

Chapter- 2

An Intersemiotic Translation of Deepa Mehta's *Water* by Bapsi

Sidhwa: An Ecofeminist Reading

Women the world over, through the ages, asked to be murdered, raped, exploited, enslaved, to get importunately impregnated, beaten up, bullied and disinherited. It was an immutable Law of nature. (Sidhwa 226)

The development of Feminist movement from 1960s onwards has focused on the variegated aspects of the lives of women across the world. The novel writing has become one of the ways for women to translate their emotions and feelings. These feelings and emotions across the world conveyed through novels have erected a different landmark in the field of humanities. The initiatives taken by the Western Feminists to theorize the socio-political, cultural and economic status of women have paved a new trajectory for the women across the world to raise their voices. However, the Western Feminism limits itself to the 'marginalized voices of women' without paying much heed to the socio-cultural, political, cultural, racial and caste context. The development of other feminist movements like Afro-American Womenism, Third World Feminism, Ecofeminism, Dalit Feminism etc have given a new dimension to the Feminist Movement. Therefore, the present research highlights the differences which exist in the struggle of women within Indian socio-cultural, political and economic context and the development of Ecofeminism therein. Hence, it challenges the Western homogeneous terms "Feminism" and "Ecofeminism" which try to incorporate the marginalization of women across the world under the rubric of "Feminism".

In order to support this argument, the present research takes recourse to the inter-semiotic translation of Deepa Mehta's movie *Water* (2005) into Bapsi Sidhwa's novel *Water* (2006) and analyses through Roman Jakobson's concept of 'Intersemiotic translation'. The main difference between film and literary work lies in the fact that literature is fixed in a written form, while in a film the image (representation) is supported by the sound in form of music or words. Therefore, rendering the visual presence of feminist movie in the linguistic code is one of the crucial aspects of the present analysis. Clüver says that a translated text is inevitably not equivalent to the proto text and, at the same time, it contains something more or something less with respect to the proto text. "Any translation will inevitably offer both less and more than the source text. A translator's success will depend [...] also on the decisions made as to what may be sacrificed." (Cluver 61)

The most important factor in intersemiotic translation is to represent from one code unit to another code unit which Jakobson says,

Most frequently, however, translation from one language into another substitutes messages in one language not for separate code-units but for entire messages in some other language. Such a translation is a reported speech; the translator recodes and transmits a message received from another source. Thus translation involves two equivalent messages in two different codes. (qtd. in Venuti 114)

The translation here is more problematic because it is from visual code into linguistic code, and "The translator recodes and transmits a message received from another source. Thus translation involves two equivalent messages in two different codes" (Venuti 113). The audience's imagination of the pictures and scenes with sounds in the movie will always hamper the reading of it, which is not rendered with

proper linguistic capabilities. Therefore, the hurdle for Sidhwa is to recreate the imagination through language. There will be certain differences in the translation, but the linguistic capabilities of Sidhwa do justify the visual renderings of Mehta. Jakobson, rightly remarks on the intricacies which lies in the intersemiotic translation in his seminal essay, “On Linguistic Aspects of Translation”,

Equivalence in difference is the cardinal problem of language and the pivotal concern of linguistics. Like any receiver of verbal messages, the linguist acts as their interpreter. No linguistic specimen may be interpreted by the science of language without a translation of its signs into other signs of the same system or into signs of another system. (qtd. in Venuti 114)

It is a feminist translation of a movie by Bapsi Sidhwa. While translating, she is aware of certain facets of women of India. Being an Indian woman she can understand and acknowledge the feelings and emotions of Deepa Mehta, so it is the translation of one woman’s work by other woman. According to Susanne de Lotbinière-Harwood (1990), “making the feminine subject visible in language is an important way of putting feminist politics into practice,” and since “language cannot be neutral,” she is aware of the fact that her “woman-centred focus guides and frames her translation work”, and he further says:

As a feminist translator, my choices — of words, of works to take on — are informed by the emerging women's culture, which means that our references can now be found within the sphere of work done by women. We have a feminist dictionary, an encyclopaedia, theoretical works, fiction, criticism, translations, prefaces to translations — all of these are beginning to constitute a women's culture.... (Harwood 43-44)

The movie *Water* was released on the 8th Sept 2005 in Canada facing lot of political and religious protests; in fact the movie would have released much earlier if Mehta was allowed to continue her shooting in Banaras. The religious fundamentalists did not allow her to shoot in Banaras in the pretext that she would pollute the holy river Ganga. As a result, rest of the shootings were done in Sri Lanka. As most of her movies including ‘Water’ has several released dates according to location unlike other parallels of commercial movies, and finally on the 9th March 2007 it was released in India. Apart from changes in location, Mehta had to change her star cast in the movie. In an interview with Colleen Walsh, published in Column on Arts and Culture in an American based journal *Harvard Gazette* on 29th march 2012, she shares:

Her experience with an Indian house for widows compelled her to make the subject the focus of “Water.” But controversy stirred during filming. “I had never come across anything so appalling,” said Mehta of the homes, scattered across the country, that house women, largely outcast by society, who often fall into prostitution or begging simply to survive. Armed with Chen’s work, she wrote the script and set to work filming. But the project was quickly derailed. Angry crowds called it anti-Hindu, and violent mobs destroyed the sets. “It was as if a whole army had been unleashed on a little independent film crew on the banks of the Ganga” River, said Mehta. (Mehta Interview with Colleen Walsh)

The short history behind the release and shootings of a movie gives us the fare idea of the controversies which lies in the source text of Bapsi Sidhwa’s translation. Though the novel was published one year after the first release i.e. in 2006, the translation did not face the similar treatment before its release by the religious and

political fundamentalists of India. The irony here is that the source text contains so much of controversies and the translation process did not face the similar plight. Though the translated novel did not face the problem in the process of production but it had problems in conveying the message from ‘visual code’ into ‘linguistic code’. The movie has paid importance to every aspect of the female characters and the cinematography is one of the crucial aspects which translation had to replace with language. The parallelism drawn in the movie through cinematographical techniques is one of the crucial aspects which Sidhwa fails to bring in her novel. The intersemiotic aspects of the translation would be one of the major areas of discussion in the present research to highlight the representation of Indian women and their socio-cultural, religious and political problems.

Ecofeminism defines that patriarchal structures substantiate their dominance through categorical or dualistic hierarchies such as - heaven/earth, mind/body, male/female, human/animal, spirit/matter, culture/nature, and white/black etc. Established oppressive systems continue to manifest their powers by reinforcing assumptions of these binaries, even validating them sacred through religious and scientific propagandas. Ecofeminism posits that as long as any of the dualisms exist as an integral component of social structures and justification, they will all continue to justify patriarchy. Therefore, to bring equality and harmony in any societal structures, all dualisms and binary oppositional forms must be dismantled otherwise humanity remains “divided against” itself, a phrase that Griffin uses to describe the ideological impact of dualism (Griffin 26). Deepa Mehta, through her films, takes the initiative to dismantle such instances by portraying characters which are deeply rooted in nature and represents the other aspects of women and nature. The audio-visual representation is extended further by Sidhwa in the form of novel. Therefore, the representation of

characters in the *Water* novel/movie becomes major focus of the present research than the story of the novel/movie

In the field of English literature, realistic writings which are mainly socially concerned, especially in Indian context, have carved a niche for themselves by focusing on issues such as gender, caste, child abuse etc. Bapsi Sidhwa's name in this regard is of great significance. Out of her five novels, one of her novels, *Ice Candy Man* is picturized by the talented film director Dipa Mehta. Sidhwa's another celebrated novel *Water* is based on the movie '*Water*' by Deepa Mehta. The story of the movie/novel is a portrayal of widows in India before independence and it highlights the hypocritical attitude of Indian society and the plight of women in the society. The novel is set in 1938, against the environment of Gandhi's campaigning for independence and social awakening in India. *Water* depicts the story of a six year old girl, Chuyia. She is the victim of established inhuman traditions and practices of the society.

At the age of eight, Chuyia becomes a widow, after the death of her 41 year old husband. It is unfortunate to see an innocent child falling in the trap of institution of marriage which she hardly understands. The naive and innocent nature of Chuyia is well depicted from the first scene of the story, where her husband is on death bed and she is unable to understand the seriousness of the situation. Chuyia hardly remembers being married to the man once he dies. But traditions demand that she has to accompany her husband's dead body to Varanasi where he will be cremated and she would be expected to live in a widow's ashram which is located at the banks of the Ganga. The plot of the novel is woven around Chuyia and her young and beautiful friend, Kalyani, a widow who is exploited as a prostitute. Chuyia is also sent for prostitution once where she gets raped but fortunately she manages to escapes from the

hell. The life of the widows at ashram is presented effectively and accurately. The female characters in the story are products of the Brahminical and patriarchal society but when their rights are crushed under the heels of the society, they break the constructed norms and live with dignity. As Deepa Mehta in an interview has rightly stated about the Indian rigid tradition with reference to *Water*:

Water can flow or water can be stagnant. I set the film in the 1930s but the people in the film live their lives as it was prescribed by religious text more than 2,000 years old.... To me I think traditions should not be that rigid. They should flow like the replenishing kind of water. (Mary)

The major concern of the story lies in the fundamental question of the value of women and their role in Indian society. Why widows were treated in such an inhuman way in India? Why did it become natural for women to live the secluded life? In Brahminical tradition, a woman is acknowledged as an individual only when she is with her husband. Outside the bond of marriage, the wife has no accepted existence, so when her husband dies, she too dies with him. The same judgment is accountable for the barbaric act of Sati (the self-immolation of a wife on her husband's funeral pyre), which was providentially outlawed in 1846. However, the rule was not the same for men in the biased society. Men were allowed to remarry, keep mistresses or visit prostitutes, and even be proud of such immoral acts, which most of the time are justified by taking advantage of religious texts. As a character in the novel, Narayan's father who is a Brahmin justifies it, "Our holy texts say Brahmins can sleep with whomever they want, and the women they sleep with are blessed" (Sidhwa 174). The choice women were given was to be a part of the basic elements of nature; she can either subsume into fire (Sati) or live near water (Widow Life near Ganga).

Even today, such evil practices are followed in various parts of the country. The decreasing number of the girls and the skewed sex ratio are the proof of the same. The pain and suffering of the widows during the time of independence has been aptly brought out by Bapsi Sidhwa in her novel *Water*. The life of Indian women in pre-independent India was surrounded by these two elements of nature. The particular aspect of *Water* demarcates the Indian Ecofeminist novelists from rest of the Ecofeminists like Margaret Atwood, Alice Walker, Barbara Ehrenreich and Anna Kingsford.

The river Ganga plays a significant role in the story. It is represented as a symbolic character, and lives of widows are revolving around it. Thus, to understand the role of Ganga - it is important to know the mythological significance behind the existence of the river, and its barren condition in present scenario. Every character in the story is associated with '*Water*' in one way or the other. Unlike the Western Ecofeminism, the Indian Ecofeminism deals with nature in connection with religion. *Water* not only stands for nature but also the Goddess Ganga, the holy place for purification. Therefore, 'water' stands for a character and all the characters represent water. To understand the significance of water and the river Ganga and how it is symbolically translated in the movie/novel, it is important to know some of the popular myths behind their existence in Indian culture.

The river Ganga has a great mythological significance in Indian culture. In India the river Ganga has been placed in the list of 33 crosses of Indian deities. According to the Famous myth, the presence of the Ganga in the human form can be found in the great Indian epic the Mahabharata. She is the wife of Shantanu, the king of Hastinapur. But while living the life of a human being she is suffering from the curse. Under this curse she is supposed to drown her seven sons. So at the time of

marriage she takes a promise from Shantanu not to ask her the reason behind her cruel deed. But after the death of seven sons Shantanu fails to control himself and asks her the reason behind her cruel act. As a result, Ganga shoulders the responsibility of the eighth son Devavrata (Bhishma, the prominent figure in the Mahabharata) to Shantanu and leaves the king and the kingdom and again takes the form of the holy river Ganga, providing the 'life' in the form of water.

According to another famous myth, Ganga used to live in the heaven but Bhagirath, the great sage takes painstaking efforts to bring Ganga on the earth for the human beings. As the river incarnates from the heaven, its water has very special qualities. It is considered to be miraculous which has the capacity to cure the diseases of human beings. Taking a dip into the water of Ganga is considered as the liberation from all the sins committed by the human beings. But today, this great Ganga is seen in the pitiable condition. The river Ganga occupies a unique position in the mythological and cultural ethos of India. From times, the Ganga has been India's river of faith, devotion and worship. However, the river is not just a legend; it is also a life-support system for the people of India. But in present scenario, despite the significance of Ganga in mythology, due to its polluted condition the purity of Ganga is spoiled.

In the novel/movie, water is used metaphorically. The water of the Ganga is considered as sacred. The people have faith that by taking a dip into the water of the river Ganga, all the sins will be washed off. But on the banks of the Ganga the purity of the innocent Chuyia is seen spoiled. The unheard cry of the Ganga for polluting the purity of the medicinal water by the people and the cry of Chuyia for the inhuman treatment she receives from the society is the same. On both the levels, the innocence

and purity seem to be helpless in the hands of the society. The nature creates life and protects the same. The woman gives birth to the child and maintains the presence of human species on the earth. Both the elements take care of their creation and devote themselves for their upbringing and protection. But in turn what do they get? Tarun Mukharji has wonderfully described the relevance of the Ganga in the context of the plot as:

The metaphorical and metonymical use and the multilayered connotations of the river are integral to the plot. Besides reflecting the shifting moods of the characters and the twists in the narrative tandem with the changes in nature, the river operates at once as a regenerative element as well as a purifying agent; it is the resting place for tired bodies, the last sip for the departing soul and a site of rituals for both marriage and death; it is a source of hope where Chuyia floats a boat to carry her home and of hopelessness when it bears both Kalyani and her as object of lust. (43)

In the novel/movie, Narayan falls in love with Kalyani and her life seems to be full of hopes and pleasures. She even imagines her better future. This state can be compared to the beautiful floating water of the river Ganga. But at a particular mode she ends her life by committing suicide. She dreams to marry Narayana and to live a peaceful and contented life with him. But when she realizes that Narayana is the son of Seth Dwarkanath who exploited her, the dreams shatter into pieces. The presentation of the emotions of Kalyani speaks volumes when she writes, “but i do need to ...” Kalyani said and abruptly broke off midsentence. Torn between the need to make him

understand why she had to turn back and not wanting to reveal the ugly truth, she was at a loss.

“then please try”, said Narayana.

“I can’t...” she said. Then looking desperately at him, Kalyani gave him as much of an answer she could. “Ask your father,” she said simply. “What”, mystified, Narayan could not imagine what his father had to do with Kalyani’s determination to turn back. As a glimmer of comprehension dawned at the edges of his mind, he was overcome by a deep foreboding. (Sidhwa 172)

Kalyani does not have any shelter now. She goes back to ashram but is reluctant to follow the same old hollow life. She does not want to marry Narayana because she thinks that the marriage would saddle Narayana’s noble family with a daughter-in-law whose every living moment would bring disgrace and dishonour to their house. As a Result she selects the way to commit suicide.

After the suicide of Kalyani, Madhumati selects Chuyia to replace her as an income source. Along with Gulabi she sends Chuyia to Seth Bhupindernath’s mansion. The innocent Chuyia is drugged and exploited there. Kalyani’s committing suicide and innocent Chuyia’s rape is the metaphorical presentations of the pollution of purity. On one hand the single dip in the water of the river Ganga is considered to be washing off the sins of the life and on the other hand such inhuman practices are followed on the banks of the same river.

In the novel, the river is presented as a background. When the wonderful and delicate love between Nayayan and Kalyani flourishes, the river seems to respond to the calm and beautiful moments:

The river was a dark ribbon, except for the temple fires it reflected. Wisps of white smoke curled up against the black, star pricked sky. A boat glided silently along the river. A gentle breeze carried to her the haunting, long-drawn-out notes of a flute. She stilled to listen, certain it was the same bansuri player she and Gulabi had heard in the boat that other night. (Sidhwa 122)

When Kalyani is seen in disillusionment and helplessness, it is the river which provides shelters and consoles her like a mother. Kalyani prefers to take a calm sleep in the lap of the mother Ganga. The river is known for purity and sacredness. Similarly, the river possesses the capacity to heal the wounds of a child. The sacred and pure Kalyani is imbibed by the river without any complaint or grudge. She bent to splash her face with the sacred water that flowed from Shiva's head, and smeared it over her face and hair. She clasped her hands in prayer for a moment. Then she calmly walked into the river until her short hair floated in an inky stain on the water.

“Ma Ganaga had claimed her daughter.” (Sidhwa 178)

After Kalyani, it is Chuyia who is the second choice of Madhumati as an income source. She sends Chuyia to the ‘rich customer’, Seth Bhupindernath. When Shakuntala comes to know about the calamity on Chuyia she becomes restless. She takes unconscious Chuyia to the banks of the holy river and tries to console her. Shakuntala is moved by the state of Chuyia.

In ashram, Shakuntala Didi becomes the major point of liberation for the subjugation of women. The simple women involved in household and religious matters debunk the age old rules imposed on women by supporting Kalyani's second

marriage and sending Chuyia with Narayan. This fascinating look at the lives of widows in colonial India is ultimately a haunting and lyrical story of love, faith, and redemption. Chaman Nahal gives the apt definition of women in society as a “mode of existence in which woman is free of the dependence syndrome: whether it is the husband or the father or the community or whether it is a religious or ethnic group.” (Chaman 30)

Water as a movie and novel represents hypocrisy in the Ashram, where instead of social security and dignity they are forced to face all sorts of disgrace, torment and prostitution. All the widows in Ashram were with their shaved heads and their long unyielding face look like men, disfiguring their personality, socio-cultural and economic status. Madhumati is a widow and the imperial authority is orchestrated through her. She shouts, abuses and commands to preserve her unconditional subservience. In contrast, Shakuntala, a widow of the same Ashram with her sympathetic and dynamic image consoles Chuyia. It was an Ashram situated near the temple; here widows are given a cup of rice and a fistful of lentils for every eight hour session of singing and dancing. The affair of Kalyani and Narayana boldly defies Hindu tradition and threatens to undermine the delicate balance of power within the Ashram.

The characters of *Water* as movie and novel depicts subjugated, marginalized and muted, women who are seen contesting the discourse of patriarchal mastery. They transcend adhocacy by exploring their capacities expressing love and reciprocity to the alienating condition of Hindu widowhood in colonial India. It poses a more visible challenge to the dominant cultural narratives of Hindutva, an ideology that seeks to establish a monochromatic Hindu state in India. *Water* is nothing but the exploration of the women character in the colonial India. It is a story of women and nature. Three

different characters Chuyia, Kalyani and Shakuntala Didi are the human representation of Water and vice versa. They are silent when respected but boisterous when humiliated.

The cruelty of Chuyia's descent into her societal construction of widowhood is powerfully depicted by the smashing of her glass bangles, tonsuring and being dressed in a homespun white cloth: "as the razor scraped across her scalp, Chuyia's teeth were set on edge. Somnath noticed her toes curl, almost reflexively, in mute protest" (Sidhwa 35). The very first scene of the movie is well translated into language by Sidhwa. The particular incident which drops the jaw of the audience is one of the best parts of cinematography and by building the same sort of imagination, Sidhwa uses the opposite words to create the same sensation in her Novel. Somnath declares "Bitiya your husband is dead you are a widow now", "for how long, Baba?" (Sidhwa 17), Chuyia asks her father. The brutal metamorphosis of Chuyia's body being shorn as a trademark of her civil death and the strict dismissal from old ties marks the beginning of the miserable life that awaits her in the destitute Widows' House: "with her white sari and bald, yellow head, Chuyia was a very different child from the girl who had ridden in the bullock cart." (Sidhwa 44)

Chuyia's depiction of a widow is not only to orchestrate the plight of every woman in colonial India but also to redefine the social norms which de-favour women. Widows are not supposed to apply different colours but her entry into the Ashram with 'yellow head' marks the novel trajectory of widowhood. She is not mute, subjugated, and subaltern but a woman who does not accept social injustice given to her as a natural fate of being a woman. She is the true representation of nature which does not demarcate 'Man and Woman'. Like nature, she also believes in equality, particularly her ground breaking questions like, "where the house for men widow?" (Sidhwa 23)

She looks quite innocent and calm but her entry in the Ashram is not calm. She bites Madhumati when the latter orders her around unsympathetically, and rebelliously shouts “I don’t want to be a stupid widow! Fatty!” (Sidhwa 42). In contrast, both Shakuntala and Kalyani reveal a deep-rooted patriarchal conditioning that makes them more submissive and conformed to their widowhood. As soon as Chuyia enters their lives, both women endure an inner change that moves them to interact gracefully and capriciously to the rigidity imposed by the Ashram.

The habitual dictatorial presence of Madhumati unsympathetically reigns over the house, dictating instructions to the widows with the help of Gulabi, a eunuch (hijra) who arranges the side business of prostitution to financially support the Ashram. Chuyia is not prone to compliance of the oppressive restrictions which control the whole community. Madhumati reminds her that ‘when our husbands die, God help us, the wives also half die. So how can a poor half-dead woman feel any pain?’ but Chuyia’s untainted logic makes her defiantly reply ‘because she is half alive?’ (Sidhwa 42). However, fate of Chuyia is nothing extraordinary in *Water*; as despite her ignorance over the physical aspects of womanhood, Madhumati sends Chuyia with the Eunuch to Zamindar’s house at night to fulfil his sexual need. Though the incident is not shown in both the movie and novel but the aftermath does indicate her ‘Rape’. Shashi Deshpande’s famous lines about the rape clearly show the implication and the consequences of it on women:

Rape is for me the grossest violation of trust between two people. Whether it is someone in the family or your husband or any other man who commits a rape, it destroys the trust between men and women. It is also the greatest violence because it is not only the woman’s body but is her mind and feeling of her right to have a control on her body which is gone. (Deshpande 126)

Kalyani is a young widow who is forced into prostitution as a financial aid for the Ashram. Shakuntala is a literate middle-aged woman and a very religious Hindu who is aware of the phallogocentric discrimination of their plight. Their presence improves Chuyia's new life from the beginning through their expression of caring and bonding. Even in their forced isolation from the world, they find companionship and build up a good life of their own to have their lives more meaningful: "You must say the japa, Jai Shree Krishna 108 times a day and you will soon fly away home" (Sidhwa 54), Kalyani encourages Chuyia to never lose hope. Similarly, Shakuntala reads her the story of Dushyanta, reminding her to be brave and strong like him who grew up alone in the forest.

Kalyani, in her desperate situation, gets some relief by spending some time with Chuyia. Through Chuyia, she tries to relive her childhood. However, the infinitesimal relief turns into a horror every night when she is forced into prostitution by Madhumati. The discipline of Ashram deprives unfortunate widows of their rights, self dignity and even the basic biological urges peculiar to their sex. Kalyani does not follow the code of shaving the hair. The hair in her head maintains her beauty as a result they can fetch as many Zamindars as they want to pay Ashram for sex. On the other hand, Narayan's love for Kalyani is far removed from his father's lust, as he is encouraged by the Gandhian ideals of emancipating her from widowhood by making her his wife. Like Chuyia, Kalyani has been led to prostitution unwittingly. After having fallen in love with Narayan, she finds herself no longer competent of living as an unreceptive victim of phallogocentric domination. She knows that "cast out in the streets she would die, but to live without Narayan and return to a life of forced prostitution would be a worse kind of death." (Sidhwa 177)

The humiliation felt deep inside her heart becomes the part of her life and she gets used to it and does it as an everyday activity. The advent of Narayana, a young, upper-class Gandhian idealist, in her life brings some respite, but his propagation seems like threatening to Madhumati. Madhumati and Gulabi (a eunuch) see Gandhi as a dangerous man ruining the country with his efforts to abolish untouchability and caste discrimination:

‘Didi, have you heard?’ Gulabi asked in her deep, affected voice.

‘What?’

‘About that Mohandas?’ she said.

‘Mohandas who? Is he a new client?’

‘No, Mohandas Gandhi! He’s from the jungles of Africa. He doesn’t sleep, he doesn’t drink’.

‘Why? Doesn’t he feel sleepy?’

‘Nooo! He doesn’t sleep with women. He lies beside them, but he doesn’t sleep with them. Self-discipline, he says’ (Sidhwa 71)

‘This Gandhi is going to sink India’.

‘What’s he done now?’

‘Gandhi says, “The untouchables are the children of God!”’

(...) Disgusting! Before he came, everything ran like an English clock. Tick tock!’ (Sidhwa 103)

In this phallogocentric land, Narayana comes to her life to get her out of the widow Ashram by marrying Kalyani. However, her fate does not give her the chance to relive her life as a human being. Narayana and Kalyani decide to marry, on their way she comes to know that Narayana is a son of Zamindar who sleeps with her every night. As a result she refuses to meet his parents and commits suicide at night. The

particular scene visualized in the movie is absent in the novel. The translation of Sidhwa here fails to recreate or overshadow the visual effect of Mehta. The movie does not use much of metaphor or make it grand because, transferring such incident into a linguistic code becomes difficult for any translator. Committing suicide is not the choice of Kalyani but it is the situational compulsion as she cannot go to Narayan and Madhumati does not allow her to come back in Ashram. Sidhwa, in her *Ice Candy Man* rightly depicts the dilemma of rejected women,

“What a fallen woman?” I ask godmother...

“Hamida (the second Ayah) was kidnapped by the Sikhs”,

Says godmother seriously... When that happens sometimes,

The husband – or his family won’t take her back.”

“Why? It isn’t her fault she was kidnapped.”

“Some folk feel that way—they can’t stand their woman

being touched by other men.” (Sidhwa 215)

Narayan, a Gandhian and also a rationalist questions the archaic patriarchal laws and points out at the end of the story, after Kalyani’s death, the prejudice laid down by the law-makers of the ancient age that have institutionalized phallocentric authority over women. The purity of the Kalyani-Narayan romance reaches its highest celebration when Narayan expresses his love by reciting the Sanskrit verses of Kalidasa’s classic *Meghaduta* (‘The Cloud Messenger’), a poem about the pain of separation between lovers, foretelling at the same time their future parting. The incident is so well described in the movie where Mehta leaves the space for the translator to show her/his linguistic ability to express it in better way and create a different imagination in readers’ mind. One cannot deny the cinematographic

excellence by showing the parallel happiness of Narayana and Kalyani but the description of such incidents seems better when read than seen.

The language of Sidhwa makes it more tragic than the real incident in the movie. Sidhwa describes: “and she clasped her hands in prayer for a moment. Then she calmly walked into the river until her short hair floated in an inky stain on the water” (Sidhwa 178). This act situates her death outside the phallogocentric discourse as a justifiable end. It has also a powerful and insubordinate force on Narayan, which makes him aware of the hypocrisies of his family due to which he leaves home.

The death of Kalyani affects Shakuntala the most as she tells her to leave the house and marry Narayana. Shakuntala, a significant character is not boisterous as Chuyia or silent like Kalyani rather, she is the amalgamation of both, and stands for the ideal woman. She is aware of the injustices women are subjected to. In a way, she is the true representation of River Ganga which accepts “Puja and Funeral Pyre” in her Ghat. She can read, write and has a good knowledge of sacred texts, and her seeking spirit makes her believe that “there must be a reason for it. Why are we sent here?” (Sidhwa 181). She ponders over the meaning of life with the priest Sadananda and courageously asks: “Pandit–ji, is it written that widows should be treated badly?.” (Sidhwa 157)

Her belief in God never fades away, that’s why every morning she goes to river Ganga and cleans the place of the priest Sadananda. She learns the way of life from him and also accumulates the courage to take path-breaking steps like sending Kalyani for remarriage and sending Chuyia with Narayana at the end of the story. She has the recurrent thoughts about the life of widow and dares to ask Sadananda why widows are treated so harshly and he tells her of the possibility of being remarried: “a law has recently been passed favoring widow re-marriage”. “A law? Why don’t we know

about it?” Shakuntala responds. Sadananda’s concern deepens. “Men ignore the laws that don’t suit them, he declares solemnly.” (Sidhwa 157-158)

Through bold actions, she sets Kalyani free when she is locked away by Madhumati and eventually saves Chuyia by handing her over to the care of Gandhi, thus signalling the beginning of new journeys, including hers as an emancipated middle-aged widow, and indeed for India at large on the cusp of its imminent independence.

The important role which Sidhwa plays in the translation is by doing the ‘poetic justice’ to the character of Shakuntala. Mehta, in the movie, gives the most important aspects of the story, a character who defines the true nature of womanhood, the apt representation of River Ganga and Indian woman who knows her strength. This aspect of feminist translation can be viewed as a proper act of translation where the translator pays much importance to the source culture. As Barbara Godard theorizes, in feminist translation, “difference” is no longer “a negative term,” and translation becomes what she calls a “transformance”:

Like parody, feminist translation is difference despite similarity. As feminist theory tries to show, difference is a key factor in thought processes and in critical activity. The feminist translator affirming her critical difference, her delight in interminable rereading and re-writing, flaunts the signs of her manipulation of the text. Womanhandling the text in translation means replacing the modest, self-effacing translator.

The translator becomes an active participant in the creation of meaning.

(89)

In Conclusion, *Water* as a mere critique of Hindu patriarchal orthodoxy is as much detrimental as it is a denial of its universal appeal in evoking the redemptive

potential of all human beings for social change and renewal. Far from representing a precise portrayal of socio-cultural practices and outlooks of Hindu widowhood in pre-Independence India, both authors are legitimately correct in their interpretation of the novel and the film as being against violence, beyond the boundaries of time and space. What is also fundamental is that *Water* frames Indian widows within rigid Indian culture and society that still inhabits several aspects of life, both in economic and regional spheres.

The enforced “law of nature” on women over the years have been one of the worst aspects of human history. Through this law of nature, women have been marginalized across the world. In order to contest such a construction, women writers have voiced their wrath through their writings - the medium Sidhwa uses to re-voice Mehta. Most importantly, as Santosh Gupta points out, we should at the same time keep in mind that both Mehta and Sidhwa have constructed the holy city of Banaras and Hindu society from a specific angle that, although highlighting the backwardness of Hindu orthodoxy in colonial India, it does not pay due attention to the flexibility of Hindu tradition and the changes that were taking place in the same period. In the Brahmanical tradition, “a woman is recognized as a person only when she is one with her husband” (Sidhwa 8). Chuyia is hardly aware of the implications of this predicament and when she is seen pampered and celebrated during the numerous wedding rituals, she innocently enjoys the enticing offer of new clothes and the festive celebrations of her community. After the wedding, Chuyia lives in her parental home as was the custom with wedded pre-pubescent girls. Not long after, news of her husband’s near-death reaches her parents. Far from representing themselves only in ways dictated by Hindu patriarchy, Chuyia, Kalyani and Shakuntala subversively move beyond the oppressive social world.

Due to its powerful thought-provoking critique as both fictional and cinematic text, *Water* has been making waves in projecting multiple cosmopolitan trajectories in the ways the filming and the writing of its story has been crossing over local and national boundaries, religious and political alliances and intertwining many people in order to come to its full completion. Since the original text and the translated text, or metatext, are not easily comparable in terms of specific criteria, the concepts of “translatability” and “accuracy” can only be considered in conventional terms. Textual translation follows the principle according to which an original can possibly have many different translations, all of them potentially accurate; such potentiality is even more developed in intersemiotic translation, to such an extent that any attempt to retranslate a text into its original language - hoping to recreate, as a result, the original text - is inconceivable.

The intersemiotic translation of *Sidhwa* tries to highlight the major concern of Mehta about the degraded situation of women and nature in India. The evils of society have to be cleansed by women and water. Bapsi’s racy style of writing ensures that there is not a single dull moment in the book. The climax, where Shakuntala, the sympathetic, middle-aged widow, holds Chuyia close to her chest, looking out frantically to bestow the child away to one of the Gandhian supporters at a station, is one of the most touching portions of this book. The fact that Chuyia manages to relive a life of drudgery and other ills associated with the widowhood in the ghetto symbolises a ray of hope even for those caught in the most helpless circumstance. And it is exactly this feeling of redemption, running throughout the book that prevents it from ever getting morose and depressing.

There is a great similarity with the noble river Ganga and the innocent and intelligent Chuyia. The river is worshipped and has a special space in Indian

mythology and minds. But due to brutal and inhuman practices it is polluted in past and due to carelessness it is polluted in present. Women and nature are the victims of patriarchal social set up and male dominance. Patriarchy has been trying to control and conquer over the female existence. The modern man also aims to control and conquer the nature. The pain and misery aroused due to this dominance resulted into revolt. Some revolts effectively affect and bring a change in the contemporary society. As a result such movements niche a special corner on the canvass of literature. The theory like feminism voices the suppressed cry of the women. Similarly, the eco-feminism focuses on the alarming condition of the nature with that of the pains suffered by women in the prevailing period. The sensitive minds feel the pain and sufferings of the suppressed and effectively pen out in the literature to bring awareness in the society.

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