



INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF CREATIVE RESEARCH THOUGHTS (IJCRT)

An International Open Access, Peer-reviewed, Refereed Journal

Myth, Reality And Resistance In Mahasweta Devi's Draupadi (*Dopdi*)

Dr. Ashok Dayal

Assistant Professor, English

Kaushalya Bharat Singh Gandhi Government Girls Degree College, Dhindhui, Patti, Pratapgarh

Abstract:

Mahasweta Devi was always dedicated to the struggles of tribal people in Bihar, Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh. In her elaborate Bengali fiction, she often depicts the brutal oppression of tribal peoples and the untouchables by potent, authoritarian upper-caste landlords, lenders, and venal government officials. She has written of the source of her inspiration:

I have always believed that the real history is made by ordinary people. I constantly come across the reappearance, in various forms, of folklore, ballads, myths and legends, carried by ordinary people across generations...The reason and inspiration for my writing are those people who are exploited and used, and yet do not accept defeat. For me, the endless source of ingredients for writing is in these amazingly, noble, suffering human beings. Why should I look for my raw material elsewhere, once I have started knowing them? Sometimes it seems to me that my writing is really their doing. (Bardhan, 24)

Keywords: Bonded labours, Resistance, Tribals, Postcolonial, Myths

Mahasweta Devi's introduction to Agnigarbha is an ideological manifesto of a writer's role, in which Mahasweta Devi writes:

A responsible writer, standing at a turning point of history, has to take a stand in defence of the exploited. Otherwise history would never forgive An anger, directed against a system that has failed to liberate my people from these horrible constricts, is the only source of my inspiration for all my writings. (Rose, 96-102)

She passionately opposes the idea of India that has been posited on the basis of certain truths postulated as 'Indian truths'. By centring certain 'selective' truths and values and foregrounding systems, the mainstream Nation marginalizes and subsumes the truths and values of the subordinate groups. The present paper attempts to analyse, how Mahasweta Devi in her stories, deconstruct the prevalent notions of India as nation so as to make it a more inclusive conceptual and experiential category that gives the tribals, dalits, the underclass, women, landless peasants, bonded labourers their deserved space i.e. about subaltern and their space.

I don't know whether the story is fictitious or based on facts but one thing which is clear is that Mahasweta Devi is a keen observer of the incidents surrounding her. It's very easy to highlight the problem without giving solution, but with the help of Draupadi, she has clearly indicated the solutions of the problem which is even significant today.

By the Indian Constitution, all human beings, regardless of caste or creed, are sacred. Still, accidents like this do happen. (257)

She raised the question that if all human beings are equal then why this problem. She has also given reason:

Not merely the Santals but all tribals of the Austro-Asiatic Munda tribes appear the same to the Special Forces. (257)

Twenty seven year old Draupadi or Dopdi, as she is often referred to in the text, is involved in a social movement-the Naxalite movement in India, is wanted by the military force. The story begins with an exchange between sentries who discuss:

Most notorious female. Long wanted in many..." (257).. "Dulna and Dopdi worked at harvests, rotating between Birbhum, Burdwan, Murshidabad, and Bankura. In 1971, in the famous Operation Bakuli, when three villages were cordoned off and machine gunned, they too lay on the ground, faking dead. In fact, they were the main culprits. Murdering Surja Sahu and his son, occupying upper-caste wells and tube wells during the drought, not surrendering those three young men to the police. In all this they were the chief instigator. In the morning, at the time of the body count not be found. (257)

Dulna and Dopdi, the so called terrorists who belong to the insurgent group prove that powerlessness can resist powerful. After their escape from Bakuli, Dulna and Dopdi have "worked at the house of virtually every landowner, they can efficiently inform the killers about their targets and announce proudly that they too are soldiers, rank and file." (259)

Senanayak knows the activities and capacities of the opposition better that they themselves do. In the "expert opinion" of Senanayak and the Army Handbook, the insurgents have become a force to reckon with only through their involvement with. Dopdi and her fellow tribals. This is amply illustrated when the superior "fighting power" of Dopdi and Dulna is analysed as follows:

... the most despicable and repulsive style of fighting is guerrilla warfare with primitive weapons... Dopdi and Dulna belong to the category of such fighters, for they too kill by means of hatchet and scythe, bow and arrow ... their fighting power is greater than the gentlemen's. Not all gentlemen become experts in the explosion of 'chambers'; they think the power will come out of its own if the gun is held. But since Dulna and Dopdi are illiterate, their kind have practiced the use of weapons generation after generation. (259)

On the one hand the search for Dopdi continues. In the forest belt of Jharkhani, the Operation continues - will continue, while on the other hand Dopdi goes on with her 'action' of resistance.

Dopdi's final act of resistance occurs at the camp when she is apprehended and brought to the camp. No one touched her, and she was allowed to sit on a canvas campstool. At 8.57 pm Senanayak's dinner hour approached and saying, "Make her. Do the Needful", he disappeared. (267)

Dopdi's training has taught her to sacrifice herself for the cause. Her standards of conduct are governed by the old code of the Santal tribe and that code dictates that one must never betray the members of one's tribe. Dopdi's current "tribe" Consists also of her comrades in arms. Thus when she is captured and first questioned and later raped and tortured she adopts a mode of passive resistance, still holding on to the patriarchal traditions that inscribed her and the instructions imbibed through repeated listening. Although she has heard what it is to be tortured, -"when they counter you, your hands are tied behind you. All your bones are crushed, your sex is a terrible wound" (page 267) -- in the final scene she realises that the experiences she went through are those uniquely female ones and it is at this point that Dopdi/Draupadi metamorphosis into a powerful agent.

They gang-rape Dopdi but she performs her final ritual of resistance. The guards intend sexual abuse to be the best way to handle a female Naxalite but Dopdi subverts this notion. To her, Rape is just another form of physical torture and hence she tears away the cloth thrown over her naked body. She makes use of her naked body to confront Senanayak:

The commotion is as if the alarm had sounded in a prison. Senanayak walks out surprised and sees Draupadi naked, walking toward him in the bright sunlight with her head high. The nervous guards trail behind.

What is this? He is about to cry, but stops.

Draupadi stands before him, naked. Thigh and pubic hair matted with dry blood. Two breasts, two wounds.

What is this? He is about to bark.

Draupadi comes closer. Stands with her hand on her hip, laughs and says, The object of your search, Dopdi Mejhen. You asked them to make up, don't you want to see how they made me?

Where are her clothes? Won't put them on, sir. Tearing them.

Draupadi's black body comes even closer. Draupadi shakes with an indomitable laughter that Senanayak simply cannot understand. Her ravaged lips bleed as she beings laughing, Draupadi wipes the blood on her palm and says in a voice that is as terrifying, sky splitting, and sharp as her ululation, What's the use of clothes ? You can strip me, but how can you clothe me again? Are you a man?(268-9)

Another significant point which has been raised with the help of Draupadi by Mahasweta Devi is noteworthy, that is the non-seriousness regarding the deployment of officers s on duty, and this also increases the problems of the backdrops: Government procedure being as incomprehensible as the Male Principle in Sankhya philosophy or Antonioni's early films, it was Arjan Singh who was sent once again on Operation Forest Jharkhani. (258)

The mythical Draupadi in Mahabharata is saved from public humiliation by the timely intervention of Lord Krishna.

The story of the rape of Draupadi by the serpent king Vasuki is a completely new addition by the Bheels to the Mahabharata - there is nothing like that in Vyasa's epic. The nearest there is, is Keechaka's attempt to molest her. Jayadratha abducts her once, too, with evil intentions on her, while the Pandavas were living in the jungle. Another time. Jatasura succeeds in carrying her off, with the idea of ravishing her. But in all those cases, the men were defeated, and in the case of Keechaka and Jatasura, killed, before they could succeed in their intentions. But what the Bheel Bharata describes in this episode is a case in which Vasuki succeeds in having sex with Draupadi for several. Consecutive nights.

Looking at it from the standpoint of the Mahabharata, the first question that naturally arises in our mind is why this scandalous story has been added to the Bheel epic. The story not only paints a very poor picture of Arjuna, it also depicts Draupadi as a woman subjected to sexual ravishing. She thus loses, by traditional Indian standards, the right to be called a sati or a *pativrata*, a chaste wife, since she has had sex outside marriage. Traditional Indian culture considers that a woman loses her chastity by merely thinking sexually about a man other than her husband. Why do the Bheels then add this story to the epic?

As the tribal Bheels have a Mahabharata version of their own, episodes of which are narrated or sung during their festivals, usually accompanied by music and sometimes With dance - a captivating version that never fails to thrill, one of the secrets of its allure being its truly enchanting folktale-like quality. This article tries to understand an episode from it, on its own and in relation to Vyasa's epic. Likewise tribal women have a different concept of freedom and they sometime break the norms of feminism, as they are also the victim of elite class women.

Mahasweta Devi's Dopdi lives in la world where there is no miracle to save her. So, she has to become an agent of own deliverance. she has to become an agent of her own deliverance. Senanayak's fear and perplexity at the end of the story is a classic example of the most powerful form of which causes a rapture in hegemonic discourse. Her final resistance brings out an entire paradigm shift. Unlike the classical Draupadi, Mahasweta Devi's Draupadi emerges from Agnigarbha - the womb of fire.

She looks around and chooses the front of Senanayak's white bush shirt to spit a bloody gob at and says, There isn't a man here that I should be ashamed. I will not let you put my cloth on me. What more can you do? Come on counter me - come on, counter me -? Draupadi pushes Senanayak with her two mangled breasts, and for the first time Senanayak is afraid to stand before an unarmed target terribly afraid. (269)

In Draupadi, Mahasweta Devi clearly indicates that a Revolutionary Movement must not be mimic, but destroy, all vestiges of the dominated power structure, the State itself with its whole ancient and dismal apparatus of jails, armies, and armed robbery: with all its murder; with all of its grotesque and repressive legislation and military attempts, internal and external, to interfere with people's private lives and freely chosen co-operative ventures. The world obviously cannot survive many more decades of rule by gangs of armed males calling themselves governments. The situation is insane, ridiculous and even suicidal. Whatever its varying forms of justifications, the armed State is what is threatening all of our lives at present. The State, by its inherent nature is really incapable of reform.

True socialism, peace and plenty for all, can be achieved only by people themselves, not by representatives ready and able to turn guns on all who do not comply, with State directives. As to how we proceed against the pathological State structure, perhaps the best word is to outgrow rather than overthrow. This process entails, among other things, a tremendous thrust of education and communication among all people. Resistance is an unstructured response to repression and it is a counter hegemonic move, which is the core of Mahasweta Devi's writings. Postcolonial discourse is concerned with the reassessment of the relationship between the definer and the defined. Resistance gives voice to the unvoiced, space to the excluded and attention to the oppressed.

Works cited

Primary Sources:

Devi, Mahasweta. *Draupadi*. Trans. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak. In *Other Worlds*. New York and London: Routledge, 1998. 245-269.

Secondary Sources:

Bardhan, Kalpana. "OF Women, Outcastes, Peasants, and Rebels: A selection of Bengali. Short Stories". London: University of California Press, 1990.

Leon, dee Kock. "Interview with Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak: New Nation Writers Conference in South Africa." *ARIEL: A Review of International English Literature*. 23.31992.

Rose, M.Leema. "Narrative Resistance: A Reading of Mahasweta Devi's *Draupadi*". *Littcrit*. 66.34.2. 2008.

Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty. "Can the subaltern Speak?". *Colonial Discourse and Postcolonial Theory: A Reader*. Ed. Patrick Williams and Laura Chrisman. New York: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1994.