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Reconstructing History Through Centralising the Marginalised: A Study of Portrayal of Uruvi by Kavita Kane in Karna's Wife: An Outcast Queen

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Abstract:

Specifically concentrating on female characters who are frequently marginalized by patriarchal narratives, this research study examines the subject of marginalization in Indian epics. This research explores the way women are portrayed in "Mahabharata," focusing on the marginalization of strong female characters who uphold the supremacy of the male protagonists. Kavita Kané's revisionist works give importance to characters from these epics, Uruvi, whose roles are highlighted in this examination. The article looks at how these characters defy patriarchal norms and gender roles via a feminist viewpoint. Women's voices and viewpoints are often silenced in conventional renditions of stories, but Kané's retellings give them a voice by centering them around the story.

India possesses an incredible array of epic literature as a result of its long and complex social, cultural, and political past. Readers are fascinated by the epics even after thousands of years since they were composed. In the oral tradition, epics have been composed as collections of passages from numerous minor versions that have been translated into multiple languages and circulated among users. To ensure that the epics inspire wonder and interest due to their grandeur, the writers of the written versions have meticulously prepared them. Thus, this response has made it possible for the vast majority of readers and listeners to accept a patriarchal discourse in unison. I.e. Accordingly, over many years and generations, there has been a systematic dissemination of knowledge that a man's social status is based on his money, property, bravery, and military prowess. But women's roles are subordinated, and their worth is determined by how they relate to the epic's male protagonists. The way they are portrayed either turns them into dangerous and vile challenges to the ideal of virtuous women, or it makes them become exemplary figures of it. Revisionist mythology rejects toxic masculinity and masculine dominance stories depicting submissive women, which are already prevalent.

Contemporary debates on how to depict Indian culture and comprehend how contemporary society responds to conventional social structures are known as mythological re-presentations. In an effort to elucidate the significance of myths, contemporary writers employ fiction as a means of analyzing their traits and social purposes. However, in the study of myths, certain legendary subtleties are frequently disregarded that might be vital to different social groups. Thanks to the work of Jacques Derrida, Mikhail Bakhtin, and Adrienne Rich, new tendencies in literature and non-fiction are reintroducing portrayals of women and are having a big impact on the literary world.

Women's plight, suffering, and oppression are the subject of writings by Indian authors such as Kavita Kane, Pratipa Ray, Anita Nair, and Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni. This paper examines the feminist revisionist viewpoints of The Outcast's Queen, Karna's wife, as told by Kavita Kane. Novelist Kavita Kane believes that writers can effectively utilize mythology as a tool to highlight contemporary issues and challenges. She skilfully and deftly uses it in all of her poetic creations. The marginalized character Uruvi, who was given little screen time in the original grand tale, is brought to light in the novel. The novels' titles, Karna's Wife: The Outcast's Queen, allude to Kane's portrayal of the characters' marginalization. Rather of calling her Uruvi, Kane has named the book Karna's Wife: The Outcast's Queen.The title alludes to Kane's
belief that these women are oppressed. Kane used the Feminist Revisionist Mythmaking Technique to produce this figure. The current novel's title implies that the women were marginalized on two fronts: first, as women, and second, as outsiders. Uruvi is a courageous princess who believes in living life on her terms, according to Kavita Kane's portrayal. Uruvi, portrayed by Kane, with the ability to combat the wrongdoings of a patriarchal society, which includes her own spouse Karna. In Kane's rendition, Uruvi is a model of justice.

Uruvi, the protagonist of the book "Karna's Wife," is given a voice by the author, who is an unsung hero herself—she is Karna's second wife. Unlike the Mahabharata, "Karna's Wife: The Outcast's Queen" does not feature any male protagonists. Quite the reverse; instead, it centers on female characters and their relationships with their families as well as their surroundings. Kavita Kane takes considerable pains to prove that Uruvi is a fictional character created by the author. The king of Anga, Karna, had two wives.

Other than Vihali, Karna's other wives are not discussed in depth in Vyasa's Mahabharata. Uruvi was the sole daughter of Pukeya's King. The princess disregarded all social norms and traditions when she wed her beloved Karna, a misfit from the charioteer's family. She deliberately marries an outsider and discards all social conventions and expectations. She knows Karna is the outsider. Still, she chooses him because she was drawn to his skill. Uruvi experiences disgrace from her own relatives following their marriage. At that time, no one had the guts to defy social conventions. However, Uruvi was adamant that she would wed Karna or else she would be single all entire life. In the past, each Kshatriya princess had the right to choose her own marriage during her swayamwar. To the amazement of everybody, Uruvi deliberately and voluntarily chose Karna over Arjuna. Every person sat in the swayamwar was against this decision. Her helpless father protected Uruvi’s rights and said: “It is her choice. Respect it” Kane portrays Uruvi as a courageous princess and states:“Princess Uruvi saddled her horse each morning to ride to the gurukul, after she spent her day immersed in the world of medicinal herbs and other remedies” (Karna’s wife 15).

Uruvi in Various Versions of the Mahabharata:

Karna is stated to be married to Padmavati in the Stri Parva of the Mahabharata version of Vedvyasa. The couple bears two sons, Vrishasena and Sushena. In the Udyoga Parva of the Mahabharata, Karna tells Lord Krishna that he has only been married in his clan, not the Kshatriya, and that he is devoted to his foster parents, the Adhiratha, who were formerly a backward clan. "When also I attained youth, I married wives according to his [Adhiratha] selections," declares Karna. O Janardana, through them have my sons and grandson been born. "All the bonds of affection and love, O Krishna, are fixed on them, and so is my heart" (Ganguli, Sec. CXLI).

Two Marathi novels, Radheya by Ranjit Desai and Mritunjaya: The Death Conquer by Shivaji Sawant, are based on the life of Karna and mention his two wives, Vrushali and Supriya (Bhattacharya, 2021). Kavita Kane names Karna's wives, including Uruvi, in a conversation with Wagle. She makes the observation that Uruvi is a fictional character. She was someone I had to make up in order to justify my ideas and claims. Karna was married and the father of eight sons, in contrast to the perception of him as a bachelor that has gained him popularity. Vrushali, a significant character in my work, was one of his wives. Supriya, Prabhavati, and Ponnaruvi are rumored to be the others. After reading and rereading the Mahabharata texts several times, I came to the conclusion that Karna's family and personal life continue to be among the most overlooked aspects of the epic drama.

The equality of men and women is a central motif in Hindu mythology. However, the majority of women in mythology are disregarded and only a select handful receive the credit they merit. The most famous women in mythology include Mandodari, the wife of Lanka's monarch, Draupadi, the heroine of the Mahabharata, and Sita, the wife of the main character Rama. But we failed to recognize the significance of female characters in the Great Epics. Hindu mythology include characters like Surpanaka, Raavan's sister, Urmila, the wife of Lakshman from the Ramayana, Uruvi, the wife of Karna from the Mahabharata, and Menaka, the apasara and wife of Vishwamitra. When we look at the epics from their point of view, we see them in a new light. Conversely, we never tried to view things from another person's point of view.

Kavita Kane's depiction of Uruvi in her novel goes beyond a simple storytelling endeavour, questioning long-held interpretations of the Mahabharata. It encourages the readers to reconsider the established gender roles and societal frameworks of ancient times. As the story progresses, we watch Uruvi's transformation from her origins as a Kshatriya princess to the maligned wife of Karna, enduring the scorn and isolation that accompany her decision. Her passage from a life of royal luxury to the stark reality of societal rejection not only highlights her character development and tenacity but also serves as a commentary on the inflexible caste system prevailing back then.

From its extreme individualistic attitude in the late 20th century to the feminism-humanism dispute in recent decades, the criticism of feminism has changed throughout time. Humanism has always been the foundation of feminist ideology, as demonstrated by Simone de Beauvoir's The Second Sex, which highlighted the ideas of liberty and gender equality. Many feminists and authors, like Pauline Johnson, who contends that feminism is not distinct from humanist ideas due to its equality, have endorsed this move toward humanistic feminism. According to Johnson, the new wave of feminism should be viewed as an expansion of the ideas of humanism, enhancing the virtues that are already present in these concepts. Reorienting humanistic practice for feminist political goals is the goal of another humanist writer.

The Hollywood actress and activist Susan Sarandan is a humanist who supports equal rights, income, healthcare, and education. Human rights activists, such as Kamla Bhasin, Vrinda Grover, Kamla Jaisingh, and Viji Penkoottu, are Indian women who have fought for the welfare of people in Indian society. In recent decades, feminist action has included humanistic elements in an effort to be impartial and voice opposition to injustice.

A Tamil recounting that names "Ponnuruvi" as one of Karna's brides is largely the source of Kane's Uruvi, the second wife of Karna. Certain academics suggest that the term "Ponnuruvi" might be a derogatory term for Karna's consorts. Karna, a Suta, is the son of a charioteer, and Uruvi is a brave and free-spirited Kshatriya princess. Vahusha, the seventh king of Pukeya, and his spouse Shubra are the

parents of her. Incredible, intelligent, and witty. She is an heiress to her father's legacy, his intelligence, and her mother's flaming beauty…she was too spirited to be restrained (Karna's wife 8)Growing up, Uruvi disregards patriarchal constraints and enjoys riding horses and climbing trees. It is unusual for a girl of those days to have a scientific temperament, as Kané characterizes her. Uruvi turned herself into a skilled horseback rider; girls her age are usually taught to become beautiful princesses, but Uruvi studied Ayurveda extensively and goes to the gurukul every morning. Uruvi discovers the intriguing world of medicines and healing through Rishi Bagola and his gurukul. Particularly for a princess, the Kshatriya clan views healing and Ayurveda as uncommon and improper vocations. Uruvi is sensitive and kind, and her love of learning about medicines drives her to the tents set up next to battlefields where wounded troops are treated.

At times Uruvi expresses her hatred being a Kshatriya, "How can you feel so triumphant when you have hurt and killed so many? How can you gloat about your victory while trampling on t is it insatiability, egotism, or self-importance that goads you to go to wra? (Karna's wife16) asks Uruvi. The union of Uruvi with the Suta putra Karna is an example of patriarchal oppression, even if her parents' early opposition was unintended. The beginning of Uruvi's love for Karna is an archery match in which she competes against the Pandava warrior Arjuna. Despite being made fun of for being from a lower social class, Karna's boldness, grace, and elegance captivate Uruvi, who falls in love with her right away. In the book, Karna is denied the opportunity to challenge Arjuna in the Hastinapur archery contest because of his low caste, and Duryodhana declares Karna to be the Anga Dynasty's monarch. Bhima then makes fun of Karna in a mean way, , "You are no warrior, young man! You were strutting about so proudly a while ago —where has all that arrogance gone? You don't deserve the crown, or the kingdom given to you so undeservedly by my cousin here…" (Karna's Wife, p. 6). Uruvi becomes so furious that she reacts to his hateful words saying, "Bhima is downright mean!" (6). She turns furiously to Kunti, the mother of the tormentor, vehemently questions her:

How can he ridicule the humble and the helpless? Does that pride and pettiness befit a prince? And why are the elders keeping quiet about this gross insult being heaped upon a defenseless person? Why does Bhishma Pitamaha remain quiet when Bhima is so brutally ridiculing the warrior? Did he not proclaim a moment ago that Karna was a great archer, better than even Arjuna? (6).

Uruvi not only performs a duty of an ideal wife but also a mentor to Karna and timely has proven it. Hence without hesitation, Karna too admires her by saying, "It's not just love and beauty as you so dismissively say, Uruvi had taught me a lot of things, she has taught me to live" (67). Uruvi shattered all the notions of patriarchy.

Uruvi confronts Guru Dronacharya after observing his partiality for Arjuna, saying,

"What dharma does Dronacharya talk of? Some may call him loyal to the Kuru throne but has he been really fair to others besides Arjuna?" (Karna's Wife, p.75). Dronacharya rejected Karna, the Sut-putra, and Eklavya, a tribal ruler, as two deserving rivals of Arjuna.Uruvi further claims, "Like Karna, Eklavya was rejected and callously cast aside so that Arjuna could feel secure and become successful! Is that the dharma of a teacher?" (75). She speaks out, questioning how someone can be a flawless Guru if they are flawed and how they can teach their pupils humility and honesty if they are not themselves. Throughout the whole book, Uruvi assumes many personas, including that of a devout queen, a powerful lady, a daughter, and so on. Karna is adored by Uruvi. Karna is passionate and willfully angry with anybody who mistreats her. Karna then questioned her,"Are you going to get angry and abusive with all the people who have behaved me badly with me?" (77) and immediately Uruvi replied, "Yes, I shall! I can't

bear it, if anyone hurts you" (77). Here, Uruvi might be identified with the new woman of modern society. She challenges patriarchal conventions and defies prejudiced social standards while adhering to Indian culture and heritage. She therefore steps forward to represent the old and the new, tradition and modernity, as a balancing force.

Uruvi transforms from a Kshatriya princess into the outcast's Queen when she chooses to wed Karna, a Suta putra and the son of a charioteer. People in her immediate vicinity harbor enmity for her. She falls from grace after getting married to Karna. "She was neither the Princess of Pukeya anymore nor would she ever be accepted as the Queen of Anga" (Karna's Wife, p. 59).

In addition, she faces several challenges in her quest to marry Karna since she is a woman in a world where men rule. Due to this epic battle, the Mahabharata, Uruvi is forced to see the ups and downs of both her own life and the fate of Karnataka. At an archery competition in Hastinapur, Karna is seen by Uruvi adorned with shimmering armor and jewelry; to the budding Uruvi, he appears to be in perfect shape. She decides right then and there that she will marry this young man. Despite her strong awareness that Karna is a suta putra and that she is a princess of the Kshatriya (warrior clan), she would still have to overcome several obstacles. Uruvi has little regard for the Kshatriya code of conduct, which stipulates that when a woman marries a man from a lower caste, In the Shastras, "Pratiloma" is forbidden (p. 19). She dares to pick Karna as her spouse despite all of these obstacles, and during the swayamwar (a ritual where a girl chooses her groom from several eligible suitors), her desire is granted. Uruvi starts to bask in the happiness of her marriage, attempting to ignore the problems that have arisen from her marriage to a misfit. She thus doesn't receive the respect she deserves along with Karna. Similar to the chapter "The Swayamwar," Karna is denied entry into Draupadi's swayamwar because to his low caste and rank, and it is Uruvi who has altered the custom of a swayamwar. . Duryodhana, the Kuru Prince, is the one who elevates Karna to the status of friend and Anga dynasty monarch. Draupadi continues to stand by her position, "You may be a king now, O King of Anga, but you are not of royal birth…. Please do not proceed" (31) Because of his low caste and rank, Karna feels humiliated once more. Karna is the ideal man, with manly beauty and talent alike, and Uruvi choose him. This infuriates and enrages the Kshatriyas, to the point that they begin blaming Uruvi and her father.However, her father says to shield Uruvi: , "This is a Swayamwar and the bride to have the final say. She has the right to reject any of the suitors for any reason. She has the right to choose whomsoever she wants" (41)

Characteristics of Indian femininity include female bonding, empathy for other women, and providing each other with moral and spiritual support. Indian women are distinct in that they comprehend communal membership, in contrast to western feminists who emphasize individualistic independence. Uruvi feels a feminine connection to other characters, particularly to Draupati, after she is publicly humiliated by the Kauravas. The storyline dramatically changes as a result of Draupadi's humiliation and Karna's participation in it. The news that Karna incited Dushasana to undress and defame Draupati in court astounds Uruvi. That Karna would disparage a woman in that way disgusts and astounds her. Uruvi recognizes the nobility of Duryodhana's brother Vikarna's attempt to halt the injustice. She questions how Arjuna, Karna, and Bhishma Pitamaha could have tolerated such a heinous act without speaking up. She is enraged and heartbroken about Draupadi's situation since she is a woman. "Did it make you proud, great worrior,?" Uruvi asks Karna. Uruvi makes the decision to leave Karna and return to Pukeya. Her justice and righteousness make her an example of individualism; she speaks out against her own husband for committing an unforgivable crime against a woman. "To pull a woman by her hair and haul her through the royal hall...to strip her of

her pride...to deride her 116). Clearly, Uruvi is exhibiting feminist solidarity via her empathy and sense of unity with Draupadi. In meeting Draupadi and the Pandavas face-to-face, Uruvi demonstrates an unmatched moral bravery. She knows Draupadi secretly loves Karna, yet she nevertheless lends her alliance to him. Why Karna wasn't chosen by Draupadi as her spouse may be a mystery to readers. It's easy to see why; she lacked Uruvi's bravery and will to stand up to patriarchy and win her heart. "She had unknowingly offered herself as the wager in the political crossfire between the Kauravas," stated Uruvi, "by choosing to marry Arjuna." the Pandavas and the Panchals. (Karna's wife 134).

She recognizes Gandhari, Kunti, Ambika, and Ambalika as victims of an oppressive system and identifies with ease the suffering they endure. She reveals this to Kunti. "gross injustice has been heaped upon these women"(Karna's wife 158) Kunti conceals her own emotions and gives up her will for approval from others, as revealed by Uruvi's analysis of her psyche. Karna's actual ancestry is hidden by Kunti out of fear of societal marginalization and self-loathing. However, she outright begs Karna's pardon not to use any supernatural weapon more than once when the dire scenario of an imminent battle presents itself. In order to spare her other five kids but kill Karna, Uruvi openly accuses Kunti of being selfish. You went there to save Arjuna's life, but you successfully shattered him from within by verbally abusing Kunti, who was always your biological son but was never truly yours to "lose" and deprive him of his final line of defense.

In the chapter "The Death of Karna," the dogma and hypocrisy of the Hindu caste system are demonstrated. It states that no one is permitted to embrace Suta-putra's dharma. Karna gives up his own life in order to "he did not want the future generation to point a finger at him and say that the sutputra Karna killed the Kshatriya Arjuna by deceit. But, in turn, that is exactly what the Kshatriya Arjuna did- he killed Karna through treachery" (Karna's Wife, p. 284)

The reason behind Karna's demise is the camaraderie that binds him and Duryodhana together. Uruvi makes many attempts to save his life, but she finally fails. Karna dies valiantly and receives the Gokuldham upon passing away. In the last moments of his life, Lord Krishna manifests as Vishnuavatar. As a Daanveer of the highest kind, Lord Krishna speaks to Arjuna and explains to him why he loves Karna and renders him eternal. For all of humanity, Karna represents the epitome of kindness, generosity, and dharma. as Lord Karna grants Krishna a blessing after he is very impressed by his charity. wants Queen Kunti to openly announce, "that upon my death, Queen Kunti should declare that I am no longer a low-caste man" (Karna's Wife, p. 290). "That of" is the second. Annadanam, his desire to share meals with others in order to free his spirit from the cycle of babies. People avoided dining in the room, so it was one goal he lamented he could never fulfill. home of a man of humble birth" (290). "Please light my pyre on the most barren part of the earth so that no man may suffer the pain I did" (290) was the third one.

Conclusion:

The importance of female characters is diminished by a pervasive patriarchal attitude that is exposed by studying marginalization in Indian epics. Conventional stories frequently cast women in vital but devalued supporting positions, restricting their potential to being nothing more than accessories to masculine bravery. Characters like Uruvi are frequently overlooked in favor of their masculine counterparts. Nevertheless, Kavita Kané's revisionist retellings elevate these characters and give them a voice that transcends conventional patriarchal limitations. The character Uruvi from "Mahabharata" is recast as an independent, strong-willed woman who successfully negotiates the difficulties of her

relationships and status. The tight caste structure and patriarchal ideals that set societal standards are criticized by her marriage to Karna. The confidence with which Uruvi confronted respected individuals such as Bhishma and Dronacharya. Kane invented the character of Uruvi in Karna's Wife: The Outcast's Queen; this figure did not exist in the Vyasa's Mahabharata. She demonstrates her belief in gender equality by speaking out against injustices done to masculine characters such as Karna, Eklavya, wounded warriors, and others, in addition to standing up for feminine characters like Draupadi, Vrushali, and Bhanumati. In actuality, Uruvi's audacious claims represent her fight for equal human rights.

Her heavenly power of humanity fortifies her feminine might. Her fearless protests against social injustices and biases, whether they be caste, gender, or patriarchal, together with her firm opposition to war, are essentially humanitarian in intent. The current research indicates that Uruvi is more of a humanist than a feminist, despite the fact that she is a powerfully constructed embodiment of feminine power. From a modern standpoint, Uruvi may be considered a real example of the feminist critique's feminist-humanist approach, combining modernity with tradition.