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Gender Transgression, Subversive Acts and Discipline in Kavita Kané's *Lanka's Princess*

Langpoklakpam Sophia Devi*, Sangeeta Laishram

Department of Humanities and Social Sciences, National Institute of Technology, Manipur, India. *Corresponding Author's Email: sophialangpoklakpam@gmail.com

Abstract

It is an indubitable consensus that throughout history, women have occupied a marginal territory in cultural and social domains. This peripheral occupation is evident in the vast corpus of mythology that has helped shape the collective consciousness of every civilisation. In India, the two epics, the *Mahabharata* and the *Ramayana* are instrumental in laying down certain intransigent standards in terms of morality, dharma, and gender. These metanarratives predominantly emphasise the heroic feats of the male characters and though there are prominent female characters, they have been reduced to submissive, docile, and subservient positions. Kavita Kané's *Lanka's Princess* is a revision of the narrative of the epic *Ramayana* from the narrative stance of Surpanakha, the notorious rakshasi. Kané captures an alternative portrayal of this abhorred character, otherwise known as a witch, monster, and ugly old hag in the canonical text. Building on Judith Butler's seminal "theory of gender performativity", the paper traces Surpanakha's evolution from birth to womanhood from a gender-oriented standpoint. The present paper further aims to study how Kané's deliberate placement of the marginal character in the centre stage challenges and subverts the authorial position of the epic. Additionally, the paper seeks to underscore Surpanakha's subversive acts which serve to deconstruct the definite gender boundaries and the reciprocal consequences she faces, and Kané's question of whether Surpanakha's mutilation is a defensive act or a form of punishment for the attempted gender infringement.

Keywords: Feminist Revisionist Mythmaking, Gender, Mutilation, *Ramayana,* Surpanakha.

Introduction

The basis of the cultural, social, and religious structure of a society is profoundly influenced by its respective set of myths. A myth can be generally defined as a sacred, symbolic narrative that has universal significance; sometimes considered to be a truthful event that helps enforce a set of moral codes, principles, and dictates for a particular society. Myths are instrumental in creating a well-defined collective consciousness of a group of people. Observing myth as a system of communication, Roland Barthes, in his seminal work *Mythologies* underscores the neutralising and naturalising capacity of myths. He states the function of myth is to purify an idea, to make it seem innocent by giving it a clear and natural justification for its inherent reason of existence, not by explanation but by declaring it a fact (1). Thus, for Barthes, myth is a medium, a form through which certain ideas of a dominant discourse are disseminated and acquired by a particular culture and considered natural and unquestionable. Myths are also instrumental in regulating and naturalising social order. The naturalising and neutralising function of myth is pertinent to how women have been relegated to a marginal territory in the annals of history.

The grand narratives of Indian mythology, the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata* have an immense hold over the construction of the sociological and cultural foundation of the country and as well as a reservoir of creative enterprise for its vast literature. The epics have been cemented as dominant artefacts that shape a community's sense of identity and reinforce fixed beliefs, values, and norms. Rohit Sharma, in his article, "The Art of Rewriting Indian Epics" stresses the dominance of the epics in the Indian socio-cultural sphere when he states that the authenticity of these texts is not validated by the presence of an ancient, unadulterated script, rather it is legitimised by their deeply ingrained presence in Indian psyche and their essential role in shaping cultural experiences (2). However, mythology is predominantly a male-centred discourse representing heroic deeds and masculine valour. Women, on the other hand, have been reduced to a

docile, submissive, and subservient position. They are often defined by their relationships with the male protagonists or as symbols of virtues or vices rather than as fully developed characters with agencyand complexity. Throughout generations, the notion of women as 'other' has been perpetuated so elaborately that it has become naturalised and accepted as a fact by a large section of the community. Reiterating Barthe's idea of myth as a system of transmitting a message, the idea of women as inferior to men has been diffused through myth to a certain degree and it can be exemplified by the circulation of the Sita myth and the Surpanakha myth and the strict demarcation between these two characters; one as symbol of subservience and the other a deviant. Tracing the treatment of women in the discourse of Indian mythology, Atreyi Biswas, in her book *Women in the Ramkathas*, aptly highlights that throughout history, the experiences of women have been sculpted and constrained by the frameworks of morality authorised by men (3).

Jean Francois Lyotard's famous declaration of postmodernism as "incredulity towards metanarratives" calls for a dissolution of the authorial position held by these metanarratives and the coming forth of postmodernism heralded in new perspectives in the way we anticipate and interpret the world around us (4). Postmodernism has set the scene for the emergence of multiple, minor narratives to flourish and a celebration of differences. Moreover, its engagement with Feminism ushered in a new way of looking at myth. The earlier fascination with myth as a reminiscing motif of past glory has been renounced, shifting the stance from mere allusions and references to mechanisms of subversion (5). As a part of the numerous attempts made by feminists to reclaim their space in the hegemonic patriarchal structure, they have turned to mythology to question the depiction of women in these canonical narratives. Adrienne Rich claims that no male author has ever written for a woman; not in the materials, the themes or even in the language, had he ever considered from a female point of view (6). Therefore, feminist writers have initiated revisiting, re-inventing, and re-writing the existing myths to correct what has been a wrong construction of the idea of what a woman is and to reclaim what has been an inherently male-centric language and a male-centric society.

However, the unmasking of the inequitable delineation of the women personas in the epics and their rehabilitation has not necessarily been a new phenomenon. In the Indian context, this model can be traced back to a female-centric version of *Ramayana*, Chandrabati's *Ramayana* in the 16th century. The text is narrated through a woman's folk song which places Sita at the centre of the story rather than Rama as in the traditional version and also replaces the epic themes with "essentially female Concerns" (7). Recent writers of the Indian sub-continent, Kavita Kane, Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni, Volga, etc, have followed this tradition by accentuating the marginal characters and lending them a space to exist as individuals, no longer defined by their male counterparts. In *The Forest of Enchantments*, Divakaruni offers a nuanced insight into Sita's character. Rewritten from Sita's point of view, she is transformed from a passive victim to a symbol of resistance. Divakaruni also adopts a more sympathetic light on the figure of Surpanakha, her story exemplifying the brutality of patriarchal power (8). Similarly, Volga's *The Liberation of Sita* focuses on Sita's inner freedom, an awakening of her consciousness, emotional independence and her solidarity with other marginalised women of the epic; Surpanakha, Ahalya, Renuka and Urmila. Volga notably reimagines Surpanakha as an evolved woman, a survivor of violence and a mentor to Sita in her journey of self-actualisation (9). In *Lanka's Princess*, Kane's Surpanakha emerges as the protagonist; her emotional and psychological introspection, as well as her desire, rage, and fury, become the principal themes. These deliberate shifts from the margins to the centre aim to appropriate the biased interpretation of mythology that has chiselled the notions about women in our society (10). Thus, feminist revisionist mythmaking has been for women a subversive act and an attempt to dismantle the androcentric hierarchical system, it is what Alicia Ostriker deems as the questioning and emendation of gender stereotypes represented in myth (11). This appropriation of myth to posit women's voices and subvert patriarchal dominance is for women, a means of survival (6).

Methodology

The present paper employs a qualitative approach to examine Kavita Kané's novel *Lanka's Princess*

through a critical and theoretical framework of gender and feminist revisionist mythmaking. The study is in the form of a literary analysis that investigates the following crucial elements:

- Challenging dominant patriarchal narrative: The present paper examines how Kané alerts to and subverts the traditional representation of Surpanakha as a monster, a villain and an abhorred character in the Indian epic, *Ramayana*. It further examines how a notorious rakshashi is empathetically and adroitly transformed into a strong and assertive character.

- Reconfiguration of the silenced and marginalised characters: The paper highlights how Kané's revision provides alternative narratives which showcase strong women figures of Indian mythology as role models. The study also investigates how the author advocates a voice to the voiceless, often marginalised and misinterpreted women characters, providing them agency, autonomy and subjectivity.

- To reframe traditional interpretations of mythology in a contemporary light: By integrating various theoretical approaches to myth, the study analyses how the ever-universal themes of mythology resonate with our society and culture and its immense dominance over the construction of our collective psyche. And by reframing and renegotiating the age-old tales and stories, how myth can be a tool for social change.

- Deconstructing prevailing gender stereotypes: The study, additionally, positions Kané's Surpanakha in a gender oriented point of view. Building on Judith Butler's theory of gender as performative, the study delves into the idea of gender as a social assemble; dissecting the character of Surpanakha as a woman who transgresses the prescribed gender norm.

The study involves a close reading and in-depth textual analysis of the novel, situating it within a larger socio-cultural landscape. It incorporates nuanced and multifaceted additional sources on feminist theory and mythology, as well as scholarly materials, academic papers, and critiques, to enhance and arrive at a comprehensive understanding of the central thematic elements. The present research pursues the objective of contributing to feminist literary discourse by offering a critical re-evaluation of the novel as a site of gendered resistance and subversive narrative agency.

Results and Discussion

Kavita Kane's *Lanka's Princess*: An Overview

Kavita Kané's *Lanka's Princess* revisions the narrative of the epic *Ramayana* through the eyes of Meenakshi, who was later denigrated as Surpanakha. In the epic, she is portrayed as a hideous, disfigured antagonist and for generations, she has been labelled as a monster literally and metaphorically. Though credited as the perpetrator of Sita's abduction and ultimately the war that led to the downfall of Ravana, she remained a minor character and an example of what a woman ought not to be; a monster, a wanton as opposed to Sita; docile, subservient, "the archetype of Indian womanhood" (12). The perspective shift conforms to modern feminist mythopoeia as through the narrative agency of Surpanakha, Kane challenges patriarchal interpretations, emphasising female subjectivity and their lived experiences. Working within the framework of the original epic, the author sets out on an emotional and incisive remapping of Surpanakha's psyche. The novel has received great acclaim for its emotional depth, with readers, academia and feminists resonating with the character of Surpanakha, and the text has earned its place as a powerful addition to popular mythological retellings. Moreover, the novel has become a site of extensive debate and study in academia, within the context of feminist mythopoeia, marginality, patriarchal violence, trauma studies and subaltern theory.

The Evolution of Meenakshi to Surpanakha: A Victim of Gender

In an article titled, "Sita and Surpankha: Symbols of the Nation in Amar Chitra Katha", Karline McLain stresses three major roles the epic *Ramayana* has contributed to the Hindutva ideology; the portrayal of ideal gender norms, the golden age setting and its deprecation of the other (13). The depiction of the ideal gender norm is a crucial component of the epic, as the onus of women in Indian society has been patterned on these sets of models. Notwithstanding, it also serves as a fertile ground for contestation by many feminist revisionist writers such as Kané. Kané's

Surpanakha tries to shatter this stigmatisation as she transgresses the prescribed gender boundary and evolves from Meenakshi to Surpanakha.

Gender is a term that has troubled scholars around the world for a while. In many instances, it has been used synonymously with sex in the sense that gender is generally considered a social and cultural category that is naturally ascribed to a particular set of two distinct biological sexes. Sex is regarded as a fact, a biological reality, while gender is understood as a social construct that assigns a specific meaning to the fact of sex (14). However, due to the recent theoretical shift in the field of Gender Studies, scholars have leaned towards a clear demarcation between sex and gender, contesting the essentialism that it presupposes. Simone de Beauvoir's famous statement that a woman is not born but becomes one through societal influence and that no psychological, economic or biological fate decides a woman's identity in society aptly displays the significant inception of the dichotomy between the two (15). Thus, for scholars such as Simone de Beauvoir, Gayle Rubin, and Judith Butler, Gender becomes a social and cultural construction; a person's biological fact does not determine one's gender. Similar to myth, gender becomes an acculturated tool to regulate certain precepts embedded in the underlying power structures and the uneven distribution of power between the binary genders leading to the ultimate domination of the other.

Some of the key concepts of Judith Butler's theory of gender have been employed to dissect how one becomes one's gender. Starting from a premise that presents gender as an "effect rather than a cause" (16) which dismantles the notion of an essence preceding a self, Butler opines that Gender is performative. She states that gender is an identity that is formed through repeated actions and behaviours (16). This notion of gender simply means that gender is not something that is natural; rather, it is a set of acts which is imposed on a person, and the body assumes its gender by renewing and revising the performed acts over time (16). This set of acts occurs within a strict regulatory frame, which solidifies over time to create an illusion of a natural and inherent sort of being (17). She further posits that gender is not a stable identity but an ongoing process which does not have a real beginning or an end but is repeatedly constituted through the acts that a

person consciously or unconsciously partakes in. For Butler, gender can be characterised as a mould or a system in which a person's identity is cast. It is also an action that creates the very identity that it aims to define through repeated performance (18). Building on the above notion of gender as a discursive construct, we can situate Surpanakha's evolution in a gender-oriented boundary. "It's a girl!" (19). The novel starts with the birth of Meenakshi, the only daughter of Kaikesi and Rishi Vishravas. Right from birth, the very act of labelling and categorising a child as a 'boy' or 'girl' comes with its set of cultural and societal markers ascribed to a particular gender and Meenakshi falls victim to it. What should be a moment of joy for the parents is thwarted by the mother's reaction to her child being a girl. Also, the act of recognising the child as a girl brings it into being as a girl, entailing a certain norm that has to be followed. In Surpanakha's case, her gender identity paves the way for her ill-treatment, deeming her incapable of achieving her mother's dream to reclaim the kingdom of Lanka which is to be hindered by the birth of a girl child as it is believed that such a feat can only be achieved by sons rather than daughters.

Meenakshi is an unwelcome child in the family who remains ignored and neglected throughout her journey, torn between her mother's adoration for Ravan and her father's open preference for Vibhishan. When Meenakshi helped her brother Vibhisan from a fight, it was her mother who corrected that Vibhisan was a boy and didn't need her protection (19). Thus, right from her childhood, she is reminded time and again of her gender and how she should behave accordingly. The incident also highlights how a person's gender identity is gradually constructed in a stringently regulated structure and the mother is a medium through which the boundary between masculinity and femininity further polarises. Butler, in her essay, "Performative Acts and Gender Constitution: An Essay in Phenomenology and Feminist Theory" stresses how the reproduction of gender category is carried out in a regulatory frame. She states, there is a sedimentation of gender norms that produces the peculiar phenomenon of a natural sex, or a real woman… over time has produced a set of corporeal styles which, in reified form, appear as the natural

configuration of the bodies into sexes which exist in a binary relation to one another (16).

For Meenakshi, her family serves as an agency through which the 'sedimentation of the gender norms' materialises with the consecutive reinforcement of the idea of binarity through the treatment, gestures, and expressions of the members of her family.

Transgression and Patriarchal Phobia

Since gender is not a stable identity, as deduced from Butler's notion of gender as performative, one's enactment of gendered acts can be unstable, too. Even though Meenakshi has been compelled to follow certain gender-specific norms from birth, there are instances where she does not and displays overt expressions of gender transgression. However, such an attempt is met with hostility, and she is labelled a 'monster'. Her violent retaliation to her pet lamb's brutal murder by her brother Ravan made him and her mother label her a "witch' and a 'monster'. It is ironic how Ravan does not realise that the attack was a reaction to his action of killing her favourite pet, an act which can be interpreted as her way of resisting the indifference and silence she faced in the family and instead labels her a witch, Surpanakha. This incident resulted in Meenakshi's realisation of her power and internalises the name, "Yes, I am a monster!... I am Surpanakha!" (19). The killing of the pet lamb foreshadows Surpanakha's mutilation by Lakshmana and there is a gnawing similarity between the two incidents. Ravan expresses his dominance over the helpless animal by killing it, and Lakshmana and Ram when Surpanakha is mutilated for her overt sexuality and robbed of her honour. It can be observed as an expression of the male authority figures warning women not to transgress their boundaries, as deeds of challenge, violence, and rage are not associated with the gendered category of women. The physical attack on Ravan, observes Nancy Sharma and Smitha Jha, is Surpanakha's first act of defiance, which establishes her as a ferocious woman (20). For Surpanakha, her family becomes her arch nemesis, and the incessant neglect she endured evolves her into a woman of assertiveness. She also realises the predominance conferred by the cloak of 'Surpanakha' and adopts the name as her weapon and a shield.

Gayle Rubin, in an article titled, "The Traffic in Women: Notes on the "Political Economy of Sex", traces the genesis of the oppression of women using notable Marxist, anthropological, and psychoanalytical theories. Using Claude Levi Strauss's idea of kinship, she observes the importance of the institution of marriage in sustaining a male-controlled social structure. She places the crux of the inferior status of women in a social rather than a biological realm, which she terms as a 'sex/gender system'. Gayle defines it as an array of social and cultural frameworks by which biological differences are interpreted and regulated into gender roles (21). She further uses Claude's notion of marriage as a most basic form of gift exchange, to situate a direct correlation of the institution of marriage to that of a 'sex/gender system'. She further posits that it is through this system that bodies become engendered and become women. In Surpanakha's case, she takes control of this aspect and subverts and dismantles the androcentric culture rooted in tradition. By seizing this opportunity from Ravan, that is, by taking away the right of "exchange of women", to give her away to another man of his choice, Surpanakha takes a step further in her transgression of the gendered space (21). Surpanakha chose her own man by manipulating her awareness of her brother's weakness for women. The sheer audacity and chauvinism of men's belief in their right over women is evident in Ravan's threats to kill Surpanakha if she marries Vidjujiva. It further highlights the patriarchal fear of a strong and assertive woman. Surpanakha subverts and dismantles the boundary of the patriarchal edifice by using Ravan's weakness for women to gain what she wants. She warns him and asserts that she will marry the man of her choice. It was not a request but a statement. She asserts, "You won't dare touch him... Nor will you stop me from marrying him. Like a good elder brother you will give us your blessings." (19). Surpanakha's ingenuity and fierceness lie in her ability to reciprocate the warning and use it to her advantage to get what she wants, although sometimes her means to her end can be harsh. Thus, throughout the narrative, Ravan harbours an underlying fear of Surpanakha as he sees a parallel power in her; her rebellion, defiance, and candid criticism of his susceptibility to women, which challenges the established order he signifies (22).

Mutilation as a form of Discipline

Male fear and anxiety of the said subversive acts performed by Surpanakha is reciprocated by Ravan, who kills his own sister's husband. The act itself can be interpreted as a form of punishment imposed by the male authority figure, Ravan. The gender-transgressive act of seizing her right from Ravan is reciprocated by Ravan by seizing Surpankha's right to happiness. In a more violently coerced but similar vein of events, the locus of the traditional story of *Ramayana* is the mutilation of Surpanakha. Surpanakha is mutilated by Lakshman at the behest of Ram, violently cutting off her ears and nose. The cutting off of the ears and nose of a woman is to be construed as one of the most violent forms of discipline inflicted on the body. And since gender is an identity tagged to a body, this form of discipline separates the power from the body, inverts the energy that the body could generate, and turns it into a relation of rigid control (23). It also unveils how the body becomes a ground of social and patriarchal control once it assumes its gender identity.

The episode of the mutilation of Surpanakha is a pivotal component of the epic, from a narrative as well as a thematic point of view. It marks the climax of the story which leads to Sita's abduction and eventually Ravan's destruction. Kathleen M. Erndl, in her article, "The Mutilation of Surpanakha", observes that the act of mutilation has serious moral implications since it offers insight into Ram's character and the outlook of Indian culture towards female sexuality (24). Surpanakha, while spending a self-imposed exile in the Dandak forest, came across Rama and Lakshman, the two handsome young immediately felt a rush of desire. She went forward and expressed her desire for Ram, but Ram refused her and playfully referred her to Lakshman, "But my brother here is a free man- he is single and available unlike me" (19). However, Lakshman too refused her as he already had a wife and teasingly replied that she deserved a better man, someone like Ram. He urges her to go to Ram as he will make a better husband. Surpanakha realises that she is being teased, sending her back and forth like a toy and a form of amusement for the brothers. The playful tossing of Surpanakha among the brothers foregrounds certain male intrigue and fascination with women treated as threatening and uninhibited, explaining why the brother toys with Surpanakha before humiliating her (25). Exasperated at the jest she has become, she tries to attack Sita and before she can, Ram steps forward and orders Lakshman to maim her, to teach the adulterous monster a lesson she will never forget (19).

The entire incident sheds light on how the controlling regime of patriarchy perceives female sexuality and its paranoia about women's overt expression of sexuality. Unlike Sita, a chaste woman accompanied by her husband, Surpanakha roams free in the forest unprotected by any male and openly expresses her desire. It is this exhibit of Surpanakha's freedom and independence, the sheer possibility of women escaping and crossing the gendered frontier that agitates men. As Erndl points out, on a surface level, the punishment of Surpanakha seems to be her attempt to attack Sita, but the intended reason is her effort at adultery, which is beyond the cultural norms of fidelity and female morality (24). Surpanakha's interior monologue delineates the duplicity of the supposedly infallible character of Ram, who symbolises the epitome of male authority,

> Maim her, what weird barbarity was this and for what…. For displaying desire for these two handsome men? How could someone so beautiful be so ugly and cruel? What were they furious about- me attacking Sita or me assaulting their chastity, their moral righteousness? Was it their apprehension for my uninhibited behaviour…. (19).

The dominant narrative of the epic posits a clear dichotomy between good and evil women characters emblematised by Sita and Surpanakha, and the text is considered a transcendental model of morality wherein the gender structure prescribed has become normative and deviation from the norm is regarded as an act of aggression. Surpanakha's act of transgression of this perimeter, "Lakshman Rekha" leads to the labelling of her as 'other' and a 'monster', which further leads to her mutilation, a form of punishment (25). Here, Ram symbolises the male authority who reinforces the established masculine norms by asserting his dominance over Surpanakha, placing her in a socially subordinated position (26). The punishment for the gendered infringement also serves as a threat to the "good woman" if she attempts to go "bad". For a man, a woman is the perpetual 'other', constantly needing to be

subdued to maintain the existing status quo. Thus, women such as Surpanakha and Tadaka are labelled as evil, a threat to society, and need to be controlled and tamed; the cruel behaviour towards them is considered justified. The mutilation episode challenges the façade of Ram as the epitome of dharma, and his portrayal has been transformed from a divine figure, full of noble qualities, to a man who causes immense pain and cruelty (27).

Surpanakha's several attempts to assert her individuality and strive for freedom from gender-biased constraints always have a tragic end. Her journey echoes Sen's reflection in her article, "Lady Sings the Blues: When Women Retell the *Ramayana*" that, whenever a woman retaliates, transgresses herself from a space of subordination to fight back, she never wins even if it seems so ostensibly, it always ends in a disaster while women who remained passive, poses no threat to the existing order (28). Surpanakha's actions appear to be largely self-determined; she actively questions the injustices she faces, foregrounds her rage and desire, challenges the gendered hierarchy, and resists her portrayal as a mere temptress or a vengeful sister. However, her subversion is limited by the narrative arc of *Ramayana*, as in the epic as well as in Kane's version, her actions lead to her mutilation and the war in Lanka. And while the revision reframes the patriarchal norms by presenting an alternative lens to mirror her not as a villain but as a victim of gendered injustice, Surpanakha remains a tragic figure; the consequences of her challenges remain severe. So as long as women stay in their demarcated space, they are considered symbols of 'good' women, a little deviated from the norm, they are targeted as monsters, wicked women. Surpanakha's inability to achieve happiness and the liberty of her expressions during her lifetime seems to hint at the impossibility of women escaping a gender-oriented boundary.

Conclusion

Kané's novel *Lanka's Princess* does not render an alternative end to Surpanakha's tragic predicament in the traditional epic. However, since the study is primarily based on Kane's retelling, it bears the limitation of excluding regional and oral versions of the *Ramayana* that may offer alternative insights. Moreover, given the religious and cultural significance of the epic in Hindu traditions, centring Surpanakha's perspective, a figure often vilified in traditional narratives, inevitably re-evaluates the roles of revered characters such as Rama and Lakshmana. Such revisionist readings may highlight the challenge of engaging critically with sacred texts while being mindful of cultural and religious sensitivities.

Nevertheless, the significance of Kane's revision lies in the passionate and proficient addition of a new dimension to the myth of Surpanakha. Kané's feminist interpretation of the muted character challenges the stereotypical projection of Surpanakha as raksashi and consequently removes her from the position of evil incarnate to a woman wronged by the gendered structure in which she was curated. Kané further establishes Surpanakha as a strong and assertive woman who has been misrepresented and mislabelled in the male-centric narrative of the epic. In an interview with Karishma Kuenzang, Kané expressed that through her revisionist narrative, she has humanised Surpanakha, showing that she was a complex figure who had various shades of grey and how she became an abhorred character (29). Although her tragic end seems to hint at the impossibility of escaping the confined territory, her exhibit of not-so-subtle acts, expressions, rage and fury can be considered as the initial step towards a dismantling of the hegemonic and controlling regime of a gender biased society. The intentional placement of the cursed character from the margins to the centre is a way of stealing the male-centric language "to seize speech", to make it say what women mean and "unlearn submission" (11). Kané's retelling of the epic rescues and amplifies aspects that have been sidelined in the classical epic and gives the marginal women characters an agency to express their individuality. The re-imagination of the narrative further makes us question that perhaps the monster that we were compelled to dread throughout history is a hegemonic construction made to sustain the colossal edifice of patriarchy. Feminist revisions of canonical narratives could pave the way for future research areas, to use mythology as a transformative tool to reshape and reframe the dominant structures to reclaim our cultural, social and gendered identity.

Abbreviation

None.

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Author Contributions

Langpoklakpam Sophia Devi: research materials collection, structural design, data analysis, original draft writing, Sangeeta Laishram: supervision, guided the research work, revision, feedback on the research.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

Ethics Approval

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