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Editorial

The January 2021 issue of GNOSIS had a very warm response from the readers in India and abroad that articles have been flowing in quick succession to fill the folder for this issue even before the deadline of 30 November 2020. The thumping reception of the journal shows the depth of multicultural issues in literature to which critics and readers are attracted. As a journal committed to quality research and writing, we are aware of the need to delink quality from publication cost. Hence, our decision to charge no publication fee from the scholars whose papers will be published in the issues of GNOSIS. At the same time since GNOSIS is a self-financed venture, co-operation and support in the form of subscriptions are solicited from the readers and admirers of English Literature and Language from all over the world.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank all the Academicians and well wishers of GNOSIS who recommended GNOSIS for publication. There are five research/critical articles, and two poems in this issue. Before concluding, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my our esteemed members of the Board of Advisors and Review Editors for their selfless and tiresome efforts in assessing the articles very sincerely and giving their valuable remarks to bring out this issue in such a grand manner. I am also grateful to the revered contributors who have made this issue of the Journal a beautiful reality. Wishing all the readers a mental feast. Happy Reading!

Dr. Saikat Banerjee

Editor

Privacy in the Age of Surveillance Capitalism: A study of select episodes of Charlie Brookner's *Black Mirror*

Pranav Kapil

Abstract: The paper aims to understand the politics of privacy in the context of the Individual and the new order of Capitalism. The paper explores this by developing a landscape of privacy, addressing the two options available to the individual, compliance and protest in the age of Surveillance Capitalism. Theoretical contributions of Foucault, Giles Deleuze, Shoshana Zuboff, and Daniel Solove among others are employed to study select episodes of Charlie Brookner's web series Black Mirror.

Introduction

In one of his *Nanjing Lectures*, titled "Introduction to Questions Concerning Automatic Society", Bernard Stiegler referred to the persistent drive of progress and evolution of living beings as organogenesis; noting that the progression of evolution about two or three million years ago saw the beginning of Hominization and Exosomatization which mark the creation of artificial, non-organic organs as the next evolutionary step. These organological organs, which include language, market, social orders, civilizational structures, etc. are distinguished from various other stages in the evolution of living beings by their "ex-teriorization or ex-ternalization" (Stiegler 1), simply put, organs outside the body creating a larger body of hominization. These bodies are what Stiegler called Technics. Where Stiegler evaluates the evolution of living beings through entropy, envisioning the Neganthropocene, various efforts have been made to understand this evolution from Schonepheure's Will to Life, Nietzsche's Will to Power, Kant's Noumenon, etc.

The more modern discussions on the same have been captured by the zeal of post and transhumanists, and Latour's camp of Science Studies. For the optimistic branch of the Posthumanist school i.e. Katherine Hayles, Donna Haraway, Neil Badmington, etc. the new age of technological evolution assisting organogenesis marks an opportunity for correcting the flaws within the conceptualisation of the liberal human. The other side of this camp finds the often controversial Transhumanists, who openly advocate in favour of singularity, a continuation of human life in the inorganic, of human consciousness merging with a computer. These include Hans Morvac, Natasha Vita-More, Ray Kurzweil and Elon Musk to name a few. Of the various schools that exist under the umbrella term of Posthumanism, an inevitability is acknowledged, that of, the role of technology in the evolution of humans. Additionally, what stands mostly unchallenged through these various schools is the understanding that evolution now operates outside the individual member of the specie. And the tendency of infinite progression seems to be moving further and further away from the organic individual.

On the peripheries of these discourses, the influence of digital technologies on our everyday life has been much debated, yet the 'individual' continually fails to escape its fate in the designs of evolution, most prominently, in the models of hierarchical power that capitalism continues to redesign with each metamorphosis. What is at stake for the individual is, as Zuboff puts it, the "right to the future tense". Raghuram Ragan in *The Third Pillar: How Markets and the State Leave the Community Behind* (2019) established the Market, the State and the Community as the three pillars of society much in line with Stiegler's organological organs or Technics. Ragan points to the invasion of the Market and the State in functions of the Community, which as many

have noted eventually results in the Market being the most powerful organ, even eroding the State of its agency. Such an invasion in the agency of the community offers an explanation for the crisis of identity that plagues the world today. The last few decades have marked a key shift in the operational practices of the Market, its relation with the State and the Individual with Zuboff noting the collapse of the dot-com bubble as the birth of this new age of capitalism, coining the term "Surveillance Capitalism". Privacy, which invariably becomes the first site of such invasions in the Individual and the Community faces the polycephalic monster of Capitalism and Technology rearing its atrocious heads in an age hurtling towards a posthuman future.

Martin Heidegger in *The Question Concerning Technology* (2013) noted, "The manufacture and utilization of equipment, tools, and machines, the manufactured and used things themselves, and the needs and ends that they serve, all belong to what technology is. The whole complex of these contrivances is technology" (Heidegger 4-5). Herein a similarity is noted with the complex contrivances that form capitalism. The inevitability of technological progress parallels, in essence, the inevitability of capitalist progress, with one often serving as the justification for the other. This artificial, non-organic extension of our evolution is perhaps the most potent organ of its kind. Heidegger notes that "what technology is, when represented as a means, discloses itself when we trace instrumentality back to fourfold causality" (6). This four-fold causality according to Heidegger is *causa materialis*- the material out of which you make something, *causa formalis* – the form/ shape the material takes, *causa finalis* – the end, the sacrifice required to give the thing its final determination and *causa efficiens* – what brings about the effect that is finished,

the final product. Such an investigation of technology is bound to coincide with the investigation of capital forces and models supporting and directing it, thus the instrumentality of any technology is inevitably tied up with its driving force, which as we see in its present form termed surveillance capitalism.

What is Surveillance Capitalism?

In her book *The Age of Surveillance Capitalism: The Fight for a Human Future at the New Frontier of Power* (2019) Shoshana Zuboff covers the expansive scope of the term by giving eight definitions. Most succinctly it can be understood as "A new economic order that claims human experience as free raw material for hidden commercial practices of extraction, prediction and sales"(Pg I "Definitions"). This "rogue mutation of capitalism" as she puts it emerges at the collapse of the dot com bubble in the attempts of Google to incorporate a new and more efficient way of helping advertisers reach prospective consumers. However, this quickly evolves to a system that can use behavioural data collected from the subjects to predict and control a behavioural futures market. This is eventually employed by the entire GAFAM i.e. Amazon, Apple, Google, Facebook and Microsoft and becomes the norm of the 21st economy. Surveillance Capitalism places the individual at the mine or as a source of raw material, rechristening it as Data Subject. Companies through the up-gradation of services already being offered or new ones, collect the individual experience of everyday life. Often these Data Subjects are employed in a role akin to factory workers and are used to feed their everyday choices, desires, interests etc. into the machine but this time from the comfort of their everyday existence. This data is then processed through Artificial Intelligence (AI) algorithms and used to create what Zuboff calls

Prediction Products. These prediction products assure the transformation of the Individual into the Posthuman, (a fluidic state of evolution that utilises technology to shed the old garbs of the human-centric philosophies) whose expanding parameters and consequences the Surveillance Capitalists can control through their totalising control over the raw material, production and consumption. The Market by lending its services to the State, in turn, increases its invasion of the roles and functions of the State, something the State may be helpless in preventing. In this new model of capitalism, Zuboff notes that the currency of power has shifted in part from capital to information; the vision has changed from that of total possession to one of total certainty. Behavioural patterning, processing, prediction and modification have replaced the checklist on the factory floor, the digital spaces, in turn, have replaced the factory. In this new order of capitalism, the Individual's private experiences of the world form the raw material that is processed through what Zuboff calls 'behavioural surplus' - algorithmic analysis is then employed to produce prediction products and secure a Behavioural Futures Market.

What is Privacy?

The acquiring of individuals' private data is often through corrupted practices of consent and incentivised by small digital rewards, similar to what Deleuze noted of the factory in *Postscript of Societies of Control*, "internal forces at a level of equilibrium, highest possible in terms of production but lowest possible in terms of wages" (Deleuze 4). In this new form of Capitalism, the privacy of an individual or a community continues to be violated two-fold. First, their dependency on digital services is continuously increased thereby forcing them to be regular participants of such a model and secondly, numerous incidents in the last few years, ranging

from the role of Facebook in influencing the US General Elections, the WhatsApp breach and surveillance of Indian activists and journalists, etc. show how the growth of Surveillance Capitalism often caters to State Surveillance leading to the violation of civil rights and increased control over the individual.

Just as Privacy is violated two-fold the notion of Privacy as something that needs to be protected from such violation is also threatened on two accounts, both emerging again from Surveillance Capitalism. First, since Surveillance Capitalism stays true to the path of inevitable technological and economic progression it boldly asks the question - is the price of private data really too much to pay? This argument stems from the vision of Instrumentalization, a new species of power bred simultaneously along with Surveillance Capitalism, which sees Prediction from Behavioural Surplus leading us to a world of highly efficient and reliable futures. Zuboff defines Instrumentalization as

> "… the instrumentation and instrumentalization of behavior for the purposes of modification, prediction, monetization, and control. In this formulation, "instrumentation" refers to the puppet: the ubiquitous connected material architecture of sensate computation that renders, interprets, and actuates human experience. "Instrumentalization" denotes the social relations that orient the puppet masters to human experience as surveillance capital wields the machines to transform us into means to others' market ends". (Zuboff 222)

As a result, the man on the street rationalises after the initial shock of surveillance that it is all right to lose his privacy if it means his needs will be better understood. Further, a threat emerges in the democratic violation of privacy, if everyone's private data is being collected then no one particular entity is being targeted. The second threat is an internal one. Privacy has for long suffered numerous challenges ranging from its conceptualisation, application and failure to generate organic and self-evolving safeguards.

Sarah E. Iago in *The Known Citizen: A History of Privacy in Modern America* (2018) notes that the discussion on Privacy

> "has been a response to, and sometimes a resolution of an inescapable impasse of modern life: the fact that, even as U.S. public culture purported to honor the will and choices of individual citizens, its agencies pressed in new and forceful ways on the private person. 'Privacy' rarely referenced a thing with definite contents rather it served as an index to changing ideas about society itself" (Iago 8).

This inability of privacy to be definite about what it encompasses stems from the functional misunderstanding of categorizations such as public and private. As Susan Gal notes "public and private do not simply describe the social world in any direct way; they are rather tools for arguments about and in the world" (Gal 79). This long-standing difficulty in conceptualising privacy has plagued any efforts to produce a meaningful discourse on Privacy's relationship to technology and the development of a remedial alternative. Daniel Solove in *Understanding Privacy* (2008) referred to the conceptual challenges in articulating Privacy by stating that,

Currently, privacy is a sweeping concept, encompassing (among other things) freedom of thought, control over one's body, solitude in one's home, control over personal information, freedom from surveillance, protection of one's reputation, and protection from searches and interrogations. (Solove 1)

Such a sweeping and vague conceptualisation defeats any efforts initiated in privacy or technological discourses. Solove, further notes that "Privacy is too complicated a concept to be boiled down to a single essence. Attempts to find such an essence often end up being too broad and vague, with little usefulness in addressing concrete issues" (103).

Daniel Solove's Taxonomy Of Privacy: Conceptualising Privacy At The Point Of Infringement

His solution thus emerges in the form of a Taxonomy of Privacy wherein he identifies four broad categories of harmful activities which envision privacy at the point of infringement. He conceives a taxonomy of privacy in a manner wherein various subjective instances of privacy infringement can be represented in the sub-categories of the four main infringements, providing an understanding of the internal relationship of these aspects of privacy.

Solove's taxonomy model begins with the "Data Subject – the individual whose life is most directly affected by the activities classified in the taxonomy. From that individual, various entities (other people, businesses, and the government) collect information" (103).

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INFORMATION PROCESSING

Aggregation
Identification
Insecurity
Secondary use
Exclusion

INFORMATION COLLECTION

Surveillance
Interrogation

DATA HOLDERS

DATA SUBJECT

INFORMATION DISSEMINATION

Breach of confidentiality
Disclosure
Exposure
Increased accessibility
Blackmail
Appropriation
Distortion

INVASIONS

Intrusion
Decisional interference

Model of taxonomy

Figure 1: Daniel Solove's Taxonomy of Privacy. Source: *Understanding Privacy* (2008) Pg. 104

The ones who collect data Solove terms as "data holder". The first category that is identified is

Information Collection which is the collection of this data from the Data Subject by the Data

Holder. How it may be done is sub-categorised on the bases of the modes employed i.e.

Surveillance and Interrogation. This stored data is then processed, which includes storing,

combining, manipulating, searching and finally using it – this forms the category of Information

Processing; the modes employed thus form the sub categorises: Aggregation, Identification, Insecurity, Secondary use and Exclusion. The next step is what Solove calls "Information Dissemination" herein the information collected from the Data Subject is transferred to another entity or released to the public by the Data Holder, the way this is accomplished, Solove represents through Breach of Confidentiality, Disclosure, Exposure, Increased accessibility, Blackmail, Appropriation and Distortion. Solove notes that "The general progression from information collection to processing to dissemination is the data moving further away from the individual's control" (103). The last category or step is Invasions wherein the progression turns back towards the individual and according to Solove may not necessarily involve information.

The Landscape of Privacy in the Age of Surveillance Capitalism

Noting the marked similarities in Zuboff's model of Surveillance Capitalism and Daniel Solove's Taxonomy of Privacy one can evaluate the Landscape of Privacy in the Age of Surveillance Capitalism, State Surveillance and the creation of the Posthuman. Both models address the individual as the Data Subject and understand its primary function to be that of a source of information from which Data Holders i.e. State and Surveillance Capitalism can initiate a process for their goals. For Surveillance Capitalists this secures a Behavioural Fututres's Market and for the State, it is control over its subjects. What is more striking is that since surveillance capitalism mandates a particular progression, it coincides at each step with how privacy is impinged upon. Thus the following hybridised model offers a succinct understanding of how Surveillance Capitalism and State Surveillance necessitate the infringement of an individual's privacy, reducing its ability to create a place for itself in such a landscape wherein under the garb of the freedom that technology offers, the individual is a victim of ever-increasing control. An

additional feature of this model is that it locates this new situatedness of the individual in the larger drive of organogenesis; helping us understand how the individual unwittingly caters to evolution progressing outside and away from the individual – much in line with the Posthumanist ideologies, most particularly that of Transhumanism.
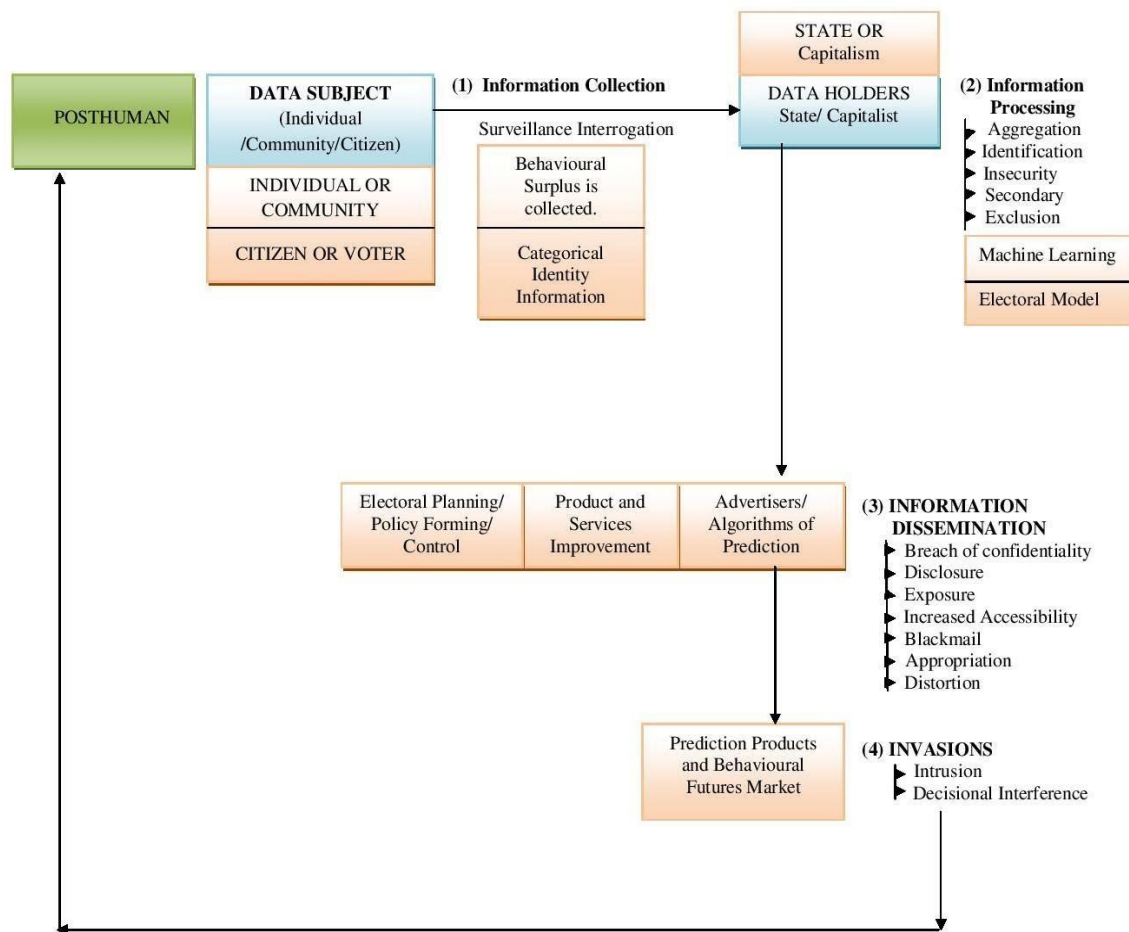

Figure 2: Hybridised Model of the Landscape of Privacy in the Age of Surveillance Capitalism, State Surveillance and the Creation of the Posthuman. Source: Author.

To look at how Surveillance Capitalism and the infringement of Privacy match step, leaving the individual completely absent from its agency let us look at Charlie Brookner's Black Mirror as

text to analyse the individual's compliance and protest in the Landscape of Privacy in the Age of Surveillance Capitalism, State Surveillance and the Creation of the Posthuman.

Information Collection

Solove notes that "Information collection creates disruption through the process of data gathering. Even if no information is revealed publicly, information collection can create harm" (106). According to the model, this collection of the Behavioural Surplus or categorical identity information is done either through Surveillance or through Interrogation. John Gilliom in *Overseers of the Poor: Surveillance, Resistance, and the Limits of Privacy* (2001) noted that "Surveillance of human behaviour is in place to control human behaviour, whether by limiting access to programs or institutions, monitoring and affecting behaviour within those arenas, or otherwise enforcing rules and norms by observing and recording acts of compliance and deviance" (Gilliom 3). In the *Black Mirror* episode, *Fifteen Million Merits* we find that the Data Subject i.e. Bing Madsen exists in a constant state of surveillance. His every action, including trivial routines like brushing his teeth or urinating, are monitored by an unseen authority. Each activity he undertakes—feeding himself, performing the rituals of personal hygiene, even skipping an advertisement—costs him a currency called 'merits', which he earns by pedalling a stationary bicycle in front of a screen that pours an unremitting torrent of more or less vapid entertainment into his brain every day. His life becomes a video-game, revolving around a virtual avatar which could be seen as the visual sign or proxy of his 'data self', an aggregate of all the information the Data Holders i.e. State or Surveillance Capitalist possess about him. This condition of near omnipresent scrutiny pummels him into a chronic state of apathy and mental indolence. Solove points out that "surveillance can lead to self-censorship and inhibition" (108).

This need not take the cliche form of political compliance under the looming threat of a police state full of bogeymen—it can also manifest as a routine of prescribed behaviour which the Data Subject sluggishly falls into. This routine is reinforced by a system of reward and punishment that surveillance makes possible. Julie Cohen in *Examined Lives: Informational Privacy and the Subject as Object* (2000) noted that "Pervasive monitoring of every first move or false start will, at the margin, incline choices toward the bland and the mainstream. The result will be a subtle yet fundamental shift in the content of our character, a blunting and blurring of rough edges and sharp lines" (Cohen 1426). Bing's desires, dreams, ambitions and even the ambit of his intellectual life are controlled and curtailed by the limited diet of TV shows and advertisements that the surveillants feed him. If he refuses to watch an advertisement by closing his eyes or averting his gaze the system plays a painfully shrill beeping sound until he starts looking again. The surveillants' gaze is totalizing: it enforces uniformity over the social lives of all of its Subjects. Bing and his co-workers shamble through their days in a zombie-like fashion, conditioned by surveillance and routine. Different people bend to this uniformity with different degrees of enthusiasm and gusto. Bing himself seems to feebly resist it by remaining always sunk in numb, unvocalised despair. Any avenues of revolt open to him are also controlled by the surveillants: when he finally speaks out against his intolerable existence it is turned into yet another entertainment product for his peers to consume. One of the judges tells him that they loved his performance because 'sincerity is in short supply'—his despair and his non-conformity have been commodified, and the numerous other surveilled individuals who make up the audience have become surveillants in their turn, spectators to a private grief. Surveillance can close off the victim's field of expression and suffocate their intellectual life. This is a life akin to

a piece on a chessboard, forever circulating the same space with the same movements in minor variations, and with an unseen and infinitely distant player secretly controlling your actions— always watching, always vigil.

Information Processing

Once data has been gathered through surveillance or interrogation, it is then collated and processed into a coherent network of interlinked facts. One of the many modes of processing is Aggregation – combining bits and pieces of different data to form a portrait of a person. Although aggregation is not new Solove notes that "aggregation's power and scope are different in the information age; the data gathered about people is significantly more extensive, the process of combining it is much easier, and the technologies to analyse it are more sophisticated and powerful" (Solove 118). We find Aggregation in action in the Black Mirror episode, 'Be Right Back'. Martha and Ash are a young couple who've just moved into a countryside home that belonged to Ash's family. Ash dies not long after they move in, and while Martha is grieving her friend signs her up for a service that promises to authentically recreate Ash using an advanced Artificial Intelligence (AI) that closely mines his publicly available data and learns to imitate him. At first, the AI can only mimic his writing style, but as Martha feeds it Ash's private data—voice notes, videos, etc.—it learns to talk like him as well. Eventually, the AI is installed in an android body which closely resembles Ash and which unsettles Martha. This simulacrum of Ash is a direct result of aggregation. During his life, Ash left behind disparate shards of information about himself—biographical details, photos, videos, tweets that carried his personal highly sarcastic sense of humour, etc.—and these have now been brought together in an unprecedented way to produce a digital copy of himself. Solove says that "people expect certain

limits on what is known about them and on what others will find out. Aggregation upsets these expectations because it involves the combination of data in unanticipated ways to reveal facts about a person that are not readily known" (119). It's doubtful if Ash would have felt very comfortable knowing that the little bits and pieces of himself that he scattered over the internet during the course of his life had been harnessed by an organisation to create an uncanny imitation of himself. However, the AI is also full of gaps and lacunae. Its memory and knowledge are limited to Ash's public and private record. While talking to it, Martha experiences moments of dissonance—when it can't remember a shared memory or doesn't understand an idiom or turn of phrase, or when its android body doesn't have a mole on its collarbone as Ash's did. The most striking aspect of the AI is the facts about Ash that aren't known. Much like the virtual avatars from 'Fifteen Million Merits' it is a shadow version of the real thing, an individual's identity narrowed down to the precinct of available information and data. As such, it points up the immense potential for misprision and misapplication in information processing techniques like aggregation, since data can be not only misleading but also offer only a partial view of its subject. Referring to how governments and businesses gather and aggregate data about their citizens or consumers and develop a "digital dossier" of the person, Solove notes that "Increasingly, each individual is living alongside a counterpart who exists in the world of computer databases, a digital person constructed not on flesh and blood but of bits and bytes of data" (119).

Information Dissemination

After data has been extracted from the individual and appropriately processed into a coherent pattern of information, it can then be disseminated to a third party or a wider audience. This

audience could be as small as a single person or as large as the entire media-connected public of the world. Dissemination can occur in a variety of different ways, one of which, Appropriation, is clearly at play in the Black Mirror episode 'White Bear'. In this episode, a woman with amnesia wakes up in an unknown house where she finds several pictures of herself with a man, and one of a little girl. Outside she seeks help from passersby who however only stare at her or record her with their phones. A mysterious symbol appearing on computer, television and phone screens everywhere has turned people into a teeming mass of passive voyeurs and rubberneckers. Many who are unaffected by the symbol use this as an excuse for wrecking violence and havoc with impunity and are called 'hunters'. The woman has a number of near-fatal run-ins with these hunters and even meets an ally, a similarly unaffected woman named Jem. The woman and Jem plan to destroy the transmitter that's sending out the symbol—but when they reach it the woman realises that all her misadventures have been staged and are part of an elaborate show. She learns that her real name is Victoria and that she and her fiancé tortured and murdered the little girl (Jemima) whose photograph she found in the house. This is her punishment. Every day her memory is wiped clean and every day she must undergo the vicissitudes of this horrifying game of survival. The entire event is spectated by an audience that is eager and rabid for her suffering. This bleak scenario could be plausibly interpreted as an oblique case of appropriation, which has been defined as "the use of one's identity or personality for the purposes and goals of another" (155). Identity in this context should be taken in a broadly external sense—it applies less to a person's interiority than to aspects of their public life, such as for instance their name or their appearance. Philosophically, one could argue that, once she has been stripped of her memories,

Victoria ceases to be the person she was when she murdered Jemima. Her sense of personal identity has been demolished. An amnesiac is no longer fit or able to carry the burden of guilt and punishment. But this matters very little to the purblind anger of the audience. For them, merely Victoria's name, her face and her house are enough of an identity to pin their feelings of contempt, horror and appetite for violence upon. The organizers of this show have hijacked Jemima's tragedy and Victoria's personal history to produce what is (presumably) a profit-churning spectacle of sadism.

Invasions

The fourth important step in the economy of surveillance capitalism involves the active incursion of surveillants into the lives of individuals. The most common form of this is interference, which involves any means that a surveillant may employ to disrupt the rhythm and fabric of a person's life. The most ubiquitous type of interference is probably advertising, particularly the kind of targeted advertising that has been calibrated to the twists and turns of an individual's data trail. Although it may seem innocuous at first, advertising takes its toll on 'people's time and attention' (163) and it can interrupt the carrying out of one's tasks and activities. Black Mirror is full to the gills with examples of invidious advertising, but two from the predominate episodes stand out. In 'Fifteen Million Merits', Bing and his peers are subjected to ads throughout the day, and not only do these ads cater exactly to their narrow appetites and tastes, they reinforce this narrowness by choking off the possibility of any fresh intellectual stimulus. The workers are partly trapped in the cursus of their daily routine because advertising keeps them mentally chained to a limited cycle of desires and appetites. Some of the comedic TV shows and violent video-games they are offered promote ill-treatment of the overweight cleaning staff. This then is

reflected in the way some of the characters treat the cleaning staff in real life. The cycle of unchanging, uniform, if-it-ain't-broke-don't-fix-it entertainment embeds itself and its values into the recursive routine of peoples' everyday lives. The disruptive nature of advertising is almost hidden from people via the cudgeling, brain-numbing pattern of habit. In 'Be Right Back', on the other hand, Martha can still be surprised and shocked by the invasiveness of advertising. After her boyfriend's death, as she's scrolling through her email, she is presented with an ad for books about grieving and coping with loss. Even in her most private moments, during intense, unfathomable grief, her feelings can be turned into a data point and a sales pitch.

Conclusion

Privacy's failure to articulate itself and establish a constructive discourse is a result of not having an established purpose in the Posthuman world. As we prepare for a Posthuman world, Community can preserve or bargain for a space of functionality only if Privacy's discourse is energized.

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Validating Culture through Folklore: A Study in Santal Folktales

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&
Vishaka Venkat

Abstract: Folktales have always captured the attention of the young and the old. They can be found in any community. They are a way of passing on the rich cultural tradition. Folktales are the medium which carry the history and psychology of the people they are based on and the one who narrates them. As Ramanujan (1991) points out, folktales symbolise the relation people have with each other and with nature, the animals, birds and trees. The bizarre events and the supernatural creatures when read from a Freudian perspective can tell us so much about the life and times of the people. This paper attempts to reflect the cultural element and motifs in the Santal Folktale, based on the collection of Santal Folktales by A. Campbell (1891). Though there were limitations to do a comprehensive study of the same in this paper, it does address the different recurring motifs and their potential meaning along with listing the various cultural elements.

Keywords: Folktales; Santali; narratives; culture; metaphors.

Introduction

Folktales have always been popular among the masses. The heavy load of rich oral tradition was carried to a great extend by folktales. They seemed to defy logic or reality but captured everyone's attention. Folktales, after all, encompass the mythology, fantasy and history

of a society. This paper looks at few folktales from Santal and tries to list the various motifs being represented along with the cultural knowledge that they carry.

The theories of folklore literature have been in abundance. Vladimir Propp's *Morphology of the Folktale* (1958) provides a structural analysis of the folklores and fairy tales. James Frazer's *The Golden Bough* (1890) also anthologies the folk customs and traditions around the world through the 12 volumes. Stith Thompson's *Motif-Index of Folk-Literature* (1960) in six

volumes catalogues the motifs and symbols in folklore literature. A great amount of study has also been done on Folktales and on its reflection of the culture (Ross et al. 2013, Bascom 1973, Mitchell 1972).

Defining culture as "webs of significance…an interpretive one in search of meaning" (Geertz 1973, p.5), folktale as a cultural repository provides significant insights to interpret the customs and tradition of a group. Culture, thus, encompasses the language and tradition. The overarching impact of culture on language is observed by Malinowski, who says: "that an utterance in a primitive language is totally incomprehensible unless it is placed into its cultural setting and related to the circumstances in which it occurs. He argues - Language is essentially rooted in the reality of the culture, the tribal life and customs of the people, and ... it cannot be explained without constant reference to these broader contexts of verbal utterance. (op. cit.: 306)".

Culture as an institution always has been dynamic. A change in geography, history, economy, finds a reflective change in culture too. Amidst the mainstream acculturation, where tribes lose their ethnic and indigenous nature, Santali tribe have been able to carry forward their

social institutions and culture. The Santali folktale, which is less attended mainly portrays how they have been able to transmit the culture to the next generation. Through the Santali folktales, the paper enlists cultural and linguistic motifs, which are substantive in comprehending the Santali culture.

Santali Tribe and Folktales

Folktales, defined as "a traditional story that people of a particular region or group repeat among themselves" (https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/folktale), mainly accommodates stories, which are passed orally from one generation to another, preserving their social norms and culture. Folktales, therefore, are a medium of socialisation that conserve their institutional heritage. The study of folklore is crucial in understanding the culture of a particular group, as they form the "ethnography of communication" (Hymes 1964). Through the study of Santali folktales, the paper delineates the cultural, social and ethnic features of the Santal tribe.

As the literature survey suggests, study on Santali folktale has been inadequate. The relation of Santali tribe with their ecosystem and their totemic culture is studied in detail in Arpita Raj's "Revisiting Human and Non-human Relationship in Santal Worldview" (2019). The faith healing system in the Santali tribe has also been researched by Raj in "Living in the World of Sacrifices of Human and Non-Human Beings: A Study in the Faith-Healing System of the Santals in Select Santal Folktales" (2017). A study of the Baha festival of the Santal tribe finds its mention in Mazharul Islam's *Folklore, the Pulse of the People: In the Context of Indic Folklore* (1985). These papers, in general look at a single cultural characteristic of the Santali

tribe. Here, whereas the paper tries to offer an over-all view at the cultural signifiers through the

folktales.

Santali language

The Santal tribe mainly located in the states of Jharkhand, Assam, Bihar, Odisha and West

Bengal, speak Santali. Santali is one of the scheduled languages of India, receiving this status in

2003, along with Bodo, Dogri and Maithili languages, as per the 92nd Constitutional amendment

Act (https://mhrd.gov.in/sites/upload_files/mhrd/files/upload_document/languagebr.pdf). It is

also recognized as the second state language of Jharkhand and West Bengal. It belongs to the

Austro- Asiatic language family (which is a minority language family in the Indian context).

This is further divided into three sub groups: Munda; Mon-Khmer; Vietnamese Muong. Santali

falls under the Munda language sub group. It is mainly spoken in the eastern states of India,

namely Orissa, Bengal, Assam, Bihar, Jharkhand, Tripura and Mizoram. Interestingly, Santali

was an oral language until the script was developed around early 20th century. The script, now

widely used for Santali, is called 'Ol Chiki' and was developed by Pandit Raghuram Murmu.

Indigenous words like "Keh kere" (Campbell 1891, p. 26), "Tumki" (27), "Ghur Pank" (51) and

"Kara Upar Chap" (51) are some of the instances garnered from the folktales.

Santal Folktales

A lot of interest was taken in learning vernacular languages during the time of colonization.

Folklorists like A. M. Campbell found a keen interest in Santali and played a great role in

publishing translations of Santal folktales. This paper focuses on the various motifs expressed

through a collection of Santal Folktales and the cultural reflections found in them. A. Campbell's "Santal Folk Tales" has been the main reference. The folktales can be divided into two- the original Santal tales and the ones which have outside influence (Campbell, 1891).

A.   Motifs in Santhal Folktales:

1. Geography

As far as the location is concerned, the hills and the forest continue to be a major terrain in the story, with this being repeated in most of the stories.

2.   Mythology and Children's Tales

In the story of Sit and Bosont, the disliking of the stepmother, where the brothers are sent out is an allusion of Kaikayi asking Rama to go out and Laxmana accompanying him, as in the epic, Ramayana. Many of the folktales have an accultured influence. One can spot influences of Arabian Nights, Story of Cinderella and many other main stream children's tales.

3.   Role of the hero

The concept of hero has been pivotal to folktales. According to Joseph Campbell in *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, a hero undergoes a painful transformation and fights for a bigger cause. This can be seen in the story "Gumda, the Hero". The story explains Gumda's strength who threw King's elephant in seven seas and goes in search of its bones. Finally, overcoming the obstacles Gumda becomes a King as he is rewarded half of the Kingdom. Here the transformation and the journey Gumda undergoes reflects that of a hero.

4.   **Local Tradition**

The tribe follows a totemic culture, where the tress, animals and the nature are important. Trees like Akauna and Mohwa are mentioned. Mohwa seems a significant tree. There has been a considerable recurrence of animals like tigers, jackals and bears in most of the stories. The recurring animals point to the native regions where Santal tribes are cohabited with these creatures. The bees seem to be their friends as seen in the story of Jhorea as well as Bitaram. While the relation with tigers and jackals is platonic, cow, on the other hand, seems to symbolise the Kamadhenu. In the story "The Boy and the Stepmother", the cow gives food to the child. Birds like sparrows, crows and parrot were visible in some of the stories. As cultivation is a major source of income, harvest rites have been notable. The harvest festival, Karam, finds its mention in "The tiger and Ulta's mother".

5.   **Friction between Man and Nature:**

In the "The story of a tiger" a group of men save the tiger but the tiger without any gratitude comes to eat them. The men seek justice from the nature and have a dialogue with the forest, trees and other creatures. The story depicts the friction between man and nature. It discusses anthropocentrism as the cow says: "how much I have contributed to the health and comfort of my master, yet he does not recognize my merit" (Campbell, 1891, p. 41). The Mohwa tree says: " Men are not good. Behold every year I give them my flowers to eat, and my fruit from which to make oil. In the hot weather I give them shade, and on leaving, when they have rested, they give me a parting slash with their axes, therefore it is right to eat these people, as they return evil for good" (40). But in the

end, the jackal, a metaphor for humans, traps the tiger. Jackal asks how did such a mighty creature fell into a quagmire? The tiger jumps and shows it to the jackal. In the end the jackal leaves saying pelt the tiger with stones. The cunningness of man versus innocence of nature is showcased here.

6. **Supernatural belief: Ghosts, Magic and Witchcraft**

    Most of the stories have a magical element to it. There are magical creatures, though not necessarily malevolent, but can be tricky to manage. The first story "Magic lamp" is set on a hilly landscape as the uncle and the boy go on a quest for golden flowers. The story alludes to the story of Aladdin who was tortured by the Magician. Instead of a Genie, a fairy issues forth to fulfil the wishes of the lad. The cruel magician is replaced by a merchant who takes away the princess and the castle and the boy is robed off his prosperity. Finally, the merchant is killed and peace is restored as the boy gets back the fairy, princess and the kingdom. There is a recurrent motif of demons in the stories "Kara and Guja" and "Jhorea and Jhore". The spirit Bad Bonga (presiding over rice land) is seen in the story "The Magic Fiddle".

7. **Love** (Man-Woman; Parents-Children; Brother-Sister and Friends)

    Family as an institution follows the prescribed norms of the society. In "Magic Lamp" the son sends his mother for asking the princess' hand in marriage. The mother remains a widow after the death of her husband. "The Boy and the Stepmother" story alludes to a typical children's story where the step-mother illtreats the child and a fairy or a strange

magical being comes to help them. Women's role, as can be seen from the stories, was limited to cooking, cleaning and taking care of the kids. The inquisitive queen is sacrificed by the king reinforcing the idea of a woman being submissive. It also shows though King lost his wife he was allowed to remarry. In the story of Bitaram the curious sister-in-law though warned gets cursed and gives birth to a son only a span long. Polygamy it seemed was accepted, specially among the royalty, where the king could marry as many times he wished, whereas, women once widowed did not remarry. Siblings have been shown to have a strong bond. Stories like "The Magic Fiddle", "Seven Brothers and their Sister" illustrate this bond. Be it the brothers or the sisters, they stick through each other, no matter how many mischiefs and troubles they cause.

8. **Humour** (Idiocy; Sarcasm about other caste and Funny situations):

The character Jhore, in the story of 'Two brothers Jhorea and Jhore', displays idiocy to an absurd extent. It is these events which take the story further but despite all the troubles they fall into, the endings are happy. The story of the simpleton (and foolish) goat herd who is brought before the king is again a common tale told throughout Indian subcontinent. This brings the humour element into it. This shows how folktales reciprocated all the emotions. They were not just meant for educative or informative purpose, they were there for pure entertainment too.

9. **Other tribes**

There are some other tribes mentioned in the stories like Hadi- a semi-Hinduised aborigines in "The Magic Fidddle" and "Bir Hor" in "the story of a simpleton" as it

says "the simpleton took up his residence in that part of the jungle in which the above occurred. He is said to be the ancestor of the Bir hors, or jungle Santals".

B. **Cultural Influences**:

Culture is generally defined as the traditional behaviour being followed by generations. It includes the knowledge, belief systems, morals and customs of a particular society. (Tylor, 1871). Folktales then seem to be the perfect carrier of this changing culture.

Culture can be reflected in the folktale in many ways; it could be the names of the characters, the instruments and objects they use, the dress they wear, the food they eat, the songs they sing, the customs they follow and so on. Given below are some of these socio-cultural elements reflected through the Santal Folktales.

Names: Most of the stories refer to the protagonist with respect to their occupation or kinship terms but the few stories where names have been provided reflect their culture. The names are specific to their tribes, not mainstream names (which are mostly Sanskritized in nature). These names include, Kara, Guja, Gumda, Jhorea and Jhore.

Occupation: includes farmers, goat herds, traders and the royalty but the stories reflect the struggle to reach the latter. Earning money is most often the goal and the recurrent golden flowers also hint at that. Horse trading is hinted in the story of the 'magic lamp'. Farming as an occupation is again mentioned in the story of Kara and Guja. Horses were not common in this part; hence it could be an outside influence. Trading in general has been shown as an occupation. '*Ghur pank*', which is mentioned in the story (The story of a tiger) is a phrase

used by ploughmen when turning their bullocks at the end of a furrow. Agriculture, especially rice cultivation is an important source of economy.

Customs: The funeral ceremony also seemed to be in line with the main stream culture where sumptuous dinner was prepared and relatives were invited. Rice appears in the first two stories which shows it to be their staple food. There are other grains like jari, wheat that is grown. In one story, bread is mentioned, but this most probably refers to the Indian roti which is hard and thick than the usual bread loaf. There is mention of Gongo- Covering for the head and shoulders made of leaves pinned together, worn as a protection from the rain by women, while planting rice.

Measurements: Pai, Pawa and Paila seem to be specific measurement terms. As was usual, food was measured using certain fixed scales. This particular scale appears in the story of 'Two brothers: Jhorea and Jhore'.

Conclusion:

A folktale is not just a telling or a retelling of a story, it carries with itself the culture, the history and life of people who share it. It contains not one but many interpretations. Some of them have lots of influence from other tales, the stories just get intertwined, the landscapes change to accommodate the local terrain, the names of the characters change, the objects change, and thereby reflect the culture of the narrator, in short, a folktale evolves. Thus, every retelling of the story, will reflect the cultural identity of the narrator.

The Santali folktales studied in this paper, reflect these cultural elements. They suggest to us the role of women and of men. The common perception of different roles, step mothers,

sons, daughters, fathers etc. The space they share with nature and how confrontation with the wild is a part of their life. The bizarre tales that are told can be understood metaphorically to symbolize the life of the people. For example, as Ramanujan points out in his book, *Folktales from India* (2004), stories of animal husbands can be understood to mean the way women see their relations with their husbands, as that of domesticating the wild animal; or else, the tales about Gods and Demons often differ from that of Hindu mythology, with Gods and Demons can be tricked by humans and are not often in that reverential position then otherwise are depicted as. The folktales are not just about relations, or fate but also include the humorous elements. They can be sarcastic or pure and simple silly ones.

Thus, folktales open up a window to a different culture. It offers a glimpse into the psychological, the sociological, the historical and the linguistic elements, of a group of people who constitute a society.

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Memory and the 'Many Mahabharatas': A Reading of *Mahabharata*, *The End of an Epoch* and *The Palace of Illusions*

Ankita Sharma

Abstract: History is often re-constructed and past events are reimagined to serve the needs of the present. Memory work becomes imperative to construct and understand the past in relation to the present, but the question is, does collective memory present a singular narrative or can there be multiple narratives of the same event, seen through different lenses? Assuming the presence of multiple narratives, questions are raised on the singularity, individuality and authenticity of any historical event. This paper intends to explore, discuss and interrogate how memory work shapes social identities in various renditions of age-old Hindu epic Mahabharata as presented in C. Rajagopalachari's *Mahabharata*, Iravati Karve's *Yuganta: The End of an Epoch* and Chitra Divakaruni's *The Palace of Illusions.* Using the method of comparative analysis this paper would try to explore how memory plays momentous role in resolving the past. In doing so it leaves out certain events over time to cast light upon few other episodes in order to dismantle new truths and meaningful ideas about existing times and places. Whether these ideas are administered by collective recollection of the past or the creative genius of the storyteller or the social reality of the time in which the narration takes place is a matter of contestation. It is important though, to take note of how the past is remembered and by whom. Why is it important to remember the past or cast new light on existing memories? To realize a shared past or to construe a convincing present out of existing traditions and culture or to simply record events for future generations?

Keywords: Mahabharata, Memory, Narrativization, Dialogism, Meaning-making, Social criticism.

Nothing is ever really lost to us as long as we remember it.

— L.M. Montgomery, *The Story Girl*

One historical event can have a hundred onlookers, hundred onlookers turn it in a thousand narratives and a thousand narratives bombard a million of memories. How do events impact individuals? Do memories from the past create static mental images on the minds of individuals? Does the past ever change with the way one remembers it? Can one have a control over the memories of one's past? How are memories recalled in the process of narrativization? How does the author deal with the memories of an event? How does a reader engage with a memory narrative? Where is the meaning of a text situated? These are some of the questions that formulated my interest in the current research and led me to an inquiry into the problematization of the memories within a narrative.

One always looks at the world from a particular point of time and place, in a certain way that makes one's vision from the other spectators different. While the author configures memories pertinent to a context, how much is the text located and fixed in the temporal and spatial zones and how does it evolve in time with the memory of the author, the memory of the reader, the memory of the narrative and the memory of the historical event itself?

The memorization process of an event is selective in nature and in order to register certain things in the memory we carefully exclude a few others so as to remember better. Also, out of those that make it to our memory initially, the list is continually revised according to the

significance attached with the things we remember and forget. When this event takes the shape of a narrative, this selection is guided by various factors including the history of the author, the history of the reader, the history of the memory and the memory of the history. I argue that the meaning-making act is enabled through a constant dialogue between the text, author and the reader. To substantiate this argument this paper makes use of the age-old Hindu epic Mahabharata, which is a blend of *itihasa,* the history located in the distant past and its memory, constantly evolving with the present. Using the contemporary theories of memory, social criticism, dialogism, post-structuralism and feminism, an attempt is made here to analyse the narratives of Mahabharata as presented in C. Rajagopalachari's *Mahabharata*, Iravati Karve's *Yuganta: The End of an Epoch* and Chitra Divakaruni's *The Palace of Illusions.*

The story of Mahabharata is told and re-told many a times by performers and authors including Tagore and can claim no singular authorship. The storying of myths and the epics form a large part of the Hindu culture and their understanding of the self. Even today, the *kissagoi* or the performative storytelling tradition is enriched with the enigmatic world of characters drawn from both the Ramayana and Mahabharata. The readers and the authors continue to rehearse the meaning of this grand story that has evolved over thousands of years:

Whenever a Hindu wants to convey an idea or a thought about the self or the world, they are likely to tell a story from the epics, as Kakar observes: "the preferred medium of instruction and transmission of psychological, metaphysical, and social thought in India continues to be the story." There is a shared assumption between the storytellers and listeners that everything is interrelated – scriptures, ethics, philosophy, literary style, semantics, grammar, mysticism and moral codes – all of them seen as indispensable to the

understanding of our existence. The culture at large recognizes that a good story must appeal to both the literate and the illiterate alike. While the less educated are drawn to the dramatic appeal, the erudite may study the subtleties of language and grammar to distil esoteric truths. The characters are simply seen as prototypes and moulds in which humanity is cast, and hence their validity is understood as timeless. (Bandlamudi 106)

To dismantle these 'truths,' the present study concentrates on three retellings of Mahabharata, namely *Mahabharata*, *Yuganta* and *The Palace of Illusions* (henceforth, *The Palace*) to locate them within the memory sphere and see how the memories involved thus inform the interpretation of the text in contemporary times.

Remembering Mahabharata

Maha means great and *Bharata* is another name for India. Mahabharata thus, is the narrative of the grand epic of *Bharata*. The Indian soil is suffused with the memories of the epic that is alive, open, moving and in constant touch with the contemporary cultural shifts. The movement of the epic back and forth in time and space has resulted in its multiple, diverse and disparate compositions. This ubiquitous presence of the epic in the Indian tradition and the Indian consciousness can be situated in the claim posited by it, noted in the following words that appear in the Adi Parva or The Book of the Beginning, "*yadihasti tadanyatra yannehasti na tattkvachit*."

The contemporary reader thus, time and again, tries to mend the disjoints of his times when faced with existentialist crises and runs to traditional tales of wisdom, "making the past present" in this effort, while simultaneously drawing new inferences from them. While critiquing

the practices prevalent in a society, one is always exposed to possible "risks of contemporaneity" as,

> The contemporary is the untimely—warned Nietzsche in his radical critique of his times. Contemporariness in this sense is a singular relationship with one's own time disjunctively and anachronistically; one is at once proximate and also distanced from it; one is a "misfit" in the present. The contemporary is he, writes Agamben meditating on the question "who is contemporary?", "who firmly holds his gaze on his own time so as to perceive not its light but rather its darkness." In our case, the presentism of our academic institutional contemporaneity (to be with the latest) conceals the darkness of our postcolonial destitution. (Rao 196)

Rao describes the predicament of our "postcolonial destitution" as losing the access to our past experiences or "resources of the past," in such a way that no reflection is possible for negotiating "different futures for the resources." This destitution is further made critical with the rigid and limited interpretations of historical texts. Even when there are multiple perspectives present, dismissal of a few and the overlapping of other narratives perplexes the reader. Amidst these narrative manifestations, the part-history and part-mythic encounter with the "many Mahabharatas" ensures the persistent engagement of the reader with the uncertain and irresolvable dilemmas of the human existence. The tangible contact thus created is a measure to convince the reader, torn between emotional fervour for the tradition and an aware proximal reading of the text, of the presence of a potential counter-history and a resilient counter-memory.

However, the nuances of translation drift the attention of the reader towards ascertaining the framing of the cultural consciousness in each modern rendition, warning at each act of

mobilization or transferral of the semantic apparatus. The casting of each text into varied moulds of cultural hegemony registers the post-colonial readings of the epic, reviving the sentiments against the British colonial rule and appropriating the survival of the subjugated self, down the road at the hands of the modern-day perpetrators.

Mahabharata thus distils into the modern reader's sensibility as a source-text to reimagine history, exhibiting the fallibility and mutability of the memory-narratives one has accumulated through time and tradition, providing an impetus to redeploy the existing structures with an addition of some fresher perspectives. The diversified experience produced through translations and multiple versions hence validates the necessity of a cultural dynamism between contradictory but co-existing narratives.

Whose memory?

Talking about Mahabharata as a memory-site for the regeneration of cultural memories, the important question arises here as to whose memory is it that we are ascribing to? The vision of the author is communicated through the narrative discourse which involves the selective remembering and editing of the information perceived by the author's imagination. This editing though is not meant to be an 'intrusion' into the historical truths. As Bakhtin suggests, "the author must be situated on the boundary of the world he is bringing into being as the active creator of this world, for his intrusion into that world destroys its aesthetic stability (191)."

Narrativization is always embedded within the politics of time and the author cultivates a persona in accordance with the concerns of the hour. C. Rajagopalachari, famously known as Rajaji, was an influential leader of Tamil Congress Party and held many political positions

during his distinguished career. Through his *Mahabharata* he presented a moralistic viewpoint of the epic world and his re-telling allowed him to merge the mythic pre-independent world with the modern post-independent Indian nation. Gopalachari's *Mahabharata* first appeared in the Tamil magazine *Kalki* from December 1943 to May 1946. This was the time when re-telling of both Mahabharata and Ramayana received renewed interest, as noted by Joanne P. Waghorne in her study titled, *Images of Dharma* (Sharma 206). Rajaji's political repute and the institutional support of Bhartiya Vidya Bhavan added to the establishment of the cultural legitimacy of the text. Rajagopalachari writes:

> Vyasa's Mahabharata is one of our noblest heritages, and it is my cherished belief that to hear it faithfully told is to love it and come under its elevating influence. It strengthens the soul and drives home—as nothing else does—the vanity of ambition and the evil and futility of anger and hatred. (5)

It is with this avowed didactic intent that Rajaji takes upon the responsibility of connecting his contemporary readers with their living past through his *kalaksepam*, restoring the cultural values to his society. He constantly draws parallels between his time and the time of Mahabharata stressing on the fact that, "there is nothing new under the sun," in an attempt to re-construct a national memory of the past (172). The chapters are given descriptive labels with moralistic messages like "The Wicked are Never Satisfied," "Affliction is Nothing New," "Mere Learning is not Enough" etc. that clearly show the reader where the sympathies of the narrative lie. The language of the narrative is plain English, heightening the moralistic vision, with no blurred meanings. The characters are either heroes (Pandavas) or villains (Kauravas) and the whole narrative is a simplistic synthesis of the ethical lessons based on the Kurukshetra war.

An eminent anthropologist and sociologist, Irawati Karve was born in a *Chitpavan* brahmin community and traced the development of ideas such as caste and kinship in Hindu society. In *Yuganta*, Karve studies the main characters of the Mahabharata and unlike Gopalachari, treats them as historical figures and uses their attitudes and behaviour to gain an understanding of the times in which they lived. Karve's book was first composed in Marathi, and later got translated into English. The book also won the 1967 Sahitya Academy Award for the best book in Marathi.

Karve studies the humanity of the Mahabharata's great figures and for her no character is "wholly good or wholly bad," as she observes life in a secular and a scientific way. She sketches each character in its entirety, cutting across the exalted aura of the characters to see them in the light of their human flaws, exhibiting a full range of human passions and emotions. Through Karve's lens, the readers are able to evaluate the mythic figures in human size and are made to re-arrange their past memories of the characters.

Maintaining an astute grasp on the shifting trends of her time, Karve identifies the picture of the social order in Mahabharata as "definitely male-oriented and class (*Aryan-Kshatriya*) oriented." She observes:

During the Mahabharata times the ideal of a woman's loyalty to her husband differed slightly from that of later times…in the Mahabharata times, a woman was the "field" and she had to produce children from any man when her husband demanded…the conception of the women's chastity was rather elastic in the Mahabharata times and became more rigid later on. (223-25)

Perusing the discussions on *dharma*, Karve notes that "the name Hinduism, was given by foreigners. Even today no thinking Hindu will be able to give a clear-cut definition of his religion…all one would say is "this is *my* interpretation (195)." Dharma and Arjuna question the validity of human action in relation to the ultimate reality when Dharma proclaims that "this victory seems to me as defeat." This "mood of questioning" brings the modern readers close to Mahabharata which is full of "questions, answers and doubts regarding the nature of religion and human destiny (229)." She also interrogates the notion of friendship in her analysis of Mahabharata, illustrating the bond between Drona and Drupada; Duryodhana and Karna; and between Krishna and Arjun. Only the third kind "was what the Mahabharata considered the ideal kind of friendship, as in those times, only equals could become friends (240)."

According to Karve, Mahabharata marks the end of a *yuga* or an era as the post-Mahabharata world of "hero-worship and unquestioning obedience to the order founded by the hero" was never seen in the Mahabharata times,

> India retained her polytheism, did not give way to fanaticism, but made up for the lack of these two by abounding in sentimental dreamy literature. The pervading despair and frustration, hardness and realism of the Mahabharata never again appeared in Indian literature. (232)

The Palace offers an enlarged view of the character-portrayals in Mahabharata and constructs a narrative dedicated to the journey of the revolutionary heroine, making it Darupadi's Mahabharata. The masculine and misogynist attitude of the fierce warriors and the epic war is described through the 'female gaze' of Draupadi. The fictional world of the novel finds expression for the marginalized voices of the women, through a constant interrogation and

dialogue by Draupadi, inviting critical thinking on the part of the modern readers engaging with their memories of the women in Mahabharata as well as their contemporary status in society. Divakaruni circumvents the patriarchal tool of mythic storytelling to subvert the stereotypical image of women projected to subdue them in the name of traditional boundaries and social values.

Draupadi's desire to seek education and knowledge is always discouraged, and she struggles to map her path to a "heroic destiny." She inquires about her position in her family and the world outside, probing into the circumstances of her birth and learns that it was only Dhri, a warrior son that King Drupada asked for to avenge his insult that, "it was only my brother that he wanted…we clung together so stubbornly that my father was forced to pick us both together" (Divakaruni 6). The universe of Draupadi was confined to the palace walls and her human contact reduced mostly to her observation of Dhri, her father and later the Pandavas. Using this limited space, Divakurni re-creates Draupadi in an entirely new light directing her efficacy to expose the differences in the binary world inhabited by the two sexes in the text. Empowering Draupadi with an agency of questioning and appropriating her narrative for a larger purpose and meaning, Divakurni exalts the status of Draupadi from being mere the daughter of King Drupada, or the wife of Pandavas to the woman who asked the most trenchant question at the court after the game of dicing.

Interpretation and de-centring the meaning

We have come far extolling the memories of the traditional and cultural heritage of Mahabharata and detecting new metaphors for alternative narratives but what enables this dialogism to sustain is the act of writing as the substitute for memory. Functioning between

history, memory and imagination, a narrative is contemplated and realized with bits of memory through an interactive ecosystem created between the text, the author and the reader, where the "memory simultaneously transforms, so that a memory represents not a copy of an original but more precisely a version of it" (Hansen 205). Hansen writes:

> Frow proposes what he calls a textual model of memory, according to this conception, the past is open-ended, subject to revision and new interpretations. Memory, according to Frow's model, follows the logic of narrative and reading: 'In such a model the past is a function of the system: rather than having a meaning and a truth determined once and for all by its status as event, its meaning and its truth are constituted retroactively and repeatedly; if time is reversible then alternative stories are always possible. Data are not stored in already constituted places but are arranged and rearranged at every point in time. Forgetting is thus an integral principle of this model, since the activity of compulsive interpretation that organizes it involves at once selection and rejection. (206)

This selection and rejection not only directs the narrative flow of a historical text but also makes suggestions to the readers about the authorial intent. The reader then shuffles between multiple temporal and spatial zones to construct the meaning of the text and while doing so, does not approach it as a *tabula rasa*, instead, "in understanding this historical text, the individual's own "history of understanding" and the history of the text intersect, and such a dynamic process brings about new meanings of the text" (Bandlamudi 10).

Thereby Mahabharat offers an instance for narratorial intervention into the memories to generate productive ways of translating a compact past into variegated narratives. The omnipresence of Mahabharat and its acceptance into the cultural space reinforces its connection

with the sensibility of the contemporary readers, while questioning at the same time, their understanding of the text and the self through it. The memories instilled into the mind of the reader are put to challenge in context of the discursive trajectories forged by the different versions of Mahabharat. These reflective renditions demonstrate the scope for disassembling and seeing through the semantic accretions of historical narratives and engaging with the living memories of past in unprecedented ways.

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Voice of the Voiceless: Subaltern Study of the Burning of the House of *Lac* in *The Mahabharata*

Shabnur Parveen

Abstract: My paper endeavours to seek with a very specific focus for an incident from the gigantic epic *The Mahabharata* and in the course of the discussion, I will be focusing on the overview of Historiography, Subaltern Studies and the burning of the house of lac which will elaborate on how the idea of "inferiority" is "internalized" in minds of the subalterns. Later this paper will further argue over how all conspiracies against marginal groups emerge together and hide behind the tradition of "elite historiography" and "grand narrative'. In the end, this paper with conclude with how all these conspiracies emerge together and provide a juxtaposition of a 'thesis' and 'antithesis' the idea finally give birth to a 'synthesis', that to be explored through the parameters of Subaltern Studies.

Key words: Historiocity, Conspiracy, Justification, Myth.

> "What is history but a fable agreed upon?" -
>
> Napoleon Bonaparte

Though here we are reflecting upon our very Indian ancient epic *The Mahabharata*, still an above-quoted statement of Nepolean Bonaparte stimulates very core argument of our discussion. A bulk of ancient Indian literature books are very much utilitarian in writing a true history of Indian people. From ancient times, Indian classical texts have tempted scholars of different fields to accomplish their thirst for knowledge. Scholars have been delving into the

ocean of *The Mahabharata* from the ages to trace its originality through the lenses of history. In this paper *Voice the Voiceless: Subaltern Studies of the Burning of the house of Lac in The Mahabharata*, the domain of discussion is very limited and specific, focusing on the incident where the voices of the margins were brutally mutilated by the 'Elite historiography', a term used by Ranajit Guha (Guha ii). Apart from a critical understanding of Subaltern Studies, I shall reflect on brutal killing off the *Nishada* woman with her five sons through a conspiracy of the burning of the house of lac. Throughout the discussion of this paper, I shall endeavour to foreground how the great epic *The Mahabharata* had been suppressing the rising voice of subalterns from the beginning through internalizing the idea of inferiority in the minds of these people. The great epic *The Mahabharata* had not written even a single word to justify their actions of killing those *Nishadas.* The incident has been portrayed as natural and unquestionable. I shall also attempt to determine the underneath 'historicality' of the epic under the light of the incidents from the text and ironical presentation of the histories which tell only stories of winners.

The term "subaltern" primarily originated from a Latin word "Subalternus", where "sub" means "everyone". Oxford English Dictionary registers "subalterns" as a noun that means a British army, who is in a lower rank than the captain. Later in the 1920s, Antonio Gramsci in his *Selections from the Prison Notebooks* mentioned the term "subaltern" as a "class" or "group" of people who are outside the hegemonic power structure. A particular group of people, who are being exploited, oppressed on the basis of colour, class, caste, religion, culture and other homogeneous subjects. Simply it can be said subaltern studies seek for: "rewrite the

nation outside the state-centred nation discourse that replicates colonial power-knowledge in a world of globalization". (Guha 20)

In India, the inherited literature contained works like *The Mahabharata* which claims itself an encyclopedia of Indian ancient history. However, the accuracy of this claim is still under question. To understand whether we should consider *The Mahabharata* as a document of historical events or not, we may go through the following filtration: to understand its historical significance we must know the historical sense of that era. Western historians always questioned Indian lack of sense in the field of history through the ages. To comprehend the historical value of India, Ranajit Guha used and elaborated the term 'historicality' in his book *History at the limit of world history*. Guha in his book has defined 'historiocity' which is later simplified by Dipesh Chakraborty, in his review article of *History at the limit of world History* by Ranajit Guha points out as: 'the historiocity of human existence' is very much contradictory to the history written by the 'professional historians'(whom Guha squints as 'statist'). Chakraborty's words were:

> Every human being and every human relationship is imbued with special qualities that shine forth in their uniqueness. Each radiates a past that is wondrous and multifarious. This past, shot through as it is with myriad colourful narratives and multiple realities of concrete human experience, is what Guha calls 'historicality.'(125)

So, as we are discussing other compilation of events in that era, we can go back to the pages of Rgveda. D.D.Kosambi a renowned historian rightly points out in his well-known works, "*Myth and Reality*", *An introduction to the study of India* presents the validity of *The Mahabharata* as history. Malati J. Shendge in his article *The Earliest Population of India: Links*

between Rgveda and The Mahabharata, presents some touchstone methods which proves the genuineness of the text as a written form of the encounter of day to day life of common individuals of that era. To understand whether *The Mahabharata* is a history or not, we first have to understand the definition of history in that period then we will understand if the present version of the epic matches itself with the initial versions of the text then lastly we can investigate how the idea of myth and the reality amalgamated in the text and made it a piece of literature rather than a complete book of ancient Indian history. It's not like that ancient Indian people had no sense of history (as RgVeda deals with the real incidents), rather they combined history with mythology. Ancient history deals with the lives of the kings, moral ethics and the good deeds of the society. So there are ample shreds of evidence that ancient Indians were aware of history. Suta, when first started the narration of *The Mahabharata*, calls it *itihasa*. *Itihasa* always deals with history. The tradition of writing history dealt with always past glorious events and uses those events as a lesson for a later generation, as the writing of *The Mahabharata* shows already two versions: *Jaya* and *Bharata*. So, it's evident here the continuous transmission from generation after generation as a kind of reservation. For this purpose, *The Mahabharata* had been writing for ages as an encounter and preservation of history. So present hypothesis of this paper is: here I shall try to prove the tendency to keep aside the narratives of the backward classes in India have been practicing since the ancient period. In our later discussion, will focus on this specific domain will be elaborated and explored.

Questioning history, no doubt is a very recent phenomenon, which encounters history differently. Our present construction of society is largely a reflection of ancient history and *The*

Ramayana, The Mahabharata and myth coated histories have a great contribution to our large heritage of Indian culture. *The Mahabharata* is written to capture a large part of Indian history and this book clearly shows the conspiracy of "elite historiography" (a term used by the Ranajit Guha in Subaltern Studies book I) and how it glorifies the great dynasty of *Aryans* or 'Elites' and in doing so, how this great epic has undergone many subversion including deletion, interpolation and has used many imaginary myths, "Deus ex Machina" (Merriam-Webster) and deceits the voice of margins unknowingly. It has been internalized the idea of inferiority in the minds of the subalterns and has never allowed into raise any voice against this dualism. In the successive discussion, I shall focus on this very aspect of this great Indian epic.

After the death of *Pandu*, *Duryodhana* (elder son of *Dhritarashtra*) hears a rumour that *Yudhisthira* will become next king. To get rid of cousins and grab whole authority over the kingdom, he sends *Pandavas* away to a city called *Varanavata*. At the same time, he sends *Purochona* (his spy) to plot against *Pandavas* and kill them. The text describes:

Vaisampayana said after he had seen them living there happily for the year and observe their confidence, Purocana was filled with joy. But Kunti's son Yudhisthira expert in dharma,saw how joyful he seemed and spoke to Bhima, Arjuna and the twins: 'this wicked Purocana thinks we are utterly confident: we have fooled the cruel wretch. I believe the time for the fight has come. We shall fire the weapons-store burning Purochana too, and flee observed leaving six other people living here". (*The Mahabharata* 60-61)

Pandavas spend their days by haunting and nights by planning to escape from the castle of *lac*. The story grows and one night *Kunti* feeds a large number of *Brahmanas*. There come one *Nishada* women with her five sons, they eat, drink. As the night grows, Pandavs set fire in the castle where *Purocana* was sleeping and leave *Purocana* and five sons and their mother dead. The next day the six burn bodies of five *Nishada* women and their mother make *Kauravas* believe that they have finally got rid of *Pandavas*. This is how the burning of the house of lac episode ended.

Here is a very interesting point to note that, despite knowing the fact that *Kauravas* want to kill them, *Pandavas* wait for one year and grab the right opportunity and time to escape, why? And then they call Brahmins on the same day to deviate their conspiracy against *Nishadas*? All guests left but *Nisadas* did not left-why? And more surprising- *Pandavas*, the owner of the house were not aware of the fact. *Pandavas* were living in a castle surrounded by high walls. The text evident that there was only one gate in the palace, then the fact is unacceptable that *Kunti* did not know about them. If *Kunti* did not know then who provide them with food and drinks? She knew very well that these five men with their mother are unconscious due to over drinking still they leave them to burn without any hesitation. The narrative can be interpreted through various layers of understanding of the narrative-anthropological, psychological, mythical understanding. Regarding the origin of 'Aryans' B.G.Tilak in his book *The Arctic Home* says:

"The invasion theory becomes the basis of the view that Indian history has primarily been one of the invasions from the west with little indigenous coming from the subcontinent either in terms of population or cultural innovations. The history of India appears as a series of outside

invasions, from the subcontinent itself either in terms of populations or cultural innovations. The history of India appears as a series of outside invasions, Aryans, Persians, Greek, Scythians, Huns, Arabs, Turks, Portuguese, British and so on. Aryans belong to Barbarian Tribes. Original homes of Aryans were in the Arab Region." (48).

Now here question rises, is it so only because the *Nishida's* were non-*Aryan* or not the elite class? Some basic questions are raised – Who are these tribals? What is their real socio-economic and cultural identity? What are their hopes, aspirations and challenges? And who are these Aryans? What is their origin? Is the phrase 'urged by fate' (Mahabharata 61) in only justification for them to join the party. D.D Kosambi also points out in *The cultural and Civilization of Ancient India in Historical Outline*, "The conclusion in that the original *Aryans* were familiar with and probably originated in the northern regains' of Eurasia" (52).

It is evident from the above discussion that *Aryans* were strangers and their only the aim was to conquer the land. They had no sympathy for the original habitant of the land and they never felt any need for the documentation of the plight of common people, they just skipped it unquestionably. Ranajit Guha, in his introducing volume of *Subaltern Studies,* points out the very aspect of his work is a powerful invention that seeks to recover the present from elite projects and positivist historiography. Guha points out his idea to produce a historical analysis of which the subaltern groups are viewed as the subject of history "we are indeed opposed to much of the prevailing academic practice in historiography...for its failure to acknowledge the subaltern as the maker of their destiny. These critiques lie at the very heart of our project". (vii)   In his essay *On Some Aspects of the Historiography of Colonial India*, Guha says that "The historiography of Indian nationalism has for a long time been dominated by elitism—

colonialist elitism and bourgeois nationalist elitism" (37) However, what is more, important here is the understanding of how the lower-order people are suffering under some kind of imperial or social oppression become part of the same folk-cultural imagination and religious zeal to fight back. In *The Mahabharata* as a subaltern group at the same time, another parallel we can draw between *Nishadas* (tribal community) and Indian Dalit traditions as these two communities are equally suppressed. As Arjun Dangle, a Marathi Dalit writer and the editor of *Poisoned Bread, an anthology of translation of Marathi Dalit writings*, have correctly pointed out:

> Dalit is not a caste but a realization and is related to the experiences, joys and sorrows, and struggles of those in the lowest stratum of society. 'Dalit' means masses exploited and oppressed economically, socially, culturally, in the name of religion and other factors. Dalit writers hope that this exploited group of people will bring about a revolution in this country. (264)

Nationalist historiography has always tended to internalize the idea of "violence", the binary between "good" and "bad" in the minds of mass through media, movies, music and literature. Benedict Anderson in his the idea of "Imagined Communities" has implicitly discussed how persons from across the world can build community by sharing similar ideology and experience. He also implicitly interrogates how these 'nations' are 'imagined' into being. It follows a process of selection, exclusion and marginalization, of one particular voice, speaking, particular official rhetoric being heard and the other dissident voices being suppressed and hushed up. What it does is to 'problematize' the notion of a 'nation-state' being monolithic

entities, exposing within the cracks and marginal voices which threaten its stability and identity. The demand for marginal groups ignored of violently rescinded. This also very much true for the ancient text like *The Mahabharata*, where common people not only died in the name of war (in *Kurushetra*) but also the name of saving their so-called elite 'Kings', here lies the falsity of the term 'Nation'.

Our present social structure is largely influenced by our past. To borrow from T S Eliot as he says in his poem "*Burnt Norton*":

"Time present and time past

And both perhaps present in time future

And time future contained in time past." (1-3).

Eliot again draws attention by giving huge attention to methodology in his review to James Joyce's *Ulysses* and he says "Myth" provides the writer with a stable frame through which to view and explore the modern world. In the world in the words of Eliot: "[It is]...a way of controlling or ordering, of giving a shape and significance to of the futility of anarchy which is contemporary history"(Eliot). *The Mahabharta* has been carried our past culture since centuries. It was first named *Jaya Itihas* or also called *Bharata Samhitata* because of being a history of *Bharat* dynasty. Indian ancient history has always mingled myth with history and has created a large Heritage in our culture.

This story (burning of the house of *lac*) maybe one of the few stories where the *Pandavas* are viewed as an exploiter of ethics or "*dharma*". They let those *Nishadas* burn

without any hesitations and the writer of the epic also did not spend a single word to the malfeasance of the protectors of "*dharma*". The right of the subalterns remained unquestionable, thus proves, history is always in praise of the winners. By not giving any narrative to the *Nishadas, The Mahabharata* sticks to its position as a narrative of "elite historiography". This is how the narrative works in *The Mahabharata*.

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Status and Sexuality of Kannadiga Women in Karnads Adaptation with Special Reference to Film Nagamandala

Mridul C.Mrinal

Abstract: Girish Karnad through his plays always tried to draw strong blend of gender and culture.Nagamandala is one such play which contextualise both. Several adaptations had been provided new planes ad interpretations to the play. One such was the 1997 film Nagamandala by T.S Nagabharana .This film portrays the visualised experience of the Play. Set upon in the ethnic Kannadiga cultural background, the movie provides an even intense picture on the rural Kannadigas female identity. Celebrating the rural myth intertwined with the traditional serpent worship practiced in the kannadigas society the film provides stark reality of subjugation of women the rural kannadigas societies. The film draws a strong ethno-cultural symbolism. Exploring Karnads adaptation in screen provides further area of interpreting the play in composition of visual media and technology. This paper proposes to discuss the representations of female subjugation in the ethnic Kannadigas society in the film Nagamandala. Further, the paper also discusses the main departures in the film with respect to the play. The paper further provides the scope of evaluating how custom and myth plays a motive force in determining the sexuality of women in kannadigas society. It also proposes an Eco feministic reading in Karnards adaptations. The paper further discusses status of Kannadiga women by analysing the cultural stereotypes within the Ethnic Kannadiga society portrayed in the film.

Key words: Nagamandala film, Kannadiga, Women, sexuality, status, Eco feministic reading.

Introduction

Indian Drama has a tradition of two thousand years. Along with the western Drama tradition like Greek and Roman Theatre in Europe, the Sanskrit drama also thrived in ancient India. Theatres in vernacular languages started to appear all over in India. Khadilkars Kechaka vada in Marathi, Amanants opera Inder sabha in Hindi, Ram Sanker Rays Kanchi kaveri in Odiya, Gurajada Apparaos Kanya Sulkam in Telugu, T.P Kailasms Tollu Gatti in Kannada, Sundaranar Pillais Manonmaniyam in Tamil, Tagores Chitra, Post office and Sacrifice in Bengali are some of the remarkable plays produced in Indian vernaculars during then. The Indian English Drama Tradition dates backs to the establishment of East India Company rule. India was a legend among the English long before they established themselves as rulers of the land. Theatres were established for the entertainment of the company officials. The first Indian play written in English was from Krishna Mohan Banerjee titled "the persecuted or dramatic scenes illustrative of the present of hindoo society in Calcutta" in 1831.Micheal Madhusudhan Dutt translated his plays into English, Followed by Rabindranath Tagore. Aurbindo penned plays and so was H.N Chattopadhyaya. The Indian English Drama Traditions didn't achieve as much reception as Poetry and Prose had in Indian English. The major cause can be the complexity of Theatrical performance and Audience felt more comfortable with their Native Tongue rather than a Foreign Tongue. Indian English Drama Tradition is evolving genre with a wide range audience especially after the post liberalization era. Playwrights like Mahesh Dattani, Badal Circar, Asif Carimbhoy, Vijay Tendulker, Girish Karnad and Manjula Padamanabhan etc nourished the Indian English Drama Tradition with notable plays.

Girish Karnad towers as one of the stalwarts of India Drama Tradition. Karnads deviation from contemporary issues to Mythical, historical and folk themes as the Skelton for his plays make him unique among his contemporaries. Girish Karnads talents didn't confine to the stage. He was also a writer, playwright, movie director, screenwriter and an actor. Karnads plays reflect his deep insight into the human nature. This knowledge helped him to establish himself as a successful actor and playwright. Karnad explored the paradoxes of human nature and tried to imbibe it into his plays. The spectators never felt any distance from his plays .employing myths and historical events into theatre, karnad expanded horizon of Indian theatrical tradition, especially the Kannada theatrical tradition. He was curious in knowing little known and obscure myths and tried to connect it with the chosen plot. Karnad was an exponent of existentialism in Indian theatre. According to existentialist it held the thought that humans do not have fixed nature or essence as other organisms has. Humans make a choice which creates his/her nature. Kannada drama tradition has a history from 7 ᵗʰ century. Yet the modern Kannada drama tradition starts with T.P Kailasams plays, who often hailed as father of modern Kannada drama. His plays revealed the contemporary urban Brahmin middle class life .he employed unconventional carefree mannerisms in his plays. Use of Local Kannada dialect was also a peculiarity of his plays. Kailasam was also a forerunner of Indian English drama tradition compiling plays both in English and Kannada. Kailasam opposed mythology and stories on royalties in drama instead he preferred realistic plays. Adya Rangacharya was another prominent playwright who dedicated 50 long years for theatre. He was influenced by western drama. Composed more than 100 plays and successfully experimented a majority of them on stage. Shivarama Karanth was an exponent of realistic drama. Same time he promoted amateur theatre as well as Yakshagana. it is through

Karanths effort Yakshagana acquired an international recognition. Karnad was a progressive dramatist who gave a new lease of life to Kannada drama.

Karnad in his plays, tried to provide a curious blend of mythology with human emotions. He never tried to kill the authenticity of the original tale but instead incorporate local culture in to it. Naga Mandala was written in 1988 originally in Kannada, later translated into English by Karnad himself. It was based on two Kannada folk tales which he heard from A.K Ramanujan. The play consists of a prologue and two acts. The title Naga Mandala means play with the cobra. in fact Nagamandala is a tradition related to serpent worship prevailing in Coastal Tulunad districts of Karnataka. The play is about Rani who ill-treated by his husband Appanna. Kurudavva a blind woman offers her charms so that her husband will love her. She tries it but abandoned the plan by pouring the food into an anthill .the resident King Cobra consumed it and fell in love with her. Through transformation it visited Rani each night .Naga impregnate her. Appanna accused her of adultery and courted in village. Rani passes the ordeal and hailed as goddesses.

Film Nagamandala

Girish Karnads Nagamandala had been adapted into a film in 1997 by Kannada Director T.S Nagabharana. The film visualises the original play. The movie was produced by Srihari L Khoday and released under the banner of Yajman Enterprises on 31 March 1997.The starring include Prakash Raj as Appanna/Naga,Vijayalaxmi as Rani,B.Jayashree as Kurudavva and Mandya Ramesh as Kappanna. The film is 3745 minute long and secured a " U " grade under CBFC (Cinema Board of Film Certification) The movie consist of 16 Audio tracks composed by

C Aswath and Written by Gopal Yagnik. The movie uses myths that prevailed in rural Karnataka. The movie portrays complex social relations with a background of Magical setup. The film won several recognition including the Karnataka state awards including second best film state awards, best supporting actor and actress award, best art direction award and best photography award. It also received udaya cine awards and selected for the Indian panorama in the international film festival 1997.

Female Subjugation With Respect To the Culture and Myth

The film Nagamandala portrays the blend of culture and gender. The film is setup in the North Karnataka. Based on the myths prevailed in Northern Karnataka, Nagamandala provides the perfect ambience to apprehend the culture of this specific region. The Culture of the ethnic Kannadiga society in Northern Karnataka differs from other parts of Karnataka in different ways. The film Nagamandala portrays the lifestyle, culture and costumes of medieval northern Karnataka. The rich Vachana Sahitya in Kannada nourished by Poets like Basavanna, Akkamaha devi, Allama Prabhu, Channakesava etc had a cultural impact in these regions. The rise of Lingayatism or Veerashaivism had transformed the cultural and societal landscape of northern Karnataka.Akkamahadevi occupies a unique position in the sharana movement of 12 th century.

Rani (played by Vijayalaxmi), the female protagonist is a representative of the typical rural Kannadiga women. She was independent and roamed around the fields and plantations. She was too dear to her father, who is a single parent. As Myth plays a centric part in the movie, culture should not be ignored as it can be a measure which limits the presence of women. .A womens life is incomplete without having a husband in the Society. It is considered that a woman is the ardhangi (half part) of men. But contrary is observed in the female representations

in the film. Norms of traditional patriarchy uses culture as one of its measure for female subjugation. Rani is silent in front of Appanna (Played by Prakash Raj) whenever he pays the afternoon visits for lunch. The experiment of the magical roots given by Kurudavva (Played by B.Jayashree) symbolises the desire of Rani to be loved by her husband. When the experiment went unexpected as flames came out of the potion, Rani is shown nervous and exhausted. She tries to dumb the potion, when she poured it into the sidelines it got on fire. Further she went and dumped. Only after pouring the potion Rani realised it was an anthill. She is expressing guilty. The social restrictions require women to be loyal to her husband. Despite of all ill-treatment she faces from her husband the social norms prompt her to remain silent and some time to indulge into her own world.

After the marriage, Appanna is acting lustful and exposing his manly authoritative moves to subdue Rani in the bed room during their shantimuhurtham. The tradition in northern Karnataka as it was in many part of south India required an early marriage. Rani is still a young girl. The physical growth the body will be in demand of institute and instrument for fulfilment, which is required by a husband. But the young Rani is unknown to these social institutions like shantimuhurtam or initial intercourse. She is shown as afraid and exhausted of Appannas lustful action. Kurudavva on the other hand, is a blind woman who is at the mercy of his son Kappanna (Played by Mandya Ramesh), who carries around her in his back. Rani and Kurudaavva both legitimize the claims of Manusmriti. Women is under the patronage of her father in her childhood, under her husband in her youth which can be associated with Rani and finally under the care of her son in the old age which can be observed with Kaurudavva.

Reptiles have specific role in Indian mythology and Traditions. Serpent worship is common in several parts of Kerala and Karnataka. Serpents are viewed as supernatural beings capable of transformation. Transformation plays an important role in the entire film. Rani under her solitary confinement found a relief under the hands of Naga who assumes Appannas form. Shaivate traditions such as Lingayatism have a strong foot in the religious life of north Karnataka. Serpent worship is often associated with fertility, health, long life etc. Married women will offer milk in anthills which was considered as the abode of the serpent god for an offspring and adolescent girls for a good future husband.

Culture may sometimes be paradoxical especially when it drew along the gender lines. It will lead the trail and guilt only for women, whereas, men are exempted from it. The climax scene where Rani is courted in the panchayat in front of the elders, Appanna is accused her of adultery. He swears that he didn't impregnate rani. While Appanna accuses allegations against rani, the whole village is aware of the extra marital affair of Appanna with the concubine who is also shown to be present in the crowd. Only the chastitsity of women is marked as problem in the patriarchal society. These moral norms are not applicable to man. Only women is expected to be faithful to her husband whereas the vice versa isn't.

The myth and traditions could be viewed as the motive force for determining the sexuality of women in the rural Kannadiga setup in the film. Naga symbolises fertitlity.i t relieves Rani from the misery she had been through. The tradition holds that cobras are capable of getting woman fertile, guarding treasures, aid humans etc. Rani is realising her sexuality through Naga. The tradition holds the responsibility for Ranis transformation. She was not less than a child when she was brought home by Appanna. She still doesn't know about sex. When

she got pregnant by Naga she as informs him, she realises herself. The journey from complete innocence to liberated self assertion. She lashes out at patriarchal subjugation which acts like a chameleon. Elaine Showalter argues womens writing goes through three stages, imitation of the prevailing modes of the dominant tradition, protest against these standards and values and finally self discovery, a search for identity .Showalter goes on by labelling these stages as feminine, feminist and female. The case of Rani is a clear replica of these three crucial stages. Every Indian wife is observed with this issue with her husband just like Rani had experienced. An ardent lover in the night whereas a complete stranger during the day. But Naga was a positive side of the coin. It is through Naga, Rani got Self realised .Rani was realises herself as a daughter, a wife and finally as mother. It could be observed how the myth can determine the sexuality of a woman.

The film portrays a typical wealthy rural household in which Rani has been locked up. When Kurudavva and Kappanna visits Appannas house, it was shown the sacks of grains were loading from the house indicating the wealth. The interior is also shows wealthy status. It is in such a large wealthy house Rani got locked up alone. She is shown as a naïve girl who merely obeys Appannas order. A typical housewife should always at the command of her husband as per the tradition. The symbols of local Kannadiga culture are intense in the film. At lunch when Rani is gave him the Jolawa Roti , the staple food of north Karnataka, Appanna remained emotionless like an idol. Cultural stereotypes have determined the status of women in these parts of Karnataka. Rani is draped in a traditional green red border *sere* (sari) common among northern Karnataka. The dressing pattern is similar to that of Naushari Maharashtarian Sadee. Rani is required to cover her head as symbol of respect in front of her husband even if only the two are

present. The same is shown in snake ordeal in front of the elders in the panchayat. age or status is not a barrier as Kurudavva also cover her head as per the social norms. Such tradition is only visible in northern Karnataka in south India where they share cultural affinity with Marathi tradition. Men garments are Kurtha dhoti similar to that of Maharshriyan style. Appanna drapes vibrant head gear while he visits his concubine after lunch. Appannas concubine is shown as wealthy. She was draped a rich costly silk *sere* and ornaments. This shows another paradox where a woman who doesn't sin doesn't own everything while the women sins do own everything.

Major Departures from the Play

The relations between Indian English Literature and film in India starts with R.K Narayans' Mr.Sampath written in 1949 made into a bilingual film in 1951 both in Tamil and English. This was mere a starting. Later Narayans' own Guide (1965), Swamy and Friends (1988) were made into films both in English and Hindi. The adaptation of Girish Karnads' play Nagamandala, written in 1988 was adapted into celluloid by The Kannada Director T.S Nagabharana in 1997.The story and plot in adaptations should be aligned with Screen play. It is observed with emissions and inclusions from the basic plot of the source. Here as a play had been adapted into a film certain departures had to be noticed along with the film.

The prologue is partial in the film as it deletes the playwright in the text and retains the flames. Rani had the child marriage with Appanna and remained with her parents until she came to age. Appanna brought her a home. The film proposes a different angle. Rani is motherless country girl who brought up by her single parent father. Kurudavva who only appear in the play after founding Rani locked up in Appannas house. Whereas in the film, Kurudavva knows both

Appanna and Rani.it is she who brought the proposal of Rani to Appanna. The film shows multiple attempts by Kurudavva and her son Kappanna to pursue Appanna into the marriage with Rani. Literally the film shows Kurudavva as the source of Ranis sufferings.

An Elaborate Marriage in Northern Karnataka style is shown in the film.Rani and Appanna never shared any bed in the play whereas Appanna and Rani are having their First night after Marriage. Appanna is acting lustful in the scene where it scares in naive Rani who never had any idea of sexual intercourse. The play shows two magical roots which Kurudavva handover to Rani in order to prompt Appanna to fall in love with her. The film however shows only one magical root which Rani mixed with the dish and later poured into the anthill. The color distinction of the bloody magic potion is not shown in the film. Instead it got inflammated.

Appanna is shown in an Akhara, where he practices wrestling and physical exercises. Such a midshelter is absent complete in the play. When Rani gets pregnant by Naga, Kurudavva and Kappanna visits Appanna in the Akhara and informs his wife is pregnant. In the play Kappana went missing and Kurudavva becomes mad and wandering in search of him. Naga never shares any idea of selecting snake ordeals in the film. She herself chooses the snake ordeal in the panchayat. During the ordeal The Cobra slides up her shoulder like a garland and spreads its hood like an umbrella over her head and the villagers exclaimed and hailed her as goddess. This is absent in the film. As she swore with the cobra in her arm the crowd including Kappanna is shown hailing her as Devi or goddess. Appanna went in fury. The triple ending in play is also absent in the film. In addition there was a conflict between Appanna and Naga who transformed into Appanna. Appanna kills the Naga. He eventually understood everything and accepts Rani and her child.

Eco Feminist Reading

The film is providing the spectators with a chance of an Eco feminist reading. Although revolves around Mythical themes the story is seems to be intertwined with Nature. Prior the marriage the film shows Rani (Played by Vijayalaxmi) as the joyous girl who roams around the nature in the rural country. She smells flowers and roams through paddy fields, Areca nut plantations and plantain trees. The nature is shown green and lust like Rani. But the context becomes different when she arrives at her husbands house. The nature becomes arid and dusty from the lush green scene from her parents home. The arid and dusty nature symbolises Ranis status, who was ill treated and lockup by her husband Appanna.

Rani is considered to be a mere food making machine by Appanna. He locks her up and visits his concubine. Rani has been silenced as she has been denied emotional and physicals needs just as man exploited nature unlimited. Naga who fell in love with her after consuming the bloody magic potion becomes a refuge for Rani at this hardship. The relationship between Naga and Rani provides a ecological touch as the human and environment becomes one. The night visits by Naga is relief to Rani during her solitary confinement in Appannas house. Nature symbolises Naga, provides the refuge. Kurudavva offers her a magical root after found her lockup in the house. She claims that it will prompt Appanna to love her once he consumes it. The magical roots stands for the beliefs of rural women had in the nature. In hard times it's the nature which provides them solutions. This causes a major turn in the film. When Naga impregnates Rani, Appanna accused her of adultery, calling her *Randy* (Harlot whore).at the panchayat Rani is asked to prove her chastisity by holding hot Rhodes. But when some villagers indesparity of iron rode ordeal. The panchayat suggests the snake ordeal. Nature has been act as the judicial

force here. A fate of a woman lies in the king cobra, shows the ancient bond human societies had with the nature.

Conclusion

Girish Karnad had always walked out from the usual way. The intensities of his plays invokes a series of revelation much enough to have a retrospection into the issues which he discusses. Despite of abundant resources in contemporary issues, Karnad gave hand to Mythologies and tradition. It was a road which was not taken much by his contemporaries. These mythologies had found relevance in the modern day through Karnads plays. One such is Nagamandala. Based on two Kannada folk tales he heard from his mentor A.K Ramanujan, Karnad asserted that the story was there but he had given a Skelton for the apprehension the spectator masses. The adaptation of Nagamandala into moving screen exposes a new variety of analysis. it provided the scopes of a wider observation. Mythology and tradition had intertwined with gender. It exposed how tradition had become a motive force in determining the sexuality of women in the ethnic Kannadiga society. The film provides a complete cultural landscape of the rural Kannadiga society. The clashes of female representations through Rani and Kurudavva with that of the traditional patriarchal norms are clearly embedded in the film. Female subjugation in a society has to be observed through the eyes of cultural interpreter. The distinct regional culture of Northern Karnataka which serves as the plot of the story lies undistinguished from the popular analysis under the umbrella of Indian culture. With respect to the fact that India is a diverse country the unique Kannadiga culture are analysed with the instincts in the film. Gender and culture is found to be intertwined in the film.at the same time considering the departures from the play. The film provides the advanced visual display of the play. It can be

concluded that the adaptations of the original work should be examined as same as the authentic original work.

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Confession

Anum Mirza

Exhausted existence; downbeat or upbeat,

Alas! These vibes of all types,

Read me; modify and revise

Read them; understand and detoxify.

Transform my thoughts; full mind with functions,

Transform my living, my psyche and purpose

Hug me, hug me and hold me extra tight

Then filter my deeds and strain out all weeds.

Keep bullion in my basket,

I will carry them in casket

Whenever I shall leave,

This globe full of grieve.

Mucky and maddening

I made a messing choice

Listen! Listen! Oh dear God

First filter then fill my heart

With love, life and light for all.

Either distillation or decontamination

Modification or sophistication

Utilize every purifying style,

Enhancement or improvement

Whether revolution or fine-tuning

Sanitization or purification

Cleanse every 'Callous and cruel'

With all concern and compassionate hues

Listen! My mission oh dear God

First filter then fill their heart

With love, life and light for all.

Bushel of blunders,

My bungles are now barriers,

What was more stupid?

Our concern for careers

'Joint accounts of sin'

Left us with no wings

My lust is now dust

And thirst is now trust

Oh dear choosy my awful fate

Let me shine or shriek louder

Set me free or you sit closer

My rigid past and newborn keen

Neither cures nor conceal

Listen! Listen! Oh my Lord

First filter then fill my cart

With love, life and light for all.

Sleep, slumber and siesta

All swindled my gain

Baffled me con embaucar

And took away my aim

Oh blindfolded my roller heart

So basic and bare that decree was

My Gold in shroud; Thy brass in crowd

No whites are here in class.

Thou in me, cross-dressed and the whole lot

First filter then fill our carts

With love, life and light for all.

But what's my sin?

They were my kith and kin

Inform them my demise

Born and gone; to you no surprise

Unfinished wants: but no more cry

If not lawn then let me fly

Filter filter, thou filter my all

Take my life, take my all.

Now nix can blossom

My heart's caisson

For what is dead: forever in rest

Filter your hue, give me your blue

I have an end high, ceaselessly in the sky

Filter filter take this winter

Let me cry let me fly

High high athwart sky.

A Perfect Match?

Tishya Majumder

On my tenth birthday,

I was gifted two dolls –

A boy and a girl.

A couple.

On my twenty-fifth birthday,

She came to my house.

As I blew out the candles,

She kissed me, "Happy Birthday Love!"

On my twenty-ninth birthday,

She looked me in the eyes.

Gently holding my chin,

She perfected my lipstick.

Tears veiled her eyes,

She sobbed.

"Come down! The boy and his family have arrived,"

My cousin shouted.

I left the room silently,

I left her weeping.

As I stood in front of the staircase,

I looked down.

I smiled and missed a step.

As I lay on the ground,

My head oozing out blood,

Vision blurry,

My eyes caught my glass cupboard.

Barely alive, I spotted two dolls –

A boy and a girl,

A couple.

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