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**Topic:**

**Escapism From Page to Screen in Robert Hichens's Novel  
*The Garden of Allah* (1904) and Richards Boleslawski's  
Movie *The Garden of Allah* ( 1936)**

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## **Dedication**

### **Keltouma:**

To all the members of my family, my brothers and sisters, and especially to the dearest person in my life, "My Mother " without her nothing would be possible.

### **Nadia:**

To all the members of my family, especially to my beloved parents, who devoted their lives to meet my needs without them nothing would be possible.

## **Abstract**

This dissertation is a comparative study on the theme of escapism in Robert Smythe Hichens' novel *The Garden of Allah* (1904) and Richard Boleslawski's movie *The Garden of Allah* (1936). Our analysis has relied on Roy Baumeister's *Theory of Escapism* and Pamusuk Enest's *Theory of Ecranisation*. The aim is to show the interplay between literature, film, and the human desire for temporary liberation from reality. The study has examined how Hichens' novel interprets the theme of escapism and how Boleslawski's cinematic adaptation has enhanced the escapist experience using visual storytelling techniques. It has also delved into the psychological motivations behind the appeal of escapism and the challenges and opportunities in adapting escapist motives from literature to film. The research highlights the significance of escapism in storytelling by portraying characters who seek to flee the social norms by adopting new behaviors and personalities. After comparing *The Garden of Allah* by Robert Hichens (1904) and its film adaptation by Richard Boleslawski's in (1936), we have noticed that the issue of escapism is stressed in both works through individuals who seek escape from their reality. The characters are able to confront their impulses and set out on transforming journeys thanks to the desert landscape, which plays a major part in depicting physical and emotional solitude. through visual components and performances bridging the gap between the written word and the cinematic experience, the film adaption also highlights the difficulties and adjustments necessary in ecranisation.

## **Key Words**

Robert Smythe Hichens, Richard Boleslawski, *The Garden of Allah* , Escapism, Ecranisation, Adaptation, Page , Screen, Comparative Study .

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## **Introduction**

Engaging in imaginative or entertaining activities serves as a gateway for individuals seeking a break from the monotonous or distressing elements of their daily lives. This mental departure enables a shift of focus away from feelings of sadness or general despondency, providing a temporary escape from the grip of depressive thoughts. By immersing themselves in captivating pursuits, individuals create a mental sanctuary where they can momentarily indulge in escapism, setting aside the less appealing aspects of reality. This diversionary tactic offers a means of finding solace and rejuvenation, allowing individuals to recharge and seek moments of joy amidst the otherwise uninteresting or unpleasant facets of life.<sup>1</sup>

The notion of escapism has fascinated individuals across diverse societies and through time. The act of escaping offers a brief relief from the burdens, worries, and repetitive nature of existence. It is a phenomenon that manifests in various forms, from literature and film to virtual realities and immersive experiences. Exploring the depths of escapism opens a window into the intricate relationship between individuals and their desire for solace, imagination, and self-discovery. Escapism refers to the tendencious desire to seek distraction and relief from unpleasant realities, especially by seeking entertainment or engaging in fantasy. It is a way of avoiding an unpleasant or a boring life. It provides us with a feeling of having everything we need .It gives satisfaction in life and allows us to grow and aspire for a better version of ourselves in the society .It offers us an opportunity to recharge ourselves. Escapism is a way to occupy one's self away from persistent feelings of depression or general sadness. Escapism can take various forms, such as reading books, watching movies, playing video games, daydreaming, or engaging in other activities that offer a sense of retreat from the stresses of daily routine .<sup>2</sup>

The term “Escapist Literature” is a genre of writing intentionally crafted to provide readers with a departure from the confines of reality. It involves creating fictional worlds,

characters and narratives that transport readers into a different realm, often far removed from the challenges and limitations of their lifestyle. “*Escapist Literature*” typically emphasizes elements such as adventure, fantasy, romance, or idealized settings. It aims to provide entertainment, enjoyment, and a temporary retreat from the real world, allowing readers to immerse themselves in captivating stories and imaginative experiences. While escapist literature may not always delve into deep or realistic portrayals of life, it fulfills the desire for diversion and the pleasure of temporary detachment from the real world that many readers seek.<sup>3</sup>

This comparative study tries to show how escapism is represented through words in Robert Hichen’s romantic drama novel *The Garden of Allah* (1904) and the way it is screened in Richard Boleslawski’s movie *The Garden of Allah* (1936). It seeks to shed light on the psychological, social, and cultural dimensions of the concept. We examine the motivations behind the human inclination to escape the effects it has on individuals and communities, and the ethical implications it raises.

By examining the historical roots, contemporary manifestations, and future trajectories of escapism, we aim to deepen our understanding of its allure, impact, and the intricate interplay between escapism and reality. While the novel is largely set in French Algeria, with a brief opening in Marseille, and a conclusion in French Tunis, the movie is set in Buttercup California and Yuma, Arizona. The choice of the American desert rather than the Algerian desert for the filming of the film *The Garden of Allah* (1936) directed by Richard Boleslawski in 1936 can be attributed to several factors. Moving the setting to the California desert could have made the story more relatable and accessible to a predominantly American audience, as they would be more familiar with the California landscape than the Algerian landscape.

The story takes place in North Africa, but the specific choice of Algeria may be not essential for the film adaptation. At the time of the film's making, in 1936, Algeria was a French colony, and it could have been difficult to obtain the authorization and the resources necessary to shoot in the Algerian desert. The bureaucratic, logistical and financial constraints associated with filming abroad can be complex, and directors often choose more accessible and convenient locations to film their work. It would have required less travel and coordination compared to filming in the actual Sahara Desert in Algeria. In summary, the choice of the American desert rather than the Algerian desert for the filming of *The Garden of Allah* in (1936) can be attributed to factors such as logistical constraints, available resources, bureaucratic and aesthetic considerations, as well as the ease of access to desert landscapes in the United States.

### **Review of the Literature**

Hichens novel *The Garden of Allah* (1904) has received a large amount of criticism which has been carried from different perspectives. The Critic George Murray identified two main subjects that run through the work: "the desert that is the 'Garden of Allah'" and the Catholic faith.<sup>4</sup> An anonymous reviewer from *The Evening Standard*, however, thinks that only faith is the dominant theme of the novel: "Throughout the book there is a strong religious motif, on which indeed the whole plot is built. Faith is a necessity; "To sin against faith is an unforgivable crime, and it matters little to Mr. Hichens whether the faith is Christian or Mohammedan, so long as it is true and binding."<sup>5</sup>

According W. L. Alden in *The New York Times* , Hichens has "handled a precise plot in a very skillful and satisfactory way". *The New York Tribune* also presented a nuanced appreciation for the novel .In this newspaper it is declared that "Mr. Hichens may also no longer have made a lasting addition to literature, but he has written a book which we can't however admire while under its spell" (1904, November ) p. 27.

The novel was once well-received through readers of the time. In UK, it went via eight sales in the US took simply three months before the fifth edition used to be published. Hichens used to be said to be disturbed over implications in the American press that he has made a trip to Algeria just to work up this novel. Through his US publisher, Frederick A. Stokes, he released a statement clarifying the novel came about from his many visits to the place of Algeria he described, and from numerous stays at a Trappist monastery in North Africa<sup>6</sup>

As for Richard Boleslawski's movie *The Garden of Allah* (1936) is concerned, it has also drawn a great deal of criticism from a variety of angles. Glenn Erickson, an American critic, has argued that this movie is a chestnut of a story done at least twice before. He has stated that the movie's producer David O. Selznick has a weakness for literary adaptations, hence, one wonders if this property was suggested by his story editor Val Lewton. He has praised Boyer's character in the book and his brilliant performance, so the strength here is the strong performances. Despite his moral dilemma is a trivial gimmick, Charles Boyer's big impassioned speech scene is an extended close up that shows undeniable skill and definite star power. For Erickson, Marlene Dietrich the main actress who has played the role of Domini Domini Enfielden (main character), rarely relaxes long enough to resemble a human, but she is fascinating to watch.<sup>7</sup>

The English writer and journalist Graham Greene has given neutral review on the movie in an article that he has written in *The Spectator* (a weekly British newsmagazine) in (1936). He says that the movie has showed the pious catholic superhuman, so intensely dramatic, Greene has praised the surrealism of the film as really magnificent, and noted that the dialogue had a distinctly apocalyptic tone closely matched by Dietrich's delivery of her lines.<sup>8</sup> *The New York Times* journal explains the techniques used by the director to realize this movie. In this light, it is argued that Selznick International production in technicolor in Robert

Hichens's *The Garden of Allah* (1904) is a distinguished motion picture, rich in pictorial splendor yet unobtrusive.<sup>9</sup>

### **Issue and Working Hypothesis:**

From the above review of the literature, it is clear that Robert Hichens's novel *The Garden of Allah* (1904) and Richard Boleslawski's movie *The Garden of Allah* (1936) had been studied and evaluated separately by several critics. In the novel critics have focused on the role of the characters, the desert and faith. Concerning the movie, the critics have limited their thoughts to the study of technicolor, actors, and the camera used in the movie. However, critics have ignored and missed the theme of escapism which is dominant in both the novel and the movie. Thus, we suggest a comparative study on the theme of escapism as it is portrayed in the novel and the way it is screened in the movie. To reach our gain, we are going to make an appeal to two theories: the Pamusuk Eneste's theory of ecranisation will be referred in order to explain the process of adaptation, and Baumeister's R.F theory of escapism will be used to explain the issue of escapism.

### **Methodological Outline:**

Our dissertation will follow the IMRAD method. The study is divided into an introduction in which we have introduce the topic and stated the purpose of our study. Then, we have reviewed some representative literary critics on Hichens's novel *The Garden of Allah* (1904) and Boleslawski's movie *The Garden of Allah* (1936). As far as the issue and working hypothesis are concerned, we have supported a gap that we found interesting and convenient since no study has been conducted to compare the novel and the movie of *The Garden of Allah* (1936).

In the second section we find the methods and materials. In the methods, we will first introduce Eneste's Pamusuk theory of Ecranisation (1991) and Baumeister's R.F theory of escapism, and in materials, we will present a brief biography of both the author and film

director and a short synopsis and a brief context of the two works. In the result section, we will show the findings of our research. The discussion section will be divided into two chapters. The first one will make a comparison between the novel and the movie in term of adaptation by making reference to ecranisation theory. The second chapter will study the theme of escapism in both works. Finally, we will finish with a general conclusion which will sum up the different ideas discussed throughout our dissertation.

## EndNotes:

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- <sup>1</sup>. "Escapism meaning in the Cambridge English Dictionary". *dictionary.cambridge.org*. Retrieved ( 23 March 2020).
  - <sup>2</sup>. Ibid
  - <sup>3</sup>. (Hasa,2016). What Is Escapist Literature. *Pediaa.com*.
  - <sup>4</sup>. Murray, George (28 January 1905). "Books of the Week Reviewed". *The Montreal Star*. Montreal, Quebec. p. 2 – via Newspapers.com.
  - <sup>5</sup>. "Novels of the Day". *The Evening Standard*. London, England. 20 October 1904. p. 3 – via Newspapers.com.
  - <sup>6</sup>. (Alden, W. L, 5 November 1904). *The New York Times*. New York, New York. p. 27 – via Newspapers.com.
  - <sup>7</sup>. (Glenn ,Erickson, 2007) <https://www.dvdtalk.com/dvdsavant/s1391alla.html>
  - <sup>8</sup>. (Greene,Graham,25 December 1936). *The Garden of Allah*. *The Spectator*. (reprinted in: Taylor, John Russell, ed. (1980). *The Pleasure Dome*. Oxford University Press. pp. 125-126, 128-129
  - <sup>9</sup>. (Nov. 20, 1936) of the National edition with the headline: *The Music Hall's 'Garden of Allah' Is Technicolor Triumphant -- 'Tarzan Escapes' at the Capitol*-*TheNewYorkTimes*. <https://www.nytimes.com/1936/11/20/archives/the-music-halls-garden-of-allah-is-technicolor-triumphant-tarzan.html>

## **II) Methods and Materials:**

### **1) Methods:**

Our analysis will rely on Pamusuk Eneste's *Ecranisation Theory* (1991) which deals with transformation from literature to movie. The ecranisation product is not always identical to its original source which is a written production. Also it lacks in the details such as the plot and characters which do not always exist in the movie. Eneste, states ecranisation is based on the origin of the word, ecran, which means to screen. So, ecranisation intended as filming literary works. The term ecranisation is also used also to broader sense of adaptation or changing a production from writing into an audiovisual work. The differences that occur between the film and the novel adaptation, according to Eneste are a creative process that can be performed by the director by making some changes and additions to the story.<sup>1</sup>

#### **A) Pamusuk Eneste's Theory of Ecranisation (1991):**

Ecranisation refers also to the transformation of the work. In the process of creation, a novel is work of individual creations, while the film is a team work. The novel is the result of an individual involving experiences, thoughts, ideas, and others aspects. Therefore, ecranisation can also be said to be a process of change from something produced individually to something produced collectively. According to Eneste's theory the film it is realized through moving images or audio visuals that present a series of events. Different media of two arts have different characteristics. Language as the medium of literature has to be transparent to the author's imagination. Mental processes are more prevalent in this regard. The language used allows giving a broad space for the reader to interpret and imagine each image that had been seen.<sup>2</sup>

The process of adaptation from page to screen according to Pamusuk Eneste follows three steps/techniques:

### **a. Reduction**

One of the processes in the conversion of a literary piece into a cinema is reduction. Reduction is the component used in the transformation of literary works that shortens or streamlines the narrative. According to Pamusuk Eneste (1991), there are a number of reasons for the story's shortening. First of all, not every scene may be documented in his opinion; only the events that are essential to the story will be captured on camera. Some moments are not necessary or not so vital that it is not suitable to shoot them. Second, the unpleasant nature of the tale compelled the director to cut some of the unneeded sequences. If the producer had included all the unwanted scenes, the story would have been tedious and bothersome, and the spectator would not have been unsatisfied with viewing unnecessary occurrences. Thirdly, not every scene or tale in the novel may be portrayed due to technological restrictions in the filming process. The length of the movie is the final consideration. The maximum and average length of a film is three hours, which restricts the number of original sequences that may be filmed.<sup>3</sup>

### **b. Addition**

The procedure of adding some scenes to the movie is called addition (extension). Story, storyline, characterization, setting, and even atmosphere are all areas where the process might take place. In order to make the film more engaging, the filmmaker adds certain extras. An addition is a development of the literary work's transformation into a cinema. This can happen in the areas of story, plot, characterisation, location, and mood in addition to lessened creativity. Producers had the opportunity to adjust the length and add sequences while still adhering to the work's original structure. Readers' and viewers' faultconcept images are to blame if there are any unfavourable presumptions. The mental picture a reader has when reading a literary work is known as a conceptual image. It includes

the reader's personal spiritual experiences, as well as characters, ideas, and imaginative concepts.<sup>4</sup>

### **c. Modification**

The third step in the conversion of a literary work into a motion picture is modification. The sphere of tale concepts, storytelling techniques, and other areas are all subject to alteration. The kind of material utilized, the target audience, and the amount of playing time are some of the variables that affect transformation variations. In order to create the appearance that a film based on a novel was not originally a novel, Eneste (1991) claims that directors feel the need to alter the film during ecranisation. Conversely, Stanton (2007:94) asserts that the adjustment often means that we read novels on days in line with the period agreed upon (typically 1 hour 30 minutes to 2 hours 45 minutes). As a consequence of this time, the director who adapted the novel modified any passages that he felt were either too wordy or too brief. In addition, modifications are frequently used to appeal to audiences and meet commercial demands.<sup>5</sup>

### **B)Baumeister's Roy .F Theory of Escapism (1990):**

Escapism, according to Baumeister R.F. theory, is the propensity of individuals to behave in order to suppress undesirable psychic emotions. Although the term "escape" is typically used to refer to physically leaving a place, such as escaping from prison, escape theory contends that people flee from unfavorable impressions of themselves. It is used to characterize behaviors that originate from self-escaping objectives, which are frequently undesired, and that enable a person temporarily escape unfavorable psychological responses.<sup>6</sup>

### **The Six Major Steps of Escape Theory:**

According to Baumeister R.F. escapism can be divided into six major steps. The person first has a critical contact during which he realizes that the current outcome has fallen short of his expectations, whether they be self-imposed or based on society's norms. Second,

instead of attributing unfavorable outcomes to external factors, he tends to hold internal aspects of himself, such as the different aspects of his personality, which are accountable for these circumstances. Thirdly, the person realizes that the current situation makes him feel insufficient, unable, undesirable, or even blamable. As people accept that their expectations were unmet, this realization sets off unpleasant feelings. Fourth, the individual feels unhappy after realizing that existing results fall short of intended ambitions. Fifth, by avoiding deep, significant contemplation, the person tries to prevent this unfavorable emotional response. Sixth, avoidance of meaningful thoughts can lead to loss of self-control and unwanted behavior. Moments of connection within causal processes are embodied in the escape theory's stages. Only when a person has advanced through all of these earlier phases does undesirable behavior start to emerge. However, the process does not lead to undesirable behavior if a person explains this recent failure to situational variables rather than considering it to be an inherent defect within himself. Therefore, it should be understood that self-escaping is a very uncommon response to upsetting or unsatisfying results or situations.<sup>7</sup>

## **2) Materials:**

### **A-Robert Hichens's Novel *The Garden of Allah* (1904):**

#### **A1-Biography:**

Robert Smythe Hichens English journalist, novelist, songwriter for music, short story writer, music critic, and author of several popular plays. He is most known for being a "Naughty Nineties" humorist. He was the eldest child of Abigail Elizabeth Smythe and Reverend Frederick Harrison Hichens. He attended Clifton College and the Royal College of Music for his education and always wanted to be a musician. Later on, he would succeed George Bernard Shaw as the music critic for *Le Monde*. The London School of Journalism was his place of study. Egypt was one of Hichens' favourite places to visit while on the road. When he initially visited in the early.<sup>8</sup>

The Coastguard's Secret (1886), Hichens's debut book, was written when he was just seventeen years old. The Green Carnation (1894), a parody of Hichens' pals Lord Alfred Douglas and Oscar Wilde, was his debut in the public eye. In addition, Hichens had friendships with a number of other authors, such as Maude Valerie Whit, Reggie Turner, and E. F. Benson. Hichens's Felix (1902), an early fictional treatment of hypodermic morphine addiction, and The Garden of Allah (1904), which did well worldwide and was acted in Carl Theodor Dreyer's *Die Gezeichneten* (1922; *Love One Another*), were both produced in Warsaw during the Russo-Polish War.<sup>9</sup>

### **A2-Summary:**

The Garden of Allah, a romantic drama authored by Robert Hichens, was first published in 1904. The novel was released by Methuen and Company on October 13, 1904 in London and Frederick A. Stokes on January 28, 1905 in New York. The novel, which is set against the backdrop of the late 19th century, transports readers on a delightful journey across the North African desert and the protagonists' emotional and spiritual development. Domini Enfielden, a younger Englishwoman. She travels to Algeria in order to get away from her painful past and find peace in the desert. Domini meets an intriguing and enigmatic guy named Boris Androvsky as she enters the opulent Hotel du Desert. He is a frustrated trappist monk who has abandoned his home in the Sahara and given up on humanity. Domini finds herself captivated to Boris because of the way he looks and the all-encompassing arid region's scenery. As the two works through their own issues, they begin to question their identities, their wants. A forbidden love begins to develop between the two. Domini's experience evolves as she struggles with her feelings for Boris and the problems they provide into a journey of self-discovery and enlightenment. The protagonists wrestle with their inner demons and the tension between their desires and societal expectations among the ageless magnificence of the

desert. In order to craft a vivid and compelling novel, Hichens expertly weaves together themes of love, spirituality, cultural differences, escapism, and the allure of the extraordinary. *The Garden of Allah* 1904 invites readers to ponder the difficulties of interpersonal relationships, the search of uniqueness, and the tenacity of religion by engrossing them in the vivid descriptions of the Sahara's enormous landscapes. The book continues to enthrall readers with its beautiful style and reflective mood, offering a timeless investigation of love and the human spirit against the backdrop of an untamed planet.

### **A3-Context:**

The narrative of affluent and attractive young woman Domini Enfielden, who leaves her luxurious but unfulfilling existence in England for Algeria, is told in the late 19th-century novel. Algeria had been a colony of France since 1830 when the book was published. Despite the brutality and resistance of the native population during the French colonization of Algeria, by the late 19th century, the French had largely conquered the nation and created a colonial authority. Algeria saw a considerable effect from French culture and language at this period, and Algeria developed into a vital component of France's empire. In the framework of this colonial past, Hichens explores the cultural clash and conflicts between the locals and the French colonisers in his novel. In addition, the work captures the attitudes and moral principles of the late Victorian age in which it was written. This includes moral and gender roles. Overall, *The Garden of Allah* (1904), which represents the cultural and social ideas of the day, provides a window into colonial Algeria at the start of the 20th century.<sup>10</sup>

### **B- Richard Boleslawski's Movie *The Garden of Allah* (1936):**

#### **B1-Biography:**

Richard was born on February 4, 1889. He was a Polish director of theatre and film as well as an actor and acting coach. Boleslawski participated in World War I as a cavalry lieutenant on the tsarist Russian side and served there until the collapse of the Russian

Empire. After the 1917 October Revolution in Russia, he fled to his home Poland, where he began to make his first films. He changed his birth name to Bolesawski since it was difficult to say.<sup>11</sup>

Richard directed a variety of movies including *The Grand Parade* 1930, *Hollywood Party* 1934, *Metropolitan* 1935, *Three Godfathers* 1936, and *The Garden of Allah* 1936. One of the best screwball comedies ever is a romantic comedy entitled *Theodora Goes Wild* 1936, starring Theodora Lynn, a Sunday school teacher from a small town, who writes a racy best-selling novel.<sup>12</sup>

### **B2-Summary:**

The filming took place in Yuma, Arizona and Buttercup, California. A disillusioned British lady named Domini Enfielden (Marlene Dietrich) escapes her rough background and sets off on a voyage of self-discovery in the film. She goes to the desert in search of peace and loneliness. She encounters Boris Androvsky (Charles Boyer), a Russian priest who has also fled to the Sahara in pursuit of enlightenment; there Domini and Boris develop a strong bond and gradually fall in love despite their initial reluctance. They experience several barriers and tensions as their relationship grows. Additionally, Domini's personal apprehensions about commitment and love put a strain on her budding relationship with Boris. *The Garden of Allah* film 1936 examines themes of romance, escape, and faith.

It explores the character's internal conflicts and the decisions they must take in order to experience real pleasure. The movie shows how love has the ability to overcome social expectations against the vast and stunning desert scenery. *The Garden of Allah* 1936 by Richard takes audiences on a compelling voyage of love and self-discovery in one of the most stunning and difficult locations on Earth thanks to its exotic setting, passionate acting, and exquisite cinematography. *The Garden of Allah* (1936) deviates in various ways from its

original story, including the way the filmmaker has portrayed his characters, the shifting of the locale, and some plot points.

### **B3-Context:**

*The Garden of Allah* is a 1936 American drama film, directed by Richard Boleslawski; the movie was inspired by Robert S. Hichens' novel of the same name. In the years between World Wars I and II, in the 1930s, the film is set in California. The year is the early 20th century in *The Garden of Allah* 1936.

Several notable historical and social changes occurred during this decade. One of the most important historical occurrences of the 1910s was World War I, which started in 1914 and lasted until 1918. Millions of people died during the conflict, and there were enormous political and social changes made in Europe and across the world. Significant developments in societal views and women's rights occurred during that time period as well. Women fought for more equality in school and the workplace as well as the ability to vote in several nations, including the United States and the United Kingdom.

The Great Depression, a major global economic crisis that started with the Wall Street Crash of 1929, also dominated the 1930s. As a result of the economic crisis, there was a significant increase in unemployment, bank failures, and a reduction in international commerce. The Harlem Renaissance, an intellectual, cultural, and artistic movement centered on New York City's Harlem neighborhood, reached its pinnacle in the 1930s. During this time, African-American philosophers, singers, authors, and artists arose and significantly influenced American art and culture.<sup>13</sup>

## EndNotes:

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<sup>1</sup> Eneste, Pamusuk (1991) Novel and Film, Flores, Nusa Indah.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid

<sup>3</sup> Ibid

<sup>4</sup> Kayyis, M. (2016). Comparison Between Novel and Film *Divergent* (Ecranisation Theory).

English and Literature Department, Adab and Humanities Faculty, Alauddin State Islamic

University Makassar. <http://repositori.uin-alauddin.ac.id/367/1/Muh.%20Kayyis.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> Ibid

<sup>6</sup> Baumeister, R. F. (1990). *Suicide as escape from the self*. Psychological Review, 97, 90-113.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid

<sup>8</sup> [Robert Hichens \(writer\)](https://encyclopedia.thefreedictionary.com/Robert+Smythe+Hichens)

<sup>9</sup> Ibid

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.britannica.com/place/Algeria/Colonial-rule>

<sup>11</sup> Barson, M. (2023, February 13). Richard Boleslavsky. Encyclopedia Britannica.

<https://www.britannica.com/biography/Richard-Boleslavsky>

<sup>12</sup> Ibid

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.thepeoplehistory.com/1936.html>

### III-Results:

Throughout this dissertation, we have tried to compare the way in which the issue of escapism is represented in Robert Hichens's novel *The Garden of Allah* (1904) and Richard Boleslawski's movie *The Garden of Allah* (1936). In doing so, we have relied on Pamusuk Eneste *Theory of Ecranisation* (1991) to explain the process of the movie's adaptation. Then we have appropriated some aspects of Roy Baumeister's *Escape Theory* (1990) in order to show how the characters have fled their reality and adopted new behaviors which are different from the imposed norms.

By studying the two literary works in the light of the two mentioned theories, we have come to the following results: First, the theme of escapism is present in both Robert Hichens' novel *The Garden of Allah* (1904) and its cinematic adaptation *The Garden of Allah* (1936). The characters in the story often seek refuge from their realities, wishing to escape the confines of their lives and to find comfort in another existence. The story's rich portrayal of characters and exotic settings, have allowed the audience to explore the depths of human emotions and the search for meaning in life.

Moreover, both in the novel and its film adaptation, the theme of escapism is intricately present, and highlights the human longing to get rid of the confines of everyday existence. Both the novelist and the movie director have explored the emotional and psychological motivations behind seeking refuge in different realities, either through physical exploration or by a search for personal aspiration. *The Garden of Allah* in both novel and film adaptation portray the consequences and complexities that can arise when one attempts to evade reality entirely. Domini's experience with Boris in the desert, shows the conflicts and moral problems that accompany tries to get away. The novel and film show us the importance of confronting and embracing the complexities of life rather than merely evading them. *The Garden of Allah* reminds us that life is a constant journey of self-discovery and that the most

profound changes often occur when we are open to the unknown. Either through the pages of Hichens' novel or the screen adaptation, the story invites us to embark on our own personal journey.

In addition, *The Garden of Allah*, both as a novel and as a movie, showcases the desert setting as an incredible and evocative backdrop that performs a central role in the narrative and enhancing the overall thematic depth of the story. Robert Smyth Hichens' novel, with its colorful and immersive descriptions of the Sahara desert, transports readers to a world of vast expanses and mesmerizing beauty. The desert serves as a symbol of both physical and emotional isolation, a place where characters can confront their interior desires and start new transformative journeys. In the film adaptation, the visual splendor of the desert is presented to life by capturing the amazing and magic of the Sahara. The vastnesses of the sandy dunes, the intense heat, and the endless horizons have created a sense of isolation and escapism, allowing the characters to challenge their fears, desires, and religious dilemmas.

Finally, Boleslawski's movie, holds the visual medium to transport the spirit of the original story. Through captivating cinematography, art direction, and costume design, the film successfully creates a visually stunning portrayal of the desert setting and the character emotional journey. Also, ecranisation necessitates certain changes and alterations to the original story. The film adaptation of *The Garden of Allah* (1936) takes independence with the source material by modifying certain plot elements and characterizations to be suitable for the medium of the movie. These changes reflect the inherent challenges of ecranisation, as directors often need to enrich streamline, or rework certain aspects to ensure a coherent and engaging cinematic experience. The ecranisation of *The Garden of Allah* (1936) also focuses on the importance of performances in bridging the gap between the written word and the visual medium. Marlene Dietrich and Charles Boyer have brought the characters to life with compelling portrayals,

injecting depth and emotion into the story. Their performances contribute significantly to the ecranisation process, allowing the audience to connect with the characters.

## **IV-Discussion:**

### **Chapter one: Major Changes in *The Garden of Allah*'s Adaptation from Novel to Movie:**

*The Garden of Allah* is a novel written by Robert. SHichens, and published in 1904. It has been adapted into several movies. The most famous is the 1936 film directed by Richard Boleslawski and main characters were Marlene Dietrich and Charles Boyer .As with any adaptation, changes are made to the original novel during the process of turning it into a movie. The way the story is converted from page to screen will be explained through characterization, plot and setting.

#### **1-Reduction:**

The movie adaptation of *The Garden of Allah* (1936) has known some reductions comparing to the original novel. This section, therefore, will deal with the cuts made by the director. We will mention in detail the characters, events, and places that were omitted in the film.

##### **a) Characters:**

**Father Arlworth (Henry Arlworth):** He appears in the in the novel *The Garden of Allah* (1904) by Robert Hichens as a character. He is identified as Domini's uncle. Father Arlworth has appeared in the first chapter of the novel. He is one of the most prominent and ardent English Catholics of his day. Father Arlworth has helped Domini to overcome her ordeal when her father died, and he was her support and the only one, who understands her, "Her uncle, Father Arlworth, helped Domini by his support and counsel in this critical period of her life ..." <sup>1</sup> Arlworth's character has an important role in Hichens's novel as it helps the main character to overcome her pain and all the internal conflicts she has lived through, but this character is cleared in Richard's movie 1936. The director has decided to remove

him because he was mentioned before Domini's trip to the Sahara, and this period of time was left out of the movie. Therefore the director dispensed with him because he was not necessary for him to attend.

**Suzanne Charpot:** In the novel, Suzanne is considered as Domini's French maid of three years service. She and her mistress are almost the same age. She is seldom heard and seen after the first day in Beni-Mora. The film's director removed the portion of Suzanne's novelized existence, so her character isn't shown in the picture. The presence of Suzanne in *The Garden of Allah* (1904) novel is mentioned at several occasions. Hichens writes, "Long before dawn the Italian waiter rolled off his little bed, put a cap on his head, and knocked at Domini's and Suzanne Charpot's doors".<sup>2</sup> In order to show the role of this character in the novel, he adds, "Suzanne, who sat opposite to Domini, had her eyes shut. If she had not from time to time passed her tongue quickly over her full, pale lips she would have looked like a dead thing"<sup>3</sup> Her role as a servant at Domini's house makes of Suzanne an important character in the novel.

**Mustapha:** He has a small role in Robert Hichens' *The Garden of Allah* (1904) novel. Mustapha is a giant guide in the smaller oasis of Sidi Zerzour. He takes tourists to show them the beautiful and historical tourist places. His presence in the novel is shown through Hichens' words "Mustapha strode before to show the way, Domini and Androvsky followed, and behind glided the little mob of barefoot inquisitors in long shirts, speechless and intent, and always hopeful of some chance scattering of money by the wealthy travelers."<sup>4</sup> Mustapha's character is omitted from the movie because the director thought it was unnecessary, and his removal does not change the story's direction.

**Ouardi:** He appears in the novel as one of the supporting characters. He is introduced as one of the Arabic servants Domini acquires in her journey to the desert. Ouardi is mentioned in several passages in the novel. Hichens writes that, "He was helping himself to some

gazelle, which sent forth an appetizing odour, and Ouardi was proudly pouring out for him the first glass of blithely winking champagne.”<sup>5</sup>This short quotation shows us the presence of Ouardi in the novel. Then he adds, “She began to walk slowly up and down on the sand before the tent. Ouardi came to walk with her, but she sent him away. Before doing so, however, something moved her to ask him.”<sup>6</sup>Ouardi characters’ is appeared many times in the novel as it is mentioned in the previous citations taken from Hichens’ narrative.

The director of the film *The Garden of Allah* (1936) Richard Boleslawski has likely reduced the characters mentioned previously (Father Arlworth, Mustapha, Ouardi) for various possible reasons. First, there are time constraints. As we know, film adaptations often have time limitations, and producers must condense the story to fit within a reasonable running time. By reducing some secondary characters from *The Garden of Allah* (1936) movie such as Father Arlworth, Mustapha, and Ouardi .

The director can focus on the central storyline and main characters Domini and Boris, since the film focuses on their love story more than anything else. This allows him to create a tighter and more streamlined narrative. Second, there is the matter of simplification. Adopting a novel to screen sometimes requires simplifying characters to make it more accessible to a wider audience .By removing minor characters the director can create a more easily understandable storyline for the film. That is exactly what we have noticed in the movie of *The Garden of Allah* (1936). Richard’s purpose from this character’s reduction is to simplify the story of Domini and Boris, and focus on their love relationship and also for the viewers will not be disturbed by a large number of characters. In the romance between the two main characters ,the absence of these characters is meaningless. Third, financial factors may also contribute to the decrease of supporting characters.<sup>7</sup>

Finally, the decision to reduce secondary characters in a film adaptation is a creative choice made by the director and the screenwriter to best translate the story to the screen, while considering various practical factors. Characters that played minor roles or had limited impact on the central plot might have been reduced in the film adaptation. That is why in Richard's movie *The Garden of Allah* (1936) the characters are omitted because their presence in the movie is not important.<sup>8</sup>

**b) Plot:**

In both the novel *The Garden of Allah* by Robert Hichens 1904 and its 1936 film adaptation, there are several events from the original novel that were either reduced or omitted. Here are some of examples of the reductions made to the plot in both versions:

**Domini's Past and her Inner Struggles:** In the novel, Domini's troubled past is explored in more depth, providing context to her character and motivations, Domini's past pains are presented at the beginning of the novel: "Then she felt afraid of herself, recognizing partially, and for the first time, how all these years had seen her long indifference. She felt self-conscious too, ignorant of the real meaning of life and as if she had always been and still remained, rather than a complicated woman".<sup>9</sup> Then Hichens adds about Domini's moral absence from her native space by saying: "Presently, still in this perplexity of spirit, she felt England with only her maid as companion."<sup>10</sup>

These quotations explore Domini's inner struggles and her life before she travels to the desert.

However, in the movie, Domini's inner struggles are downplayed, and her back-story is not explored in depth, that is why most of the events of the first chapter which concern Domini's past and all that she lived had been reduced. The film's director streamlines Domini's conflicts, and all what pushed her to travel to the desert. Her emotional journey and personal growth are more extensively explored in the novel. The author speaks deeply about the

experiences of Domini and her adolescence, and everything she has been through before she travels to the desert, while the film simplifies these aspects to maintain a more accessible narrative.

The first scene in the movie is in Le Convent de Ste.Cecile, where Domini stands in front of the statue of the Gods, looking at it and her lips moving as if she is praying. Then Mother Josephine came to her. While they are talking some of the girls in the Covent are looking at her stealthily from the window. They are deeply impressed by her beauty and curious to know everything about her. This is shown in the following image<sup>11</sup>:



The film simplifies Domini's inner struggles and conflicts. Her emotional journey and personal growth are more extensively explored in the novel. Hichens, in his novel, said that she became self-conscious ,ignorant of the true meaning of the existence ,as if she had always been ,and still was rather than a complicated piece of the structure than a woman<sup>12</sup>. As we find in the first part of the novel, the author has speaks deeply about the experiences of Domini and her adolescence, and everything she's spoken through before she travels to the desert, Hichens says that Domini was thirty-two years old, single, and in a singularly isolated

situation, according to some ones .and that her father, Lord Rens, had just died, go away from Domini, who was his only girl, His life was a sad and a tragic one.<sup>13</sup>

The author adds:

Domini was nineteen, and had recently been presented at Court when the scandal of her mother's escapade shook the town, and changed her father in a day from one of the happiest to one of the most cynical, embittered and despairing of men. She, who had been brought up by both her parents as a Catholic, who had from her earliest years been earnestly educated in the beauties of religion, was now exposed to the almost frantic persuasions of a father who, hating all that he had formerly love...<sup>14</sup>

**Simplification of Religious Themes:** The novel explores religious and spirituals themes in greater depth, including faith and religious experiences. Hichens writes,

She felt that some day Allah would show himself in his garden to the wanderer there. She dared to feel that because she dared to believe in the endless mercy of God. And when that moment came she felt, too, that their love—hers and his—for each other would be crowned. Beautiful and intense as it was it still lacked something. It needed to be encircled by the protecting love of a God in whom they both believed in the same way, and to whom they both were equally near.<sup>15</sup>

The film reduced the emphasis on these elements, presenting a more straightforward and accessible narrative that was less focused on religious discussions. This was done to modernize the plot and the central storyline which is Domini's and Boris's love story, and to focus on this beautiful relationship between the protagonists. It is important to note that these reductions were made to streamline the plot, maintain a manageable runtime, and prioritize certain aspects of the story over others. While these changes may alter the depth and complexities of the narrative, they aim to create a more accessible and visually compelling film adaptation.

### c) Setting:

In comparing the reductions made between *The Garden of Allah* 1904 novel and its film adaptation *The Garden of Allah* 1936, we have noticed also some cuts that have occurred in the setting of the novel and movie. At this point, we are going to clarify the locations that were removed and the reason.

Hichens's novel *The Garden of Allah* (1904) provides rich detailed descriptions of the desert landscape, capturing its vastness, beauty, and harshness. Hichens's prose creates vivid imagery of sand, dunes, and starry skies immersing readers in the setting. Hichens writes,

The dark green line showed clearer through the sunshine across the gleaming flats. It was possible now to see slight irregularities in it, as in a blurred dash of paint flung across a canvas by an uncertain hand, but impossible to distinguish palm trees. The air sparkled as if full of a tiny dust of intensely brilliant jewels, and near the ground there seemed to quiver a maze of dancing specks of light. Everywhere there was solitude, yet everywhere there was surely a ceaseless movement of minute and vital things, scarce visible sun fairies eternally at play.<sup>16</sup>

Hichens also said that the desert is as the road, as far as the eye could see, extended in line forward through huge wood and palms, whose feathery tops swayed gently in the light air that blew from the desert where all things rained a flood of blue and gold. A blinding shining made all things happy.<sup>17</sup>

The movie adaptation of *The Garden of Allah* (1936), focuses more on the general portrayal of the Sahara Desert, without capturing the specific nuances of these varied landscapes. The reduction of setting is noticeable in the film particularly when it comes to interior locations. The novel also features some interior settings, such as mosques, hotels and other dwellings, which contribute to the overall sense of place. For instance, in *The Garden of Allah* (1904) novel the author made reference to *The Great Mosque of Sidi-Zerzour*, "This is Sidi-Zerzour. Madame will eat in the garden. She is tired, fainting. She will eat and then she will see the great Mosque of Zerzour."<sup>18</sup> Then he adds, "This is the famous Sidi-Zerzour,

where the great warrior is buried, and where the Arabs make pilgrimages to worship at his tomb.”<sup>19</sup> In contrast, the film streamlines these interior settings, focusing more on the outdoor desert landscapes. These reductions of some places have simplified the narrative and focused on the key setting, rather than depicting a wide array of places. In the movie, the key setting is the Sahara, so the director gave this location more prominence than the others.

*The Garden of Allah* (1936) movie has included technical limitations, which are inherent constraints that filmmakers have to work with. For instance, the director has reduced some characters, settings, and events from the film, because their presence is useless and insignificant in the storytelling, that's why Richard reduced them. Also by these reductions and limitations, the primary romantic story between the protagonists, Boris and Domini, will receive more attention from the director.

Novels and films have different techniques in conveying stories. Novels, in general, have no limitations when it comes to storytelling. In the first place, the writer can tell his story in hundreds to thousands of pages using details descriptions. In contrast, movies usually have technical limitations in conveying story adaptations from novels. The duration of movies typically lasts from one and a half to two hours. In such a quick period of time, the filmmaker is supposed to report a story from a novel that has hundreds to thousands of pages. Producers are obliged to put off some events from the story to overcome the technical limitations of the film. The misplaying of numerous occasions in the adaptation system will certainly not interfere with the loss of the message to be transport from the story.<sup>20</sup>

## **2-Addition:**

The movie adaptation of *The Garden of Allah* (1936) made some additions to the original novel *The Garden of Allah*(1904).This section will deal with the additions made by the film's director.

### **a) Characters:**

**Josephine:** The character of Mother Josephine is not present in the original novel, but is added to the film adaptation of *The Garden of Allah* (1936).Her presence in the film may have been intended to provide a female perspective on religion and faith. As a nun Mother, Josephine has a different experience of faith than the trappist monks who are all men .Her character allows for a more diverse representation of religious beliefs and practices, and adds depth and complexity to the film's exploration of spirituality. Her character demonstrates that women can be just as spiritually enlightened and wise as men, and that their perspectives are valuable and necessary. In addition, Mother Superior Josephine advises Domini to travel to the desert in order to find herself .she says: "Life is full of interesting things to do. Try something to do, perhaps desert for a time, you may found yourself in the face of the infinite, and you will realize that life is larger, fuller than you dream".<sup>21</sup>

**Irena:** This character is played by Tilly Losch, a minor character that appears in the movie. She is a dancer who performs at the hotel where the main characters have stayed. Despite her limited screen time, Irena plays an important role in this film's exploitation of cultural differences and prejudices. As a performer, Irena is initially dismissed by the European guests at the hotel, who see her as an exotic curiosity rather than a talented artist. This dismissed attitude reflects the European colonialist perspective of that time, where non-Western cultures and people were often seen as inferior and strange Her appearance in the

movie highlights the importance of cultural understanding and respect, It also reinforce cultural exchange and interactions even with minor characters.

### **b) Setting:**

The adaptation of *The Garden of Allah* (1936) has known some additions to the story's setting comparing to the original novel. In this part; we will highlight these additions related to the locations.

#### **The Oasis:**

In the film, there is a lush oasis situated near the hotel where Domini and Boris stay. This oasis is not present in the novel as it is in the movie. The director focused on showing it to the audience to provide a visually striking location for some of the scenes in the movie. The oasis holds significant importance within the narrative for several reasons .First, it is a symbol of paradise; *The Garden of Allah* 1936 represents a metaphorical paradise within the harsh desert landscape. It serves as a place of refuge, tranquility. The oasis illustrates the characters yearning for a better life and their search for happiness and spiritual fulfillment. Second, it is a place of contrast and escape. The oasis stands in stark contrast to the surrounding desert, offering respite from the harshness and danger of wilderness. It becomes a place where characters can run away the conflicts, and complexities of their lives. Third, it is a place that reinforces romanticism and love. In *The Garden of Allah* (1936), the oasis serves as a backdrop for a romantic love story. The amazing setting of the oasis increases the climate of passion, desire, and emotional intensity between the main characters .This wonderful place becomes a symbol of their love and the paradise they wish to create together, despite the obstacles they face. Overall, in movie the oasis adds depth and richness to the narrative, and serves as a central element that influences the characters' journey and the overall storytelling.

As the picture below shows:<sup>22</sup>



### **The Desert:**

It is present in both works but the significance of the desert in *The Garden of Allah* (1936) movie is multifaceted; it plays a critical role in the plot and the characters' development. First, it serves as a backdrop to the romantic and spiritual journey of the main characters. As they travel through the desert, they resist their fears and aspirations and it becomes a space for self-discovery. Second, the desert represents a clash between Western civilization and traditional Arab culture. The conflict between the two cultures is highlighted by the characters' attitudes towards the desert. For example, the European characters see it as a dangerous and inhospitable place while the Arab ones view it as a sacred and spiritual space. Third, the desert can raise conflicts and relationships among the main characters. The harsh conditions of the desert would challenge their ability to trust, cooperate, and rely on one another; it becomes a place where their relationships are tested, leading to both conflicts and growth.

For instance, Domini's and Boris's relationship face several challenges while they were in the desert Sahara. Domini must confront her emotions between her new found love Boris and her adherence to societal norms and expectations. Boris, on the other hand, grapples with his

inner conflicts, confused between his love for Domini and his spiritual quest for redemption. Finally, the desert contributes to the setting and atmosphere of the narrative. It symbolizes struggle, creates contrast with the oasis. It is a powerful element that adds depth, visual interest, and thematic significance to the story. As it is cited in the novel:

Many sounds rose from far down beneath the tower, but at first Domini did not hear them. She was only aware of an immense, living silence, a silence flowing beneath, around and above her in dumb, invisible waves. Circles of rest and peace, cool and serene, widened as circles in a pool towards the unseen limits of the satisfied world, limits lost in the hidden regions beyond the misty, purple magic where sky and desert met.<sup>23</sup>

The director gives great importance to the desert by highlighting its enchanting beauty, and that was from the beginning of the film until its end .Although the desert is also mentioned in the novel, there are some additions in the movie. For instance, the first scene in the movie is a picture of the vast desert with its golden sand dunes. As the following picture shows:<sup>24</sup>



The desert in Richard's movie, testifies to the love story of Domini and Boris, as most of the romantic scenes that brought them together were in the desert. As we can see it in the following image<sup>25</sup>:



### c) Plot:

There were multiple additions made to the original novel *The Garden of Allah* 1904 plot's, in addition to characterization and setting. This was done in order to enhance the storytelling and cinematic experience.

While the novel *The Garden of Allah* (1904) explores themes of spirituality and self-discovery, *The Garden of Allah* (1936) movie adaptation adds a significant romantic storyline between the two principal characters, Domini and Boris. In the novel their relationship is mainly platonic and their interactions are focused on their spiritual journeys. However, their relation in the movie becomes romantic, with several scenes showing those falling in love and sharing intimate moments.

This was added to increase the appeal of the movie to audiences who enjoyed romantic drama. The film also has added many new scenes and dialogues that were not present in the novel. For instance, the scene that shows the love of the main characters, Boris said: "Something happen to me .I can breathe again, for the first time I can live in the world .There

is dark places which should be left dark”<sup>26</sup>. “I don’t want to remain you of that Boris, I see you happy you must think only on that”. Domini replied.<sup>27</sup>

The additions that occur in a movie adaptation are commonly made to complement or enhance the story when the producer is unsatisfied with the story created by the writer. The director of the movie *The Garden of Allah* (1936) has made some additions to the characters, setting, and plot of the original novel to better suit the needs of the story as it was being adapted into film. For example, he has combined certain characters such as Mother Josephine to simplify the plot and focus more on the main characters’ lives and love stories.

The producer may have wanted to put their own artistic stamp on the story, and therefore made changes to better suit their creative vision. They have felt that certain aspects of the original novel did not translate well to film, or that certain themes or characters needed to be emphasized or de-emphasized to make the story more compelling. Ultimately, when adapting a novel into a film, changes to the characters, setting and plot are often necessary to create a cohesive and engaging story.

The director in this movie has made additions for a variety of reasons, including creative vision, narrative plot.<sup>28</sup> Richard Boleslawski’s creativity in *The Garden of Allah* movie 1936 is reflected in the film’s visual style, such the designs shown in the movie. He has employed also specific visual techniques such as framing, lighting, and the camera movements. Richard’s movie *The Garden of Allah* movie 1936 has also incorporated sounds, effects and music to enhance the storytelling and create atmosphere that proves the director’s creativity in evoking specific emotions and heighten tension.

### **3-Modification:**

In this part, we will discuss the alterations made to the original novel *The Garden of Allah* 1904 in its film adaptation directed by Richard Boleslawski in 1936. Characters, the setting and the plot will be adjusted .

#### **a)Characters:**

While the movie and the novel have the same principle characters, there are some differences in their portrayal. For instance, in the novel, the main character Boris Androvsky is a Russian artist who is disillusioned with his success and fame. He is more complex than his role in the movie, who struggles his feelings for Domini and his own spiritual beliefs. In the movie Boris is played by the Hollywood actor Charles Boyer. He is portrayed as a suave and sophisticated European gentleman. The movie version of Boris is less complex than the one of the novel. In the film, Boris has primarily focused on his romantic relationship with Domini. Boris said: "Domini forgive me, but I can't go to the city, I love you, I love you." This phrase shows how much Boris loves Domini.

Domini Enfielden the female lead is also portrayed differently in the two versions. In the novel, she is a young Englishwoman who is searching meaning for her life. She embarks on a journey of self-discovery and spiritual awakening in the Sahara desert .Domini is initially portrayed as a disillusioned and skeptical individual. Throughout the novel, Domini undergoes transformation, finding solace and deeper understanding of herself through her encounters with other characters and the desert landscape.

Her journey is philosophical and explored themes of faith, doubt, and the pursuit of truth. In the (1936) film adaptation, she is played by the Hollywood actress Marlene Dietrich. The latter is portrayed as a glamorous and mysterious woman who seeks escape and adventure in the desert .She is depicted as an independent, spirited, capturing the attention of those around

her .In both novel and movie, the character of Domini undergoes a significant personal journey; However, the film adaptation, catering to the medium of cinema and the appeal of its star actors, puts more emphasis on the romantic elements and externalizes the character's transformation through her relationship with Boris Andovesky.

### **b) Setting:**

Both the novel *The Garden of Allah* 1904 and its film adaptation *The Garden of Allah* 1936 depict the setting as an essential and captivating element of the story ,however, there are some modifications in the setting and how each place is portrayed .

In the novel, the setting is primarily focused on the Sahara in North African, particularly in Algeria, which was a French colony at that time. Robert Hichens vividly describes the vast landscape of the desert, capturing its beauty and harshness.Hichens delves into intricate description of the desert's colors and even changing moods, creating a vivid sense of place and atmosphere. The movie adaptation, however, is screened in Buttercup, California and Yuma Arizona. The desert scenes were shot in the Mojave Desert; the movie does aim to capture the charmer of the desert, through the use of set design and costumes. Both the novel and the movie take place primarily in the Sahara Desert, but there are some differences and changes in how the setting is portrayed. In the novel, the desert is described in details. The novel emphasizes the harshness and the beauty of the desert, as well as its spiritual significance. As it is described in the passage below:

She looked down into the village and could see its extent, precisely how it was placed in the Sahara, in what relation exactly it stood to the mountain ranges, to the palm groves and the arid, sunburnt tracts, where its life centered and where it tailed away into suburban edges not unlike the ragged edges of worn garments, where it was idle and frivolous, where busy and sedulous. She realized for the first time that there were two distinct layers of life in Beni-Mora—the life of the streets, courts, gardens and market-place, and above it the life of the roofs.<sup>29</sup>

In the movie, however, the desert is still an important setting, but is portrayed more as a romantic backdrop for the main characters. The film showcases the exotic beauty of the Mojave Desert .In both the novel and the film, the setting plays an important role in shaping the characters' experiences and journeys. While the locations differ between the two versions, the setting remains an integral part of the story, influencing the characters' emotions, relationships, and personal growth. As it is shown in the image below<sup>30</sup>:



### **c)Plot:**

The principal plot of both the novel and the movie is the same: Boris Androvsky meets and falls in love with Domini Enfielden in the Desert. There are some differences in how the story is told and the way the events occur. In the novel, the story is told from the perspectives of several characters, including Boris, Domini, Count Anteoni, Batouch, Mother Superior Josephine and Irena. The novel includes more philosophical and spiritual themes too such as search for meaning in life and the relationship between humans and the natural world.

The movie, on the other hand, focuses more on the romance between Boris and Domini and the exotic setting of the desert Sahara. By focusing on the romance between the two main

characters, the director has aimed to attract a larger audience and ensure the film's success. Also, Marlene Dietrich, who portrayed Domini Enfielden, and Charles Boyer who played Boris Androvesky, were both popular actors at the time. By emphasizing their romantic relationship, the director has capitalized on their star power and chemistry that have enhanced the film's appeal. In addition, by emphasizing the romance, the director has taken advantage of the opportunity to show the beautiful cinematography, lush, landscape, and romantic scenes. Ultimately, the decision to concentrate more on the main character's love story, has allowed the director to cater the preferences of the audience, and to highlight the star power of the leading actors.

The ending of *The Garden of Allah* 1904 novel and movie differ from each other. The director has changed the end of the film which is not the same with the end of the story in the novel. In the novel, the main characters do not end up together romantically, while in the movie they do. The story in the novel, ended with Domini's scene after six years, in Count Anteonni's garden, which is no longer his with her son Boris playing around. The author writes:

Sometimes, when twilight is falling over the Sahara, his mother calls him to her,  
to the white wall where she is sitting beneath a jamelon tree.  
Listen, Boris! she whispers.  
The little boy climbs up on her knee, leans his face against her breast and obeys.  
An Arab is passing below on the desert track, singing to himself as he goes towards  
his home in the oasis: *No one but God and I knows what is in my heart.*<sup>31</sup>

In the movie, it has ended at the gates of the monastery, where Boris and Domini embrace for the last time. As it is shown below :<sup>32</sup>



This difference in the endings of *The Garden of Allah* (1904) novel and its film adaptation *The Garden of Allah* (1936) can be attributed to various factors. First, it may be related to visual Medium: the director may have chosen to craft a visual stunning final scene that would have a lasting impression on the audience. Second, films often have limited runtime compared to the novels, so the endings may have been modified to fit within the time limitations of a feature film, ensuring that the key narrative elements are resolved satisfactorily. Third, producers think about market trends, audience preferences, and commercial viability when adopting novels. So, in the ending of *The Garden of Allah* (1936), the director may have been altered to make it more commercially appealing or to align with the tastes of the audience.

Finally, the director of *The Garden of Allah* (1936) movie may have wanted to bring his own artistic interpretation on the source material. He may have chosen to emphasize certain aspects of the story that resonated with them personally, leading to changes in the ending of the movie. It is important to note that changes in the endings allow each version of *The Garden of Allah* to stand as its own distinct work, with its own artistic choices and intentions.<sup>33</sup>

## End Notes

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- <sup>1</sup>(Hichens, R)1904. The Garden of Allah. GROSSET & DUNLAP Publishers ,New York.p7
- <sup>2</sup> (Hichens, R.) 1904. The Garden of Allah. GROSSET & DUNLAP Publishers ,New York.p9
- <sup>3</sup>Ibid.
- <sup>4</sup>(Hichens, R) 1904. The Garden of Allah. GROSSET & DUNLAP Publishers ,New York.p120
- <sup>5</sup>(Hichens, R) 1904. The Garden of Allah. GROSSET & DUNLAP Publishers ,New York.p266
- <sup>6</sup>( Hichens, R) 1904. The Garden of Allah. GROSSET & DUNLAP Publishers ,New York.p292
- <sup>7</sup>(Larasinta ) 2014An Ecranisation*Study of a Novel and a Walk to Remember and its Film adaptation,A journal* .Gunadarma University
- <sup>8</sup>Ibid
- <sup>10</sup>(Hichens, R)1904. The garden of Allah. GROSSET & DUNLAP Publishers ,New York.p5
- <sup>11</sup>Boleslawski, R. (Director), & Selznick, D. O. (Producer). (1936). The Garden of Allah.2:19min
- <sup>12</sup>(Hichens, R.) 1904. The Garden of Allah. GROSSET & DUNLAP Publishers ,New York.p10
- <sup>13</sup>( Hichens, R) 1904. The Garden of Allah. GROSSET & DUNLAP Publishers ,New York.p08
- <sup>14</sup>(Hichens, R.) 1904. The Garden of Allah. GROSSET & DUNLAP Publishers ,New York.p09
- <sup>15</sup>( Hichens, R.)1904. The Garden of Allah. GROSSET & DUNLAP Publishers ,New York.p277
- <sup>16</sup>(Hichens, R). 1904. The Garden of Allah. GROSSET & DUNLAP Publishers ,New York.p251
- <sup>17</sup>Hichens, R)1904. The Garden of Allah. GROSSET & DUNLAP Publishers ,New York.p44
- <sup>18</sup>(Hichens, R )1904. The Garden of Allah. GROSSET & DUNLAP Publishers ,New York.p136
- <sup>19</sup>Ibid.

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<sup>20</sup>(Larasinta ),2014An Ecranisation*Study of a Novel and a Walk to Remember and its Film adaptation,A journal* .Gunadarma University

<sup>21</sup>(Boleslawski, R)1936 (Director), & Selznick, D. O. (Producer). The Garden of Allah.  
04:37min

<sup>22</sup>(Boleslawski, R)1936 (Director),& Selznick, D. O. (Producer). The Garden of Allah.  
37:21min

<sup>23</sup>(Hichens, R)1904. The Garden of Allah. GROSSET & DUNLAP Publishers ,New York.p70

<sup>24</sup>(Boleslawski, R)1936 Director, & Selznick, D. O. (Producer). The Garden of Allah.  
00.28min

<sup>25</sup>(Boleslawski, R)1936 (Director), & Selznick, D. O. (Producer). The Garden of Allah.  
48:41min

<sup>26</sup>Boleslawski, R.1936 (Director), & Selznick, D. O. (Producer). The Garden of Allah.  
34:41min

<sup>27</sup>Boleslawski, R. (Director), & Selznick, D. O. (Producer). The Garden of Allah. 35:05min

<sup>28</sup>Larasinta ,2014)An Ecranisation*Study of a Novel and a Walk to Remember and its Film adaptation,A journal* .Gunadarma University

<sup>29</sup> Hichens, R. (1904). The Garden of Allah. GROSSET & DUNLAP Publishers ,New York.p71

<sup>30</sup>Boleslawski, R. (Director), & Selznick, D. O. (Producer). (1936). The Garden of Allah.  
0:25min

<sup>31</sup> Hichens, R. (1904). The Garden of Allah. GROSSET & DUNLAP Publishers ,New York.p382-383

<sup>32</sup>Boleslawski, R. (Director), & Selznick, D. O. (Producer). (1936). The Garden of Allah.  
1:15:16

<sup>33</sup> (Eneste ,Pamusuk.1991)Novel Dan Film,flores:Nusa Indah.

## **Chapter Two: Escapism from Page to Screen in Robert Hichens Novel's *The Garden of Allah* (1904) and Richard Boleslawski's Movie *The Garden of Allah* (1936)**

Escapism serves as a prominent theme in both Robert Hichens' novel *The Garden of Allah* published in 1904 and Richard Boleslawski's *The Garden of Allah* film adaptation released in 1936. Through different mediums, Hichens and Boleslawski explore the concept of escapism as a means for individuals to transcend the mundane realities of their lives. Both the novel and the film transport audiences to the enchanting landscapes of Algeria, where characters seek refuge, self-discovery, and a release from the burdens of their existence. By examining the allure and consequences of escapism, Hichens' literary work and Boleslawski's cinematic adaptation offer profound insights into the human longing for liberation and the complexities that arise when pursuing it.

### **1- Female Escapism in the Novel:**

In his novel *The Garden of Allah* (1904), Robert Hichens tackles the idea of escape in the context of a spiritual retreat in the Sahara Desert. The novel features several female characters who seek refuge and solace in the Garden of Allah. This chapter part tries to deal with female escapism by focusing on the female protagonist Domini'. It aims to establish a connection between Domini , Suzanne and Irena characters and the theme of female escapism while examining how the author skillfully incorporates this concept through their experiences ,before doing so we will take a closer look at these characters.

#### **a. Domini Enfilden:**

The central female character of the novel, Domini Enfilden, is depicted as a woman of exceptional beauty and grace. Her appearance captivates those around her and serves as a reflection of her inner strength and allure. She is described as having a striking presence,

Domini is characterized by her tall stature and an elegant, strong, and masculine temperament and interests, as Robert Hichens described her in his novel:

Her forehead was broad and low. Her eyebrows were long and level, thicker than most women's. The shape of her face was oval, with a straight, short nose, a short, but rather prominent and round chin, and a very expressive mouth, not very small, slightly depressed at the corners, with perfect teeth, and red lips that were unusually flexible. Her figure was remarkably athletic, with shoulders that were broad in a woman, and a naturally small waist. <sup>1</sup>

This extract shows that Domini's thoughts and inner feelings predominate throughout the book. She not only dominates all the characters who come in contact with her, but she is also devoted to her faith. As a devout Catholic, Domini is seeking peace after many years enduring the apostasy of her late father.

In the novel, Domini is considered as a figure of female escapism because she wants to escape from the winters and the fogs of England where she lives. She wants to explore unknown lands and to run away from the noise of the city and its too civilized world. She seeks a peaceful, simple life, and looks for wide horizons, great winds, and a bright great sun. Domini is glad that she has come to Beni-Mora. As she stands in the sun, she is conscious that she needs the re-creation and that she might find there. In the Desert, she feels that light does warm the body, but it also illuminates the dark places of her soul. The sound of the wind is as the sound of the clashing cymbals of liberty. In the solitude of the Sahara Desert, she might find herself, and become happy.<sup>2</sup>

Hichens writes about her that she desired independence, an expansive horizon, powerful winds, powerful sunlight, harsh voids, blazing, shimmering brightness, hot, alluring moons, and blooming, purple evenings in Africa. She craved the fires of the nomads and the harsh barks of the Kabyle dogs. She desired the tom-tom boom, cymbal rush, castanet rattling of the black dancers, and fluttering, painted dancer figures. She desired more than she was able to articulate

and comprehend. As she breathed in this odd and opulent environment, she could feel the need gnawing at her heart.<sup>3</sup>

As Robert Hichens cited it in the novel, Domini wants to forget her prison, and everything that she has ever known before Beni-Mora, she wants to be free. Her actual life, the one that both men and women dream about as a prisoner dreams of release, would start tomorrow. She was thankful to God that her former years had been devoid of joy and that she had been deprived of the delights of youth. She thanked God that she had reached adulthood without having experienced love. She believed that falling in love while one was young was nearly sad, disastrous, and an experience that the soul was not prepared for and so was unable to fully comprehend its great significance.<sup>4</sup>

Domini Enfilden, the central female protagonist, exemplifies this desire for escape. Despite her privileged background, Domini feels stifled by the oppressive nature of her lifestyle. The confines of her societal position weigh heavily upon her, leaving her searching for solace and freedom. It is in the mystical sanctuary of the Garden of Allah (desert) that Domini seeks respite, a place where she can break free from the shackles of conventionality and delve into her spiritual beliefs. Immersed in the tranquil beauty of nature, Domini finds an avenue to explore her own identity and seek a deeper understanding of herself. The author described it in the following quotation :

And all her dull perplexities, all her bitterness of ennui, all her questionings and doubts, were swept away on the keen desert wind into the endless plains. She had come from her last confession asking herself, "What am I?" She had felt infinitely small confronted with the pettiness of modern, civilized life in a narrow, crowded world. Now she did not torture herself with any questions, for she knew that something large, something capable, something perhaps even noble, rose up within her to greet all this nobility, all this mighty frankness and fierce, undressed sincerity of nature. This desert and this sun would be her comrades, and she was not afraid of them.<sup>5</sup>

In this fascinating quote ,Domini's internal conflicts and unhappiness are banished by the desert's infinity. She experiences courage and self-discovery as a result of the contrast between

the petty nature of contemporary civilization and the noble and true nature of the desert. Instilling a spirit of fearlessness that frees her from social restraints and gives her a sudden sense of belonging. The desert and the sun become her friends.

#### **b. Suzanne Charpot:**

Suzanne Charpot is indeed a significant female character in the novel. She is a young French girl who plays an important role in the story. Suzanne is a fellow traveler who becomes acquainted with Domini Enfielden during their time in the desert. She forms a bond with Domini and serves as a friend and confidante for her throughout the novel. Suzanne's presence and interactions contribute to the overall development of the story and the relationships between the characters.

Suzanne is depicted as a character who seeks escapism from her mundane and restrictive life. She represents a contrast to conventional and conservative ideals of society. Suzanne's desire for freedom and adventure leads her to join Domini Enfielden in her journey to the Sahara Desert. She embraces the exotic and unfamiliar environment of the desert, finding peace in its vastness and solitude. Suzanne's escapism is evident in her fascination with the desert's mystique and her willingness to break away from societal norms. As Robert Hichens illustrates it :

The night was marvelously dry and warm. The thickly growing trees in the garden scarcely moved. It was very still and very dark. Suzanne, standing at her window, looked like a shadow in her black dress. Her attitude was romantic. Perhaps the subtle influence of this Sahara village was beginning to steal even over her obdurate spirit.<sup>6</sup>

This moving quotation conveys tranquility and serenity because of the atmospheric environment of a dry, and warm night. The scene is enhanced by Suzanne's presence, which is depicted as a shadow in her black dress. The reference to the Sahara village refers to its transforming ability, implying that it can eventually reduce Suzanne's obstinacy and evoke a romantic sensibility in her.

**c. Irena:**

Irena is a minor character who plays a supporting role for the main protagonist, Domini Enfilden. She is depicted as a Kabyle dancer who is part of the social scene in Biskra. She represents a more liberated and carefree lifestyle comparing to Domini, who comes from a conservative English background. Throughout the novel, she acts as a source of fascination for Domini who is intrigued by her manner of living and the freedom she embodies. Irena represents a different perspective on love, relationships, and societal norms. Her presence challenges Domini's own beliefs and allows her to question her own choices and desires as it is stated in the following quotation :

Domini looked at her again more carefully, and saw that Batouch spoke the truth. Irena was unusually tall, but her excessive narrowness, her tiny bones, and the delicate way in which she held herself deceived the eye and gave her a little appearance.

“So she is; but who could be afraid of her? Why, I could pick her up and throw her over that moon of yours.”

“Madame is strong. Madame is like the lioness. But Irena is the most terrible girl in all Beni-Mora if she loves or if she is angry, the most terrible in all the Sahara.”

Domini laughed.<sup>7</sup>

It is worth noting that the portrayal of women in the novel is heavily influenced by the author's perspective as a man writing in the early 20th century when the societal attitudes towards women were often shaped by traditional gender roles and expectations. The author, Robert Hichens, being a man writing in that era, might have incorporated those societal norms and biases into his portrayal of female characters. Within the novel, the female characters are portrayed as individuals who yearn for liberation from the confining social norms and expectations prevalent in their time and society. The Literature of that era often reflected these attitudes and portraying women in ways that reinforced gender stereotypes by limiting their agencies . Female characters were frequently depicted as either virtuous, innocent damsels in need of protection or as seductive and exotic objects of desire. As Hichens mention it in the book:

Again she felt desperately that she did not know herself, and this lack of the most essential of all knowledge reduced her for a moment to a bitterness of despair that seemed worse than the bitterness of death. The vastness of the desert appalled her. The red moon held within its circle all the blood of the martyrs, of life, of ideals. She shivered in the saddle. Her nature seemed to shrink and quiver, and a cry for protection rose within her, the cry of the woman who cannot face life alone, who must find a protector, and who must cling to a strong arm, who needs man as the world needs God.<sup>8</sup>

However, it is important to recognize that the escapism depicted in the novel is often fleeting and unable to provide a lasting solution to the characters' dilemmas. Although the desert offers a momentary respite from the trials of ordinary existence, the characters eventually find themselves compelled to face the harsh realities of the outside world. The temporary nature of their escape highlights the inherent limitations of seeking quietude solely through withdrawal from society.

Finally, it is crucial to acknowledge that the portrayal of female characters in the novel is not without its problematic aspects. Their relationships with men are presented within the confines of societal norms and expectations, which may limit their agency and personal growth. The depiction of these relationships may reinforce traditional gender roles and reinforce the notion that women's fulfillment primarily lies in their interactions with men, rather than in their individual aspirations and self-determination.

## **2- Female Escapism in Boleslawski's Movie :**

Richard Boleslawski's movie adaptation 1936 of Robert Hichens's novel *The Garden of Allah* (1904), has starred Marlene Dietrich as Domini Enfielden. It explores theme of escapism in the context of the Sahara Desert. In the movie, various female characters look to the desert for safety and comfort. By concentrating on the female protagonist Domini, this chapter's part attempts to address female escapism. It attempts to create a link between Domini, Mother Josephine, and Irena characters and the idea of female escapism while evaluating how the

author skillfully weaves this notion via their experiences. Before doing so, we will take a deeper look at these characters.

**a. Domini Enfielden:**

Domini Enfielden is a wealthy English woman returns to the convent where she was reared to seek the counsel of Mother Superior Josephine for her loneliness following the death of her father. She is counselled to seek spiritual renewal in the saharan desert. In the film, Domini Enfielden is depicted as a disillusioned woman who seeks escape from her privileged but empty life in Europe. She travels to the Sahara Desert and finds serenity in the Garden of Allah, where she discovers her spirituality and falls in love with Boris Androvsky, a Russian artist who has also sought refuge in the desert.

The film's title, which features a superb soundtrack highlight, draws us into the movie with its Sahara and Love themes at 00:01 minute. The Selznick International Picture logo is displayed beside a Berber man kneeling for evening prayer amid a cloudscape glowing with sunset auras and breath-taking landscape. In the opening titles at 0:16 over sunset-lit desert panoramas, the vast and lonely terrain of the Sahara frequently represents a departure from society expectations and limitations. The Domini character's Character wants to be seeking relief from her uninteresting lifestyles, terrible settings, and self-imposed restrictions as she venture towards the Sahara. The vastness of the desert can represent a blank canvas upon which individuals can redefine themselves or escape the confines of their previous existence.<sup>9</sup>

Domini is attracted by the monks' devotion to a life of prayer and devotion, which embodies the idea of escapism, when she visits the Trappist monastery in the desert. She finds a way to escape the difficulties and distractions of the outer world in their devotion to spirituality and their rejection of earthly pursuits. Domini's interactions with the monks, especially with Brother Antoine played by Basil Rathbone, raise issues of faith, meaning, and

the tension between love and religious piety. These interactions also further explore the allure of escapism as Domini muses over taking a different route and looks for comfort and purpose in the monastery's quiet sanctuary.

While Domini is deeply intrigued by the monastery and its inhabitants, her relationship with religion is portrayed as a struggle. She is torn between her desire for a life of freedom, far from social codes, in order to find herself and her admiration for the spiritual devotion she witnesses in the monastery, as it is shown in the movie at 3:41 she asked to Mother Josephine: “perhaps the only time I ever was happy, was here”.<sup>10</sup>

Similarly to the novel, Domini, in particular, is screened as trying to be free from her wealthy and privileged lifestyle and to find a deeper meaning in life. The Garden of Allah, which is defined as the Sahara desert, provides a space where she can explore her inner self and find peace. However, as in the novel, the film's portrayal of female escapism is not without its problematic elements. Domini's agency is often limited by the male characters in the film, particularly Boris, who is depicted as possessing a greater degree of power and control over their relationship. In 26:53min the movie featured the "Oasis of Azur." Music intertwined with the scenes, portraying Boris's arrival. As he joined her, it became clear that she was pleased to see him.<sup>11</sup>

The desert environment, with its silence, grandeur, and unspoiled beauty, acts as a catalyst for Domini's spiritual awakening. The Sahara's awe-inspiring landscapes and the presence of the Trappist monastery within it lead Domini to contemplate deeper existential questions and explore her relationship with God and witness a sort of religious escapism. Domini develops a profound connection with the natural elements of the Sahara. She becomes attuned to the desert's rhythms, its stark beauty, and its raw power. This connection with nature serves as a metaphorical bridge to her own inner world and emotions, allowing her to experience

a sense of freedom, wonder, and connection with something greater than herself. Overall, the relationship between Domini and the Sahara in *The Garden of Allah* (1939) movie is one of profound connection, self-discovery, and spiritual exploration.

The desert serves as a transformative landscape that enables Domini to confront her inner conflicts, question her beliefs, and ultimately find a new sense for life and most of all to be free. She says : “The sand is so warm, so alive.”<sup>12</sup>. She wants to say by "the sand is so warm" alludes to how strikingly comfortable and pleasant the sand's temperature is. It suggests that the heat of the sun has permeated the sand grains, heating them up and giving them a warm sensation when touched or trod on. According to this description, the sand is cozy and welcoming, maybe luring individuals to unwind or enjoy its warmth. "So alive" means that the sand has characteristics that make it feel lively or energetic. It could mean that the sand appears to be moving, whether owing to shifting dunes or wind-driven minuscule particle movement. Alternately, it may be used to describe the existence of different living things that live in the sand, such tiny critters like insects or crustaceans. This phrase gives the description a sense of vibrancy and activity and implies that the sand is a living ecosystem rather than just a static ingredient.

#### **b. Mother Superior Josephine:**

Mother Superior Josephine is another female character in the movie the role is played by the actress Lucile Watson . She has encouraged Domini to travel to the Sahara and rediscover herself . She is like guide and mother for Domini .She supports her to live and forget his bitter past in order to escape ,find freedom and love. Hichens says :

Mother Superior Josephine : Why not leave the cities you have found so lonely, and try something different - perhaps, the desert for a time.

Domini Enfielden : The desert, mother? What will I find there?

Mother Superior Josephine : Perhaps, in the solitude, you may find yourself! In the face of the infinite, your grief will vanish, and you will realize that life is larger and fuller than you dream.<sup>13</sup>

**c. Irena:**

Irena her role is played by the actress Tilly Losch. A stunning spectacle occurred within the movie's world at exactly minute 18:30 when an entrancing image appeared before the audience's eyes. This amazing entity, decorated with exquisite grace and endowed with an incomparable attraction, held the extraordinary power to capture and captivate the hearts of innumerable admirers, especially those of the masculine type who found themselves inexorably pulled to her alluring beauty. Beyond her alluring appearance, she exuded a spirit that personified liberation; she was a real symbol of the emancipated woman. Despite the powerful effect she had on the audience, it is remarkable that her role, although being less prominent, smoothly woven itself into the plot of the movie, leaving a lasting impression on everyone who saw her on screen.<sup>14</sup>

**3- Male Escapism in Robert Hichens's Novel:**

Robert Hichens tackles the notion of escape in *The Garden of Allah* (1904), a novel about a spiritual retreat in the Sahara Desert. Several male characters in the novel look for safety and comfort. By concentrating on the male lead character Boris Androvsky, this chapter's part attempts to address male escapism and it seeks to create a link between Boris, Count Anteoni, and Batouch characters and the idea of male escapism while evaluating how the author deftly weaves this notion via their experiences. But, let's take a deeper look at these characters. *The Garden of Allah* (1904) follows the story of Boris Androvsky who falls in love with Domini Enfilden. He is a Russian monk who has renounced his faith and taken up a new life in the desert. While the novel primarily focuses on Domini and Boris's relationship, it also explores themes of male escapism through the character of Androvsky.

**a. Boris Androvsky:**

Boris Androvsky grapples with his own internal struggles and seeks peace and serenity in the remote desert setting of *The Garden of Allah* (1904) . The monastery provides him with a refuge where he can detach himself from the distractions and temptations of the world. He is portrayed as a man who has turned his back to society and all its trappings in order to live a simpler, more contemplative life in the desert. He has abandoned his family, his wealth, and his position in Russian society, all in the pursuit of a higher spiritual calling. In doing so, he has escaped the constraints of his former life and found a new sense of freedom and purpose. Boris says:

My father had originally come to Africa for his health, which needed a warm climate. He had some money and bought large tracts of land suitable for vineyards. Indeed, he sunk nearly his whole fortune in land. I told you, Domini, that the vines were devoured by the phylloxera. Most of the money was lost. When my father died we were left very poor. We lived quietly in a little village—I told you its name, I told you that part of my life, all I dared tell, Domini—but now—why did I enter the monastery? I was very young when I became a novice, just seventeen. [...] And yet—how am I to tell you? Even now I feel that then I had the vocation, that I was fitted to enter the monastery, that I ought to have made a faithful and devoted monk. My mother wished the life for me, but it was not only that. I wished it for myself then.<sup>15</sup>

However, in his ordinariness, Androvsky, like countless others, nurtures a profound desire for companionship and intimacy. This is where Domini comes in. She represents a new kind of escape for him, one that is not only spiritual but also physical and emotional. Through his relationship with her, he becomes able to experience a different kind of freedom, one that is not just about escaping society but also about embracing life in all its complexity. Hichens indicated it:

Androvsky stopped, stood still with his back turned towards her. And Larbi, hidden and far off, showered out his little notes of African love, of love in the desert where the sun is everlasting, and the passion of man is hot as the sun, where Liberty reigns, lifting her cymbals that are as spheres of fire, and the footsteps of Freedom are heard upon the sand, treading towards the south.<sup>16</sup>

Androvsky's quiet and stop in this poignant quotation, suggest a time of reflection or internal turmoil. An alluring element of the image is added by the distant sound of Larbi's

African love notes, which evokes the fervor and intensity of love in the desert. The words "liberty" and "freedom" allude to a more profound subject of emancipation and the attractiveness of the desert, as a location where one may discover both emotional and spiritual freedom.

**b. Count Anteoni:**

Count Anteoni is another male character who embodies the theme of escapism in *The Garden of Allah* (1904). He is portrayed as an Italian soldier who embodies a sense of adventure, restlessness, and a desire for exploration. He represents the pursuit of excitement and the allure of the unknown. Count Anteoni is depicted as someone who is attracted by the exotic landscape of Algeria and who seeks to engage in daring escapades. In the novel, Count Anteoni's character serves as a contrast to the more contemplative and spiritual nature of Boris Androvsky, the Russian monk. While Boris seeks comfort and spiritual enlightenment in the desert, Count Anteoni is driven by a thirst for adventure and the thrill of discovering new experiences.

Count Anteoni's presence in the novel adds an element of adventure and unpredictability. He embodies the impulse to break free from societal constraints and seek fulfillment through exploration and living life on his own terms. This character represents a different form of escapism compared to other characters in the novel by emphasizing the pursuit of excitement and the desire to escape the ordinary. He seeks adventure, excitement, and a break from his aristocratic lifestyle. Count Anteoni represents the romanticized image of a traveler seeking a temporary escape from societal norms. Hichens writes:

All along the edge of the garden, from the villa to the boundary of Count Anteoni's domain, ran a straight high wall made of earth bricks hardened by the sun and topped by a coping of palm wood painted white. This wall was some eight feet high on the side next to the desert, but the garden was raised in such a way that the inner side was merely a low parapet running along the sand path. In this parapet were cut small seats, like window-seats, in which one could rest and look full upon the desert as

from a little cliff. Domini sat down on one of them, and the Count stood by her, resting one foot on the top of the wall and leaning his right arm on his knee.<sup>17</sup>

The physical border of the garden, which is shown in this descriptive quotation as an earth brick wall with a painted palm wood coping on top, is rendered vividly. A special vantage point for seeing the desert's immensity is provided by the wall's contrasted heights, which are taller on the desert side and lower on the garden side. Domini's decision to take a seat on one of the little benches in the parapet demonstrates her desire to fully appreciate the grandeur of the desert, while Count Anteonio's relaxed attitude conveys a sense of comfort and ease in this alluring situation.

### **c. Batouch:**

Batouch is another significant character in *The Garden of Allah* (1904). He is a native guide and servant who accompanies Domini and Boris on their journey through the Sahara Desert. Batouch plays a crucial role in the story, providing support and insight into the desert environment. His interactions with the main characters contribute to the overall narrative and add depth to the cultural and geographical aspects of the novel.

Batouch is as a Muslim guide, Batouch operates within the confines of his traditional role and religious beliefs; however, when he ventures into the desert with Domini, he temporarily escapes the societal norms and expectations that govern his daily life. In the vastness of the desert, Batouch is free from the constraints of his community and experienced a different way of living, which connected more with nature. The desert serves as a spiritual and mystical space for Batouch. His interactions with the natural world and his deep knowledge of the desert enable him to find consolation and a sense of belonging in the Sahara. In these moments, he escapes the realities of his daily life and immerses himself in the spiritual essence of the landscape. Batouch has witnessed a set of personal growth and transformation. Through his interactions with Domini and exposure to different perspectives. He expands his understanding of the world and his place within it. This journey of self-discovery allows him to escape the limitations of his previous worldview and embrace new life existing possibilities.

Batouch's escapism is not as central to the narrative as that of other characters in the novel, but his experiences in the desert and his interactions with Domini contribute to his personal escapism and growth. Batouch has swept forward to reassure the priest as it is cited in this following excerpt :

She remembered what Batouch had said. There was pluck in this man, pluck that surged up in the blundering awkwardness, the hesitation, the incompetence and rudeness of him like a black rock out of the sea. She did not answer. They rode on, always slowly. His horse, having had its will, and having known his strength at the end of his incompetence, went quietly, though always with that feathery, light, tripping action peculiar to purebred Arabs, an action that suggests the treading of a spring board rather than of the solid earth. And Androvsky seemed a little more at home on it, although he sat awkwardly on the chair-like saddle, and grasped the rein too much as the drowning man seizes the straw.<sup>18</sup>

Overall, the novel portrays male escapism as a complex and multifaceted phenomenon, it is an escape that can take many different forms depending on the individual. Androvsky's journey is just one example of this, and the novel suggests that there are many other ways in which men might seek to escape the pressures of society and find a sense of fulfillment and purpose in their lives.

#### **4- Male Escapism in Boleslawski's Movie:**

Robert Hichens's novel *The Garden of Allah* (1904), was adapted into a film by Richard Boleslawski in 1936, starring Charles Boyer as Boris Androvsky. In the backdrop of the Sahara Desert, it examines the issue of escape. Throughout the film, several male characters turn to the desert for seeking tranquility and protection. This chapter's part tries to establish a connection between the characters of Boris , Count Anteoni, and Father Roubieran and the concept of male escapism while analyzing how the author skillfully weaves this concept through their experiences. We shall examine these personalities in more detail before moving on, also it aims to discuss masculine escapism by focusing on the male protagonist Boris

##### **a. Boris Androvsky:**

In the movie, Charles Boyer's character acts the role of Boris Androvsky is a disillusioned monk who leaves his monastery and travels to North Africa in search of enlightenment. There, he meets Marlene Dietrich's who portrayed the role of Domini Enfilden. She is a wealthy and beautiful woman who is also seeking escape from her privileged but empty life.

Boris is presented as a Russian monk who seeks spiritual quietude and contemplation in the Sahara Desert. He is depicted as a mysterious and enigmatic figure, drawing the attention and affection of the main female character, Domini Enfilden (played by Marlene Dietrich). Charles Boyer's portrayal of Boris Androvsky in the 1936 film emphasizes his romantic and spiritual nature. Boris is shown as a calm and introspective character, offering guidance and support to Domini as she embarks on her personal journey of self-discovery and escape.

While adaptations may introduce some changes or alterations to the characters and storyline, the interpretation of Boris Androvsky in the 1936 film maintains the core essence of the character's introspection, spiritual depth, and his role as a romantic interest for Domini. Boris can be seen as an example of male escapism in the sense that he is trying to escape from the constraints of his monastic life looking for new objectives. Boris's journey can be interpreted as a search for a new sense of masculinity and identity outside of the rules of the monastery. The desert landscape and its challenges, such as sandstorms and dangerous animals, provide a backdrop for Boris's self-discovery and transformation. As it is shown in the movie: “Desert Ride offers a romantic score highlight. We see Domini and Boris riding across the desert dunes propelled by a spirited, galloping rendering of the Sahara Theme. As they reach the oasis and dismount, at long last Boris opens up to a happy and receptive Domini.”<sup>19</sup>

Boris said that “There are things in human life that are best forgotten. There are dark places which should be left dark.”<sup>20</sup> This expression perfectly expresses the notion that some facets

of a person's past or experiences are better ignored or forgotten. To safeguard one's well-being or inner peace, the existence of discomfoting and distressing experiences or memories that are more wisely left unexamined. It implies that selective forgetting may be a strategy for preserving oneself, enabling people to move on and put their attention on more fulfilling areas of their life.

Furthermore, the film also reinforces certain gender stereotypes, particularly in its depiction of the relationship between Domini and Boris. Boris is portrayed as the more dominant and forceful of the two, while Domini is often shown as more passive and submissive, reveals Boris's attitude with his arm around Domini. He releases her, she thanks him for helping her, and departs. She turns back, their eyes lock, and we can see a mutual attraction. She tells him she does not need his escort, but he insists, and she accepts as they continue their walk. <sup>21</sup>

**b. Count Anteoni:**

Basil Rathbone has interpreted Count Ferdinand Anteoni in the movie, a British actor who takes on the role of Count Anteoni, an Italian soldier in the film. Rathbone's portrayal show cases Anteoni's adventurous nature and provides a contrasting element to the more introspective characters. He infuses the character with charisma and charm, and adds excitement and unpredictability to the story, Count Anteoni said :

“A man who fears to acknowledge his god, is unwise to set foot in the desert. The Arabs have a saying, Madame, the desert is the Garden of Allah.”<sup>22</sup>

Count Anteoni reveals that it is important to be aware of one's faith and beliefs before entering the desert. It implies that the desert has a special relationship with God, as seen by Arab culture's use of the term "Garden of Allah." The remark emphasizes that the desert may be a place of spiritual awakening and enlightenment by highlighting the significance of acknowledging and honoring one's higher power. It emphasizes the concept that someone

without faith or who denies their deity could not completely understand the life-changing experiences and transforming potential the desert has to offer.

The author gives the story a layer of cultural and religious depth by inserting this proverb. It highlights the Count's position on religion and the value of acknowledging and honouring one's God. The desert represents the trial by fire of one's convictions as well as the idea that individuals who abandon their religion can end themselves alone and unsupported.

**c. Father Roubier:**

Aubrey Smith is interpreted by Father Roubier, an English character actor, plays the role of a wise and experienced priest. Smith's performance brings a sense of wisdom and stability to the film, providing guidance and moral support to the characters in their spiritual journeys. Smith's interpretation reflects the subject of escapism by serving as both a refuge from life's realities and a source of knowledge and stability. Smith's portrayal provides the people a way out of their problems as they set off on their spiritual journeys, offering them direction and moral support. His personality turns becomes a source of consolation, enabling the heroes to briefly put aside their material worries and seek refuge in spirituality. Father Roubier advising Boris he said :“Take care! You've come to a land of fire. And I think you are made on fire”<sup>23</sup>

Father Roubier recognizes the recipient's fiery personality of Boris and he gives him advices and warning him.

**d. Batouch**

Batouch is interpreted by Joseph Schildkraut . He is featured as a native interpreter and guide in the desert in the 1936 film rendition of *The Garden of Allah*. He travels with the two

major characters, Domini and Androvsky, and is a friendly and informed companion. Batouch is shown as clever, adept in navigating the terrain of the desert, and knowledgeable about the traditions and practices of the local Arab society. He serves as a conduit between the foreign characters and the foreign setting, offering direction, translation, and insights into the manner of life in the desert. The heroes' ability to explore the desert environment and comprehend it is greatly aided by the presence of the figure Batouch, who may not have a major role in the movie.

Batouch himself represents a way of escape. He transports Domini and Androvsky into the mysterious realm of the desert, a departure from the everyday reality of their prior existence. They may leave their pasts behind and lose themselves in the appeal of the desert by visiting Batouch, which acts as a doorway to a world outside of their usual surroundings. By providing them with supervision, he gives them a chance to momentarily break free from the constraints of their regular life and enter a world of adventure, self-discovery, and transformation. He becomes a conduit for escape for Domini and Androvsky, allowing them to go on a profound voyage of self-reflection and release from the confines of their lives, even if his character may not be seeking escape for himself. Batouche addressing to Domini

Batouch: In the desert one forgets everything, even the heart one loves and the desires of one's own soul.

Domini Enfilden: Oh, you're a poet?

Batouch: Oh, how pretty, Madame understands me. Yes, Madame. Sometimes I'm dizzy with the beauty of my own thoughts.

Domini Enfilden: Perhaps, the sun has something to do with it.

Batouch: Oh, this sun is nothing. Wait 'til Madame gets beyond the mountains and into the gates of the Sahara. There the sun blazes.

Domini Enfilden: Let it blaze.<sup>24</sup>

This conversation between Batouch and Domini is a great depiction of the concept of escape. Batouch's claim that he would forget everything in the desert symbolizes the concept of letting go of the responsibilities and ties of daily life. It implies that one can escape from their inner conflicts and desires in the vastness and isolation of the desert.

The historical context of the 1930s is important by analyzing the portrayal of male escapism in films, including *The Garden of Allah* (1936). During that era, gender roles and expectations were significantly different from today. The concept of male escapism was often celebrated and romanticized in movies as it allowed men to assert their independence, adventure, and autonomy. It was often portrayed as a way for male characters to temporarily escape societal pressures and responsibilities; However, when examining the idea of male escapism from a modern perspective, we may view it with more critical lens. Today, there is greater emphasis on facing one's problems and taking responsibility for one's actions. Male escapism can be seen as a means of avoiding or evading personal challenges, rather than actively addressing them. It may be seen as a way for men to disengage from the realities of life, shirk their obligations and leave others to deal with the consequences.

The evolving social and cultural landscape prompts us to question the implications of male escapism. While it can still be appreciated as a form of entertainment in film narratives, we now recognize the importance of confronting and resolving problems directly, rather than seeking refuge solely through escapism. As society has changed, we've gained a more detailed understanding of how roles and expectations for both men and women are more complex and varied than we once thought.

## End Notes

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<sup>1</sup>(Hichens, R.)1904. The Garden of Allah. GROSSET & DUNLAP Publishers ,New York.p12

<sup>2</sup>(Hichens, R.)1904. The Garden of Allah. GROSSET & DUNLAP Publishers ,New York.p8

<sup>3</sup>(Hichens, R.)1904. The Garden of Allah. GROSSET & DUNLAP Publishers ,New York.p8

<sup>4</sup>(Hichens, R.)1904. The Garden of Allah. GROSSET & DUNLAP Publishers ,New York.p218

<sup>5</sup>(Hichens, R.)1904. The Garden of Allah. GROSSET & DUNLAP Publishers ,New York.p24

<sup>6</sup>(Hichens, R.)1904. The Garden of Allah. GROSSET & DUNLAP Publishers ,New York.p35

<sup>7</sup>(Hichens, R.)1904. The Garden of Allah. GROSSET & DUNLAP Publishers ,New York.p91

<sup>8</sup>(Hichens, R.)1904. The Garden of Allah. GROSSET & DUNLAP Publishers ,New York.p199

<sup>9</sup> (Boleslawski, R.) ,Director, & Selznick, D. O. (Producer). (1936). The Garden of Allah.0:16

<sup>10</sup> (Boleslawski, R.) ,Director, & Selznick, D. O. (Producer). (1936). The Garden of Allah.3:41min

<sup>11</sup>(Boleslawski, R.) ,Director, & Selznick, D. O. (Producer). (1936). The Garden of Allah.26:53min

<sup>12</sup>(Boleslawski, R.) ,Director, & Selznick, D. O. (Producer). (1936). The Garden of Allah.58:15min

<sup>13</sup> (Boleslawski, R.) ,Director, & Selznick, D. O. (Producer). (1936). The Garden of Allah 20:30

<sup>14</sup> (Boleslawski, R.) ,Director, & Selznick, D. O. (Producer). (1936). The Garden of Allah 18:30

<sup>15</sup> (Hichens, R.)1904. The Garden of Allah. GROSSET & DUNLAP Publishers ,New York p323

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<sup>16</sup> (Hichens, R.)1904. The Garden of Allah. GROSSET & DUNLAP Publishers ,New York.p214

<sup>17</sup>(Hichens, R.)1904. The Garden of Allah. GROSSET & DUNLAP Publishers ,New York.p57

<sup>18</sup>(Hichens, R.)1904. The Garden of Allah. GROSSET & DUNLAP Publishers ,New York.p108

<sup>19</sup> (Boleslawski, R.) ,Director, & Selznick, D. O. (Producer). (1936). The Garden of Allah . 33:04min

<sup>20</sup>(Boleslawski, R.) ,Director, & Selznick, D. O. (Producer). (1936). The Garden of Allah . 1:12:50

<sup>21</sup>(Boleslawski, R.) ,Director, & Selznick, D. O. (Producer). (1936). The Garden of Allah . 22:24

<sup>22</sup>(Boleslawski, R.) ,Director, & Selznick, D. O. (Producer). (1936). The Garden of Allah . 28:56

<sup>23</sup> (Boleslawski, R.) ,Director, & Selznick, D. O. (Producer). (1936). The Garden of Allah . 45:26

<sup>24</sup>(Boleslawski, R.) ,Director, & Selznick, D. O. (Producer). (1936). The Garden of Allah . 52:30

## **V-Conclusion :**

This dissertation has tried to study the issue of escapism in Robert Hichens's "*The Garden of Allah*" (1904) and its movie adaptation by Richard Boleslasky (1936) in reference to Pamela Enest's theory of Ecranisation and Roy Baumeister's Escape Theory. Initially, *The Garden of Allah* (1904) both in its original form as a novel by Robert Hichens and its cinematic adaptation, represents a timeless tale that delves into the depths of human desire, sacrifice, and the pursuit of personal freedom by offering a form of escapism with its captivating narrative and vivid imagery. The story transcends the boundaries of time and medium to leave a lasting impact on its audience.

In both the novel and the movie, the characters are intricately woven into a tapestry of emotions, beliefs, and conflicts. The female heroine Domini Enfielden, a privileged English woman who is burdened by societal expectations, finds herself in the vastness of the Sahara Desert, a place that symbolizes liberation from the constraints of her former life. Her encounter with Boris Androvsky, a mysterious and unconventional figure, sets in motion a journey of self-discovery and a quest for inner truth. Throughout the narrative, the dichotomy between spirituality and worldly desires is explored. Domini's internal struggle between her conventional upbringing and her burgeoning love for Boris mirrors the age-old conflict between duty and personal fulfillment. The vast and untamed desert acts as a catalyst for transformation, and impels the characters to confront their deepest fears and desires.

*The Garden of Allah*, in both its novel and film versions, leaves a lasting impression on its audience, inviting them to contemplate the complexities of the human spirit and the transformative power of love and self-reflection. Whether experienced through Hichens's eloquent prose or the visual splendor of the film adaptation, this timeless tale continues to resonate. It serves as a form of escapism from reality and reminds us of the universal search for meaning and the profound impact of our personal journeys.

The refined literary style of the novel and the incredible pictures in the movie offer a form of escape, enveloping the spectator in the alluring scenery of North Africa. Readers are taken away from their own reality into Hichens's exotic and seductive space, where the evocative descriptions of the desert arouse their senses and entice them to leave the pages. Similar to how the film adaptation's breathtaking photography, portrays the size of the dunes and encouraging spectators to really feel the desert's majesty and aridity. The movie escorts the audience to a captivating realm, where they may momentarily escape the constraints of their own life and immerse themselves in the majesty of the environment. This visual spectacle turns into a sort of escapism.

In the end, *The Garden of Allah (1904)* invites us to consider the limitations that constrain us and to look for authenticity and liberty in our own lives. It serves as a reminder that finding personal satisfaction occasionally necessitates defying social conventions and embracing the uncharted. The story's study of universal issues, which connects with people across generations and media, gives it a lasting appeal. giving a way to escape the difficulties and limitations of daily life. *The Garden of Allah (1904)*, whether read in the pages of Hichens' book or seen in the visual extravaganza of the film version, continues to stand as a tribute to the power of narrative and its capacity to motivate us to set out on our own journeys in search of love, freedom, and self-discovery. The scope of our dissertation did not allow us to study more issues related to the two works. Therefore, we suggest to other students to study the novel and the movie by exploring other themes such as the clash between cultures ,identity, Colonialism and Post colonialism , forbidden love and social taboos

## **End Notes**

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