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Translation of Female Characters from the *Ramayana* into Kavita Kané's Novel *Lanka's Princess*

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Abstract:

Mythology has ever been a source of past tradition and values. Contemporary Indian mythological narratives are studied as a tool to interpret oriental theories in a newer light and their impact on the present connotations. If we go through two beej kavyas, namely The Ramayana and The Mahabharata, it becomes apparent that female characters were not presented in a better light than they are in recent works of mythological fiction. Kavita Kane has woven her fictional world entirely by taking out marginalized female characters from the above mentioned epics. My paper focuses on *Lanka's Princess* by Kavita Kane. The novel *Lanka's Princess* takes up the character of Surpanakha in a different light and relates it to the process of cultural translation and its impact on the reception of depicting the marginalized characters from a different perspective. Surpanakha is not only a marginalised character but it is also true that so far only one aspect of her character has been revealed to us, the evil one. Such works have given a strong voice to those female characters, which were either silent or suppressed in the past. My paper is an attempt to explore the cultural translation of these marginalized women characters into contemporary Indian mythological fiction.

Key Words: Translation, Ramayana, Female_characters, mythology, Lanka, Surpanakha, Kavita_Kane

Gender is the most significant lens through that we have a tendency to read people and life. It's usually tough to know precisely what's meant by the term 'gender', and in what sense it differs from the closely connected term 'sex'. Whereas sex refers to the biological and physiological characteristics that are outlined for men and women, gender indicates the roles, behaviours, activities and attributes that the society constructs for men and women and that are thought of acceptable for them. In alternative words, the concept of sex is fixed that doesn't modify across societies whereas gender is in a state of flux and varies from one society to other. After about half a century Simon de-Beauvoir's wellknown statement "One is not born, but rather becomes a woman" (267), Deborah Cameron argues that "One is never finished becoming a woman or a man" (43). In a similar fashion, Eckert and McConnell-Ginet opine that "As we age, we continue to learn new ways of being men and women" (30). "Transgender" doesn't have to solely signify people and communities, however will offer a lens for interrogating all bodies' relationships to gendered areas, disrupting the bounds of strict identity classes, and redefining gender. The "trans-" in transgender is an abstract tool for interrogating the connection between bodies and therefore the institutions that discipline them. Homosexuality is believed to be a part of a minority cluster, and the way homosexuality is gendered to be either masculine or feminine. The definitions of sexuality rely a lot on the gender of the romantic partner one makes, creating



the belief that the gender one has and therefore the gender of the person one is interested in structure the foremost necessary component of sexuality.

From the Renaissance to the present age literature has frequently drawn upon myths and mythologies. Mythologies of the ancient world have continued to have a great impact on human psyche and human societies across the globe probably because they "justify an existing social system and account for traditional rites and customs" (Graves 21). The feminist movements of the twentieth century have provided a drift to feminist writers and critics to question the illustration of woman in varied literary genres as 'inferior' or 'lack'. A serious stress of feminist critics lies in modifying the method in which a woman reads literature. Inspired by these movements many female writers have tried a revisionary re-reading of texts together with myths. Women re-read myths for multiple reasons. Feminist revisionist mythmaking gives female writers a setting to amend the male construction of female identity. Not only it defies gender assumptions but at the same time it also advances gender consciousness. It looks for revealing the misogynism embedded in mythological tales. Alicia Ostriker remarks in Stealing the Language: "the motivating force behind women writers' revisionist myths is the subversion of the dominant ideology's hidden male bias" (214). Revisionary mythmaking by feminist authors uses numerous ways. Kavita Kané, a writer of Indian origin frequently reverts to myths, fairy tales and folk tales in her works. Kavita Kané employs the device of inversion to tear down the andocentric tendency to concentrate upon male values and prototypes. Inversion implies an amendment in perspective, furthermore as a try to defy, that the readers get to envision things in a totally different light. The feminist lens of Kavita Kané provides a reinterpretation of the previous myths. Surpanakha becomes the new leader or stereotype of the librated woman. Revisioning tries to help Surpanakha in getting rid of the stigma of a fallen woman, representing her as a stubborn lady. In the light of the mythological story, Kavita Kané tries a constructed deconstruction of the female identity. Kané's only intention here is to restrain the patriarchic premise of female as 'lack'. The appropriation of the myth is meant to bring in light some positive aspects of the character of women that remained suppressed and unnoticed by the androcentric society. It's the inner strength and integral divinity of women which can work wonders. The portrayal of Surpanakha as the protagonist and chief plotter of the war between Ram and Ravana is an act of reimaging the male -defined female identity. The chief motif of the search for selfhood presented through a mythic framework is an appropriate strategy for revising the gender prejudices and remediating the negative portrayals of women in myths. Throughout the text a relentless try at subverting the male traditions and prototypes is discernible. Adrienne Rich defines revision in the following way: "Re-vision, - the act of looking back, seeing with fresh eyes, of entering an old text from a new critical direction is for women more than a chapter in cultural history. It is an act of survival." (18)

Kavita Kané, a contemporary female author of Indian origin frequently retroverts to myths and folk tales and she combines them in her works. The andocentric tendency to concentrate upon values and prototypes of male is torn down by Kavita Kané with the help of the device of inversion. The tool of inversion tries to amend the perspective and in this way to defy, so that the readers can get to see things in a totally different and new light. The feminist lens of Kavita Kané

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provides a reinterpretation of the previous myths. In *Lanka's Princess*, Surpanakha turns out to be a new leader or formulaic image of a librated woman. This revisioning not only represents her as a stubborn lady but it also tries to help Surpanakha in getting rid of the stain of an unchaste woman. In the light of the mythological story, Kavita Kané tries a constructed deconstruction of the female identity. Kané only design here is to restrain the patriarchic premise of female as 'lack'. The incorporation of the myth is to throw the light upon some positive facets of the character of a woman that remained unnoticed and suppressed by the male centered society. Figuratively speaking, it is the internal strength and integral goodness of women which can perform magic. Female identity defined by andro-centric society is reimaginned through the act of the portrayal of Surpanakha as the protagonist and the chief plotter of the war between Ram and Ravana.

A relentless try at subverting the androcentric traditions and prototypes is discernible throughout the text. The chief motif of the novel is search for selfhood and it is presented through a framework of myths. It is an appropriate scheme for the revision of the gender prejudices and remediating the negative depiction of women in myths. Instead of portraying Surpanakha as a thorough devil Kane has laboured to present her as a human being who was led to do some devilish acts by her ill-fate. Even though she lost almost everything in her life yet she treasured the seeds of mercy in her. She had mercy on Lakshman when he accepts his crime of killing her son Kumar. Since it was done in a complete ignorance, he expresses his grief over it and hands over his sword to Surpanakha to behead him as a punishment. Her dropping down the sword changes her image of being an ogress. Through the reading of the text it becomes evident that to change the readers' perspective towards this character from the *Ramayana* is the author's purpose. In Kavita Kane's words: "I revisit the iconic stories and present them through the perspective of those characters which may have been missed out or overlooked. Once the spotlight is brought on these minor characters, the entire narrative changes" (Ramayana's Surpanakha).

The novel *Lanka's Princess* takes up the character of Surpanakha in a different light and relates it to the process of cultural translation and its impact on the reception of depicting the marginalized characters from a different perspective. Surpanakha is not only a marginalised character but it is also true that so far only one aspect of her character has been revealed to us, the evil one.

Meenakshi aka Surpanakha is an alienated character in the text. Her alienation is depicted in the following paragraphs:

It had been a hard week as usual: her mother had scolded her all through the days; and each time, her father had not checked his wife's tirade, but instead had thrown her a look of acute disappointment, sighing and shaking his head. He didn't rush to her defence nor did he draw her close to comfort her, which he often did with Vibhishan, although he was older. ... Ravan, as always, ignored her, barely aware that she existed. (10)

The story of Surpanakha is a quest for her identity. From the childhood she is aware that she doesn't belong to "in-group" of her family. Born of a Rakshasa mother and a Brahmin father, she becomes a Rakshasa princess after Ravan becomes the king of Lanka. Born as Meenakshi she prefers her name Surpanakha after the death of her husband because this monstrous name suited



well her intention of avenging her husband's death. Her journey ends with her attempt to become a compassionate woman, an identity which her favourite brother Kumbhakarna asked her to have. Later, Urmila also indicated that it was her feeling of revenge that pained her most. She says:

Surpanakha, your revenge had become your friend. You had gotten so attached to it that you couldn't let it go ... you have to allow yourself to be happy but not without letting go of pain and anger. Or you start believing that unhappiness is your destined happiness. In your sorrow, you consider yourself a victim and every victim prefers to believe they were innocently persecuted. But few realize that they are their own tormentors. You tormented yourself with your refusal to submit to a larger truth. (291)

Through her novels, Kavita Kane has excavated minor women characters from Hindu myths. Lanka's Princess posits Surpanakha as protagonist that not only helps in portraying her character in unconventional method but also in subverting her image presented in the texts that belong to patriarchal traditions.

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Solution of Plane Gravitational Waves in 4D Space-time

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Abstract: In this paper we explore the mathematical formulation and solutions for plane gravitational waves within the framework of four-dimensional space-time. The field equations in GR are solved by Takeno in 4D space-time and obtained some exact solutions and investigated their properties. In this brief report we give its modest formulation in more generalized and simpler form.

Key words: General relativity, Plane gravitational wave, 4D space-time, Field equations.

The field equations in general relativity are,

$$R_{ij} = -8\pi E_{ij} \,, \tag{1}$$

where, R_{ij} is the Ricci tensor of the space-time, $E_{ij} = \left(\frac{g_{ij}F_{kt}F^{kt}}{4}\right) - F_{ik}F_{jt}g^{kt}$ is the electromagnetic energy momentum tensor, g_{ij} is a fundamental metric tensor of the space-time, and F_{ij} is the anti-symmetric tensor describing the electromagnetic field which satisfies

$$F_{ij;k} + F_{jk;i} + F_{ki;j} = 0 \quad \text{and} \tag{2} \quad \text{here}$$

$$F_{j}^{ij} = 0$$
 for $i, j, k = 1, 2, 3, 4$ (3) semi

colo

n (;) denotes covariant derivative.

The equations (1), (2) and (3) corresponds to the system in which an electromagnetic field coexists with a gravitational field. Equations (2) and (3) are the generalized Maxwell equations.

In the empty region of the space-time, $F_{ij} = 0$, for each i, j = 1, ..., 4. Therefore, field equations (1), (2) and (3) reduces to

$$R_{ij} = 0$$
 for $i, j = 1, ..., 4$. (4) For

the plane wave solution of (4), fundamental assumptions about the signature of metric tensor are made as;

$$g_{ij} \leq 0$$
, $\begin{vmatrix} g_{tt} & g_{tk} \\ g_{kt} & g_{kk} \end{vmatrix} > 0$, $t, k = 1, 2, 3$

(not summed for t and k),

$$\begin{array}{c|ccc} g_{11} & g_{12} & g_{13} \\ g_{21} & g_{22} & g_{23} \\ g_{31} & g_{32} & g_{33} \end{array} < 0 , g_{44} > 0, \text{ and} \\ g = \det(g_{ij}) < 0 \tag{5}$$
 With

this we can have,

- i. A plane wave is a non-flat solution of (4), hence our waves are not coordinate waves and
- ii. A plane wave g_{ij} has the property that, in some suitable coordinate system all its components are functions of a single variable $Z = Z(x^i)$, i. e. the phase function.

Therefore,

$$g_{ij} = g_{ij}(Z) \tag{6} Here$$

we consider $x^1 = x$, $x^2 = y$, $x^3 = z$ and $x^4 = t$ which satisfies

$$g^{ij} Z_{,i} Z_{,j} = 0,$$
 $\left(, i \equiv \frac{\partial}{\partial x^i}\right)$ and (7) Whil e

$$Z = Z(z,t) \iff Z = Z(x^3, x^4) \Rightarrow Z_{,3} \neq 0, \qquad Z_{,4} \neq 0$$
(8) form

ulati

ng this definition, we have assumed that, gravitational plane wave is propagating in the direction of z-axis.

From equations (8), equation (7) is a quadratic equation $\ln\left(\frac{Z_{,3}}{Z_{,4}}\right)$ since by fundamental assumption, it has one positive and one negative root. Evidently, the positive or negative root corresponds to the wave propagating in the negative or positive direction of z-axis respectively.

Consider the wave is propagating in positive direction. Let $\varphi = \varphi(Z)$ be the negative root of (7). Then

$$Z_{,3} = \varphi Z_{,4} \tag{9}$$
 Whi

ch on solving we get,

$$x^4 = x^3 \varphi = \omega \setminus R \Leftrightarrow t = z \varphi(Z) = \omega$$
 (10) whe

re ω is an arbitrary function of *Z*.



Let us denote $M = \overline{\omega} - z \ \overline{\varphi} \neq 0$ and $N = \overline{\overline{\omega}} - z \ \overline{\overline{\varphi}}$,

where bar represents derivative with respect to $x^3 = z$.

Then from (10) we get,

$$Z_{,3} = \left(\frac{\varphi}{M}\right), Z_{,4} = \left(\frac{1}{M}\right), M_{,3} = \left(\frac{\varphi N}{M} - \bar{\varphi}\right), M_{,4} = \left(\frac{N}{M}\right)$$
(11) Agai

we define $\omega^i = \varphi g^{3i} + g^{4i}$ then we get $\omega^i = M g^{ri} Z_{,r}(i, r = 1, 2, ..., 4)$.

$$\Rightarrow \omega^{i} Z_{,i} = 0, (\because \omega^{3} \varphi \omega^{4} = 0)$$
(12)

 $\Rightarrow g^{ri}Z_{,r}Z_{,i} = 0$ (same as (7)).

And thus, Ricci tensor is given by

$$\begin{aligned} R_{ij} &= \left[\bar{L}_2 Z_{,i} Z_{,j} + L_2 (Z_{,j})_{,i} \right] - \frac{1}{2} g^{mr} \left[\bar{g}_{ir} (Z_{,j})_{,m} + \bar{g}_{jr} (Z_{,j})_{,m} \right] \\ &- \frac{1}{2M} \left[Z_{,i} \bar{\rho}_j + Z_j \bar{\rho}_i - \bar{\varphi} g^{3r} (Z_{,j} \bar{g}_{ir} + Z_{,i} \bar{g}_{jr}) \right] + \frac{1}{4} \left[\frac{2}{M^2} \rho_i \rho_j + L_1 Z_{,i} Z_{,j} \right] \\ &- \frac{L_2}{2M} \left[\rho_i Z_{,j} + \rho_j Z_{,i} \right], \end{aligned}$$

$$\Rightarrow R_{ij} = \left(\frac{N}{M^3}\right)\rho_{ij} + \left(\frac{1}{M^2}\right)\sigma_{ij} \tag{13}$$

Where $\sigma_{ij} = -\bar{\rho}_{ij} + \frac{1}{4} \left[M^2 L_1 Z_{,i} Z_j - 2M L_2 (\rho_i Z_j + \rho_j Z_i) + 2\rho_i \rho_j \right]$

$$\rho_{ij} = -M^2 L_2 Z_{,i} Z_{,j} + \frac{M}{2} \left(\rho_i Z_j + \rho_j Z_i \right)$$

$$L_1 = g^{ij} g^{kl} \bar{g}_{ik} \bar{g}_{jl} ,$$

$$L_2 = \overline{\log \sqrt{-g}} ,$$

$$\rho_i = \bar{g}_{ir} \omega^r$$
(4.1)

 $\Rightarrow \rho_a = 0, \text{ for } a = 1, 2. \tag{14}$

efore, from equations (4) and (13) we get,

$$N\rho_{ij} + M\sigma_{ij} = 0, (\overline{\overline{\omega}}\rho_{ij} + \overline{\omega}\sigma_{ij}) - z(\overline{\overline{\phi}}\rho_{ij} + \overline{\phi}\sigma_{ij}) = 0.$$

Ther

Which are equivalent to

$$\overline{\bar{\omega}}\rho_{ij} + \overline{\omega}\sigma_{ij} = \overline{\bar{\varphi}}\rho_{ij} + \overline{\varphi}\sigma_{ij} = 0$$
(15)
Con

clusion: The plane wave solutions of (4) are given by g_{ij} which satisfies our fundamental assumptions (5), (10), (11) and (15).

Reference: Takeno H. (1961).