

Intertextuality As An Art Of Narration: An Analysis Of The Novels Of Bapsi Sidhwa

J. Sreeja

Research scholar in English, Reg.No.182230140120010, PG & Research Department of English, Annai Velankanni College, Tholayavattam, Affiliated to MS University, Abishekapatti Thirunelveli-627012, Tamil Nadu, India, Mail.id. jssreeja87@gmail.com.

Dr. F.Meena Theresa

Associate Professor & Research Supervisor, PG & Research Department of English, Annai Velankanni College, Tholayavattam, Affiliated to MS University, Abishekapatti Thirunelveli-627012, Tamil Nadu, India. Mail.id. meena.pdy9@gmail.com

ABSTRACT:

This paper entitled “Intertextuality as an art of Narration: An Analysis of the novels of Bapsi Sidhwa” examines how Sidhwa makes use of intertextuality as an art of narration in her novels. It is a technique of narration which makes the readers aware of the concept of universality of literary themes in literature. It enables the readers to develop their reading and writing skills. It also unveils the authors knowledge in various literatures belong to the world. Sidhwa’s effective use of intertextuality in her novels makes the readers to be aware of the literary styles and methods employed by the famous writers who belong to the different parts of the world. She has made use of intertextuality in almost all her novels to provide depth to her writings.

Keywords: Intertextuality, Indirect quotation, Khorden Avesta, Allusions.

A text is a permutation of texts, an intertextuality in the space of a given text, in which several utterances, taken from other texts, intersect and neutralize one another.

-Allen Graham

Intertextuality is one of the interesting literary devices used by writers when they shape their texts. It is a term coined by Julia Christeva in 1966 and she used it in her essay “Word, dialogue and novel” to denote the interdependence of literary texts. It provides ample scope for the writers to make references to myths, legends, commentaries of some well-known texts, folks songs, famous poems and holy texts. The different techniques of intertextuality are direct quotation, indirect quotation, mentioning a person, documents or statements, comment on or evaluate a statement, text or otherwise invoked voice, using recognizable phrasing terminology

associated with specific people or group of people or particular documents. Writers include it in their text to provide layers of meaning to their works.

Sidhwa attains mastery in using intertextuality as an art of narration in her novels. She has made use of the poems of the poets like Mohammed Iqbal, Ernest Dowson, Kalidas and Byron. Her inclusion of the literary texts of the writers belong to other languages and traditions reveal her interest in literatures which belong to different parts of the world. She begins her novel *Ice- Candy- Man* by quoting the lines of the famous urdu poem ‘Complaint to God’ by Iqbal. It serves as a kind of epigraph for the novel. The lines are:

Shall I hear the lament of the nightingale, submissively lending my ear?
The fire of verse gives me courage and binds me no more to be faint.
With dust in my mouth I am abject: to God I make my complaint.
Sometimes you favour our rivals and sometimes with us you are free,
I am sorry to say it so boldly. You are no fickle than we. (1)

In these lines the poet describes that for years he remained silent hearing all the lament of the people. But his skill in writing verse gives him the courage to complain God about the sufferings of people. He also feels sorry for complaining to God so boldly. These lines suggest that Sidhwa’s purpose of writing the novel is also like the poet’s intention as expressed in the poem. *Ice- Candy- Man* becomes hopeless in life after his realization that he himself is responsible for the downfall and sad fate of Ayah. In order to reveal his sadness Sidhwa quotes the following lines from Iqbal’s poem “Sakinama”:

Give me the mystic wine that burns all veils,
The wine by which life’s secret is revealed,
The wine whose essence is eternity,
The wine which opens mysteries concealed.
Lift up the curtain, give me the power to talk.
And make the sparrow struggle with the hawk. (275)

In *The Pakistani Bride* too she includes Mohammed Iqbal’s poem *Kudi Ko Kar Buland itna*. She makes use of it to heighten up the spirits of Carol in the novel. Farukh recites the poem to change the disappointed mind of Carol. The lines are:

Kudi Ko Kar Buland itna

Heighten your 'khudi' to such majesty,

ke har takdeer say pahalay,

God himself asks man-

'Buta teri raza kya hai?'

Tell me, what do you wish?'. (229)

Sidhwa also makes use of allusion, one of the techniques of intertextuality in her novel *The Pakistani bride*. It is an indirect way of referring to a person, event, or thing or to a part of another text. Sidhwa refers to the Roman poet Ernest Dowson's poem "Gone with the Wind" to elucidate the character of Carol in the novel. She states that Carol resembles Katie Scarlett O' Hara in the poem. Katie is not beautiful but possess the powerful ability to charm and attract men. According to Sidhwa Carol too has the power like Katie. In the novel *Water*, she includes few lines from Kalidas' poem "Meghdoot", to express the romantic love which Narayan has for Kalyani. The lines are "*Neepam dhrashtva haritkapisham kesherre rardhyarudhe—ravirbhuta prathamkukulah kandalishvanukaccham*" (123). He reveals his love pain through the poem. He makes use of the titular line of Byron's poem "She walks like a Beauty in the Night" to express his love for Kalyani. Sidhwa not only includes poems but also includes the ideas from the religious texts like the Mahabharata, the Bhagavatgita, the Avestan texts and the Bible. She refers to the concept mentioned the Gita that "Learn to live like a lotus untouched by the filthy water it grows in" (131). Kalyani refers to it as a kind of advice to Narayan to devoid of the love which he has for her. In the course of the novel when Madhumati advises the young widows in the ashram not to get remarried, she quotes from the Mahabharata stating that "just as birds flock to a piece of flesh left on the ground, so all men try to seduce a widow" (151).

Sidhwa includes quotes from the Zoroastrian holy texts like the *Gathas* and *Khorden Avesta*. In *The Crow Eaters* she mentions the preachings related to the *Navjote* ceremony of the Parsis as mentioned in Zarathustra's Gathas as: "Give ear to the great Truths. Look within with enlightened mind (lit: flaming mind) at the faith of your own selection man by man, each one for himself" (124). In *The American Brat* Sidhwa includes the *Jasa-me-avanghe* Mazda prayer of the parsis. When Feroza starts her journey to the US, she seeks almighty's blessing by quoting a prayer from the Zoroastrian religious text. Sidhwa provides the English translation of the prayer as: "come to my help, o Ahura-Mazda! Give me victory, power and the joy of life" (42). The lines are from the *Khorden Avesta*, the book of daily prayers of the Zoroastrians.

Literature is not bound to a particular nation or country. It is a universal one and there is interrelationship among the texts belong to different parts of the world. Intertextuality as a literary device provides ample scope for the writers to inculcate the values and norms of distinct

places in the readers' mind. It enables the readers to develop their reading and writing skills. It unveils the authors knowledge in the literatures belong to different parts of the world. Sidhwa's effective use of intertextuality in her novels also provides an insight into the texts of famous poets like Iqbal, Kalidas, Ernest Dowson and Byron. It further adds colour to the texts by the inclusion of ideas and concepts from the holy texts and famous epics.

Works Cited

Allen, Graham *Intertextuality*. London:Graham Allen presses, 2000.

Sidhwa, Bapsi *The Crow Eaters*. New Delhi: Penguin, 1990.

Sidhwa, Bapsi *The Pakistani Bride*. New Delhi: Penguin, 1990.

Sidhwa, Bapsi *Ice-Candy-Man*. New Delhi: Penguin, 1989.

Sidhwa, Bapsi *An American Brat*. New Delhi: Penguin, 1994.

Sidhwa, Bapsi *Water*. New Delhi: Penguin, 2006.