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Draupadi as India's First Daughter by Vamshi Krishna

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ABSTRACT: Vamshi Krishna writes primarily in code or short fiction. He claims to be a software engineer by accident and a writer by choice, and he currently resides in Bengaluru. In addition to writing, he reads a lot about failure tales, cricket, love, and women. Additionally, he enjoys working out and is a big fan of Jeff Bezos and MS Dhoni. He is from a tiny village in Telangana and claims that his four years at IIT-BHU have been the finest of his life. He is adamant that every student should live in a dorm for at least a few years throughout their early 20s. He adores using the emotions of women as the basis for his realistic and empathetic novels. Prior to it, he wrote the very popular book "Draupadi - India's First Daughter." Additionally, 'Zero Not Out', his first fiction book, was a love story that was influenced by his real-life occurrences.

KEYWORDS: Draupadi, Vamshi Krishna etc.

I. INTRODUCTION

Women's movements from the early years had a significant influence on contemporary feminist literary critique. Women's writings have made many contributions to women's movements in order to gain respect and identity in society and literature. The most well-known publications include Simone de

Beauvoir's *The Second Sex* (1949), Virginia Wolf's *A Room of One's Own* (1929), Elaine Showalter's *A Literature of Their Own* (1977), and Mary Wollstonecraft's *An Indication of the Rights of Women* (1792). Showalter depicts the disregard for women in patriarchal society, as well as their quest of education and efforts to eschew stereotypes.

For a very long time, Indian literature and culture have been influenced by the significance of myth and epic. Both readers and authors have long been drawn to mythological beings. The rise of retelling and reinterpretation has developed into a literary movement in recent years. It has attempted to highlight the perspectives of the voiceless in the already written literature and has affected several authors across nearly all languages. Women's perspectives have a big part in mythological retellings as opposed to men's perspectives. Fiction and books that recount retellings typically focus on the narratives of female characters. In the current patriarchal culture, it lends voice.

The original epic made no attempt to highlight the perspectives of female characters. In Vamshi Krishna's *Draupadi: India's First Daughter*, a reworking of the epic *Mahabharata*, the female lead Draupadi is attempted to be portrayed in this essay. Women's assertion, identity, longings, ideas, and acts are prioritized in this rereading.

Any feminist retelling of Draupadi's narrative mostly consists of myth revisioning, which is a subject to interpretive limitations. For a woman recounting, this added restriction that the legendary precedent's patriarchal ideological framework cannot be modified or altered. It can only be called into question and revealed ironically.

Since it gave women and men role models that explained what comprised acceptable versions of the "feminine" and genuine feminine objectives and desires, it was thought that the portrayal of women in literature was one of the most significant types of "socialization" (Barry 117).

These days, feminist rereading's of mythology are common in literature. These kinds of literature have made writers like Chithra Banerjee Divakaruni, Pratibha Ray, Sai Swaroopa Iyer, and Kavita Kane well-known. Even male writers who rewrite mythology, such as Amish Tripathy, Devdutta Patnaik, and Vamshi Krishna, give voice to the silent female figures.

II. INDIA'S FIRST DAUGHTER- THE PRECURSOR OF INDIAN FEMINIST IDEOLOGY

Saoli Mitra's play *Five Lords, Yet None a Protector* was first written in Bengali and was translated into English in 2002. She relates the *Mahabharata* narrative again in an effort to save it from the perspective of Draupadi, whose personal sorrow has a big impact despite being married to five powerful Kshatriya warriors. Despite having so many unnecessary spouses, Draupadi is depicted as a helpless lady.



In 1995, Pratibha Ray's work *Yajna Seni: The Story of Draupadi*—originally written in Oriya—was translated into English. Ray retells the Mahabharata narrative from Draupadi's perspective, whose reinterpretation of the many happenings and episodes allows for the establishment of a radically new perspective on the epic figure.

The English short tale "And What Has Been Decided?" by Shashi Deshpande, which was released in 2000, recounts the events of Draupadi's life in a manner that calls for fair and complete depictions of the various facets of her persona. In order to exact retribution for the cruelty she suffered at the hands of the Kauravas, Draupadi is given a significant voice that questions the behaviour of her neglectful husbands.

The Palace of Illusions by Chithra Banerjee Divakaruni, a 2008 English publication, gives Draupadi a significant part and a critical voice, occasionally bordering on the sardonic and even the irrelevant, in an effort to undermine the epic's numerous assumptions. Divakaruni's Draupadi is fiercely honest, openminded, vocal, and inclined to be a feminist. She never accepts things at face value without investigating their justifications and usually chooses to express her thoughts verbally.

In *Draupadi: India's First Daughter* by Vamshi Krishna, Draupadi reflects on her past experiences as she travels to Swargaloka. She possesses the characteristics of the matriarchal family's leader.

SHE WAS EITHER STUMBLING OR DRAGGING HER FEET. SHE HAD THE APPEARANCE OF A WOMAN WHO HAD ONCE BEEN BRIMMING WITH CHARM, STRENGTH, PATIENCE, TOLERANCE, FORGIVENESS, LOVE, MERCY, COMPASSION, AND GRACE BUT WHO LATER GAVE IT ALL UP DUE TO PHYSICAL AND MENTAL EXHAUSTION.

She previously possessed the fortitude to endure and overcome life's challenges. Draupadi, the protagonist of the epic, is no less courageous, strong, or valiant as her husbands. She serves as a role model for mothers in the family who experience ongoing sorrow and shame. But she handled everything calmly and overcame each of the people who had caused her shame and grief.

None of the five brothers cared to glance back even though they could all tell that she had slid (Krishna 13).

Despite having five spouses who served the dharma, they never treated her well. They never wanted to know what she thought. When they ultimately abandoned her, she lost all sense of reality and died on the side of the road. Yudhishtira responds, "She is dying because she deserves it. She loved Arjuna more than anybody of us, though all five of us are spouses, which is a sin," to Bhima's question about why she must die first (Krishna 13). Her femininity is consistently put to the test. If a woman is unable to take care of herself, society will eventually condemn her and minimise her pain. During their exile, Draupadi becomes the core of matriarchal authority among her husbands. She is endowed with a "akshayapatra," a pot that Lord Dharma Raja always fills with food and which will be empty after Draupadi's meal. It is stated that Draupadi must go without food for a long period of time in order to feed others. She needs to take care of her husbands in addition to the sages who unexpectedly paid them a visit. For the benefit of others, she must postpone satisfying a basic need like hunger.

Despite her personal resentment of Subhadhrain, she displays her affection for everyone in Arjuna's situation. She was unable to express her rage at them in order to keep the peace in the family. Krishna praises Draupadi for this trait in the words that follow to demonstrate Draupadi's fortitude. That is, "Draupadi even the soldiers who are engaged in battle remove their armour and rest after dusk." However, you battle obstinately using your bravery as a shield while wearing no armour (Krishna 83).

Her marriage life is very constrained, which calls for extreme self control. When she adjusts her way of life for each spouse in accordance with her thoughts and feelings, she makes a significant amount of changes.

Both polyandrous and polygamous relationships affect Draupadi. But she maintains harmony in this precarious partnership. Kunti, her mother-in-law, gave birth to her three sons through three separate powers, and Madri, Pandu's second wife, is the parent of Nakula and Sahadeva. By acting as a catalyst for the five brothers, Draupadi preserved a state of fraternity and harmony.

The mythical polygamous relationships between males were never questioned by society. A guy can take as many wives as he wants for a variety of reasons, including power and kinship. However, Draupadi is frequently questioned regarding her polyandrous marriages. People asked themselves throughout her marriage, "What would her sex life be like with five husbands? How will the brothers physically share her?" (Krishna 46).

III. VIEWPOINT OF WOMEN IN MYTHOLOGICAL TALES

The legendary stories we have heard nearly always include powerful male protagonists. In such stories, women are either shown as "ideal" or "negative." Under the cover, they are all represented as mothers, wives, and vamps. Few female characters, such Hidimba and Draupadi from the Mahabharata and Urmila, Sita, and Mandodari from the epic Ramayana, possessed independent thoughts. Draupadi, a feminine figure, is the product of a fire sacrifice. She is one of



the most kind and strong female characters in Hindu texts. She is bold, selfless, and the one who stood up for herself in the dice game to preserve her womanhood.

There are several retellings of Draupadi in Indian literature from the viewpoint of feminism by various authors. These are examples of such narrations. Irawthi Karve's essay "Draupadi" from *Yuganta: The End of an Epoch* was first published in Marathi and then translated into English in 1967. It attempts to depict the Mahabharatha's reevaluation from both a historical and cultural standpoint. Here, the author contrasts Seeta, a female protagonist from the epic Ramayana, with Draupadi. Karve's narrative questions Draupadi's perspective on the one hand and the Mahabharatha's patriarchal framework on the other.

The collection of short stories "Draupadi" by Mahasweta Devi was initially published in Bengali, and Gayathri Chakravorthy Spivak translated it into English in 1997. Mahasweta Devi's "Draupadi" gives a catastrophic crash by transplanting the epic Mahabharatha into the postcolonial culture political framework of the contemporary realm state where the struggle between the authoritative forces and subjugated castes becomes entwined with gender abuse. It is one of the most insubordinate retellings of the epic episode of Draupadi's disrobing during the game of dice.

Vamsi Krishna does a good job of describing the female phase of feminism via the words of Shwetaketu's father, Udalaka. To put it another way, "the tradition gave autonomy to any women, even a married woman was free to have any man they had fancied." Women were as free to pick their sexual partners as cows, he said (Krishna 50). Draupadi's unspoken passion for Krishna and Karna might be used to explain her feminine phase. She asks herself why Krishna didn't participate in swayamvara when it is happening. Then, when Karna referred to her as a "whore" in the dice room, she questioned whether a guy who loved a woman could make her seem bad in public.

In her writing, Elaine Showalter asserts that "we aren't learning what women have felt and gone through, but what men have thought women should be" (Showalter 77). Draupadi is having her period while playing dice, and her ideas about it are entirely feminised. In the sentences that follow, she challenges the societal stereotypes:

People around a man who is bleeding salute him as a hero. But it is considered a humiliating thing when a lady bleeds. To protect his born people, a man spills blood on the battlefield while cutting out the flesh of creatures whose blood is regarded as unclean. What number of wars do women fight less of than men? Simply said, the context is different (Krishna 98).

There is an overheard remark about Draupadi that the battle happened as a result of her sun parallel beauty. She is not permitted in the dice room owing to the stigma and taboo surrounding menstruation that society has developed, which is the primary cause of the conflict. As in patriarchal narratives, it is never Draupadi's curse; rather, it is a result of the difficult decision-making made by her father and her brother. If they had adhered to secularism or had never viewed Draupadi as an object and had given her the opportunity to choose her spouse, the Mahabharata would have paved the way for a new path for mankind that combined secularism and socialism.

IV. CONCLUSION

Vamsi Krishna makes an effort to illustrate the dilemma faced by "femininities" in connection to warfare, sex, desire, and the duty to protect Draupadi's husbands from battle and force them to adequately prepare for the Kurushethra War. Krishna's adaptation of the Mahabharatha complies with Showalter's advice; as a man author, he made every effort to illustrate the feminism movements via the female narration. Elaine Showalter is adamant about:

TO CREATE NON-OPPRESSIVE LANGUAGE, ONE THAT ALLOWS PEOPLE TO SPEAK FREELY RATHER THAN MAKING

THEM MUTE, IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF WOMEN. IN ORDER TO MAKE FEMININE LANGUAGE INVULNERABLE, IT MUST BY ITS VERY NATURE OPERATE ON LIFE, WITH ENTHUSIASM, SCIENTIFICALLY, AND ARTISTICALLY.

THREE STAGES OF FEMINISM CAN BE LINKED TO DRAUPADI'S LIFE CYCLE. HER MOTHERING AND DEVOTION FOR HER FAMILY CAN BE COMPARED TO THAT FEMININE PERIOD. WHEN SHE BATTLES FOR HER EQUAL RIGHTS DURING THE GAME OF DICE, THE SECOND PHASE, WHICH IS THE FEMINIST PHASE, MIGHT BE CONTRASTED. FINALLY, SHE COMPARES HER YEARNING FOR KRISHNA AND KARNA TO THE FEMININE PHASE OF FEMINISM, WHICH IS THE LAST STAGE. IN DRAUPADI: INDIA'S FIRST DAUGHTER, VAMSI KRISHNA DEPICTS AN ARCHETYPE INDIAN FEMININITY BY REVEALING THE TRADITIONAL HEROIC LADY AS EVERY WOMAN.



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