

‘Chitrlekha’ in the light of ‘Thais’: An Intertextual Approach

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Abstract

With the advancement of new theories and tenets of literary criticism, texts were considered an independent unit and were studied in isolation. After the fifth decade of the present century, there were considerable changes in the perspective of literary criticism and ‘text’ became an interconnected concern with the introduction of Intertextuality by Julia Kristeva. Julia Kristeva opined that a work of literature is connected with another work, without considering the limitation of time and space. Bhagwati Charan Verma is one of the prominent signatures of Hindi literature in the book of world literature and many classics flourished from his pen. His ‘Chitrlekha’ is a study into the exploration of sin, goodness, virtue and vices through the characters of Chitrlekha, Beejgupta and Kumargiri; this work is inspired by the ‘Thais’ of Anatole France. The writer admits, in the preface, if the difference of culture and civitation is violated, there is no difference between both works. The characters of Chitrlekha and Kumargiri are the replica of Thais and the hermit; in both works, the male protagonist shrinks of the female protagonists but finally, in the name of their salvation, become the victim of their allurements and fall from their divine glory; the female protagonists, in both the novels, seem higher than the male protagonists.

The present study is to go to the Chitrlekha’ through the thematic and character study of the Thais.

Keywords: Sin, Virtue, Salvation, Human weakness, Character.

Literature, in its narrow sense, is the chain of events, happening in human lives. The life of a person reflects in the life of another person/s with or without variation; accordingly, the records of the events reflect in the literature of another language, nation, culture and civilization knowingly or unknowingly; this correlation of the events and happenings is called intertextuality.

The term ‘Intertextuality’ was popularized by Julia Kristeva when she analyzed the theory of Bakhtin, regarding Carnibal and Dialogism and Carnival. According to Intertextuality, any text is in relation to another text, within or without variation. The work may be directly reflected or indirectly allusions and references may be the part of the primary text. Intertextuality, for Julia Kristeva is, “...a permutation of texts, intertextuality in the space of a given text, in which several utterances, taken from other texts, intersect and neutralize one another”. There are various approaches for Intertwxtuality such like citations, specific allusions, citations, repetitions, modifications of the formal and great capabilities of earner texts. In Kristeva’s formula, any text is an ‘intertext’ if it is associated with another text anyhow. Text can not be followed in isolation or in the limited boundary of pre-fixed ideologies; the prejudiced theories cut the relation of the text from other concepts and institutions like society, religion, philosophy and any type of –ism.

Intertextuality stands against the theory of Jacques Derrida in which Derrida opines that there's not anything outside the text; it clarifies that all meanings are within the introspection and re-introspection of texts and that no text can stand out of this explanation and re-explanation. The intertextual productions are for that reason compulsory to literary manufacturing, involving methods of noticing primarily based on energy members of the family, forms and other theoretical disciplines.

On the basis of the composer’s intention and the significance of the references, Intertextuality can be of three types in literature: optional, obligatory and accidental.

Optional intertextuality: It is based on least impact on the value of the primary text or hypertext. It depends on the writer’s intention of regarding the original writer. It is necessary to follow the hupotext in following the hypertext.

Obligatory intertextuality: The writer’s deliberately invocation of bringing a comparative or associated concern between two or more than texts brings Obligatory Intertextuality. It depends on the study of previous text and then following it in the contemporary or studied text. Tom Stoppard’s ‘Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead’ can be followed if the reader is acquainted with Shakespeare’s Hamlet.

Accidental intertextuality: When a readers brings a connection of a text with another text on the basis of his personal experience or the cultural practice, without any being any apprehensible subsidiary point within the main text.

The strategies of Intertextuality:

(1) **Direct quotation:** Using citation marks, block indentation, italics, or other typographic points to set sure quotation from the different phrases of the text.

(2) **Oblique Citation:** To apply words to reflect the other author’s expertise and interpretation of the original text.

(3) **Mention:** Mentioning someone, file or statements: depending on the reader familiarities with the unique text and what it says.

(4) **Commenting:** Remark on or valuate a statement, text or otherwise invoked voice.

(5) **Application of terms:** The usage of recognizable phraseology, terminology related with precise humans or organization of humans or unique files.

In the light of the 'Intertextuality, the present study studies two classics of different literatures: 'Chitrlekha' of Bhagwati Charan Verma with 'Thais' by Anatole France.

II

Chitrlekha (1934), a slender literary Hindi novel by Bhagwati Charan Verma is themed in love, life, sin and other distinctive matters. It is composed after Anatole France's *Thais* (1890) however is about in an Indian platform. Anatole France credited the Nobel Prize in 1921 for his nobility of style and sympathy to humanity. Woven round an interesting love tale that displays on and flashes out now no longer simply the numerous elements of human manner and demeanour however additionally the perplexion confronted through human beings in their lifetime, Chitrlekha is primarily connected with vision and diction. The tale starts with a talk among an extraordinary Saint Ratnambar and his disciples, Shwetank and Vishaldev about sins in the society. Finally, they finish that people come to be sufferers and slaves of circumstance. So, in line with Ratnambar -there's no sin and distinctive feature in line with se. Everyone does deeds in line with instances that befall them of their lifetime. The writer additionally propounds the perspectives that sin can be in movement however in no way in notion and additionally that attachment is in hopes and longings, and alienation comes from gratification. Through the numerous twists and turns withinside the plot, Bhagwati Charan Varma presents a sincerity. Through the character of Chitrlekha, the writer paints the existence of an absolutely entitled woman: stunning and robust from within, materialistic through choice, open minded and generous hearted and sincere in duties.

Thais is a unique fiction by Anatole France the French Nobel laureate; this work came into print in 1890. It is primarily based totally on occasions withinside the existence of Saint *Thais* of Egypt, her acceptance of Christianity; she is stated to be in the 4th century. Paphnuce, a holy parson of the Egyptian wasteland, moves to Alexandria to locate *Thais*, the siren who enchanted his heart when he was in the prime of his life. Masquing as a spanking, he is positioned to talk together along with her approximately eternity; rather he succeeds in converting her into Christianity. Yet on their return to the wasteland he will become interested together along with her former existence. She admits conventary to get rid of her hideous life. He can't overlook the pull of her well-known splendor, and will become burdened approximately the values of existence. Later, as she is about to succumb and might only see heaven starting earlier than her, he involves her facet and tells her that her religion is an nothing but an illusion, and that he is moon after her.

III

In the preface of the 'Chitrlekha', Bhagwati Charan Verma admits the similarity between his novel and 'Thais' by Anatole France. Both the novels deal with the problem of virtue, sin, goodness and evil in human life. The 'Chitrlekha' begins with the problem of defing 'Sin' by Mahaprabhu Ratnambar. He advises Shvetank, a Kshatriya, to go to Beejgupta and Vishaldev, a Brahmin to go to Kumargiri and to mingle into the world to solve the puzzle of

virtue, vices, goodness and sin. Kumargiri was a yogi who proclaimed that he has neither any desire and has 'overwhelmed the human lust of ego' (11); his only desire is the achievement of emancipation through self-discipline and concentration while Beejgupta was the gay lord with the sensuality of the world in his eyes, atheist, passionate and attractive. In the beginning of the novel, Beejgupta is rapt in the beauty of Chitrlekha, not a courtesan but a dancing girl, famous as the 'most seductive and beautiful dancer in Patliputra' (14).

In order to locate Thais, 'Sweet flowering hyacinth, beautiful drinker of light', Paphnuce, an ascetic hermit from the Egyptian desert, sets out for Alexandria. He can converse with her about eternity while acting dashing; He manages, surprisingly, to win her over to Christianity. But when they get back to the desert, he becomes interested in her previous life. In order to turn from her sins, she goes to a convent. He loses track of the things that really matter in life because he can't shake the pull of her famed beauty. Afterward, as she is passing on and can see paradise of sincerity, purity and holiness opening before her, he comes to her and opens his heart to her that her confidence is a deception, and that he adores her.

Chitrlekha was a Brahmin widow in her teens. After her widowhood, she started practicing celibacy but Krishnaditya, a young and handsome youth, entered her life and pregnant her. He committed suicide after humiliation. After some times, Beejgupta entered her life and filled it with boundless luxuries. When Beejgupta was expected to be engaged with Yashodhara, the daughter of Mritunjaya, she drew to Kumargiri who first refused her but later allowed her to stay with him. Being blinded to her beauty and his desires, he fell in her lap. Like Chitrlekha, life of Thais' life was a tale of sufferings. She was born of poor parents and was not satisfied with the manners of the customers who used to come to her father's shop. A hope, in the form of a slave, was in her life whom she liked 'like a father, like a mother, like a nurse, and like a dog'; but he was crucified in the charge of stealing a silver salt-cellar. Moeroe, an old lady and mistress of dancing troupes, trained her into dancing; being affected of her dance, Lollius, the son of the pro-consul fell in love with her but it lasted only six months and she was left on the road again. Then, in her life, came Philosopher Nicias, who desired to possess her, although he professed to have no desires. Finally came Paphnutius who wanted to raise her from her status but at last, like Kumargiri, Papyrus fell in her love. At the death-bed of Thais, he said, "Do not die!" he cried, in a strange voice, which he himself did not recognise. "I love thee! Do not die! Listen, my Thais. I have deceived thee? I was but a wretched fool. God, heaven--all that is nothing. There is nothing true but this worldly life, and the love of human beings. I love thee! Do not die! That would be impossible--thou art too precious! Come, come with me! Let us fly? I will carry thee far away in my arms. Come, let us love! Hear me, O my beloved, and say, 'I will live; I wish to live.' Thais, Thais, arise!"

The character of Kumargiri is the replica of Paphnutius. The difference between them is that the former is visited by Chitrlekha while the latter himself goes to Thais. Paphnutius was attracted to Thais but he considered her fetcher to the sin. She awakened desire in him, and burning in love, once he reached her home but could not knock at her door because of his immaturity bred natural timidity and holes in his pocket. Anatole France writes about him, "Paphnutius began to think of Thais, because Thais was a sin to him, and he meditated long,

according to ascetic rules, on the fearful hideousness of the carnal delights with which this woman had inspired him in the days of his sin and ignorance.”

The end of the ‘Chitrlekha’ seems to conclude the dialogues of the old man and Paphnutius about virtuous and sinful life, "Stranger, I deprive myself of nothing which is good, and I flatter myself that I have found a life which is satisfactory enough, though-- to speak more precisely--there is no such thing as a good or evil life. Nothing is itself, either virtuous or shameful, just or unjust, pleasant or painful, good or bad. It is our opinion which gives those qualities to things, as salt gives savour to meats." After one year, when Vishaldev and Shvetank meet Mahaprabhu Ratnambar, they define the characters of Kumargiri and Beejgupta in their respective experiences and call each other's guide, the sinner; Mahaprabhu Ratnambar concludes that sin does not exist in the world; we define it as per our perspective. Man acts according to his nature that is defined by circumstances; he is slave to his circumstances. He says, "then why talk frivolously of virtue or sin, when every subtle experience is capable of endless variations and countless definitions?"

In a long run, the ‘Chitrlekha’ is definitely the work of obligatory intertextuality, based on the ‘Thais’ by Anatole France. The characters of Chitrlekha and Kumargiri are the true replica of Thais and Paphnutius respectively. Bhagwati Charan Verma, too, do not conclude the solution of the cardinal problem of sin and goodness through the articulation of the protagonists but bring it out through Mahaprabhu Ratnambar who plays the second fiddle in the novel and his sageous commentary begins and concludes the narration. Through the allusions, quotations and other techniques, Verma has got success the intertextualizing his text with another text of different culture.

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