

**A Comparative Study of Physical and Psychological Trauma in Mahabharata and Indian
Films Mom (2017) and Bhoomi (2017)**

By

Samira Zaman

24163020

**A thesis submitted to the Department of English and Humanities in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts in English**

Department of English and Humanities

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Declaration

It is hereby declared that

1. The thesis submitted is my/our own original work while completing a degree at BRAC University.
2. The thesis does not contain material previously published or written by a third party, except where this is appropriately cited through full and accurate referencing.
3. The thesis does not contain material which has been accepted, or submitted, for any other degree or diploma at a university or other institution.
4. I have acknowledged all main sources of help.

Student's Full Name & Signature:

Samira Zaman

24163020

Approval

The thesis/project titled “*A Comparative Study of Physical and Psychological Trauma in Mahabharata and Indian Films Mom (2017) and Bhoomi (2017)*” submitted by Samira Zaman (24163020) of Fall, 2025 has been accepted as satisfactory in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Master Of Arts In English on June 03, 2026.

Examining Committee:

Supervisor:
(Member)

Samirah Tabassum
, Department of English and Humanities
BRAC University

Program Coordinator:
(Chairperson)

Professor Firdaus Azim Chairperson,
Department of English and Humanities
BRAC University

Ethics Statement

This research has been conducted with honesty, integrity and respect for ethical academy standards. All sources have been properly cited to avoid plagiarism. Particularly sensitive topics like gender based violence trauma approach with care and responsibility also personal disclosures have been included with the full awareness of ethical implications and significance of the study. This research does not involve human subjects or primary data collection which need institutional ethical approval.

ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the multifaceted representation of physical and psychological trauma emerging from gender-based violence, which will be focusing on the themes of brutality, enforced silence, and the complex aftermath in cultural narratives and real world incidents. Drawing on trauma theory such as Cathy Caruth, Judith Herman, and Elaine Scarry this study will highlight a comparative feminist lens to analyze how those elements are connected across mythology, literature, cinema and contemporary real life cases focusing on women's experiences in patriarchal societies. Draupadi in the *Mahabharata*, whose public humiliation symbolized the humiliation and psychological violation, compounded by the societal silence from complicated elders. The Bollywood film *Mom* (2017), starring Sridevi, shifts to cinematic vengeance the film conveys unspoken suffering and the moral ambiguities of revenge, empowering the silenced victims through proxy. The Bollywood film *Bhoomi* (2017), also showed cinematic vengeance on a paternal perspective on the "protective" patriarch's reaction to sexual abuse. Both the film *Mom* (2017) and *Bhoomi* (2017) provide a gendered comparison of vengeance. Through these comparisons of cross-medium, this thesis will reveal the violence of patriarchal assertion, silence as secondary victimization and aftermath empowerment and justice. Ultimately, this study argues that breaking silence through representation fosters collective resistance, contributes to trauma studies, feminist discourse, and calls for policy reform in addressing gender-based violence.

Keywords: Trauma, Violence, Indian Cinema, Draupadi, Justice, Psychological Healing, Silence, Draupadi, Mom, Bhoomi, Vengeance, Mahabharata.

Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to all the survivors who remain silent and endure the violations and also resist and raise their voice despite the systematic silence. It honors those women who have been denied justice and whose stories remain unheard. It also dedicated the strength of women across all the generations who refused to be silenced. Those who have suffered in isolation, trauma, depression, and self-harming this work stand in solidarity with you and in the foundation of this research.

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INTRODUCTION

Gender-based violence is not only a mere violence of the physical body but also a structural pathology of patriarchal societies. Silence after the violence, where language disintegrates under the unspeakable pain, then humanity confronts one of the most profound and paradoxical challenges, also creates a rupture, a chasm between the lived realities of traumatic violence. The selection of Indian cinema is an essential component of this study because contemporary Bollywood narratives frequently reflect and reinterpret cultural and mythological frameworks that have a huge impact on social views towards gender, honor, and justice. Rather than treating mythology and Indian cinema as separate and different domains this research brings them together within this broad spectrum. This research places mythology and cinema within a Continuum of cultural expression where repetitive patterns of violence and quiet demonstrate the persistence of patriarchal structures. Furthermore, these narratives also demonstrate that these forms of resistance are always evolving. As victims and survivors negotiate silence through the act of speech opposition disapproval rebellion and in some cases vengeance. The selection of Indian cinema is not incidental but culturally significant because contemporary Bollywood narratives often draw mythological archetypes and social structures deeply. Because of this continuity it is possible to conduct a critical examination of the ways in which gender violence and institutional silence persists across historical and cultural norms. When it comes to comparative analysis, the strength of Indian films is in their straightforward and truthful representation and portrayal of violence as a disruption in both the body and the societal order. Indian cinemas are particularly powerful for comparing representation of violence because they are set within a cultural context where the female body has traditionally and history Kali been the focus of patriarchal honor and disagreement. From Draupadi's Cheer Haran in the ancient epic

Mahabharata to the gang- rape revenge narratives of *Mom* (2017) and *Bhoomi* (2017), the violence that is shown is never merely individual but rather always serve as a signal of greater and larger systematic collapse. These films use visual language including the close- ups of silent sufferings, judicial convictions and dismissals, also the final revenge in order to externalize the psychological trauma that the *Mahabharata* expressed through the questions of Dharma.

This thesis titled *A Comparative Study of Physical and Psychological Trauma in Mahabharata and Indian Films Mom (2017) and Bhoomi (2017)* investigates how the trauma is constantly represented across the vast range of time, period, and cultural spectrums. By placing the mythological figure of Draupadi with the modern cinematic narrative explore the ways in which gendered violence institutional failure and the struggles for justice which are portrayed in historical and cultural contexts. The research suggests that the mechanism of patriarchal violence remains remarkably static from the ancient epics of India through the Victorian countryside, and finally to the contemporary modern metropolitan contexts of Bollywood despite the narratives of resistance evolving. The central question of this research is how the interplay of brutality, enforced silence, and the aftermath of trauma is depicted and challenged. Here in this study silence is frequently used as an oppressive weapon, a technique to erase the crime and isolate the victims. This research will explore how victims negotiate the silence in order to transform it from an oppression of a site into a site of resistance. Whether it is mythical Draupadi questioning about the Dharma to her husbands in *Mahabharata*, this thesis constructs a meaningful purposeful discourse over enormous swaths to trace this enduring pattern of this violence and the resilience against it. It began with the architectural mythology in the ancient Indian Epic *Mahabharata* Draupadi's "Cheer-Haran" (public disrobing / humiliation). Draupadi was a victim of a mere game but her refusal to remain silent by using her voice challenged male dominated

norms and it ended up in a war (Kurukshetra). That disrobing of Draupadi in *Mahabharata* is a moment of public humiliation and collective moral collapse where in that moment the silence of the authority figures transforms violence into a legitimized social act that is seen to be acceptable.

Cathy Caruth's foundational trauma theory provides a crucial point to understand the traumatic events also how those traumatic events resist straightforward narration and instead demonstrate the repetition, fragmentation, and the presence of experiences which are not even fully processed. For example, trauma isn't understood when it happens, it is fully understood when it's repeated in a disturbing way. It remained unsolved and stayed with confusion and mind cannot process properly and cannot even integrate the moment it happened. This theoretical insight is particularly relevant when Draupadi's disrobing, as the incident itself becomes a persistent trauma that the *Mahabharata* fails to convey within its narrative frameworks. The many times Draupadi's humiliation is mentioned in the epic, the way her questions about Dharma, and the eventually destroyed Kuru all point to the Caruth's "Belated" nature of traumatic experiences. With the Bollywood film *Mom* (2017), this thesis dive into an emotional, visceral, visual language of modern cinema. The gang rape of a daughter and judicial system failure become the inspiration for this narrative of maternal vengeance, which use film's unique technique like close-ups, background sound designs and a tremendous performance for externalized the unsaid sufferings and raise challenging dilemmas regarding justice and revenge. Again the film *Bhoomi* (2017) where a single father seeking vengeance after his daughter is gang raped. This film represents the rage, violence, and exploitation of a father unlike the movie *Mom* (2017). The film is centered about the protective rage of a father and a narrative that takes the risk patriarchal notion of women's body as property under male protection. To understand the depth of these

representations we need to establish a better theoretical framework. Both films, *Mom* and *Bhoomi* the horrific experiences of sexual assault are portrayed through the characters psychological collapse, the fragmentation of family structure, the constant violent reactions rather than the graphic details. These films use cinematic techniques, close-ups that capture the characters, sound designs, unspoken pains, the externalization of inner turmoil and visual motifs which echo the trauma very well, reflecting Cathy Caruth's understanding that trauma speaks through forms that avoid direct representation. Judith Lewis Herman's "Trauma and Recovery" theory framework highlights another crucial dimension by emphasizing the social and political context that influenced both the experience of trauma and the potential for recovery. Survivors of trauma experiences feel powerless, emotionless also cutting themselves from others, isolated, suicidal, creating psychological and physical isolation. Also "Recovery" helps survivors be reestablished in meaningful connections, regaining the sense of self control, power of thinking positively and independently which is essential for healing. Essentially, to overcome a long lasting effect of trauma requires emotional, empowerment and relational support. In all three narratives, this structure highlights the fundamental flaws that compound the initial trauma. In the *Mahabharata*, Draupadi is violated in the court hall in front of elders and also in front of Bhishma, Drona, Vidura including her five husbands, who have the moral to step in to stop it but they choose not to step in and remain silent. This institutional silence transforms what could have been a private violation into a public display of humiliation, and the failure and inability of those authorities to uphold the dharma is also becoming itself a form of secondary wounding. Survivors can suffer second time trauma when institutions are there to protect them instead of responding with disbelief, neglect, and blame. Then this re-traumatization can lead them to suicide, worsen their vulnerability, make them lose their sanity, and isolated from everything

and everyone. The same pattern appears in the film *Mom* (2017) where the judicial system fails to convict Arya's rapist and also in the film *Bhoomi* (2017) where police are incapable of delivering justice. In both films, the failure of institutional structures drives the protagonists' escorts into vengeance in any possible way they can, stating that if the states neglects their duty to protect, individuals are compelled to make morally difficult choices. Elaine Scarry's work on the relationship between pain, language and the breakdown of the world provides a better understanding of the presentational challenges presented by gender based violence which explains why both the *Mahabharata* and the contemporary films are struggling to represent the experience of sexual violence directly. Draupadi's disrobing is not from her perspective but through the eyes of the people who present on the court and in *Mom* (2017) and *Bhoomi* (2017) rape scenes are depicted through the sounds, witnesses and with the body of the victims. "Draupadi's" humiliation is not just an act of individual cruelty but also a symbol of the patriarchal system that ruled ancient Indian society. From her polyandrous marriage to her place as a prize in gambling game all the circumstances are an example of the patriarchal society. Draupadi's voice and her willingness to tolerate her humiliation in silence became the inspiration. In both the movies *Mom* (2017) and *Bhoomi* (2017) the female characters' bodies also become the venue for patriarchal abuse. Here when they are unable to seek justice from the judicial system they choose their own way for justice to their daughters. This pattern of silence transformed into spoken resistance has a cinematic parallel in *Mom* (2017) where Devki's journey from grief to vengeance is defined by her inability to accept the silence imposed by the judicial system. The sequence in the movie *Mom* (2017) where Devki sees a picture of Draupadi's disrobing is openly connected to her circumstances. This suggests that the pattern of violence institutional failure and resistance is not only the current situation but it's profoundly

rooted in Indian cultural memory. In the film, *Bhoomi* (2017) gendered politics and paternal protection create a different relationship between silence and resistance. This film highlights how the father's trauma, while genuine, returns to dominate the daughter suffering, turning the story of a woman's rape into a masculine anguish. How your film contains the moments where Bhoomi's voice bricks throw her father's narrative, moment of resistance, questioning, also refusing to be defined what happened to her. The cross cultural and Cos temporal comparison of *Mahabharata*, *Mom* (2017), *Bhoomi* (2017) identify what her mother says as the "dialect of trauma". Each text portrays institutional silence like, the silence of Kuru elders, the silence of the legal system in *Mom* (2017), the silence of the police in *Bhoomi* (2017). In each situation, institutional silence functions as a type of "secondary victimization" called by Herman deepening the initial trauma through the failure to acknowledge and respond to violence. However it demonstrates the possibility of resistance through voice. Like Draupadi's questions break the silence of the court, Devki's revenge speaks when the law doesn't, and Bhoomi's burst out was for the protection she got from her father. The individual acts in this epic and films like Draupadi's questions, Devki's vengeance and Bhoomi's assertion are not only a personal response to violence but political acts that challenge the institutional conditions which allow such violence take place. This acknowledgement will analyze each work in depth to trace the pattern of violence, silence, and resistance, struggle, psychological and physical trauma, that connect ancient mythology and contemporary cinema in the following chapters.

Research Question-

1. In what ways is Draupadi's disrobing in the *Mahabharata* which serves as a mythological character for modern gender-based violence, also seen in the film in *Mom* (2017) and *Bhoomi* (2017), how does the aftermath challenge societal norms?
2. To what extent, the movie *Mom* (2017) and *Bhoomi* (2017) do literary and cinematic depictions of trauma, which is mirroring the real-world silences imposed by institutional failures, and what implications does this have for female activism?
3. How do contemporary Indian films *Mom* (2017), *Bhoomi* (2017) represent the psychological aftermath of trauma, and in what ways do these representations echo, adapt, or subvert the psychological patterns found in *Draupadi's* narrative of resistance?
4. What role does the concept of dharma (righteous duty) play in both the *Mahabharata's* depiction of the elders' silence during Draupadi's disrobing and in cinematic critiques of institutional failure in films like *Mom* (2017) and *Bhoomi* (2017)?

LITERATURE REVIEW

This literature review will explore the theoretical and critical frameworks that will define trauma, gendered violence, and silence, particularly emphasizing on their portrayal throughout the mythological and cinematic narratives.

Trauma as Belated Experience: Repetition, Fragmentation, and the Failure of Linear Narrative:

The multidisciplinary field of trauma studies provides a crucial framework for understanding the psychological and representational aspects of violence especially in the situation of gender based oppression. One of the most influential frameworks is Cathy Caruth in this field, emphasizing that the nature of trauma is both exhausting and hard to define for immediate understanding.

“The event is not assimilated or experienced fully at the time, but only belatedly, in its repeated possession of the one who experiences it” (Caruth 4–5). Here according to Cathy Caruth Soma is not completely processed when it occurs initially, because the mind is unable to comprehend its intensity. Instead, the experience will return later in such a repetitive and fragmented way that will haunt the person over and over again. This delayed impact means that drama is experienced not in the past moment itself but its repeated reappearance in the present. It shows how trauma memories can be unstable, intrusive, and beyond conscious control. This concept of belatedness is essential for analyzing narrative such as “Draupadi's disrobing in *Mahabharata* where the romantic events echo throughout the epic rather than being confined to a single moment. Caruth emphasizes that trauma dissolved linear temporality, making it difficult to represent within traditional narrative structures. “The impact of the traumatic event lies precisely in its belatedness, in its refusal to be simply located in the past” (Caruth 4). Here, according to Cathy

Caruth, drama is not fully processed at the moment it occurs but it experiences a letter through delayed responses such as flashbacks, past memories, memory recalls, and triggers something related to it. This “belatedness” refers to how the incident refuses to fix the past as it repeatedly recurring in the present time again and again. As a result trauma affects chronological time and continues to change the survivor’s consciousness after the initial occurrence. This theoretical insight becomes particularly relevant when exploring cinematic representation of trauma in films such as *Mom* (2017) and *Bhoomi* (2017), where the psychological impact is expressed through fragmented memory, silence, recollection stillness and emotional breakdown rather than direct narration. Judith Herman’s “Trauma and Recovery” complements Cathy Caruth’s work by placing trauma in socio political context, emphasizing that it is not only an individual psychological condition but it's a result of systematic power systems. Herman defines disempowerment, disconnection and detachment as the core experience of trauma. “The core experiences of psychological trauma are disempowerment and disconnection from others” (Herman 133). Here according to Herman, from my essentially deprived a person's power, control over oneself, connection, relationship and trust. These losses explain how and why trauma impacts identity agency interpersonal relationships and the ability to relate with others. This perspective is critical for understanding how institutional failures, whether in ancient royal courts as while “Draupadi's disrobing” nobody including her five husbands stood but said nothing or modern legal systems as in the films *Mom* (2017) and *Bhoomi* (2017) parents are seeking justice for their daughter but nobody did nothing but helps the rapists, this intensify the trauma more and more by denying victims recognition and justice. Herman also introduced the concept of “secondary victimization”, it means that survivors are re-traumatized by the institution who are meant to protect them. “The traumatized person is often subjected to a second

trauma by the very institutions that should offer protection” (Herman *Trauma and Recovery: The Aftermath of Violence*). Here according to Herman, social structures are often intensified rather than resolve the trauma. Institutions like the judicial system, family systems, and medical authorities may dismiss doubt and silence the survivors instead of protecting them. For example, the movie *Kaabil* (2017) where wife was raped by the local goons with the politician background. And the failure of institutional and legal systems to deliver justice, the police and the authorities protect the rapist which effectively re-traumatized the victim and the wife hung herself out of injustice and the biasness she got. This is exactly what Herman said that institutions should provide safety but instead of giving safety they are just deepening the trauma through biasness and corruption. This idea also directly aligns with the silence of Kuru elders during Draupadi's humiliation and the legal failures in the contemporary films is suggesting state neglect across the historical and cultural context. Mary R. Harvey extends the discussion by saying that trauma that places in the visual experience us within the largest social and cultural systems. “In attending to the social, cultural and political context of victimization and acknowledging that survivors of traumatic experiences may recover without benefit of clinical intervention, the model highlights the phenomenon of resiliency, and the relevance of community intervention efforts”(Harvey *An Ecological View of Psychological Trauma and Trauma Recovery* 1996). Here according to Harvey, trauma is more than an individual experience, it is also shaped by the surrounding environment. Trauma is experience expressed and healing in different ways which depend on the social structure, cultural norms and political conditions. For example, a rape victim may survive and report the incident but there she will confront victim-blaming attitude from family, community members, society, colleagues, like questioning about their behavior, attire, presence, exact scenes and so on. Here even the attack itself is

distressing and traumatic but the absence of social support and judgment from others can intensify the trauma and distress. This will demonstrate how the surroundings cultural and institutional responses directly influence the impact and consequences of the trauma. These theoretical viewpoints will establish trauma as a complex multidimensional phenomena that is deeply in point with power language and representation of frameworks. They provide the foundation for analyzing how narrative a violence and silence operate across different mediums and historical periods.

Feminist Interventions in Trauma Theory: - From Individual Wound to Structural Violence:

The research about feminist has made significant contributions to our understanding of trauma especially in the terms of gender based violence. This feminist lens is essential for analyzing such a narrative as “Draupadi's disrobing” which is not only a personal violation but also a symbolic act of patriarchal dominance. Draupadi's body becomes a site of political and social control reflecting the systemic aspects of violence against women. Shulamit Reinharz emphasizes the importance of voice and agency in feminist research. “Voice is having the ability, the means, and the right to express oneself... to be silenced is to have that power denied” (Reinharz 180). This paper highlights how victims negotiate the silence in order to transform it from an oppression of a site into a site of resistance. Whether it is mythical Draupadi questioning about the Dharma to her husbands in *Mahabharata*. The statement emphasizes that "voice" refers to speaking with genuine capacity, opportunity, and legitimacy to express thoughts and opinions, not just speaking out loud. It also emphasizes that true voice requires access to platforms, social acceptances and freedom of speech and expressions. If a person lacks these elements their

silence is not necessarily a choice it may be forced by social structural institutional or power barriers and restrictions. In short, being silenced means being denied agency and participation in meaningful conversation. This concept is especially relevant in the context where some certain groups are systematically and consistently disregarded, excluded, neglected, and ignored. For example, survivors of abuse frequently remain silent due to power imbalances, this demonstrates how silence can be a result of denial of voice rather than absence of experience. Scarry's argument emphasizes the political implications of representation. If pain destroys language and the inability to express trauma becomes a form of disempowerment. This is also aligned with Reinhartz's emphasis on voice, suggesting that the act of speaking about trauma is itself a form of resistance. It also highlights the transformation of silence into resistance. Draupadi's questioning of Dharma, Devki's drives for revenge, Bhoomi's assertion of agency all are the representatives to recalling their voices in the face of institutional silence. Feminist re-interpretations of mythology literature also play an important role in questioning and challenging the traditional narrative. Draupadi's resistance to patriarchal norms reclaim her power through her vivid articulation and questioning the male dominated norms. These re-interpretations shift the focus from victim to agency and align with current feminist critics of representation. In the *Mahabharata*, Draupadi's disrobing is not described from her perspective but it was described by the reaction of others which reflects the difficulty of communicating such trauma. Similarly, films like *Mom* (2017) and *Bhoomi* (2017) frequently depend on indirect representation such as sound design, visual symbolism, and fragmented storytelling to communicate the meaning of violence without clear depiction. Ultimately this suffering is showing how continuous exposure to an oppressive environment reduces psychological strength over time. Across all the text examined in this study silence appears as a central theme. Whether in the *Mahabharata* court

room or the modern cinematic settings, silence serves as a technique of control and sterilization. However silence is more than just a passive condition but it may also serve as a place of resistance. According to Reinhartz's explanations, recovery once voice is essential for empowerment. For example, Draupadi's questioning, Devki's search for justice, Bhoomi's assertion are all acts of disobedience against systematic silencing. Herman's framework of "Recovery" emphasizes the importance of reconnecting with people and restoring power and authority. This procedure is evidenced in the narratives where the characters move from isolation to action, converting their trauma into a source of strength. Harvey's ecological framework further emphasizes the importance of social action in resolving trauma. By situating individual experience as placed within the largest societal context emphasizing the need of societal and systematic revolutions. "...it speaks through the voice of another... through a language that is not its own" (Caruth 9). According to Cathy Caruth, trauma cannot be expressed directly so it came indirectly via broken, fragmented or borrowed language. This statement suggests that trauma cannot always be expressed or described in direct, straight-forward, clear, unambiguous and traditional language. Instead emerge indirectly through the dreams, broken speech, silence, repetition, fragmented speech, symbols. This reflects how trauma resists full expression and may appear through gaps, contradiction or emotional intensity rather than straight narration. However trauma expresses itself but not in a language that the speaker feels entirely in control or ownership with. For example, in films like *Mom* (2017) and *Bhoomi* (2017) trauma is conveyed through visual symbolism in silence rather than direct words. Again Draupadi's voice challenges power and authority but the trauma of her humiliation surpasses what language alone can contain, aligning with Cathy Caruth concept of displaced expression.

Silenced Voices and Embodied Trauma: From Draupadi's Mythological Resistance to Cinematic Vengeance:

In South Asia for understanding the cultural and historical implication of gender based violence The *Mahabharata* is the most important and essential component. One of the most significant scenes in this epic representing both the individual trauma and social injustice is “Draupadi's disrobing” or the "Cheer-Haran". “She appears powerless and oppressed before patriarchal conventions yet reclaims power through her vivid articulations and her questioning of phallocentric norms” (Sharma 1-15). Here according to Sharma, Draupadi was a victim of a mere game but her refusal to remain silent by using her voice challenged male dominated norms and it ended up in a war (Kurukshetra). Initially Draupadi is depicted as vulnerable and controlled by patriarchal norms and rules, where she appears having no independence and authority and also being powerless in that male dominated courtroom. However when she actively confronts those structures of authority through speech and questioning, as a result her voice becomes a form of rebellion against the power of patriarchal authority and gender norms. Ultimately this quotation emphasizes a transition from silence and repression to verbal declaration and empowerment within a social structure which is restricted and oppressive. On the other hand, contemporary Indian film is an effective tool for exploring the psychological and social aspects of trauma. Films like *Mom* (2017) and *Bhoomi* (2017) explore the after sexual abuse through narratives of vengeance which is highlighting the institutional failing of delivery justice. In the Kisari Mohan Ganguli's translation, the humiliation of Draupadi is portrayed as a public spectacle where the assembly remains mute and silent in the face of injustice. The silence is not merely passive but it actively contributes to the violence transforming it into a war (Kurukshetra). In the film *Mom* (2017), Devki, the protagonist of the film directed by Ravi Udyawar, embarks on revenge after

her daughter's rapists are convicted. The film uses visual and auditory techniques to convey the emotional depth of trauma, while avoiding explicit depiction of violence. "Sridevi is the film's beating heart, conveying a range of emotions with remarkable restraint." (The Hindu review of *Mom*). Here her remarkable restraint suggests that she does not over react or did not use any dramatic dialogues, instead she expresses pain, grief, sadness, loss, determination in subtle, and controlled ways. This is important because trauma is often not loud or exaggerated but trauma is frequently internal quite deep and intensely felt. That emphasizes how performances become a medium to communicate pain, trauma and resilience. Similarly the film *Bhoomi* (2017) portrayed that a father's descent into the balance when his daughter is assaulted is emphasizing the themes of honor and protection. "You may not approve of his bloodlust, but you can't fault his swagger." (*The Times of India*). The term recognizes and acknowledges the conflict between disapproval of violent revenge and appreciation for the characters confidence and attitude. "Bloodlust" refers to the character's aggressive desires for revenge and moreover, the "Swagger" implies a feeling of charm, confidence and determination that makes the character fascinating regardless of his actions. The statement emphasizes how the individuals appreciate the retribution even when the system, state, or government fail to deliver justice but choose silence because the reason behind it is the power and authority. Preeti Chaudhary argues that Draupadi's sufferings and experiences represent the greater condition of women in patriarchal societies. She notes that Draupadi's humiliation is not an isolated event but a reflection of social structure that reduces women to objects. This interpretation aligns with feminist critics of objectification and control. *The Palace of Illusions* by Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni is a modern retelling of *Mahabharata* with the perspective of Draupadi providing a viewpoint which explores a more intimate psychological trauma. Divakaruni challenges that traditional narrative and emphasizes the importance of

personal experience in dealing with comprehending trauma by adding the voice of Draupadi. Both the films reflect what Herman emphasizes as the failure of the institutional system to provide justice, by forcing victims to seek alternative means of settlement or the look for the other way of finding closure. This is bringing up the significant moral questions about the legitimacy of revenge as a reaction of trauma. Again these films *Mom* (2017) and *Bhoomi* (2017) demonstrate how trauma depiction is generated. *Bhoomi* (2017) emphasizes paternal rage and physical balance whereas *Mom* (2017) focuses on maternal grief and planned revenge. This contrast draws attention to the different ways in which gender influences how people react to trauma and also how both supporting and challenging traditional norms in different ways. Taken all together this mythological and cinematic narratives shows how institutional silence and societal complicity are shaped by a persistence continuity of gender based violence. Draupadi's humiliation in the *Mahabharata* is not just an individual violation but also a social failure of Justice where the Assembly silence legitimizes and justifies the violence and turns it into a political crisis that ultimately leads to the "Kurukshetra" war. This frightening pattern finds a disturbing connection in contemporary cinema where the victims frequently remain unprotected by public institutions. In short they fail to protect the victims and Judith Herman claims that institutional betrayal worsening the trauma supported by Devki's tendency towards planned and calculated vengeance in the film *Mom* (2017). Similarly, *Bhoomi* (2017) redefines the trauma through paternal rage, where the father's violent vengeance reflects the persistence of patriarchal notions of honor and protection as well as the failure of legal justice. However this narrative does not only portrait victims they also emphasize resistance. Draupadi's questioning sessions of Dharma, Devki's pursuit of revenge, Bhoomi's self-assertions all challenge an imposed silence transforming trauma into a form of strength. Thus, spreading historical and cultural boundaries,

these fictions all together reveal how violence is sustained through silence while being challenged through the act of voice resistance and disobedience.

Lastly, the research on trauma feminist theory and representation offers a strong foundation analyzing the intersection between mythology and cinema. However, there remains a significant gap in comparative studies that connect ancient narratives and contemporary media. But this study aims to reveal the persistence structures of patriarchal violence and the transforming mechanism of resistance by analyzing the similarities between Draupadi's perspective and the films *Mom* (2017) and *Bhoomi* (2017) representations. Trauma in this context, is not only a psychological condition but also a cultural and political phenomenon that demands both critical analysis and social action.

ANALYSIS THE TRAUMA AND SHATTERED SILENCES

The analysis examines how the *Mahabharata*'s depiction of Draupadi's disrobing as well as the contemporary films *Mom* (2017) and *Bhoomi* (2017) represent the physical and psychological trauma which is emerging from gender based violence. Drawing on the theoretical frameworks that were established in the literature review such as Cathy Caruth's concept of traumatic belatedness, Judith Herman's analysis of secondary victimization, and Elaine Scarry's work on pain and language destruction this analysis demonstrate that patriarchal mechanisms of violence remain and remarkably stable across historical periods, despite the fact that narratives of resistance are beginning and expanding from mythological questioning to cinematic retribution. There are some interconnected sections which represent the traumatic violence throughout all the three fictions. First the operation of institutional silence as secondary victimization, second the transformation of silence into resistance and revenge and third the gender politics of revenge as a response to the trauma.

Continuity of Patriarchal Power from Epic Narrative to Contemporary Cinema

From the epic *Mahabharata* to the films *Mom* (2017) and *Bhoomi* (2017) the structural continuity of patriarchal power reveals the most striking example through not only the institutional silence but also the mockery of language shared by the powerful man directly at the vulnerable woman. Even though that violence is fundamental and horrifying but failure of the institutional system consistently and consciously failed to acknowledge, address or sufficiently or observe the violence. This continuity operates in distinct domains like the mocking language directed at the vulnerable women, the silence of those who should defend and protect them, and the female bodies which are a transformation into an opportunity for the public humiliation of

patriarchal authority. In the *Mahabharata* Draupadi's disrobing is performed openly in front of the kuru assembly where she was surrounded by the elders, greatest warriors, also her five husbands, and an advisor the wisest men of the age. In one particular scene in Ganguly's translation captures with tragic clarity where Dushasana drags Draupadi into the courtroom by pulling her hair, her clothes were pulled, her modesty was assaulted in front of the assembled elders. Bhishma, the eldest son who had taken an oath to serve the crown for the rest of his life, was sitting in silence. Drona, the teacher of martial arts who was dependent on the Kuru King for his responsibilities and profession, averted his eyes and looked away. Vidura, the wisest uncle who was opposing the act internally but never held any authority to interfere. The cruel part is that Draupadi's five husbands, Yudhishtira who staked her email dice roll gambling game, Bhima, who has taken a pledged to drink Dushasana's blood, Arjuna, the best archer of all the time where sit in turned silence bounded by the terms of the dice roll gambling game which they have lost. The silence is not only a passive absence but also an active complicity. The silence of the elders validating the Duryodhana's act rather than protest against it. The humiliation gets normalized when each and every eye gets averted, each and every one suppressing the protest has become an endorsement and normalizing it. The assembly silence narrates Draupadi's and every other woman's that their body is their own, that her violation is not a crime which deserves justice also that the man who should protect and defend her will instead defend the patriarchal system and also will serve them. The language of mockery accompanying this violence shows how patriarchal power is still in the continuity. In 2014 TV serial *Mahabharata*, when Draupadi cries out for help, Karn responds with the cruel insult saying "Mera mitr bilkul theek keh raha hai, ek beysha ya dasi ka maan kya aur apmaan kya. Ab tu keval ek dasi hain. Hum bhi toh dekhe dasi jise humne jita hain iss khel main yoh dikhti kesi hain?" (My friend is absolutely

right, what does a slave girl's mind know of honor or insult? Now you are only a maidservant. Let us also see how the maid servant we have conquered in this game looks). (*Mahabharata*). This mockery is not merely an individual cruelty but an institutionalized patriarchal contempt. Draupadi was informed by Dushasana that anyone neither human nor any divine authority, would not step in. Her cries, her vulnerability was only entertainment for them. This mockery is a tool of patriarchal authority which isolated the victims, destroyed her hope that anyone would listen to her and help her, also it transformed her sufferings into a spectacle for the entertainment of powerful men. The concept of Secondary victimization by Judith Herman in her book "Trauma and Recovery" illustrates this precisely. "The traumatized person is often subjected to a second trauma by the very institutions that should offer protection" (Herman Trauma and Recovery). In the assembly of Kuru the humiliation of Draupadi's is approving that the institutions of the judicial systems are created to preserve Dharma, morality, and cosmic rules and regulations which are only a mechanism. This institutional betrayal is the voice where Karna mocks Draupadi which is saying that what the silent elders imply define that Draupadi is alone, there was no witness to her suffering and heart pleading for justice will be ignored.

Mom (2017) applies the same structural logic with chilling fidelity across the over the thousands years of gap. After the Arya's gang rape, the judicial systems failure throughout the procedural cruelty which is mirroring the Kuru assembly inactivity. Evidence was mishandled and classic victim blaming strategies were used by the defense lawyer with the questions like, what was Arya wearing? Was she consuming alcohol? Was she known to be friendly with young men? The judge licenses both sides with equal weight considering the evidence of rapists deserve the same credibility as that of their victim does. Similar to the Kuru assembly the courtroom turns into a place where violation is not addressed rather than being repeated when the rapists are found not

guilty on technical grounds. And the mockery continues when the rapist taunts Arya with the words like Karna used with Draupadi. "Ja bula apni maa ko" (go call your mother) (*Mom* 2017). The rapist takes advantage of the fact that Devki was not the biological mother of Arya, a fact that they have used to exploit the deepening of the wound. Their belief that Arya was alone, no biological mother, no one to answer her call, also the rapists have the political system's backing. This mockery is directly reincarnated with Karna's mockery. This continuity of patriarchal power is not only structural but verbal, the same cruel words having been used for generations due to the same patriarchal logic who produce them.

Bhoomi (2017) carries on this tradition in a rural working class context. When Arun the father of Bhoomi wanted to complain of his daughter's rape the police officer response with bitter indifference behavior. They say something like "Yeh saab hota rehta hain, beti jinda hain na, sukar mana." (These things happen. Your daughter is alive. Be grateful for that)" (*Bhoomi* 2017). The police have deliberately interfered with the justice by deleting evidence, misplacing the papers, and shielding the politically connected rapists. The rapists taunt Bhoomi with the same assumptions of authority and power and with the same conviction that nobody will respond to her and that's how the mockery continues. Arun the father of Bhoomi response was violent and public but it remains the structure. The patriarchal institution fails to provide protection and it forces the victim's family to choose between accepting the injustice and becoming vigilantes. In these three fictions the institution has changed but it remains constant to the patriarchal structure. The elders of Kuru, the judge, the police officer each of them choose to protect the patriarchy rather than the victim of the patriarchal institute. This continuity highlights that patriarchy is not only an individual balance act but also a systematic institutionalized refusal to protect female bodies from violation. The most powerful weapon in patriarchy is the silences of those who have

the judicial order position. In the three fictions when the cries weren't answered by the system it transformed into violation. In *Mahabharata* it transforms into Kurukshetra, in *Mom* (2017) it turns into Devki's vengeance, and in *Bhoomi* (2017) it turns into physical violence. The continuity of patriarchal power is real as it produces silence and each generation finds a way to respond to the patriarchal power that patriarchy men believe that their demands will go unanswered.

Trauma Cannot Speak: From Narrative Silence to Visual Expression in Cinema

Cathy Caruth argues in her foundational work on trauma theory that in the *Mahabharata* Draupadi's disrobing is not only an act of individual cruelty rather it is a public spectacle that transforms her body into a site of patriarchal disagreement. In which her physical humiliation serves as a metaphor for the generalized inferiority of women within the ancient Indian society. Moreover what makes this moment profoundly traumatic is not just the physical act of being humiliated in courtroom but the collective silence of those who are obligated to speak as like Bhishma the eldest son who was bound by his pledge of loyalty towards the throne, Drona the martial art guru who prioritized his loyalty towards the king over his moral duty, Vidura the voice uncle who opposed the act on the internally but externally remains silent but most shocking part was that her five husbands who sit in stunned silence also having gambled away their kingdom, their freedom and ultimately their wife. The idea of belatedness which serves traumatic incidents cannot be processed when they initially occur. The reason behind is the human mind is overwhelmed and unable to reconcile the experience of extreme violation. It also emphasizes why Draupadi's trauma persists throughout the epic rather than being confined to a single narrative moment. Since the epic *Mahabharata* narrative was composed in the era and

cultural contacts where women's interiority was never a subject of literary attention. Instead, it depicts the assembly silence, the complicity of gambling halls, Draupadi's passionate prayers to Krishna, and ultimately the Kurukshetra battlefield where eighteen armies destroy each other in a war participated by the single act of humiliation. The trauma does not return through Draupadi's constant doubt about Dharma rather than through her direct narration. Draupadi questions the authority arguing that Yudhishtira has no right to stake her after losing himself in gambling game, by which authority she was staked and also demands for an explanation to the elders why they remain silent during the ensuing catastrophic war. It is implying that an addressed trauma does not disappear but spread to cause a greater social devastation.

Similarly, in the film *Mom* (2017) directed by Ravi Udyawar and starring in her final powerful performance, the gang-rape of her teenage daughter Arya is not shown on screen repeatedly reflecting that cinematic choice that acknowledges the unrepresented ability of extreme sexual assault while requiring spectators to confront its reality. The audience is witnessing the aftermath of the violence as Arya's unconscious and brutalized body in the gutter, her torn clothes, swollen face which is hardly recognized, the hospital corridors where her mother facing vigorously while doctors were treating her daughter behind the closed doors, the hospital room where Arya was lying connected with machines, her body is a landscape of trauma that refused by the camera respectfully to reveal that portray, the court room where the rapists with their expensive liar also with the political connections smirks at the victims while judicial systems were denied to give the proper justice. The film employs extended close-ups of Sridvi's face for her frequent lingering expressions on her face for an uncomfortable lens of time to externalize the Cathy Caruth's that refer to the "Belated Possession" of trauma. There was a particularly powerful scene where Devki was seated alone beside Arya's bedroom after the hospital discharge with the

belongings of her stepdaughter such as school bags, a hair brush and a photograph of Arya laughing at a birthday party. This particular scene held an impactful experience about the trauma from disbelief to grief, to numbness, and finally a cold terrifying determination. The camera holds for nearly a full minute on Devki's face as her expressions complete an emotional journey. The absence of conversation, without any voiceover explaining her thoughts with only expressions, and with no musical composition telling us that emotion is clear and the silence is absolute. "...it speaks through the voice of another... through a language that is not its own" (Caruth 9). The constraint is a reflection of Cathy Caruth's conceptualization of trauma. This film did not portrayed the rape scenes but shows the mother's reaction. This film is expressing the mother's reaction since it was unable to express the daughter's sufferings. The film uses visual and symbolic references to Draupadi's disrobing which suggests that gender humiliation has persisted across culture and psychology. She started having obsessive thoughts about revenge and also researching the various types of killing methods. She also has hallucinations in which she sees the faces of the rapist in crowds, on TV screens, and in her peripheral vision. The symptoms like hyper vigilance, disruptive thoughts, sleep disturbance and emotional numbness are consistent with medical conditions of stress disorder. But the film did not portray them as a psychiatric case study but as the living reality of a woman who has been let down by all the institutions which were supposed to protect our family.

In the film *Bhoomi* (2017) directed by Omung Kumar and starring Sanjay Dutta who plays the role of a protective father Arun, where different types of cinematic techniques are used to represent the trauma which is reflecting both the gender nature of trauma response and the different ideological commitments of the film. Two portray the daughter psychological isolation after the assault the film uses the wide shots of the rural landscape which was used in the film,

the dusty roads of Uttar Pradesh, and the farmhouse which is isolated where Bhoomi lives with her father, the warehouse which is abandoned where the gang-rape occurs, all together it emphasize the psychological trauma. The character of Bhoomi played by Aditi Rao hydari is frequently shown by the camera as a small figure who is surrounded by the different landscape implying that her trauma has made her insignificant in the world that doesn't care about violated women. In one particular scene shows where Bhoomi was trying to taking a bath after returning from the hospital, where her bruised body was wet by the water pouring over her, her hands are scrubbing her skin, her face was contoured in disgust, the reflection of her in the mirror was appearing as unfamiliar and distorted. *Mom* (2017) focuses on the mother's psychological response to her daughter's trauma while *Bhoomi* (2017) centers on the father's experiences. These both films revealed how patriarchal structures shape the person who is traumatized and who gets to respond. Instead of experiencing a mental breakdown Arun uses physical violence to express his pain; he punches walls, breaks furniture, drives his motorcycle at dangerous speed and eventually torture and kills the rapist with his bare hands. The differences between this gendered while the fundamental psychological process of a trauma can be universal but it is performed in culturally and socially constructed situations where men are externalized throughout the rage and action while women are internalized throughout the silence and emotional withdrawal.

From Institutional Failure to Alternative Justice Mechanisms

From the institutional failure to alternative justice mechanism in *Mahabharata*, *Mom* (2017) and *Bhoomi* (2017) illustrate that the victim and their supporting lawyers navigating the opening or the sorting down of the opportunities to the justice when formal and legal institutions fail to fulfill their delivery of justice and betray them on purpose. Like in *Mahabharata* the Kuru

assembly, the highest judicial and political institute of that era failed to give justice, Bhishma Drona, Vidura, and the five Pandava husbands of Draupadi who have the physical and moral power to prevent this humiliation each of them remained silent. The assembly of Kuru was to preserve Dharma which ended up becoming the mechanism through the approved violation. With this institutional system where justice was denied this highlights the contradiction of patriarchy. When human institutions fall apart to deliver justice Draupadi prays to Krishna and Krishna responds through the miracle of the endless cloth to protect Draupadi's modesty. Yet this alternative is not justice Krishna just restricted the violation rather than punishing the perpetrators. Only the Kurukshetra battle which kills millions and destroys eighteen armies brings the full justice. According to *Mahabharata* there was a justice which was divine but if we think about that catastrophic scale which deprived the common victims with no accessible mechanism for justice. Institutional failure is much more systematic in *Mom* (2017). After the gang rape of Arya the legal systems did not found not guilty on technical grounds to the rapist due to evidence has mishandled victim blaming techniques by defense lawyers and using political connections to shielding the rapists. Devki remains silent, face mask with the silent devastated expressions. Unlike in Draupadi's era with divine intervention. In *Mahabharata*, Krishna was helping Draupadi to prevent violation but in the movie it was particularly mentioned that this is Kalyuga. Here Devki must construct her own justice mechanism from the available resources like higher private detective for legal systems gaps, the strategic use of accuracy, and her own capacity for calculated violence where she needs to know how a man can die with the overdose of apple seeds powder. She plans each rapist's fate individually like she killed one rapist by a hired sniper, one friend and imprisoned, one by the overdose of the powder of apple seeds mixing in his protein powder, and last one killed by Arya herself situated like self-defense.

She faces the final rapist and she turns his mockery into her justice "Tune kaha tha—bula apni ma ko. Main aa gayi. Lee aa gayi uski ma (You said—call your mother. I have come. Her mother has arrived)." (*Mom* 2017). Here the alternative justice mechanism is not divine rather it was personal, cosmic rather than personal, not public but secret. Unlike *Mom* (2017) and *Bhoomi* (2017) offers a different alternative where justice was public, violent, and paternal. Arun personally becomes the way of justice when the police failed to deliver justice, losing files, destroying the evidence, and protecting politically connected rapists. Arun's revenge is per-formative, he wants to witness the death of the rapists, he wants the community to see, and his violence framed as righteous' s protection of family honor. He tortures and kills the rapists with his bare hands. Across all three narratives institutional failure was a result in alternative justice mechanisms that all are structurally quite similar to each other. When the government or judicial system refuses to take action against the crime and criminals the individual or family must have to act instead. Yet these three fictions have different alternatives which are carrying different costs. Draupadi's divine intervention leads to the Kurukshetra war, Devki's maternal revenge costs her moral purity and strains her relationship with Arya, and Arun's paternal cruelty was the cycle of violence that patriarchy itself encouraged.

Lastly, the institutional failure to alternative justice mechanisms is just the desperate adoption to the system which refused to protect rather than a better alternative and justice. Each narrative asks the same question, when justice is denied, what remains? The response takes many forms like prayers and revenge violence but the ultimate reality remains the same that institutional failure always leads to the alternative justice which was never legal.

DISCUSSION

The comparative analysis discussion in this paper applying the theoretical frameworks of Cathy Caruth, Judith Herman, Elaine Scarry, and Shulamit Reinharz highlights physical and psychological trauma across the *Mahabharata*, *Mom* (2017), *Bhoomi* (2017). The findings reveal that throughout the transformation of resistance narratives from mythological questioning to cinematic vengeance, patriarchal mechanisms of violence have remained relatively consistent throughout the historical periods. The discussion interprets this finding, also examines their implications of trauma studies and feminist discourse which acknowledges the limitations of the study and suggests the directions for the future research. It also situated these findings in the border context of gender based violence for the awareness of the generation, drawing the connection to the other cinematic works such as *Pink* (2016), "*Kaabil*" (2017), *Article 15* (2019) which also reflect the personal experience which inspired this research.

Draupadi's disrobing as a mythological archetype for the contemporary gender based violence is not nearly in the act of violation itself but because of the institutional framework that legitimizes and justifies the violation. The Kuru assembly in *Mahabharata* serves a term which is called "spectacle of legitimation" which means a public performance where powerful people who have the authority to transform a private suffering into an acceptable social practice through their deliberate silence. Despite having the moral and physical capability to intervene, Bhishma, Drona, Vidura, and the five Pandava husbands of Draupadi each of them choose silence. In *Pink* (2016) finds a quite similar pattern where female protagonists are assaulted and subsequently blamed by the legal system. Here the courtroom has become a modern Kuru assembly where male authorities like judges, lawyers, and police officers adopt the same silence in the courtroom which is justifying the violation. The famous dialogue of the film "No Means No" is directly

challenging Draupadi's violation, also stating that women's bodies are not an assumptional subject to the male authority. The courtroom scene in *Mom* (2017), where the rapists were not found guilty on the technical grounds emphasizes the Kuru assembly's failure as structural inevitability rather than individual corruption. The judge was following the procedure and the defense lawyer performs his professional obligations and the system delivers the predetermined outcome. The comparison implies that patriarchal violence is not a result of good individuals following the laws that produce negative outcomes rather than from bad individuals making poor decisions. This is the insidious brilliance of institutional patriarchy that does not require villains; the only thing that is required is the people who do their work, follow the procedures and protocols, and remain silent. Societal norms are challenged in the aftermath of Draupadi's disrobing by refusing the silence which was demanded by the Kuru assembly. Draupadi's questions represent Judith Butler's "performative speech acts" statement which is not only describing the reality but actively transforming it. The Kuru assembly silence was degraded by the questioning of Draupadi which is revealing that it is not only impartial but also as complicity. *Mom* (2017) resembles this pattern of verbal resistance not through the words but throughout the strategic silence which is turned into an action. The answer which Devki's vengeance gave to the rapists taunt by replying to the rapists' mockery " Bula apni maa ko" (*Mom* 2017) by transforming the mother from a protector to perpetrator. The line "Lee aa gayi uski ma" (*Mom* 2017) is reclaiming from the language of mockery to weapon of justice. In *Bhoomi* (2017) the statement "Main yahan apni beti ke liye insaaf maangne aaya tha... uska dobara balatkaar hone ke liye nahi!" (I had come here to ask for justice for my daughter... not to get her... raped again!) (*Bhoomi* 2017) is the outburst to a father's anguish to the police officer capturing the devastating contradiction of the betrayal of the institutional system. When Arun shows up at the

police station expecting protection, safety and legal solution he finds that the act of seeking justice for his daughter is only a subject of secondary victimization. The investigation becomes the second assault with its intrusive questions and spectacle attitudes. The institution was meant to protect survivors but it often becomes the place of re-traumatization by their rule words which is exposing the cruel irony of the institutions. It identifies the theory of “Secondary victimization” by Herman. Draupadi's humiliation leads to the Kurukshetra war rather than restoration of her dignity, Devki's vengeance towards the rapists and ends up permanently reforming her relationship with Arya, and Arun's outburst highlights the failure of judicial systems which is exposing the societal and cultural norms rather than exposure of justice. It suggests that resistance with patriarchy cannot produce justice, it may only produce tragedy and disaster, moral uncertainty, or the partial transformation. But there was a question which remained, whether partial transformation was enough?

In *Mom* (2017) and *Bhoomi* (2017) poetries of trauma are remarkably mirroring the real world institutional silence and this authenticity has significant implications for female activism. In India, according to The National Crime Records Bureau's data the rape rates which is hovering around 27% which is confirming the fact that the movies depiction of judicial systems failure is not an exaggeration but the real documentation. The system's indifference behaviour is portrayed in *Bhoomi* (2017) firstly when the police officer says that "Yeh saab hota rehta hain, beti jinda hain na, sukar mana." (These things happen. Your daughter is alive. Be grateful for that)" (*Bhoomi* 2017). To which Arun responded with this "Main yahan apni beti ke liye insaaf maangne aaya tha... uska dobara balatkaar hone ke liye nahi!" (I had come here to ask for justice for my daughter... not to get her... raped again!) (*Bhoomi* 2017) reflects the findings from human rights rights documentation that shows that how police are often unwilling to register the

rape complaints especially in the rural areas and also particularly when the criminals or the perpetrators are politically connected. This film representation serves as an alternative narrative to the official silence which word is making them more powerful for activism. Films like this provide testimony when the states refuse to acknowledge the extent of institutional failure. Cinema shows the differences when the judicial systems fail to deliver the accurate verdict that denies the evidence and experience. This is not to claim that films are a replacement for political organization or legal reformation but to argue that they have provided the cultural conditions which make these activities reformed and organized. *Article 15* (2019) portrayed caste based violence and police corruption in rural Uttar Pradesh, which is serving as an alternative narrative that exposes the systematic failure and authorized language, which is preferred to obscure. The impact of the films on public discussions which debates about police reform, caste discrimination, and the implementation of constitutional protections demonstrate that cinematic representations can transform into political pressure. The survivors and their families not putting them as helpless victims especially for female activism but as agents. Devki is a strategist, a planner and executor of justice but not only a grieving mother. Despite the film's patriarchal framing, Arun expresses the unacceptable situation of a father who comes to seek justice for his daughter but find responds with only further violation. "Main yahan apni beti ke liye insaaf maangne aaya tha... uska dobara balatkaar hone ke liye nahi!" (I had come here to ask for justice for my daughter... not to get her... raped again!) (*Bhoomi* 2017) reveals the entire tragedy of institutional betrayal. It's described that, I believed in the system, but it failed and start form of rape and this failure is a second violence of the body and the soul. These representations provide two dominant cultural narratives for the survivors, firstly the silent sufferer who bears her trauma privately and the hysterical accuser who is not trustworthy. By depicting survivors and their

families as complex, morally ambiguous and articulated this film has expanded its range of subject positions which are available to real life survivors. Psychological aftermath of trauma as represented in *Mom* (2017) and *Bhoomi* (2017) are echoed and transformed patterns found in Draupadi's narrative of resistance. Cathy Caruth's concept of "traumatic belatedness" is visually represented in the both films through cinematic techniques such as fragmentation, delayed restoration of traumatic experience but it is unavailable in the epic narrative *Mahabharata*. The close up of Sridevi's face, which is held for a long duration as her expression moves through disbelief, grief, numbness, and cold determination externalizes the internal process which is only possible throughout the dialogues and actions in the *Mahabharata*. *Bhoomi's* fragmented editing, jump cuts, temporal ellipses, disorientation transitions reflect the survivors' shattered experience of chronological time which is a concept of Cathy Caruth's "traumatic belatedness" where Draupadi's resistance is the psychological structures which were vocalized. Her questions, her cries out for help to Krishna, the films turned this pattern by changing from the word to the action. This is a reflection in the idea of justice of a historical change. In the *Mahabharata* divine intervention remains present, Krishna's miracle was limited but sets an example of rescue that doesn't need human violence. Such an intervention is not practically possible in the contemporary world of *Mom* (2017) and *Bhoomi* (2017). The gods are silent, the government is corrupted, human actions where the only option remains however morally questionable. The change has sufficient effects on the expression and processing of trauma. Verbal articulation is resistance which does not require violence. Which is applied for Draupadi's resistance but for Devki and Arun speech was insufficient as their miseries were not heard by anyone authority, speech is what they brought to the systems but it failed. The police and the court do not hear them, they do not care, and there was no investigation, no justice. From speech to silence to

action is the arc of trauma's transformation. The victims speak, the institution ignored, survivors learned that words are powerless, and survivors take actions. *Kaabil (2017)* provide an another variety of this pattern, a blind man seeking vengeance for his wife's rape when the legal system fail to deliver justice also using his disability to their source of advantage. The film portrayed the psychological journey of the protagonist which included both the weakness and strength but due to physical disability following Devki's way from grief to rage to calculated actions. In the contemporary era, survivors cannot wait for divine intervention or legal justice, rather they must have to become the representatives of their own salvation. However Arun's words remain to ask that this agency was not chosen rather than it was forced. He was not looking for vengeance but had no option left when he arrived at the police station seeking justice for his daughter. He came as a citizen demanding what the government had promised. But the government refused and his decision to use violence is just a judgment on the state's failure rather than a choice.

This study is involved by the researcher's personal trauma which provides a critical perspective for analyzing the intersections of violence, silence, and presentation. This positionality enables a deeper understanding of trauma as both an individual and imposed experience rather than functioning as an appeal to subjectivity. Cathy Caruth argues that trauma is not completely consumed at the moment of but rather than it returns belatedly through the fragmented repetitive forms, and this framework is leading the analysis discussion across the selected fictions.

Similarly, Judith Herman explained how power structures develop trauma and her concept of "Secondary victimization" highlights the institutional system failure intensifying the psychological trauma. By integrating theoretical frameworks with lived experience, this research challenges the presumption of neutral detachment and emphasizes the embodied acknowledgement as an essential and legitimate form of critical analysis. This study has several

limitations that must be acknowledged. The range is limited to three fictions, one is an ancient epic and the other two are from the modern films from the same national cinema. The films *Mom* (2017) and *Bhoomi* (2017) are selected for the analysis specially because they released in 2017 and also their availability for analysis but it does not represent the gender based violence in full range of cinematic depictions. Other films like *Pink* (2016), *Kaabil* (2017), *NH 10* (2015), and *Article 15* (2019) each represented different strategies that might have different results. For finding historical changes in representation needs to do a more comprehensive study that would analyze a wider collection of films across different decades. Rather than finding an audience response to this research paper focuses on narrative representation. Although this research argues that these fictional films can be used for counter narratives and societal discourse, it does not provide concrete evidence that survivors can experience them this way. For establishing the intended effect of these representations one needs to utilize the qualitative interviews or service to see the audience reception. The study does not include quantitative research or any legal information on how the judicial systems handles the rape cases instead it limited to textual and cinematic analysis. Although, the author's personal experience as a survivor provides a unique insight, inspiration, and motivation. The authors on trauma history influence the interpretation of the narratives and also various survivors might emphasize different aspects of the fictions or texts. It is important to acknowledge the fundamental limitations of qualitative research on trauma. This study is more focused on trauma and resistance with the least priority in healing and recovery. Although Herman's framework did include recovery, the narratives themselves were more focused with the moment of violation and the response to it instead of long term psychological healing. Future research could explore that more in the healing process including films like *Dear Zindagi* (2016) which is dealing with mental health and healing therapy. For

further research this study is suggesting different opportunities which will extend this analysis to another level of mythological traditions to examine the pattern of patriarchal violence and institutional silence which was identified in *Mahabharata*. Like Cassandra in Greek mythology who was blessed with the prophetic vision but also cursed with never to be believed. Here unlike Draupadi's voice is heard but was ignored and Cassandra's voice is heard but without belief which is a failure of moral and political responsibility in the patriarchal court. In this study Cross culture comparison exposes that particularly South Asian patriarchy and gender based violence across human societies are reflecting deeper structures. A more comparative study examines how gender based violence is represented in the cinema which has changed overtime, from the reformist films in 1950 to the revenge narrative of the 2010. Qualitative studies investigates how different kinds of audiences like survivors, judges, activists, authorized judiciary committees will interpret these films and whether it's affecting their attitude towards victims or support for policy reform. Films like *Mom* (2017) and *Bhoomi* (2017) have psychological implications for survivors such as acknowledging their experience on screen which reduces isolation, the portrayal of vengeance which is offering a sense of relief or the moral ambiguity of revenge which creates more trauma. Such research might need more careful ethical protocols to avoid more traumatization and it could provide more valuable insights for trauma based media interventions. Finally this study explains how trauma silence and representation are structurally connected. The comparative study of *Mahabharata* along with the *Mom* (2017) and *Bhoomi* (2017) demonstrate that patriarchal violence continues because of the institutional silence all though it continuously challenges through the act of resistance and the raising voices. The researchers own experience with trauma emphasizes that the silence is not an absence of experience but it's only a condition imposed by institutional and societal limitations. This comparative study in these fictions shows

that resistance arises when the voices are raised, challenged, and refused imposed invisibility and when systems do not resolve pain. As a result, the persistence of violence is compared to the persistence of resistance where reclaiming once voice continues to be an essential and transformative act.

CONCLUSION

This paper demonstrate that the representation of physical and psychological trauma in *Mahabharata* (Cheer Haran), *Mom* (2017) and *Bhoomi* (2017) understood as manifestation of a deeply ingrained structural condition which is influenced by institutional complicity patriarchal authority and the normalization of gender based violence across time not as an isolated narratives. In all the three fictions, trauma goes beyond the immediate act of physical violence and significantly intensified by the inaction, silence, and systematic failure of the institutions which were expected to deliver justice. But it transformed someone's personal sufferings into an extensive and socially acceptable experience. Draupadi's disrobing in Kuru assembly was not only allowed but was effectively legitimate by the collective silence of those who are in the position of moral, political, and familial authority it also exposed the structural violence which is revealing that power operates both the unwillingness act and direct violence. Similarly this structural logic evident in the contemporary cinematic representations like courts, police departments and the general societal attitudes constantly failed and survivors' trauma was reproduced through the indifferences of legal procedures, victim blaming, and the prioritization of power over justice. This comparison shows it disturbing continuity more than a historical breach between ancient and contemporary contexts and demonstrating that although the evolution of their native representations across different cultural forms, the mechanism supporting the violence against women which remains essentially unchangeable. *Mom* (2017) and *Bhoomi* (2017) illustrate characters who are confronted with the constant disappointment of institutional mechanisms of justice and also prefer to construct a new system of vengeance by breaking the boundaries of the law and judicial systems. Draupadi's resistance expressed through her questioning of authority is a courageous act that shatters the system despite using violence

also overturning its physical realities or norms. Also in this way these fictions highlight the limitations of both institutional justice and personal vengeance implying that both approaches are not enough to address the persistent and fundamental structures which produce trauma. This study highlights the fundamental challenge of explaining trauma which frequently reveals itself through the indirect expression, fragmentation, and silence. Cinema utilizes visual and performativity strategies to externalize personal sufferings which is making visible the psychological aspects of trauma that remain unstated in earlier native forms while the epic which portrays trauma through the symbolic native structures moral questioning and long term effects which is unfolding across the border of narrative structure of the story. Ultimately this comparative analysis established that trauma, silence, and resistance which are inseparably connected within patriarchal systems and violence across the generations. Therefore, trauma has to acknowledge not only a person's individual psychological trauma but also as a larger socio-political realities established within power structures that demand constant critical analysis and reformation. The process of violence, complicity and revenge can be significantly disrupted rather than endlessly repeated across generations by such transformation which not merely confronts the symptoms but also the fundamental structures of inequality and silence.

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