



Partition Literature: A Study of *Ice-Candy Man* and its Adaptation

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Abstract

Adapting a literary text into a visual form is a fascinating process that grapples with the inherent tension between words and images. It's only natural that some elements may need to be condensed or omitted when translating linguistic signs into visual ones. The visual representation of a literary work can lead to the reimagining, adjustment, or reevaluation of the significance of previous literary works. The division of the Indian subcontinent has garnered significant attention in literature, yet there has been a noticeable lack of discussion in serious cinema and academia regarding the partition and its associated matters. Bapsi Sidhwa's novel *Ice-Candy-Man* endeavours to reevaluate and reconstruct the narrative of Partition, amplifying the voices of marginalised communities across various dimensions such as gender, class, ethnicity, and nationality. Sidhwa critically examines the history of Partition through a feminist lens and from a Pakistani standpoint, challenging the prevailing discursive patterns of historical discourse in Europe and India. Deepa Mehta's 1947; Earth, in contrast to the novel, can be viewed as a component of the larger narratives surrounding communal violence and the complexities of human behaviour. The film adaptation of the novel stays true to the original source material, maintaining the same general plot and dialogue. However, cinema presents a unique medium with its own set of considerations such as economics, authorship, production, distribution, and reception. As a result, certain issues from the novel may be downplayed while others take centre stage. For discovering the captivating exploration of the portrayal of *Ice-Candy-Man* in its mesmerising cinematic adaptation, the study has utilised a qualitative approach, employing content analysis to delve into the profound association between Bapsi Sidhwa's *Ice -Candy -Man* and Deepa Mehta's 1947; Earth. The paper deals with the representation of the partition of India in literature and cinema through a comparative analysis of *Ice Candy Man* and its film adaptation. This study underscores the interplay between cinematic narratives and Partition literature. It demonstrates how adaptation can alter specific narrative components to improve cinematic efficacy while

retaining the fundamental themes of human suffering, social discord, and displacement. A comparative analysis of the novel and its film adaptation reveals that the literary work offers deep psychological insights through its narrative perspective, whereas the film adaptation intensifies emotional and visual engagement with the traumatic realities of Partition. Ultimately, the research findings indicate that these modifications significantly bolster the preservation of cultural memory and the recontextualization of such memories. This highlights the collaborative influence of cinema and literature on contemporary discussions surrounding historical events.

Keywords: Visual Adaptation, Partition, Indian Independence, Indian Cinema

Introduction

The timeless art form of cinema has long been intertwined with the world of literature. The enduring partnership between literature and cinema is a testament to the countless works of adaptation. The content and material requirements for cinema are wonderfully met by the various sources of literature, making it an unquestionably excellent source to outsource and adapt any media. According to scholar Thomas Leitch, the process of adapting films from literary works belongs to the era of films (Leitch 3). However, Virginia Woolf criticises film adaptations, referring to literary texts as the “victim” and cinema as a “parasite” (Woolf). In *Theory of the Film*, Béla Balázs argues that adaptation derives new visual forms and thematic meanings from literature. He suggests that there are numerous possibilities for variation in this creative transformation (Balázs 45). In her book *The Theory of Adaptation*, Linda Hutcheon, a renowned theorist, asserts that a text possesses the ability to embrace a transition from one nature to another, while also having the potential to create new possibilities that were not present in its original form. She asserts, referencing the theories of imitation or mimesis (Hutcheon 8) and Walter Benjamin's notes that storytelling continually produces new narratives and meanings (Benjamin 87). The novel and the movie are intricately crafted works of fiction that beautifully enhance each other. The novel and the movie capture the essence of life. However, the two art genres are intertwined. A novel usually mirrors the author's introspective musings and concepts, while a film adaptation is often shaped by market forces, audience demands, cultural biases, and prevailing preferences.

The captivating journey of the rich and vibrant history of Indian cinema.

Indian films have significantly enhanced the understanding and appreciation of Indian culture. The inaugural Indian feature film, *Raja Harishchandra*, was released in 1913 and helmed by Dadasaheb Phalke (**Gokulsing and Dissanayake 22**) is widely regarded as the pioneer of Indian cinema, who also served as its producer and director. Significant alterations occurred in the industry around 1947. Indian cinema has witnessed a shift from historical and mythical tales to social-reformist films. This period also saw filmmakers such as Satyajit Ray and Bimal Roy focusing on social realism and marginalised communities (**Gokulsing and Dissanayake 55**), who concentrated on an overlooked facet of society: the lower castes and social classes. The cinematic movements have evolved since the early days, when directors aimed to provide a heightened feeling of reality and comprehension to audiences, in response to shifts in the social and political climate.

The global recognition of Indian films can be attributed to their notable success at international film festivals, which has subsequently contributed to their rising popularity on a worldwide scale. The film industry in India is characterised by its diverse regional language sectors, with Hindi cinema, often identified as Bollywood, being prominent in the northern region of the country. The film industry in West Bengal is referred to as Bengali cinema, whereas the cinematic output of Gujarat is commonly known as Dhollywood. The Kannada cinema, commonly referred to as Sandalwood, represents the film industry situated in the state of Karnataka. The Telugu cinema, commonly referred to as Tollywood, represents the film industry located in the regions of Andhra Pradesh and Telangana. The film industry in Kerala is referred to as Malayalam cinema, commonly

known as Bollywood. Tamil cinema, commonly referred to as Kollywood, represents the film industry in the Tamil language, while Marathi cinema pertains to the cinematic productions originating from the state of Maharashtra. These sectors typically encompass elements of music, dance, and structured theatrical performance. India's annual film production totals approximately 1000 films, exceeding that of any other country, while also accommodating an additional 10,000 foreign film screenings (Magik India, 2022).

A Captivating fusion of Partition and Indian Cinema

In the year 1608, the British East India Company made its initial arrival in India with the purpose of engaging in the trading of spices, which were initially utilised mostly for the purpose of preserving goods (**White-Spinner 14**). During more than 250 years that passed before the Indians were able to regain control of the country, the British established their authority over the Indians and dominated the nation. They accomplished this by employing a strategy known as "Divide and Rule." One of the most significant events in the history of South Asia and the British Empire was the partition of the British Indian Empire, which took place in the summer of 1947. Taking into consideration the situation from the point of view of the imperial British, the British empire suffered a loss of power during the heroic but drawn-out struggle for freedom that the Haitians waged, particularly after the Indian rebellion of 1857. The British Crown seized control of the East India Company in 1858, which resulted in the company's ability to administer India being transferred to the Crown. On the other hand, it is essential to keep in mind, from the point of view of the Indians who live on the subcontinent, that during the partition of India, a great number of people lost their lives, their families, their nation, and most importantly, their faith in humanity. Even after seventy-five years of suffering through the anguish of separation and migration, people from both countries continue to be tormented by the imagery of the split. The Partition of India was a shocking act of violence that resulted in the uprooting of fifteen million people and the loss of two million lives (**White-Spinner 14**). Despite the fact that it did not go to war, it was nonetheless a shocking act of violence. Within the context of modern Indian history, the division of India, which took place in August 1947, is seen as a significant event. The emergence of India and Pakistan not only resulted in the creation of a geographical split, but it also resulted in an increase in the emotional separation between people (Sharma 89). The division of the country resulted in a corresponding bifurcation of the population, predominantly along religious affiliations, leading to their displacement from their respective lands and residences. This transpired alongside the partition of the nation. Displacement, linked to travel, is perceived as a departure from one's established residence, representing a phenomenon intrinsically associated with the act of travelling. Approximately 16.7 million individuals were compelled to move in the initial years after the partition (Sharma and Velath 2021). The extensive migration resulted in the perpetration of horrifying violence by adherents of one religion, aimed at expelling followers of the other religion from what was previously a unified nation. Kaul posits that the grief associated with Partition can be comprehended by examining the transformations experienced by the Hindu and Muslim populations residing within their defined territories, as a consequence of daily mass executions and the forced migration of approximately 10 million individuals (Kaul 2002). The plight and adversity associated with being categorised as a refugee within one's own country, coupled with financial difficulties and instances of physical violence, represent significant issues that have been comprehensively examined in contemporary studies of collective memory. The concept of home and displacement is exemplified opting to transition from the newly established Pakistan to India, alongside Muslims who chose to relocate from India to Pakistan.

This was in addition to those individuals who chose to remain on the side of the border where they were now dwelling. At the same time, it is necessary to admit that the movement did not always initiate itself spontaneously. The horrible events that occurred both before and after the Partition caused people to lose their homes and have their identities changed. This was a consequence of the Partition. People were required to conform to their new identities as refugees (Sharma and Velath 567). The situation was predominantly characterised by coercion, which proved particularly devastating for the women who were abducted, ultimately resulting in their displacement and the inability of their families to reintegrate them into their households. Both Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru, who condemned the families that declined to

accept the women back solely on the basis that they had been taken, are referenced in Mookerjea and Leonard, who discusses the circumstances surrounding this issue. Both of these individuals were aware of the situation and chastised the families. On the other hand, it had been pointed out that the political discourse's flaw was that it did not discuss in a meaningful manner what should have been done (Mookerjea-Leonard 2005)

The 1947 Indian partition served as a catalyst for filmmakers to produce films that accurately portrayed the events and the hardships faced by the people. *Chinnamul* (Bengali), *Andhaman Kaidhi* (Tamil), and *Garm Hava* (Hindi) are a limited selection of films that have contributed to the dissemination of the concept of creating a cinematic production centred on this subject matter (Mohanram 72). Numerous films have been frequently released, although the quantity remains insufficient due to the multifaceted nature of the divide, encompassing not just the separation of the two nations and the subsequent migration. The Exodus event was accompanied by a significant amount of chaos and violence. Individuals have experienced the loss of their romantic partners, relatives, residences, lives, and even certain inheritances that carried significant emotional significance to them. While not universally applicable, several films have addressed these subjects, while others have mostly failed to adequately elucidate the nuances involved. The concept of a tangible dwelling has transformed into a notion of possessing land, hence creating space for memoirs that primarily address psychological matters. The concept of introspection related to the inception of existence in this location, during the division of the country and the subsequent need for the people to begin anew. The author thoroughly examines the formation of the past within the context of memory, specifically focusing on memories associated with Partition (Mohanram 2016). Filmmakers have shown the phenomenon of the great migration in manners that mirror their own conceptualizations and stances situated on the fringes of societal norms. In regional vernacular literature, the portrayal of an agrarian community characterised by a high level of social stratification is shown, incorporating Sufi symbols that symbolise the eradication of love, charismatic individuals who defy societal norms, and healing mystics (Siddique 2017). Filmmakers predominantly employed three forms of injustice to portray it: communal, familial, and national.

Ice-Candy-Man: A Historical Reconstruction by Bapsi Sidhwa

Bapsi Sidhwa is a Pakistani writer whose fiction focuses on the lives of people in the Indian subcontinent, particularly during the turbulent times of Partition and the division of British India into India and Pakistan (Sidhwa). Her major novels explore the predicament of female protagonists in patriarchal societies and the strained geopolitics of the subcontinent (Didur 45). Born in Karachi in 1938, her work is deeply rooted in her own life and Parsi identity. Her major novels, such as *The Pakistani Bride* and *Ice-Candy-Man*, are renowned for their stylistic dexterity, humour, and complexity. *Ice-Candy-Man* is a postcolonial literary work that depicts the historical context of the Partition of India, with a particular emphasis on the experiences of marginalised communities characterised by factors such as gender, social class, caste, and religion (Butalia 112). The objective of the novel is to challenge and undermine prevailing narratives and linguistic structures that impose physical or psychological subjugation upon marginalised individuals. The work sheds light on the acts of violence perpetrated by Sikhs and Hindus, hence questioning the prevailing European and Indian historical narratives that exhibit animosity against Pakistan and Islam. Sidhwa employs the first-person narrative technique to articulate the life of Lenny, her Parsi familial heritage, and the tumultuous period of Partition. This reinterpretation of historical narratives can be interpreted as a critical analysis of conventional understandings of history, which frequently attribute historical events to power dynamics rather than natural occurrences. The work also presents a reinterpretation of history from the viewpoint of women, highlighting the actual experiences of women during the Partition (Menon and Bhasin 3). The process of recreating history has the potential to foster subjectivity and individualization. However, it is not inherently incorrect for marginalised segments of society to engage in historical reconstruction as a means of asserting their own perspectives. The central motif explored in the work is to explore the unfortunate circumstances faced by women inside a patriarchal Indian society that is predominantly male-oriented.

The Visual Adaptation: Exploring the Politics of Deepa Mehta's *1947: Earth*

Deepa Mehta, who was born in 1950 in Amritsar, India, had the opportunity to attend film screenings during her formative years as a result of her father's ownership of a theatre (Desai 87). She pursued her education at Welham Girls High School in Dehradun and initially lacked inclination towards pursuing a career as a film director. Nevertheless, her fervour for philanthropy compelled her to do a scholarly programme in Philosophy at University of Delhi. Following her employment at a documentary film studio, she encountered Paul Saltzman, a Canadian film director, with whom she entered into matrimony and subsequently established Sunrise Films in Toronto. *At '99: a Portrait of Louise Tandy Murch* was Mehta's inaugural foray into the Canadian film industry. Subsequently, they created a motivational film for youngsters titled *Spread Your Wings, Sam and Me*. Deepa Mehta is a filmmaker who employs feminist principles to incorporate elements of Western feminism into Indian contexts. The author's literary oeuvre, specifically her trilogy titled *Fire, Earth, and Water*, delves at the quest for self-actualization among women and the exploitation of their homeland (Desai 101). Mehta incorporates an ecofeminist perspective into Sidhwa's narrative of the Partition of India, emphasising the historical instances of violence, land acquisition, and power transitions that occurred alongside the persecution. The movie *1947: Earth* criticises patriotic ideas that laud freedom and mute its consequences by depicting the bloodshed and misery that occurred in India during the partition of the country (Kabir 63). The history of Partition is given a human touch, and India's political freedom, which was earned after years of sacrifice and effort, is ignored for this purpose. The film has a component of neocolonial frameworks, which are characterised by their criticism of freedom movements and the accomplishments of postcolonial nation states, with a particular emphasis on the individual dimensions of suffering.

Relational Analysis of *Ice Candy Man* and its Adaptation

In the twentieth century, the genre of adapting literature as a source script for a cinema has emerged as a separate style of presenting written materials in a visual medium (Hutcheon 7). Movie adaptations of written literary works exhibit strong thematic and artistic similarities, offering visual pleasure to viewers and effectively conveying or spreading novel concepts, information, or societal truths. The primary objective of both literary texts and visual adaptations is to provide aesthetic satisfaction or delight to readers or spectators. Both the genres of fiction and film incorporate the narrative element, however the reliance on storytelling may be less pronounced in modernist and postmodernist fiction, as well as in their visual depictions. Diverse literary strategies have enhanced the ability of cinema directors to effectively convey their information through visual means. The early development of cinema was significantly shaped by the literary genres of realism and naturalism, but cinematic methods such as flashback and narrative disjunctions were inspired by poetry and fictional narrative approaches.

Ice-Candy-Man by Bapsi Sidhwa is a novel that takes place during the Partition of India. It offers a critical analysis of the patriarchal, colonial, and nationalist systems, highlighting their role in exploiting women. The girl child's narrative voice is employed to undermine the connection between colonialism and a culture that is centred around males (Didur 89).

The Partition of India has garnered significant scholarly interest, however it has received limited consideration in the realm of post-independence films in India. The majority of literature and films on partition depict violence and bloodshed primarily as communal, obscuring various aspects including politics, nationalism, gender, class, and sexuality within the overarching narrative of religion or communalism, so imbuing the entire issue with a religious essence. The novel *Ice-Candy-Man* by Bapsi Sidhwa delves into the themes of violence and injustice experienced by women within a culture that is largely male-dominated. This exploration is particularly relevant during significant periods of global history, including World War II, the Jewish massacre, and the partition of India. The novel places significant emphasis on the violence inflicted against women by a patriarchal societal structure, whereas the film, *1947: Earth*, centres its attention on the historical occurrence of Lenny, the protagonist who is a little girl, who witnesses the lack of harmony within her parents' relationships.

The cinematic rendition of the literary work, *1947: Earth*, employs Hindi as a medium, wherein the majority of conversations are precisely rendered from English into Hindi. This leads to enhanced and comprehensible conversations for an Indian audience (Leitch 15). Nevertheless, certain words in the novel may lose their semantic significance or exhibit ambiguity when rendered into English as a result of the associated cultural milieu. As an illustration, the term "kotha" is rendered as "roof," a translation that carries associations with prostitution, when the latter does not include such connotations.

Ultimately, Bapsi Sidhwa's novel *Ice-Candy-Man* adeptly delves into the challenges encountered by women in a primarily male-dominated culture within tumultuous circumstances. The cinematic rendition, *1947: Earth*, centres its attention on the thematic elements of feminism, Parsi identity, and psychosexual development. In contrast, the novel's language is adapted into English and subsequently translated into Hindi to enhance comprehension. Both the literary work and the cinematic production vividly portray the manifestation of religious violence in postcolonial India and Pakistan. The literature portrays the village of Pir Pindo as being impacted by communal conflicts, whereas the film depicts the absence of such tensions. Sidhwa attributes the disasters of the subcontinent to Hindu nationalistic leaders such as Nehru and Gandhi, whereas the film portrays the violence as inherent and can be attributed to the inexplicable forces of history or human nature. The literary work known as *Ice-Candy-Man* is a profoundly symbolic and intricate phenomena that encompasses a multitude of perspectives and interpretations. It prominently highlights the lived realities of diverse postcolonial individuals, including children, women, dalits, minorities, and other marginalised communities. The task of translating Deepa Mehta's novel into a visual text presented a considerable challenge, although the film's depiction of the novel's ideas proves to be more impactful. In the novel, Sidhwa employs first-person narrative techniques to examine the evolving paradigms of interreligious, intercommunal, and intersex interactions in pre-colonial and postcolonial India. The film titled *1947: Earth* commences with a voice-over performed by a disembodied female character, assuming the role of an older Lenny. The screen features a representation of Lenny's upbringing. The film employs narrative devices such as flashback or montage, imbuing history with a sense of personal connection and amplifying the voices of the subaltern or marginalised segments of society by highlighting their anguish and hardships throughout the 1940s. The book's narrative is psychologically intense whereas the film's narrative is comparatively more hopeful narrating the possible chances and circumstances of healing after the prolonged violence hence the adaptation has eased the different characteristics to generate a broader warm approach to audience. The novel's narrative regarding the symbolic use of public space deals with parks, homes and streets which represents the social conversations whereas in the film the sites are full of tension and violence hence the change of space reflects the division of society during partition. The novel offers intense psychological profoundness of Ice-Candy Man's character change enfolded the influence of communal hatred, whereas in the film his transformation is quick and dramatic, revealing the emotional shock, hence cinema in comparison of novel cinema simplifies the complexity of psychological character representation for a resilient visual factor.

Conclusion

Literary and cinematic mediums are distinct entities, each encompassing distinct considerations pertaining to authorship, production, dissemination, and reception. In her novel, Deepa Mehta, a transnational diasporic Indian director, deliberately omits some elements or themes that could potentially be perceived as anti-Indian or highly contentious if portrayed on screen. This deliberate choice is influenced by the extensive reach and impact of cinema as a medium. In her previous films, such as *Fire and Water*, Mehta, as a filmmaker, may critically examine the conventional Indian values and culture. Nevertheless, due to her status as an Indian expatriate filmmaker, she encounters challenges in adhering to the anti-Indian ideology shown in the novel, as well as the nationalist politics espoused by Pakistani writers such as Bapsi Sidhwa. Cinema, as a medium, possesses specific compulsions that significantly influence the formation of a visual text.

The historical continuity of partition and its aftermath is evident in their ongoing impact on both the present and future of India. Given the escalation of communal it is imperative to prioritise the preservation of fraternal bonds among diverse populations. The arts, including literature, have the potential to greatly facilitate the establishment of links and peace among many cultures, groups, and nations. Therefore, the examination of Partition films and literature can significantly contribute to the development of

comprehension and awareness about historical events that serve as the foundation for both the present and future.

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