

Impact Factor: 8.67

ISSN:0976-8165



THE CRITERION

AN INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL IN ENGLISH

Bi-Monthly Peer-Reviewed eJournal

16 YEARS OF OPEN ACCESS

VOL. 16 ISSUE-1, FEBRUARY 2025

Editor-In-Chief: **Dr. Vishwanath Bite**
Managing Editor: **Dr. Madhuri Bite**



www.the-criterion.com

AboutUs: <http://www.the-criterion.com/about/>

Archive: <http://www.the-criterion.com/archive/>

ContactUs: <http://www.the-criterion.com/contact/>

EditorialBoard: <http://www.the-criterion.com/editorial-board/>

Submission: <http://www.the-criterion.com/submission/>

FAQ: <http://www.the-criterion.com/fa/>



ISSN 2278-9529

Galaxy: International Multidisciplinary Research Journal

www.galaxyimrj.com

Analysing Hyder's Transcreation from *Aag ka Darya* to *River of Fire*

Asiya Ansari

Research Scholar,
Department of English,
PPN (PG) College, Kanpur.
(Under CSJM University, Kanpur)

&

Dr Ram Naresh Patel

Assistant Professor,
P.P.N Degree College,
Kanpur.

<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.14973946>

Article History: Submitted-29/01/2025, Revised-15/02/2025, Accepted-26/02/2025, Published-28/02/2025.

Abstract:

River of Fire is a literary endeavor that reimagines the timeless tale of Hyder, infusing it with contemporary elements while staying true to the essence of the original narrative. Through a blend of vivid imagery, lyrical prose, and thought-provoking themes, *River of Fire* invites readers to delve into the depths of Hyder's world and contemplate the universal truths it unveils. By reimagining this classic tale for a modern audience, this transcreation serves as a testament to the enduring power of storytelling to transcend boundaries and illuminate the human condition.

The paper has a significant scope and relevance in the literary world. It focuses on the transcreation of Qurratulain Hyder's novel *Aag Ka Darya* into English as *River of Fire*. Transcreation refers to the process of recreating a work of literature in another language while maintaining its essence, authenticity, originality, and cultural identity. This paper explores the challenges and achievements of transcreating Hyder's novel, delving into the linguistic, cultural, and literary aspects involved. It sheds light on the importance of preserving the

original themes, style, and historical context of the work while making it accessible to a wider audience. The relevance of paper lies in its contribution to the understanding and appreciation of Qurratulain Hyder's literary legacy and the art of transcreation itself.

Keywords: Translation studies, Transcreation, Cultural studies, Indian Literature, Cultural Sensitivity.

Objectives:

This study will have the following objectives:

- To analyse the concept of transcreation and how it differs from traditional translation.
- To state the significance of transcreation in translation studies.
- To compare and contrast the two versions of the text, *Aag ka Darya* (the original) and *River of Fire* (the transcreated version). This would involve analyzing thematic elements, character development, and narrative style in both texts.
- To explore the cultural impact of the book *River of Fire* in both the languages Urdu and English. This could include looking at the socio-political contexts of both works and how they influence the narrative.
- To study the literary techniques employed by the Hyder, in both texts. This would include discussing symbolism, imagery, and other stylistic devices that contribute to the overall impact of the stories.
- To evaluate the significance of both works in the context of South Asian literature and their contributions to discussions on identity, history, and narrative form.

Introduction:

Qurratulain Hyder's novel *River of Fire*, originally written as *Aag ka Darya* in the Urdu language is a monumental work of Indian literature. It spans different periods, from ancient

civilizations to the present day, exploring the themes of love, identity, and the cyclical nature of the history of human race across generations. The novel takes the readers on a journey through time and space, intertwining the lives of various characters and delving into the complexities of human existence. *Aag Ka Darya* is celebrated for its rich storytelling, intricate narrative structure, and thought-provoking reflections on the human condition. It's a captivating read that offers profound insights into the tapestry of life. It is often called Hyder's magnum opus. It has been compared to *One Hundred Years of Solitude* by Gabriel Garcia Marquez because both novels employ a multi-generational narrative structure, exploring the lives of interconnected characters across different time spans. Despite being a literary masterpiece, *Aag ka Dariya* failed to get recognition worldwide as compared to *One Hundred Years of Solitude* by Marquez, even though recognition and popularity can be influenced by various factors such as cultural differences, translations, marketing efforts, and even timing. It's also worth noting that literary tastes and preferences can vary across different regions and audiences. But the significant barrier with the *Aag ka Darya* was its language, because it was initially written and published in Urdu in 1959, during that period Urdu was one of the prominent languages in India, and some of its subcontinents but Urdu was not apprehensible in other countries to get this book the prominence it deserved. In 1998 Hyder published an English transcreation of *Aag ka Darya* under the name of *River of Fire* so that it could reach international readers and acclaim recognition globally.

Review of Literature:

Qurratulain Hyder was a renowned Urdu writer known for her remarkable contributions to literature. Her writings often examine complex themes such as history, culture, identity, and the human condition. Rich storytelling, vivid descriptions, and a deep understanding of the social and political landscape characterize Hyder's works. She has been praised for her ability

to capture the essence of different eras and bring them to life through her narratives. Some of the previous research articles related to the paper are given below:

- The Article "Imagined Buddhisms and the Limits of Female Liberation in Qurratulain Hyder's *River of Fire*" in *South Asian Review* by Crystal Baines discusses how Qurratulain Hyder historicizes the role of Buddhism in her magnum opus, *River of Fire*
- "Reconstructing the Contested Past: Reading Qurratulain Hyder's *River of Fire* Against the Rhetoric of Radical Hindu Nationalism" by Swaralipi Nandi talks about how the book critiques fragmentation associated with Partition and the rising anti-Muslim sentiments in contemporary India.
- "Becoming and Belonging: The Ambivalent Space of Hybrid Identity in Qurratulain Hyder's *River of Fire*" by Arshad Jappa - This research explores the themes of hybrid identity and the sense of belonging in the lives of the novel's characters.
- The paper in *IOSR Journal Of Humanities And Social Science* "The Role and Scope of Translation Studies in the 21st Century" by Mr Shivnath Kumar Sharma explores the role and scope of translation studies in the globalized world, discussing how translation acts as a bridge between different cultures and languages.

Transcreation and its Significance:

Transcreation is a term coined from the words "translation" and "creation", and a concept used in the field of translation studies to describe the process of adapting a message from one language to another while maintaining its intent, style, tone, and context. (wiki)

Translating works from one language to another can present several challenges. One of the biggest threats is the loss of nuance and cultural context. Languages often have unique expressions, idioms, and cultural references that may not have direct equivalents in another language. Translators do not usually navigate these linguistic and cultural gaps to ensure the

essence of the original work. Another challenge is maintaining the author's writing style and voice. Translators need to strike a balance between staying faithful to the original text and making it accessible and engaging for readers in the target language. Additionally, there can be challenges in translating poetry or wordplay, as the beauty and impact of these elements can be lost in translation. It's a complex process that requires skilled translators who are not only proficient in both languages but also deeply understand the cultural nuances of both. As Khushwant Singh has also said

“The translator needed to be very good at the language being translated into and reasonably good at the language being translated out of.”

To be cautious and avoid these threats Hyder decided to rewrite her works into English and called it transcreation because when the themes are complex, a literal translation may not capture the intended meaning or impact of the original work. Translators may need to engage in transcreation, which involves creatively reimagining the text to convey the same essence and emotional impact in the target language so that the aura of her works does not get lost, and the translator's subjectivity does not change the cultural contexts of the novels.

Differences and Similarities between *Aag ka Darya* and *River of Fire*:

Aag Ka Darya and *The River of Fire* are two versions of the same novel by Qurratulain Hyder, one of the most influential Urdu writers of the 20th century. Even though on the surficial level it seems like the only difference between these two versions is their language but when we do a close reading of both versions, we can find several differences other than language. Some of the differences between *Aag Ka Darya* and *River of Fire* are mentioned below:

- *Aag Ka Darya* is more than 1000 pages long, while *The River of Fire* is about 400 pages long. The author had to condense some parts of the original novel to fit the English version.

- *Aag Ka Darya* has more references to Urdu poetry, classical music, and historical figures than *River of Fire*. The author also used different styles of writing, such as letters, diaries, and parables, to convey the richness of Urdu literature.
- *Aag Ka Darya* has a more complex and nonlinear narrative structure than *River of Fire*. The author often switches between past and present, reality and fantasy, and different points of view. The reader has to piece together the connections between the characters and their reincarnations.
- *Aag Ka Darya* has a more ambiguous and open-ended conclusion than *River of Fire*. The author leaves it to the reader to interpret the meaning of the novel and its message for the future of India.

Both books are just two different versions written by the author herself in Urdu and English, so finding similarities in content is an obvious thing but we will discuss the similarities in narrative style, structure, themes, and cultural influence. Despite being written in two completely different languages both *Aag ka Darya* and *River of Fire* have the same cultural context, nuances, and themes which helps transcreation to ensure the same essence of the original work and staying true to the original spirit of the work.

Cultural Impact of *River of Fire* in Urdu and English:

The cultural impact of *River of Fire* by Qurratulain Hyder in both Urdu and English has been significant. In Urdu, the original language of the novel titled *Aag Ka Darya*, holds a special place in the literary canon. Hyder's exploration of history, identity, and social issues resonated deeply with Urdu-speaking readers, making it a celebrated work of Urdu literature. The novel's complex narrative structure, blending different periods and characters, challenged traditional storytelling conventions and expanded the possibilities of Urdu fiction.

In English, the transcreation of *Aag Ka Darya* as *River of Fire* introduced Hyder's powerful storytelling to a wider international audience. It allowed readers who didn't have access to the Urdu language to experience her literary genius. The novel's themes of love, loss, and the search for identity struck a chord with English-speaking readers, fostering a cross-cultural understanding and appreciation of Hyder's work. *River of Fire* has also contributed to the broader cultural landscape by shedding light on the history, culture, and social dynamics of South Asia. It explores the partition of India and Pakistan, the struggle for independence, and the interconnectedness of diverse communities. Through her vivid descriptions and refined characters, Hyder provides a deeper understanding of the region's complexities, leaving a lasting impact on readers in both Urdu and English.

Overall, the cultural impact of *River of Fire* in both Urdu and English lies in its ability to transcend language barriers, evoke emotions, and spark conversations about history, identity, and human experiences.

How transcreation is better than translation:

Transcreation is often considered better than translation because it goes beyond a literal word-for-word conversion and focuses on capturing the essence, cultural nuances, and creative elements of the original work. Transcreation takes into account the cultural context of the target language, ensuring that the work resonates with the intended audience. It adapts idioms, metaphors, and cultural references to maintain the impact and meaning of the original work. Transcreation allows the creator to have more artistic freedom. It enables them to make adjustments to the style, tone, and structure of the work to suit the target language and culture while staying true to the original spirit. This ensures a more engaging and authentic reading experience. Transcreation aims to evoke the same emotions and reactions in the target audience as the original work intended. By recreating the emotional impact, it creates a deeper

connection between the reader and the text, enhancing the overall experience. Transcreation goes beyond language translation and considers the target market's preferences, beliefs, and values. It ensures that the work feels natural and relatable to the local audience, making it more effective in conveying the intended message. It also makes literary works accessible to a wider audience by overcoming language barriers. It allows readers who don't understand the original language to experience the creativity, depth, and beauty of the work through a transcreated version.

While translation focuses on conveying the meaning of the text, transcreation strives to capture the essence, cultural distinctions, and creative elements of the original work. It is a more dynamic and creative process that ensures the intended impact and emotional resonance are preserved across different languages and cultures.

Comparative Analysis with Other Canonical Transcreations:

To conduct a comparative analysis, we can look at how Hyder's narrative techniques and thematic concerns align or contrast with other canonical transcreations, such as *Rubaiyat* of Omar Khayyam and *One Hundred Years of Solitude* by Gabriel García Márquez. *River of Fire* is a novel that intricately weaves personal and historical narratives, focusing on the impact of the partition of India and Pakistan on individual lives. It explores themes of identity, memory, and the search for meaning in a tumultuous world. Similarly, *One Hundred Years of Solitude* by Marquez deals with the Buendía family's multi-generational saga in the fictional town of Macondo, reflecting on the cyclical nature of history and the interplay of personal and collective experiences. In *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, García Márquez employs magical realism to depict the surreal aspects of life, blending the ordinary with the extraordinary. This technique allows for a deeper exploration of themes such as solitude, fate, and the passage of time. In contrast, Hyder's narrative is grounded in historical reality, focusing on the emotional

and psychological ramifications of the partition. Both works, however, emphasize the weight of history on individual lives—Hyder through the lens of trauma and Márquez through the repetition of familial patterns. Hyder did the transcreation of *River of Fire* on her own but on the other hand *One Hundred Years of Solitude* was transcreated by Gregory Rabassa, for which Marquez said was better than original Spanish version.

According to Thomas Hoeksema, translator and Professor of English: In what must qualify as the most outrageous compliment, Dallas Galvin, Coordinator of the Translation Center at Columbia University, states that “many Spanish-speaking people who are bilingual prefer to read Rabassa's English, because it is clearer than the original Spanish.” This statement clearly states that Rabassa’s version was more in demand and loved by public than actual work.

The Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam, a collection of quatrains, presents a philosophical exploration of life, love, and the fleeting nature of existence. Khayyam’s work reflects on the inevitability of fate and the importance of living in the moment, often with a tone of resignation or acceptance. This theme resonates with *River of Fire*, where characters grapple with their pasts and the transient nature of their identities. Both texts encourage a contemplation of life’s impermanence, though Khayyam does so through a more abstract and poetic lens, while Hyder's approach is narrative and character-driven. Edward FitzGerald transcreated original work into English, FitzGerald’s translation is rhyming and metrical, and many of the verses are paraphrased, FitzGerald has described his work ‘rendering’ or ‘transmogrification’ of the original. In the introduction of the book, FitzGerald mentioned, “Omar...has never been popular in his own country, and therefore has been but scantily transmitted abroad.” The first English translation of *Rubaiyat* was the one did by FitzGerald in 1859 originally published anonymously in a small pamphlet. The translation was initially not well received, but gained popularity after being discovered by Dante Gabriel Rossetti and Algernon Swinburne. In present time Omar Khayyam is known as highly productive Persian poet and *Rubaiyat* as one

of the most famous collection of poems with 2000 editions and reprints, FitzGerald's translation became one of the best-known English poems of 19th century and brought the recognition to Omar Khayyam throughout the world.

While *River of Fire*, *Rubaiyat* of Omar Khayyam, and *One Hundred Years of Solitude* differ in form and style, they share common ground in translation studies the way transcreation of Hyder did better than original version, these two transcreations also exceeded their authentic versions and got appreciation worldwide.

Methodology:

In this proposed research an attempt is made to study the novel *River of Fire* thoroughly and trace the elements of nature. The study is based on a qualitative method of explanatory research by primary and secondary sources. The study uses Expository Research so that it can investigate the idea, evaluate evidence, propose the idea, and present an argument concerning that idea in a comprehensible and concise way. The research is qualitative so it will use books, journals, debates, articles, and interviews as tools to collect data.

Conclusion:

River of Fire is a remarkable work that showcases the power of transcreation in bringing literature to a wider audience. Through its exploration of history, identity, and social issues, the novel has made a significant cultural impact in both Urdu and English. By transcending language barriers and evoking emotions, it has fostered cross-cultural understanding and appreciation. The transcreation process has allowed readers to experience the genius of Qurratulain Hyder's storytelling while maintaining the essence and cultural distinction of the original work. *River of Fire* stands as a testament to the importance of transcreation in preserving and sharing literary treasures across different languages and cultures.

Works Cited:

Akhtar, Jameel. *A Singular Voice – Conversations with Qurratulain Hyder*. OUP Pakistan, 2018.

Britannica, The Editors of Encyclopaedia. "Qurratulain Hyder". Encyclopedia Britannica, 17 Aug. 2024, <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Qurratulain-Hyder>. Accessed 27 September 2024.

Das, Bijay Kumar, *A Handbook of Translation Studies*. Delhi: Atlantic Publishers & Distributors, 2023

Fatima Rizvi, Sahapedia. "Qurratulain Hyder Was Modern and Experimental before Most Other Indian Writers Walked on That Road." *Scroll.In*, Scroll.in, 18 Aug. 2019, amp.scroll.in/article/934218/qurratulain-hyder-was-modern-and-experimental-before-most-other-indian-writers-walked-on-that-road.

History for Peace. "Partitioning Women in the World of Men: A Study of Qurratulain Hyder's Works - Diptarka Datta." History for Peace, 10 Mar. 2022, www.historyforpeace.pw/post/partitioning-women-in-the-world-of-men-a-study-of-qurratulain-hyder-s-works-diptarka-datta.

Walter Benjamin: Language and Translation | Ceasefire Magazine

<https://dash.harvard.edu/bitstream/handle/1/37364885/MIRZA-DOCUMENT-2020.pdf?sequence=1>

<https://www.britannica.com/biography/Qurratulain-Hyder>