was directly inspired by Western literature.
- The Sinhala prose was inspired by both aspects of our ancient discourse and Western influence.

Most of the works in Sinhala literature were popularized by the curiosity that flows throughout the story, connecting the story with the beginning of the story at the end of the story and creating an imagined world, etc.

Silva’s *‘Kela Handa’* tells contemporary readers that love is precious but also a great sacrifice in the 1930s. The novel made the readers experience that humanity is more valuable than society and what surrounds the individual reflects all aspects of society.

Most of the readers did not like the tragic ending of this novel. However, a person can be defeated by their way of thinking, not by the way others think of them. Most of the female readers wished *Malani* came alive in the novel. But she had the feeling that she had sacrificed her life for her immortal love. Then the novel ends up not making her a mere loser.

3.3 *Kele Handa*, the film adaptation

‘Kela Handa’, the Sinhalese Language feature film directed by B.A.W. Jayamanna was screened in 1953 based on the novel which has the same title. This film can be categorized into the genre of Romantic Musical.

3.3.1 *Kele Handa*, making the film

‘Kela Handa’, a film adaptation or making the film from the novel is not only the transferring of a work or story, in whole or in part, to a feature film. The filmmaker had an inherited challenge in making the film from an already very popular novel.

“Among the novels Silva wrote, the most popular novel is *‘Kele Handa.’* This novel is so popular that some people at that time were interested in even holding a copy of this novel as a fashion while traveling in a bus or hanging out in a place where people gather a lot (Thilakarathne, 1984).”

As per the popularity of the novel, there was great anticipation of the scale of production value as well.

“B.A.W. Jayamanna produced *‘Kela Handa’* for and before unspent expense for a local film produced in Sri Lanka until then (1952) as it was Sri Lankan Rupees (LKR) 500,000.00. According to the agreement, Silva had received LKR 15,000.00 for the rights to the novel and 5% of the income after the film exceeds LKR 2,000,000.00. (Seneviratne, 1970).”

The currency exchange rate of LKR to USD in the 1960s was 4.67: 1 as per the records in www.indexmundi.com/facts/sri-lanka/official-exchange-rate.

“Silva decided that there was no actress as suitable as Rukmani Devi the ever first heroin in Sri Lankan Talkies for the role of Malini in *‘Kele Handa.’* Silva has taught Rukmani Devi how to accurately portray the mental conflicts Malini faces in the novel and how to pronounce dialogues since the actress is not natively Sinhala speaking. Jayamanna had kindly said Silva that the film would fail due to the absence of the comic couple from the usual Minerva films he produced before. “I don’t like that at all.

If you do that, the story will be greatly damaged." Silva had said unhappily. "Let us use the comic couple without spoiling the story." Silva had expressed his willingness to Jayamanna's appeal by adding a new character named Missy to bring out the humor in the film to tally with the role of Anda in the novel (Thilakarathne, 1984)."

Silva, the novelist has influenced the appearance of the film as well to make the filming conduct to be similar to his imagination in the novel.

"According to Silva's advice, the cobra-styled chair made of black wood, where Ada Jayapala always sits, should also be in the same way as described in the novel. Therefore, Jayamanna had expended LKR. 15,000 for making that a huge expenditure in 1952 and the Production Designer had to spend one and half months to create it. According to the report, the film took 5 months to complete (Seneviratne, 1970)."

Jayamanna, the filmmaker also had endeavored his best to finish this opportunity to benefit him to gain a luminary as a film director with craftsmanship.

"While interior scenes were filmed in Citadel Studios in Madras, (Now Chennai), the outdoor scenes were filmed in Ceylon, (Now Sri Lanka). Silva had advised that the outdoor scenes in the novel should be shot in Sri Lanka, especially the village scenes related to the Suspension Bridge, then Jayamanna and the Indian technicians came to Ceylon after Madras filming to continue outdoor filming in Negombo, Katana, Atgala, Aranayaka, and Peradeniya. Rukmani Devi who played the dual roles of Malini and Vishnu Bhai and Eddie Jayamanna who played Anda in the film were paid LKR. 25,000 each. The highest-grossing Sri Lankan film till then (1947 to 1953) was the film '*Kela Handa*'

which was screened in eight theaters including Elphinstone Cinema in Maradana, Colombo the main center from 27th May 1953 (Thilakarathne, 1984)."

"Seneviratne is the original lyricist of Rukmani Devi's '*Kela Handa*' most popular film song '*Mawila Penevi Roope Hadhe*'. Seneviratne had written the song starting as '*Moraa Galavi Aale*'. But Jayamanna had to request Seneviratne to change and rewrite the song with the name '*Mawila Penevi Roope Hadhe*' as commanded by Silva, the novelist (Gunaratne, 1964)."

Sunil Ariyaratne describes the presentations of songs in the film in 2006 in his publication in *Sinhalese Film Songs Anthology 1947-1956 (Sinhala Chithrapata Geethaavaliya 1947-1956)* as follows.

"It is said that two duet songs have been filmed in color in this film. Those two songs are '*Anna Sudho Ara Paata Walaa*' and '*Mageya Prema Malini*' sung by Rukmani Devi and Mohideen Baig. All the songs are written by Herbert M. Seneviratne, while a South Indian musician named S.S. Veda directed the music for the songs. All the songs of the movie *Kalahanda* were popular, and their melodies are based on Hindi film tunes (Ariyaratne, 2006)."

3.3.2 *Kele Handa*: viewers response

After the ever first "*Sarasaviya Film Awards*" held in 1964, Dias Gunaratne interviewed Jayamanna, and this newspaper interview reveals a lot about the viewers' response to the film including his memories.

"The film '*Kela Handa*' commenced with the novel's first ever book cover designed by G.S. Fernando. Then it was followed by a scene in which Silva the novelist speaks with a smoking pipe addressing the patronage. After that, a

short promotional film was accompanied by live footage of heroine Rukmani Devi, comedian Eddie Jayamanna and Film Director B.A.W. Jayamanna. Apart from Rukmani Devi and Eddie Jayamanna; Stanley Perera as John Jayapala, Millie Kahandawala as Ada Jayapala, Rita Ratnayake as Daisy Attanayake, Peter Peiris as Jerry Harris, and, B.A.W. Jayamanna as Nandarala acted in the film. Although a copy of the positive film prints was brought to Sri Lanka which was sufficient for the cinema exhibition, the negative film of '*Kela Handa*' and some of the positive film prints have been arrested by the police in Madras (now Chennai) due to a problem regarding the taxes to the Government of India in 1953. On March 02, 1956, at the Royal College of Colombo, the film '*Kela Handa*' was awarded the Most Popular Sinhala film by the readers' poll ever first held in Sri Lanka, organized by the '*Dinamina*', newspaper. On May 18, 1956, at the '*Deepashikha*' Awards, the ever first Sri Lankan Film Awards held at the Regal Cinema in Colombo, B.A.W. Jayamanna was awarded for his acting in the film (Gunaratne, 1964)."

'*Kela Handa*,' the film adaptation, had become comparatively more popular and successful than the original screenplays had because the book or author already had a following that equaled a guaranteed audience, and ensured that it was not a "flop" at the box office. The film audience had been influenced to watch '*Kela Handa*' by the spread of the word about the adaptations due to the pre-existing readership of the book and the reviews and critiques of the book in the media, allowing it to become another new part of popular culture in the country.

Stephen Follows describes the book's popularity as a good candidate for adaptation to film in 2014 in his publication *What are the highest-grossing movie adaptations?* as below.

"Besides a book's popularity, what does make a book a good candidate for adaptation to film? It has been seen that the Adventure, Drama, and Horror genres have a larger percentage of adaptations from literary fiction than original screenplays. This may be largely due to a more complex plot being expected, so a popular novel from these genres is sought after as the plot and storyline are already proved to work and appeal to an audience (Follows, 2014)."

There are many examples of a book being adapted more than once in multiple remakes. But is there a limit to how many times one novel can be adapted and still be successful? '*Kela Handa*,' after the first film adaptation in 1953, another film adaptation was screened in 1993. This was 60 years after the ever first publishing of the novel, and 40 years after the first film adaptation. The second film adaptation was directed and produced by Alerick Lionel Fernando, based on the same story of '*Kela Handa*' but the film was named "*Mavilaa Penevi Roope Hadey*" and the names of the characters had been changed to different names. This film is the 756th film screened in the Sri Lankan cinema industry.

4. Conclusion and Recommendation

When the first film adaptation in Sinhala cinema was based on '*Kela Handa*,' it created a trendsetting wave in the industry. The next film adaptation is '*Radala Piliruwa*,' directed by T.R. Sundaram, screened in 1954 and based on another novel written by W. A. Silva. The third was '*Dingiri Menika*,' directed by A.S.A Saamy and screened in 1956, based on the novel '*Dingiri Menika*' written by Piyadasa Sirisena.

Substituting local novels for foreign novels happened in Sinhala cinema in 1956, with the film '*Duppathage Duka*' directed by T.R. Sundaram, based on the book *Le Miserable*' written by the French novelist Victor Hugo,

which had translated into Sinhala language as 'Manutaapaya' by I.M.R.A Eriyagolla. Following that another film 'Ramyalatha', directed by A.B. Raj and released in 1956, was based on the novel 'Devdas' written by the Bengali novelist Sarat Chandra Chattopadhyay. 'Le Miserable', was again film-adapted as 'Sirakarua' directed by Sirisena Wimalaweera and released in 1957.

'Siriyaalatha,' directed by S. Rajan, was screened in 1957, and 'Deyyange Rate,' directed by L.S. Ramachandran, was screened in 1958. Those were two other film adaptations based on a novel and a short story written by W. A. Silva. 'Maa Aale Kala Tharuniya,' directed by Sirisena Wimalaweera, was screened in 1959 and was based on the novel of the same name written by D.B. Seneviratne. As the 10th and the last film of the Decade of 1950-1959, 'Daivayoga,' directed by K. Ojha, was screened in 1959 and was based on the novel of the same name written by W.A. de Silva. It is evident that 05 films out of 10 of the decades were film adaptations based on creative works by W.A. de Silva.

W.A. Silva Memorial Foundation at Wellawatte, Colombo has been established and is recognized as a charity organization by the Government of Sri Lanka. It is also reported that a new film production based on the novel 'Kela Handa', is planned to be produced this year. If that is the case, then 90 years after the publishing of the ever first novel which film was adapted in Sri Lanka and 70years after the first film adaptation screened in Sinhala cinema, with this film 'Kela Handa', the film adaptation will be presented as a re-make in the new millennium as a new experience.

In addition, 'Kela Handa' will become the novel that was film-adapted three times, where even though there are no two times of film adaptations from the same novel in Sri Lankan history so far.

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