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Intertextuality as a Dynamic Device in Literature and Cinema

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Abstract:

Intertextuality came in discourse when study of text declined after 1980. Post-structuralism can be traced behind its origin and it gives birth to 'intertext'. When intertextuality is to be discussed we cannot fail to remember the name of Julia Kristeva, who coined this term first. She has illustrated that anything is not independent. For meaning everything is connected with something. So, even text is not independent, but it is arbitrary. To explore the sense of Indian culture and tradition in literature and cinema, we have to roam in its social, cultural and political gamut. Intertextuality in literature and film is used as a strong device to depict Indian values which are rich in cultures. Where consciously writers and filmmakers are using Intertextuality to develop their plots with various genre, artistic styles, elements and others, is really to project serious issues with dynamic devices of allusion, myth, history, song, epigraph, characters etc. in Indian perspectives. It will be very apt to cite Roland Barthes's remark - when an author uses a particular word, it does not express a single meaning but leads to a network of possible discourses that seem to emanate from a number of possible perspectives giving rise to intertextuality, far beyond the authorial intention. It crosses the boundaries when it is used as a device in literature and film. When readers and viewers are not familiar with the cited sources through which intertextuality is used they derive different meaning. That is the reason that sometimes even Indian myths and history lose its real interpretation in cinema due to new approach to look into and confer new meaning. So, in accordance with the knowledge of history, socio- political condition, convention etc. interpretation of text in literature and film varies. Our popular epics *Ramayan* and *Mahabharata* creep consciously in many historical and religious literature and film, and this intertextuality makes viewers and readers to derive latent messages by observing latent objective.

Textual analysis in cinema has been influenced by these- 'structuralism', 'narratology', 'psychoanalysis', 'aesthetics' and 'literary deconstruction'. Thus, Metz, Barthes, Lacan, became the base for film analysis. Recently novel of Chetan Bhagat's *Half Girlfriend* is converted into film which is really admired and shows the fine use of intertextuality. It is befitting medium through which Indian education system and escape of even Indian independent girls from society are exquisitely delineated. Indian culture, tradition, myths, folk songs etc. are well projected through cinema via intertextuality. Films also refer to other films and filmmakers often adopt or are inspired by the works of their fellow filmmakers. Novel of Manju Kapur *In Custody* can be understood by watching TV serial *Ye Hai Mohabbate*. With these I cannot fail to name of many films like *Daman*, *Chingari*, *Rudali*, *Rajniti*, *Barfi*, *Padmavat* etc.

Thus, this paper is a moderate endeavour to examine the intertextuality worth to depict indianness and Indian sensibility in literature and film.

Keywords: intertextuality, ekphrasis, iconotext, psychoanalysis, structuralism.

The present paper is a moderate endeavour to trace the intertextuality located in Indian Literature and cinema. It is needless to say, both literature and cinema are the best medium to project the society substantially. Our Indian culture is so rich to describe and project its features exquisitely. Hence, it is felt that the authors and directors find that with the pieces of literature, social texts, scenes, characters readers and audience can be convinced for grasping new ideas and re-imagined. Consequently, Intertextuality is discreetly adopted to create space for speculation and examination. To what effect literary piece, scene, character etc. are included in literature and cinema; it hits the readers and viewers' minds. So they compare those from previous to present context and its relevance today. They are compelled to think about author's intention of inclusion of those. This inclusion is called intertextuality. In other words, intertextuality can be defined as an application of a literary, social, media text within another one. This borrowing invites a healthy comparison between the understanding of the text outside of the book and its application inside the book. With this intertextuality so many things can be elaborated with ease connecting to its previous use in text or cinema. It involves comparison, dialogue and Destabilization.

It is encountered that intertextuality almost everywhere, has wide ranging scope of competence and the way individual theoreticians elucidate its essence differs much. A summary of any

relations between texts of any transformations in a literary work or social/ media caused because of its relationship towards the work by which it's preceded or followed, manifested on the ground of reader's and viewer's perception. Texts are signs and works are utterance. Being independent this utterance varies from complex background made in any context. The meaning and logic of utterances are completely conditioned by what has already uttered and all utterances are in dialogue form. With reference to intertextuality it will be apt to recite the names **Kristeva**, **Baktian**, **Barthes** and **Derrida**. The term 'intertextuality' was coined and systematically into literary theory by **Julia Kristeva**. Bakhtin's *dialogism* provided the impetus for Kristeva's theory and Barthes' concept of the text parallels Kristeva's concept of intertextuality as social cultures form dialogue, utterance is of historical and social significance. Bakhtin/ Medvedev, therefore describes: "Not only the meaning of the utterance but also the very fact of its performance is of historical and social significance, as in general, is the fact of its realization in the here and now, in given circumstances, at a certain historical moment, under the conditions of the given social situation" (Bakhtin/ Medvedev, 1978, 120). Bakhtin describes that verbal texture of a work of art and cinema is only its extrinsic technical facet. In this sense Bakhtin blamed formalists for elimination of the moment of creation from the object of their examination, he thinks, it is the work of art as a unique product of human communication, which is significant and should be noticed and understood. It shows that an object of an aesthetic activity of an artist and recipient aren't extrinsic factors of the work of art, but their meaning which might be thus taken aesthetic object and through which it is possible to expound the meaning of a material work of art deeper. Thus, according to Bakhtin, an essence of art doesn't reside in '*poetical language*' - according to him nothing like that exists, but in the sphere of an aesthetic object. Every reconstruction approves the creativity and newness of authors. Due to cultural variation signs in the text impart the meaning. Meaning of text depends the way of dialogue spoken in the particular culture. Each word for Bakhtin therefore is 'contaminated' in that it has already been used by a set of speakers and has passed through a series of contexts: The life of the word is contained in its transfer from one mouth to another, from one context to another, from one social collective to another, from one generation to another generation. In this process the word does not forget its own path and cannot completely free itself from the power of those concrete contexts into which it has entered (Hawthorn, Jeremy, 201). Cultural effect is perceptible in interpretation of the text, scene, character etc. This can be understood by the

theory of Bakhtin's Dialogism. As Jeremy Hawthorn has so discreetly observed: "... a word for Bakhtin is like a garment passed from individual which cannot have the smell of previous owners washed out of it" (Bakhtin, M.M. 2000, 76).

After looking into the theories of Julia Kristeva and Bakhtin in detail it can be understood that intertextuality is dynamic device of bringing the reality in Literature and cinema through visual and verbal text which transforms the texts, scenes and characters. Through this intertextuality authors impel the readers and viewers to have knowledge of the visual and verbal text of previous to understand in present context which results in transformation. *The Waste Land* is well studied work, looking into it many allusions, piece of myth, verbal descriptions of paintings, historic characters etc. reminds us its use in previous works and readers connect those to the relevance of the present time. Readers/ viewers derive literary pleasure in case of acquaintance with those but in case of ignorance they can envisage ideas correctly. Sometime intertextuality is called plagiarism but it is not. Instead of it intertextuality is a strong medium to locate ideas to impart in new garb. "Any text is constructed as a mosaic of quotation; any text is the absorption and transformation of another. The notion of intertextuality replaces that of intertextuality, and poetic language is read as at least double" (Kristeva, 1980, 66).

There are the two types of intertextuality – *Ekphrasis* and *Iconotext*. Ekphrasis is verbal representation of visual representation. It gives words to visual arts. Paintings/pictures do not speak itself but can be sketched thoroughly with the words. Thus it is 'verbal recreation of visual art works' (Wagner, 1996, 10). Shakespeare's *The Rape of Lucrece* is example of Ekphrasis. The second category is iconotext. It is the use of an image in a text or vice-versa. It is a work of art made up of verbal and visual signs. Both categories can be examined in works of text and films. Much depends on readers' understanding to fathom the depth of writers' intentions. The most texts are based on theories of quotation and imitation as these are so natural in the world of arts. Indian culture and heritage can be discreetly portrayed through the adaptation of myths, folk tales, allusions, scenes into works of art for 'reconstruction' and 'retransformation'.

Indian culture and tradition are embedded in past which are envisaged through intertextuality and are revealed to the present. Consequently, excerpts of our Indian mythology and history are added in literature and cinema. Through ekphrasis and iconotext authors and script writers represent, re-interpret and recreate historical figures or characters, scenes in works. Through

reading and watching we are placed to test our own understanding of past. Myths in our religious books are limitless. Narratives of popular Indian epics *Mahabharata* and *Ramayana* create massive space for adaptation. Here, it is not appropriate to describe its ample examples but few, where intertextuality is located can be recited. *Tale- Danda*, *Naga-Mandala*, *Tughlaq*, *Hayavadan*, *Yayati*, *Fire* and *The Rain* are such plays by Girish Karnad as to find out intertextuality. Girish Karnad in new scenario has designed the theme of his plays with the help of Indian myth, narrative, folk tale, history, historical characters. The opening of plays connects us with our past and we feel familiar with context. Studying *Tale- Danda* our legs are in the 12th century when ‘Bhakti Movement’ took place as well as in 19th century where ‘Mandir Mandala’ can be located. If we are having knowledge of our past history can understand that in better way. India socio-political scenario can be seen in creation of situation and characters. *Yayati* is replete with examples of *Mahabharata* and characters like Yayati, Sharmishtha, Devyani, Puru, Chitrlekha etc. reminds the characters of *Mahabharata*. In *Naga- Mandala* Indian culture is located. In India we worship Nagas (Serpents) to fulfil our dreams. Same can be encountered in providing shelter and security to the female character Rani by Cobra. It is none but Cobra who brings drastic change in life of Rani. It shows the religious pattern of Indian’s minds where orders of elders are carried by people like behest of God despite knowing the reality. In *Hayavadana*, Karnad projects the story of the ‘transposition’ of heads through characters with different names and identities. The sub -plot of *Hayavadana* is purely his own invention which adds to the total impression and significance of the play. The sub-plot of *Hayavadana*, the horse-man, intensifies the import of the main theme of ‘incompleteness’ by treating it on a different plane. The horse-man’s search for completeness ends comically, with his eventually becoming a complete horse. Karnad’s adaptation of myths and legends in his plays are more an act of impulse rather than intention. Karnad himself says in his “Introduction” to *Three Plays*: “The myth had enabled me to articulate to myself a set of values that I had been unable to arrive at rationally” (*Three Plays*, 11). In most of Karnad’s Plays intertextuality is used as dynamic device to connect the past to present. It opens huge domain for re-examination and re-evaluation of Indian values, ethics myth and history in the present context. Most of his plays are played on stage and few are converted into films and collected huge popularity. Stepping in past viewers realize its relevance in the present time. In characters, scenes, situations, texts etc. intertextuality can traced.

The vital and key thing about Karnad is that in his plays he engages in moral problems that are left vague and unanswered by way of myths, legends and folktales. Karnad is of the view that myths and legends hold a lasting and permanent significance, for they are representations and signifiers of the deep-seated and primeval human passions. Their conclusions are often vague and open-ended, leaving enormous possibility for arguing out an ethical, philosophical or psychological point. It has to be underlined that Karnad has delved deep into our rich heritage for his source materials. He believes that there are plots in our myths and folklores that are in themselves so symbolic and dramatic that they lend themselves to easy and myriad adaptations on stage. In his plays he examines ancient Indian myths in the light of modern-day realities to make them meaningful and relevant.

Now, we are coming to very popular Indian writer Chetan Bhagat, whose popularity soars high not only in India but abroad also. His novels have been adopted into Bollywood films. His Novel *Half Girlfriend* has been much enjoyed on the screen of cinema hall in India. Despite a little bit change, it is adopted in the film, it has lots of similarities with the novel. Chetan Bhagat's arrival in the novel as well as film turns the direction of the plot. When all hopes are shattered to Madhav, he brings a hope in his life. Bhagat has dexterously delved deep in the psyche of young Indian boys and girls. So having been acquainted with the interest of readers he presents a beautiful love story of Madhav and Riya with a real touch. Looking into the novel it appears only love story superficially but this love story is weaved with his intention of projecting the shackles which tie tightly the legs of Indian people. We are living in the 21st century and this is era of computer and technology. We claim to be citizens of the global world. But we are still being governed by old established social conventions with new garbs. It seems we have equality in rights and opportunities. Gender discrimination is uprooted from India where changes are perceptible in all walks of life, but behind the curtain of the changes we are still slaves to social conventions, our mentality is not changed, is still conservative. In our behaviours and making decision this rotten Indian mentality is reflected. Even high class is not free from this infection. Even today women became silent sufferers due to their acceptance of rotten social orders which don't let them live their lives in their terms. Unwillingly they bent to compromise in their lives.

On one side Chetan Bhagat describes the social injustice in his novel *Half Girlfriend*, on other hand he hints if women come forward in women's support, most social and familial problems will be ended as it is none but women who hold firmly social conventions and are blind followers

of old established rules which are made by men. Riya is constantly being tortured by her past wherever she goes. All these when we encounter during the watching of the film, nothing new but our familiar social and familial Indian set up is projected through the characters, dialogue and scenes. This realization and pictorial description appears genuine due to intertextuality. Riya protests by her silence and this is story of thousand Riya living in India. Chetan Bhagat with the device of intertextuality places us in such situation from where we can see something new that is women's struggle to carve new identity. Riya never likes to see women inferior and subordinate to men and hates men who assert their superiority over female in the male dominated society. Above is showing inactive life style of villagers. Today when feminism's wave is on the full swing girls are bound to give up education how far it is successful in getting its goal. Their realities depicted by Chetan Bhagat pushes us for healthy speculation.

Thus, it can be concluded that intertextuality is such dynamic device as to connect new with past. Through History, myths, narratives, scenes, characters, Indian as well as other can be connected to Indian cultures and customs, they get familiar with that and in that light they can be convinced to accept the changes with meaning. Though trend of reading literature is diminishing, craze for Cinema is still increasing. So, Indian cultures, customs, rituals, heritages, religions etc. are well carried by cinema. Many plays and dramas are shown and being shown in films. Even TV serials too are based on the works (literatures) of writers. Presently *Ye Hai Mohabbaten* is totally based on Manju Kapur's Novel *In Custody*. Even names of characters are adopted with no change. Here, it is not possible to describe all wherever intertextuality is located in literature and cinema but the above matter is sufficient to prove that intertextuality is dynamic device in literature and cinema to scatter Indian ethics and values in so many ways.

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