



COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF DEEPA MEHTA'S WATER AND EARTH:1947- A STUDY

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ABSTRACT

Deepa Mehta was born in 15th September 1950. Through her movies she tries to depict prejudice opinion and biased philosophy of the society. Her movies are regarded as challenging and amazing as they reflect the real essence of the society. In a broader sense this study will throw light on the life of women in the movies *Water and Earth: 1947* to portray the state of women in a society.

KEYWORDS: to depict prejudice opinion and biased philosophy.

INTRODUCTION

Research Methodology & Objectives of the study:

This study is the comparative analysis of Deepa Mehta's movie *Water and Earth: 1947*. The study is divided in two analyses i.e. Content and Message Analysis. In content Analysis the researcher study the content of the movies and compare them on several grounds. The researcher will also study the message of the movie conveyed by the director in both the movies. Every research is based on some objectives. So this study is based on the following objectives:

- ❖ To know and compare the thematic expressions of the movies *Water and Earth:1947*
- ❖ To know and compare the depiction of Women in the movies *Water and Earth:1947*
- ❖ To know and compare the cinematography of the movie *Water and Earth:1947*
- ❖ To know and compare the depiction of ideology, language, costumes and surroundings in the movies *Water and Earth:1947*

HYPOTHESIS OF THE STUDY:

Every study is based on some hypotheses. This study is based on the following hypotheses. This study is based on Null Hypotheses:

H1= Both movies *Water and Earth: 1947* directed by Deepa Mehta are similar in theme, women portrayal, cinematography, language, costumes, surroundings and message.

H2= Both movies *Water and Earth: 1947* directed by Deepa Mehta are different in theme, women portrayal, cinematography, language, costumes, surroundings and message.

The theme of "Water" is selected on the basis of river Ganga that is blue in colour and that is the reason why the background of film appears to be dark. For giving the "Moksha" to the soul of a dead person, cremation is performed near the banks of the Ganga River. In the close vicinity to the river, a married woman becomes widow after his husband's remain fall in the river. Mrs Mehta has chosen the theme for the purpose of glorifying the dreadful stories of those women who were deprived of their basic rights in approximation to the imposed restrictions imposed by the cultural laws. As the fluidity of the river keeps on changing in a very similar way the maker showcases the lives of women which keep on changing as the time passes by. In contrast to *Water*, Mrs Mehta derived the theme of the movie "Earth:1947" owing to the consequences of separation of land which separated the lives of many unknown people. She decided to keep the name of her

film "Earth:1947" because of the plot of the story. Like Earth has gravitational force and it attracts every object, in a very similar way the several characters of the film bind themselves with Shanta. Since the movie deals with the separation of Lahore from India that happened back in 1947, the maker decided to keep the name of movie on the basis of land that is Earth.

The two renowned films of Mrs Mehta naming "Water" and "Earth:1947" are the two narratives which are set during the times of Pakistan's division from India and during the demand of decolonising colonial free India. Showcasing the cult miseries of characters depicted in the films, Mrs Mehta let a light fall on the vicious circumstances that surrounded the country before Independent India. The filmmaker along with her screen-writer have outperformed in bringing justice to the voices shunned at those gloomy times where socialism played an indefinite role over the freedom of humanity. In "Earth:1947", where the separation of Lahore from India depicted the separation of men by land and life is in contrast to "Water", where inhumane social practices separated women from their dignity despite of living on the same land. In her prior film "Earth:1947", Mrs Mehta casted a very strong woman character called as Shanta for whom the world didn't appear as dark before the India got free from colonialism. Shanta's role appears to that of the lady who sees big dreams even in the charcoaled world fuelled with hatred for the people of different religion. The movie takes the audience towards the risen communal tensions which were propagated due to the weak arbitrary of Mr Jinnah and Mr Nehru. The tumultuous uproar throughout the Lahore fires the lives of people bounded by blood but separated by different religion. In earth where the protagonist (Shanta) loses her win in the defeat of arising communal tensions differs from the narrative of "Water" where Shakuntala sets Chuhiya free from the darkened world stricken with poverty, miseries which are covert by the socially arising stigma of society. Questioning the audiences by showcasing the grimmer facts about the status of women in those times where self-immolation, isolation and living the life full of pain was the way for a widow woman to live. The maker has led the audience to think about those times where the plight of women remained unheard. The differential analysis of "Water" over "Earth:1947" is only that a woman in prior movie is able to save the life of an eight years old girl whereas the protagonist in later movie finds herself weak and loses her identity to the lecherous mob of men. The story of Water reinforces every viewer to think about the awkward oppression implied over the women because of her fate and it screams out the need to see women through the eyes of humanity not from the glimpses of illicit laws of Hindu mythology. Inside the gulf of darkness lies another subset of dark part of these widowed women which were not listened to the world outside. Shrieking for the hour to change the outdated ideologies preferred over the status of women, the film of Mrs Mehta puts an apologetic note for those who harboured this unnamed crime against women and let the viewer demand for the change in society. The film illustrated one breed of half-baked Indians who believed in child marriages and sent off their daughters to Ashram once they become widow. Apathies of several widowed women who were inflicted with pain and sorrow raised an important enquiry that when will societal laws regarding women will change. Amongst fear of becoming untouchable and the fear to lose families, history has retold the plight of several women who remained helpless to help other women who become victim to the cycle of socially propagated myths. Mr Giles cinematographed these two films in a very different manner. For a unique assumption, he cinematographed "Water" by showing the bluish surroundings likes the river Ganga flowing near the banks of Varanasi to holy temples existing in the city. Recreating the gloomy feel like that of a widowhood's plight, Mr Giles did an extraordinary work in retelling the story that was hid from many people for many years. Illustrating the cruelty in the perception of society towards widowed women who were regarded as untouchable during those nauseating times, Mrs Mehta and her crew energetically captured each and every depressing moments of women living in Ashram. If we compare the cinematographic techniques used in Earth by Mr Giles then it would be surprising to acknowledge that in this movie, he cinematographed various landscapes of Lahore. Mr Giles by capturing beautiful lush green gardens of Lahore's suburbs to the kite flying scenes at the verandas of houses gives a realistic appeal to the film. Reliving the every dully laid moment in the film with the techniques of advanced camera angles, the cinematographer along with Mrs Mehta formed a film which is the composition of various emotions imbued inside it. The uniqueness of this film's direction is that depicts the harsh truth of what society becomes when the battle begins for occupying the land with politically stretched assertions. Among the other things, the costumes of several characters in the movie "Earth: 1947" differs from those portrayed in the movie "Water". Apparently where the women

characters in "Earth:1947" were showcased wearing traditional saris and western clothes as compared to "Water" where widowed women were seen wearing sorrowfully woven white saris attires. The difference in the costumes worn by the characters in two films is quietly different and the makers make this differentiating step in order to bring a similar contrast to the plot of two different films made on two distant ideologies.

The usage of language in these two films has played a very pivotal role in forming them as the films with truthful content. The language used in the context of film "Water" differs from the kind of language used in "Earth: 1947". Seeing the characters speak pure Hindi in "Water" reminds the audiences of time when social advancement along with the up gradation of thought didn't happen. From the eldest lady in clan to the small girl Chuhiya, each of the females represented in film spoke pure Hindi. The speaking attribute of women comprised of the gestures that might have been used in those times where the voices of women remained unheard. In a very similar to contrast to the plot of the film "Earth: 1947", the writer used the dialogues that were very general and even today their usage is prevalent in daily talks. In "Earth:1947", some English dialogues are also spoken as compared to "Water", where the writer laid more emphasis over much refined Hindi with phrases. The composition of songs played in "Water" speak more about the unearth nature of surroundings. There is a song in the film which talks more about rain and exemplifies that if rain can make a deserted farmland more fertile in a very similar manner the lives of widowed women will prosper by the drops of rain falling in their lives. The most adept thing about the making of Water is that it consists of songs that neutralises the effect of highly disheartening content included in the narrative. By showcasing the banks of river Ganga to the crimination grounds to the holy temples instilled in the cultural roots of holiest city called as Varanasi, the makers have made the viewer's familiar with the natural cyclic changes of lives. This movie let the audience ponder over the lives of women that suffered insufferable damage due to the occurrence of unethical laws subdued over their lives. Whereas songs used in Earth appears more for an emotional appeal contradicting the effect of lives if the separation of land occurs then it also apart the souls from the lives of innocent people. The song in Earth, "Yeh Jo Zindagi Hai" has a lyric which retells the impact of change in life due to changing times, the rising insecurities that one has to face in life if the beloved person goes away from them. Making the people carry mist in their eyes, this song gives an emotional appeal. Because it stirs the emotions of people through practicality in life as well as by signifying the importance of living the life filled of small but joyous moments. Raising the standards beyond the limitations of filmmaking, these two films of the very same filmmaker embarks a very important role that no film can predicted as big or small, it is the maker of the film who carries the magical realism of producing the contents which holds the summation of emotions and truth of social life. The characters in films like Hassan in Earth and Shakuntala in Water, the maker has cohesively led the illustrations of real-life characters that are distinctively different from the perception of society. The prejudiced based perception of the society is told by the character of Hasan (Earth) who appears to be the fun-loving man but showcases his true colours in the end of film. In a similar way, Shakuntala in Water appears to be the woman of selfishness, unkindness but does a noble work by withdrawing out the small girl Chuhiya from Ashram.

The message of the movie Earth: 1947 remains strong and congruent to the fact that the division of estate is the division of people. The British rule over India led to the massive furore and tragically rising conflicts. Even after the rule of British for more than two hundred years, the country remained socially distressed in straightening its own political affairs. The intervening of British officials along with Mr Nehru and Mr Jinnah led to the dreadful incident which took the lives of many unknown people. Fragmenting the society over differences on religion, gender is the most ridiculed thought which was possessed by the leaders of that time. The stains of people blood at the surface of every corner, the traumatised of those people who witness these riots is the most harming incident which anyone come across. If Dil's sister could have got alive on that train, then he might have not turned violent. But as the riot like situation do take lives and leads people to take on revenge, Dil didn't leave any time in taking wrong turn. The beauty of a peaceful city Lahore whose ambience used to boom with fragrance of friendship became the place where hatred, contempt and the clouds of gloominess appeared after it got parted away from Pakistan. The partition of Lahore from India's territory was far most devastating result of any estate whose people's lives have been put at risk. Many socially born evil things like child marriages is also exhibited in the film who brought the audience back to the reality of events that took place in the platitude of former Indian estate. The predicament possessed as threat to

the people living in Lahore was the signal that people who were unaware about the whereabouts of city should seek shelter to a safer place. Since Lahore was getting the acknowledgment of becoming a Muslim city. The snatching up of Shanta from Lenny's home is quite disturbing because it showcases that at the times of emergency, trustworthy people become deceitful. The movie *Water* clearly depicts that women of old traditions suffered insufferable isolation in their own society. In earlier times, a widow was left with three choices that were either they need to re-marry their younger brother or live apart from her house. The third most dreadfully imposed circumstance for being a widow in eighteenth century was self-immolation along with the dead husband. The audacity of protagonist in escaping little girl child from various clutches of immoral practices run in the Ashram elucidates that the strength of women is larger to any extent. As the theme of the movie suggest, remains of Hindus bodies get flow away with waters of river. In a very exact way, the dignity of a woman gets erased away after she becomes a widow and the world around her cohesively blocks all of her humanitarian rights. It is altruistic film that reels the lives of women before Independent India and accumulates several reasons that even after so many decades' women's do need to fight for their own self. Searching for different alternatives in breaking the wall of lowly valued inhumane practices, *Shakuntala* successively succeeds in letting *Chuhiya* come out from the dark world. The woman (*Shakuntala*) in film has set the path for other women to speak out their liberated thoughts with no fear. After all, every life of creature present on earth is limited to some extent. Thereby, it necessitates that women should not consider themselves beneath any external opposing force of rituals inciting on behalf of them and become the prey to such life taking repercussions. Breaking the unbreakable shambles of old-aged Indian society obsessed with inhumane practices, this film is perfect masterpiece for those women who need to take stand for their own selves. The protagonist eventually sets a path for other suppressed women to follow and morph their remaining life with self-respect. Unamicable ritual of a society which has entrenched roots in repressing the rights of a fairer female gender has been propagated transversally throughout the ended era. A widow has all the rights as equal to any women. Fuelled with misery, inadaptability of young girl child in living the life of poverty and painfully feuded inner-conscience conflict with the religion is the plight of women who could not step outside the Ashram. The sayings of Lord Krishna that a lotus blooms from the pure water does not implicate that the widows cannot bloom like watery flowers in life. The poet Kalidas poem "Meghdoot" gives out a stronger message that if god can listen to the voice of unheard then the clouds can also act as the messenger of God. The truth is the biggest God in itself which is showcased in this film. "Karma" and the believer of moral values is the only source of getting attainment for any soul from murkier world. Easing the path of destiny, fate, if there is the source of restoring faith in hard times then it guides the people in disguise.

Thus this study reveals that in these two films depiction of characters varies from every changing context happening in the backdrop of plot. In other corner of thought, women in *Water* are depicted weak as compared to *Earth: 1947*. But they are casted in the fair light exhibiting the ray of hope for many underprivileged women who remain devoid of resources and are dishevelled by the risen societal oppression. Thus the H2 is proved that both movies *Water* and *Earth: 1947* directed by Deepa Mehta are different in theme, women portrayal, cinematography, language, costumes, surroundings and message.

The two renowned films of Mrs Mehta naming "Water" and "Earth" are the two narratives which are set during the times of Pakistan's division from India and during the demand of decolonising colonial free India. Showcasing the cult miseries of the characters illustrated in the films made in the backdrop before independence. The filmmaker along with her screen-writer and the crew have outperformed in bringing justice to the voices shunned at those gloomy times where socialism played an indefinite role over the freedom of humanity. In "Earth", where the separation of Lahore from India depicted the separation of men by land and by life in contrast to "Water", where Mr Kashyap's screenplay writing put a light on inhumane social practices which caused inevitable damage to the dignity and lives of widows living in those depressed times. In her prior film "Earth", Mrs Mehta casted a very strong woman character called as Shanta for whom the world didn't appear as dark after the midnight of India's independence. Shanta's role appears to that of the lady who sees big dreams even in the charcoaled world fuelled with hatred for the people of different religion. The movie takes the audience towards the risen communal tensions which were propagated due to the weak arbitrary of Mr Jinnah and Mr Nehru. The tumultuous uproar throughout the Lahore furores the lives of people bounded by blood but separated by different religion. In *Earth* where the protagonist (*Shanta*) loses her

win in the defeat of arising communal tensions differs from the narrative of “Water” where Shakuntala sets Chuhiya free from the darkened world stricken with poverty, miseries concealed by the socially arising stigma of society. **Questioning the audiences by showcasing the grimmer facts about the status of women in those times** where self-immolation, isolation from the family and living the full of pain was the way for a widow woman to live in those times setback the plight of unanimous religious confinements imposed over the women. The differential analysis of ‘Water’ over ‘Earth’ is that woman in prior movie is able to save the life of an eight years old girl whereas the protagonist in later movie finds herself weak and loses her identity to the lecherous mob of men. The story of Water reinforces every viewer to think about the awkward oppression implied over the women because of her fate and it screams out the need to see women through the eyes of humanity not from the glimpses of illicit laws of Hindu mythology. Inside the gulf of darkness lies another subset of dark part of these widowed women which were not listened to the world outside. Shrieking for the hour to change the outdated ideologies preferred over the status of women, the film of Mrs Mehta puts an apologetic note for those who harboured this unnamed crime against women and let the viewer demand for the change in society. The film illustrated one breed of half-baked Indians who believed in child marriages and sent off their daughters to Ashram once they become widow. Apathies of several widowed women who were inflicted with pain and sorrow raised an important enquiry that when will societal laws regarding women will change. Amongst fear of becoming untouchable and the fear to lose families, history has retold the plight of several women who remained helpless to help other women who become victim to the cycle of socially propagated myths.

Mr Giles cinematographed these two films in a very different manner. For a unique assumption, he cinematographed “Water” by showing the bluish surroundings like the river Ganga flowing near the banks of Varanasi to holy temples existing in the city. Recreating the gloomy feel like that of a widowhood’s plight, Mr Giles did an extraordinary work in retelling the story that was hidden from many people for many years. Illustrating the cruelty in the perception of society towards widowed women who were regarded as untouchable during those nauseating times, Mrs Mehta and her crew energetically captured each and every depressing moment of women living in Ashram. If we compare the cinematographic techniques used in Earth by Mr Giles then it would be surprising to acknowledge that in this movie, he cinematographed various landscapes of Lahore. **Mr Giles** by capturing beautiful lush green gardens of Lahore’s suburbs to the kite flying scenes at the verandas of houses give a realistic appeal to the film. Reliving the every dull moment in the film with the techniques of advanced camera angles, the cinematographer along with Mrs Mehta formed a film which is the composition of various emotions imbued inside it. The uniqueness of this film’s direction is that it depicts the harsh truth of what society becomes when the battle begins for occupying the land with politically stretched assertions. Among the other things, the costumes of several characters in the movie “Earth” differs from those portrayed in the movie “Water”. Apparently where the women characters in “Earth” were showcased wearing traditional saris and western clothes as compared to “Earth” where widowed women were seen wearing sorrowfully woven white sarees. The difference in the costumes worn by the characters in two films is quietly different and the makers make this differentiating step in order to bring a similar contrast to the plot of two different films made on two distant ideologies.

The usage of language in these two films has played a very pivotal role in forming them as the films with meaningful content. The language used in the context of film “Water” highly differs from the type of language used in “Earth”. Seeing the characters speak pure Hindi in “Water” reminds the audiences of time when social advancement along with the up gradation of thought didn’t happen. From the eldest lady in clan to the small girl Chuhiya, each of the females represented in film spoke pure Hindi. The speaking attribute of women comprised of the gestures that might have been used in those times where the voices of women remained unheard. In a very similar to contrast to the plot of the film “Earth”, the writer used the dialogues that were very general and even today their usage is prevalent in daily talks. In “Earth”, some English dialogues are also spoken as compared to “Water”, where the writer laid more emphasis over much refined Hindi with phrases. The composition of songs played in “Water” speak more about the unearth nature of surroundings. There is a song in the film which talks more about rain and exemplifies that if rain can make a deserted farmland more fertile in a very similar manner the lives of widowed women will prosper by the drops of rain falling in their lives. The most adept thing about the making of Water is that it consists of songs that neutralises the effect of

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There are three female protagonists in the movie Chuiya , kalyani and Shakuntla. Widows are regarded as bad omen spiritually curse on society as well as family. Through the character of Madhumati auteur reflects pity state of widows. Madhumati "Our holy books says, wife is a part of her husband, while he's alive and when husband die God help us wives also half die So how can a half dead women feel pain" These lines show that women should feel pain until her husband is alive otherwise she is painless creature on earth.



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