

Draupadi Reimagined: Using Feminist Stylistics and Écriture Féminine in Song of Draupadi

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ABSTRACT

This article critically analyses The *Song of Draupadi* by Ira Mukhoty through the dual lenses of Feminist Stylistics as proposed by Sara Mills and Écriture Féminine as theorised by Hélène Cixous. Recasting Draupadi not as a passive mythological figure but as a complex, embodied subject, Mukhoty disrupts the traditional patriarchal narrative of the *Mahabharata*. The article investigates how Mukhoty's stylistic and linguistic choices foreground Draupadi's agency, resistance, and subjectivity within a socio-cultural and political context. Feminist stylistic tools are employed to analyse the novel's lexical, syntactic, and discourse structures, focusing on narrative voice, power dynamics, and gendered language. The article examines how Mukhoty's prose exemplifies Cixous' Écriture Féminine, characterised by fluidity, multiplicity, and embodiment, in order to reinscribe feminine experience into literary discourse. The textual analysis reveals how the novel reclaims Draupadi's silenced voice by employing subversive narrative strategies that reflect female corporeality, emotional truth, and historical reclamation.

This study concludes that 'The Song of Draupadi' is not merely a retelling, but a radical literary intervention that challenges canonical interpretations and repositions the female voice at the centre of myth. The article thus contributes to feminist

literary scholarship by demonstrating how language and form serve as tools of ideological resistance and reclamation in postcolonial feminist narratives.

Keywords: myth retelling; gendered language; postcolonial feminism; Mahabharata; feminist narrative strategies

FULL PAPER

1. Introduction

The Mahabharata, among the seminal epics of Indian mythology, has continued to be a potent narrative that underpins cultural, moral, and philosophical discourses across the Indian subcontinent. Traditionally attributed to Vyasa, the epic recounts the story of dynastic strife, dharma, war, and spiritual growth. However, embedded within its male-dominated narrative is the story of Draupadi, one of the most captivating and enigmatic women in Indian literature. Although the epic shows glimpses of Draupadi's inner strength and moral complexity, her voice is usually lost in the clamour of masculine heroism. Historically, Draupadi's portrayal has been filtered through androcentric readings of the epic, with her comprising more of a narrative device than a fully fleshed subject. However, feminist literary criticism in recent years has enabled a reevaluation of such mythological texts, offering alternative perspectives that focus on female agency, subjectivity, and resistance.

Of recent retellings of Draupadi's tale, it is Ira Mukhoty's *Song of Draupadi* (2021) that distinguishes itself through its lyrical prose and its sensitivity to feminist reinterpretation. In this novel, Mukhoty makes Draupadi's voice resonate, imbuing her with depth and anger, wisdom, and political awareness. The story is not just a retelling; it is a radical act of reclamation, one that bends the boundaries of myth, gender, and memory. In *Song of Draupadi*, she is no longer a figure in a male power play. Still, a woman who deliberately makes choices that affect her destiny examines injustice and then claims her identity. In this article, I will discuss how Mukhoty accomplishes this through stylistic and narrative devices that invoke feminist literary theories, mainly Sara Mills' Feminist Stylistics and Hélène Cixous' *Écriture Féminine*.

Literature reflects and creates social ideology, particularly concerning gender; thus, feminist literary theory emerged, a form of criticism that draws on its ideological significance. According to feminist theorists, canonical literature has traditionally privileged male points of view and silenced or marginalised women. Feminist literary critics, therefore, examine the ways language, narrative form, and character construction work either to reinforce or resist patriarchal ideologies in order to counteract this imbalance. Within this task, there are two important theoretical contributions: Mills' Feminist Stylistics and Cixous' *Écriture Féminine*.

These can be used separately or combined for analysing a work, such as one of the *Song of Draupadi*.

Sara Mills' Feminist Stylistics, a significant feature of her pioneering Work of the Same Name (1995), explored how linguistic choices, ranging from vocabulary at the level of the word to narrative patterns at the level of discourse, help create and reinforce ideologies about gender. However, Mills rejects the notion that we can separate stylistic analysis from the ideology at work in society; instead, she argues that the language is always embedded with ideology. She argues that what appears to be lexical and grammatical structures often encodes deeply entrenched patriarchal assumptions. As an illustrative example, news reporting of violence against females inverts cause and victim, with men less likely to be blamed, and women being rendered as victims (e.g., Mills, 2005; Cameron, 1998). By tracking the way gender works both behind and in front of the curtain, Mills' approach offers systematic scrutiny into how gender functions at the very level of the textual constitution, particularly salient for mythological retellings, where women have at times been sidelined or distorted.

By contrast, though not in opposition, Hélène Cixous' idea of *Écriture Féminine*, or "women's writing," embraces a more radical sensibility. Originating from the French poststructuralist feminist movement of the 1970s, *Écriture Féminine* aims to overthrow the phallogentric structures within language and literature. In the opinion of Cixous, traditional writing emerged as an element of male logic, characterised by a linear and rational, ordered form, and women needed to write from the body, advocating a use of language that was fluid, intuitive, and non-linear (Cixous, 1976; Moi, 1985). Cixous utilises writing as a means for liberation, an erotic embrace of a feminine subjectivity that opposes other hierarchical binaries of Western thought, including male/female, reason/emotion, and culture/nature. This theoretical framework lends itself well to exploring works such as *Song of Draupadi*, which deliberately subverts traditional masculine modes of narration at each level of its structure, tone, and poetic form.

Mukhoty's text combines the analytical rigour of Mills' feminist stylistic framework with the sensuous, subversive aesthetic of Cixous' *Écriture Féminine*. Narrative strategies in the novel, including omniscient narration, lyrical imagery, symbolic motifs, and a fluid structure that shifts between periods, reflect the experiential complexity of female life. The omniscient narrator is not a detached observer, but one who favours Draupadi's feelings, memories, and bodily sensations. Mukhoty's language is muscular and visceral, in keeping with Cixous' call for writing that is physical and passionate. At the same time, her conscious choice of empowering vocabulary and active syntax responds to Mills' plea for linguistic resistance. Altogether, these decisions assemble a Draupadi who is not merely talked about but talks, who recounts her traumas, her desires, and her dissent.

"The air is bloated with moisture, and the clouds are dark and oppressively low in the sky. The marshlands that they cross are reckless with new life, and the

sudden excess of dragonflies, beetles, and yellow butterflies confounds the kingfisher and the egrets.” (Mukhoty, 2021, p. 210)

This is not just an environmental description, but a profoundly embodied affective setting, where the landscape reflects the inner tumult of the characters. The language is rhythmic and musical, full of synaesthesia and fluid motion, a call to what Cixous (1976) calls “writing the body.” “Bloated,” “oppressively,” and “reckless” all have a heavy, sensual weight, muddling the borders between the physical site and the emotional underbelly. There is no rational narrative structure, no imposed logic, but an energy that swells and rolls, a pressure that mirrors the emotional and bodily experience of feminine consciousness.

Significantly, the feminist reclamation of Draupadi through stylistics and *écriture féminine* is not only a literary exercise but a cultural intervention. In mythological traditions where the stories of women are told through male voices (as if women are unable to tell their own stories), this sort of reimagining, which prioritises female agency, disrupts not only narrative conventions but also the socio-political framework that perpetuates and upholds gender inequality. Mukhoty’s *Song of Draupadi* does not just invert the power dynamic; it carves out a new literary space in which Draupadi is complex, contradictory, and fully human. Her rage is not monstrous but deserved. Her sexuality is not a shame but a sovereignty. Her resistance is not one of rhetoric but of revolution.

The decision to tell Draupadi’s story in a modern, literary register also raises questions about the relationship between myth and memory. Mukhoty is not trying to be historically accurate, in the traditional sense; she wants emotional truth, which Cixous names as the central word implicit in women’s writing. By privileging emotional veracity over historical linearity, the *Song of Draupadi* makes a myth into a vehicle for feminist expression. In so doing, it interrogates history’s conceptualisation as a neutral chronicle, unveiling its functioning as an abstract, and hence gendered, instrument of power.

Beyond this, Mukhoty’s retelling fits in with a wider feminist attempt to reclaim and refract the stories of mythological women. Other novels in this trend include Divakaruni’s *The Palace of Illusions*, Pat Barker’s *The Silence of the Girls*, and Madeline Miller’s *Circe*; Mukhoty’s addition brings Indian cultural and linguistic textures. While reinterpreting Draupadi through a feminist lens, she invokes Sanskrit terms, Vedic symbolism, and philosophical metaphors, grounding Draupadi’s voice in her original cultural context. This dualism of retaining fidelity to the culture’s treasure while radically reshuffling its meanings reveals the power of feminist storytelling.

In brief, this article presents a comparative theoretical framework that draws on linguistic critique and experiential poetics. Feminist Stylistics provides a structural model of how gender functions at the levels of textuality, word, sentence, and discourse. In contrast, *Écriture Féminine* offers an expressive model of how

female subjectivity can be written into existence. As the next section of this article demonstrates, a demand for these frameworks in *Song of Draupadi* shows that Mukhoty's stylistic and narrative strategies can be read as feminist interventions that recapture, reframe, and reshape the myth of Draupadi. These lenses are broad, and through them, Draupadi does not remain frozen in a bygone era; she becomes a constantly relevant symbol of resistance and a radical voice.

1.2 Linguistic and Experiential Approaches in the *Song of Draupadi*

In Ira Mukhoty's '*Song of Draupadi*', the author reclaims and reshapes the epic voice of Draupadi, employing potent linguistic and experiential strategies that upend patriarchal norms and shed light on feminine subjectivity. Utilising Sara Mills' Feminist Stylistics and Hélène Cixous' theory of *Écriture Féminine*, examines how Mukhoty's decisions regarding language, sentence-making, and narrative voice serve as a means of resistance. This novel is not just a retelling of a myth; it is a reclamation of a woman's story, told word by word, line by line, through a lens both critical of how language has treated women and also emotionally embodied.

1.2.1 Linguistic analysis: Overcoming patriarchal language

A similarly potent moment of linguistic resistance is when Draupadi is called to the sabha during the game of dice, after Yudhishtir has wagered away all of his belongings, along with hers:

"A manservant appears in front of Draupadi. 'You must follow me to the gambling hall; you have been summoned there.' 'What? How dare you speak to me, fool? I am the Rani of Indraprastha. I am in no state to appear before a sabha full of men, go away at once,'" says Draupadi. (Mukhoty, 2021, p. 213)

This exchange exemplifies what Sara Mills refers to as a stylistic reversal of power; The order by the servant, "You must follow me," implies that Draupadi is now property, like a movable thing, and has to be summoned for consumption. However, her flaming response promptly upends that logic. Her rhetorical indignation, "How dare you," combined with her declarative identification, "I am the Rani of Indraprastha", restores her political agency and royal stature. The move from third-person reference ("you have been summoned") to her self-assertive first-person authority ("I am...") is linguistically significant; it represents a shift away from objectification and toward resistance.

The way Mukhoty builds her sentences —short, confrontational, and emotionally charged —helps heighten the immediacy of Draupadi's rage. Her refusal to enter "a sabha full of men" also alerts us to the gendered dynamics of public space, echoing Cixous's sense that patriarchy codes the presence of women in public as something shameful or transgressive. Draupadi's declaration is not only one of her physical unpreparedness; it is a rejection of public humiliation and a claim for bodily dignity. Her words are the shield, the boundary line between us, expressed

in language. When Draupadi refuses to present herself before the court, the Kauravas respond not with contemplation but with a linguistic form of violence. This dehumanisation is perfectly described by the infamous outburst of Dusshasan: “Where is she, the slave woman? Where is that Draupadi, who is now a slave of the Kauravas?” (Mukhoty, 2021, p. 214)

This sentence commits an act of linguistic brutality. Draupadi’s name is always preceded by a label, “slave woman,” that supersedes her designation as queen, wife, or person. In patriarchal discourse, Sara Mills (1995) argues, naming practices are used to subordinate and objectify women; In this “public brand” of verbal branding, Dusshasan denies Draupadi not just her independent identity, but more importantly, he establishes not only Draupadi but also himself as a powerful male through this branding. Perhaps the most vicious slander against Draupadi’s character comes from Karna during the sabha where he proclaims: “Draupadi is a whore because she sleeps with five men. She is unchaste and deserves to be treated as a slave and a whore.” (Mukhoty, 2021, p. 215)

It is a moment that expresses the patriarchal impulse to make women’s identities all about their sexual partnerships. The repeated use of words such as “whore” and “unchaste” are, as Sara Mills (1995) points out, not simply insults; they are ideological weapons that serve socially delegitimise and dehumanise women. Karna’s sentence is declaratory and accusatory, with gendered moral judgment heavily encoded. Draupadi is not described in her capacity as a queen or even as a woman; she is an aberration, defined wholly by male-coded standards of sexual purity.

The most powerful instance of Draupadi’s language of resistance is in the scene of her disrobing, when she proclaims: “My hair, which this beast has sullied, shall remain as it is now, untied and unwashed, till the day I can wash it in his blood.” (Mukhoty, 2021, p. 218) This line is a direct challenge to the court’s effort to injure her dignity. The possessive “my hair” reasserts ownership over her body, while the term “sullied” recognises the violence done to her, only to transform it into a sign of revenge. The visceral sensory details “untied,” “unwashed,” “blood,” and “untie” create a raw boundary between Draupadi and those who violated her, making her trauma visible and active. As Sara Mills (1995: 3) argues, feminist stylistics frequently highlights the ways women’s agency can be reclaimed using declarative, assertive syntax. Draupadi’s sentence is long, intentional, and emotionally rich. Her vow is not to passively endure but to resist actively, embodied. She does not just resist injustice; she makes it a living vow, engraved into her skin.

1.2.2 Experiential Narrative as Instantiation of *Écriture Féminine*

At a structural level, Mukhoty’s use of language resists patriarchal norms; her narrative technique embodies the principles of *Écriture Féminine*, writing the female body and experience into literature. According to Hélène Cixous, women must “write through their bodies,” which means being liquid, cyclic, emotional, and even

nonlinear in one's style (Cixous, 1976). In *Song of Draupadi*, Mukhoty breaks with chronological storytelling to take up a lyrical, memory-drenched mode of narration. It closely follows the inner rhythms of women's lived experiences, which are marked by bodily cycles, emotional tides, and intuitive insight. Mukhoty's preoccupation with intimate, contemplative spaces, whether Draupadi's lonely ruminations, verbal exchanges with other women, or silence between her and nature, supplants the more typical concern with outward action and mighty exploit. The primary site of narrative movement does not lie in the geopolitical arena but in the emotional terrain of the negotiation itself. By centring these moments, Mukhoty creates a distinctly female narrative arc, one in which inner transformation is as important as outer events.

Perhaps most crucially, the joint movement of experiential depth and poetic form in *Song of Draupadi* subverts the phallogocentric paradigm of mythic storytelling. Draupadi's voice is not pruned for clarity or logic; it can mourn, rage, contradict, and dream. In this regard, Mukhoty's narrative becomes an artistic revelation of *Écriture Féminine*, not only in form but in spirit, a writing that "does not repress, does not exclude" but incorporates the entirety of female experience (Cixous, 1976).

1.3 Subversion of Patriarchal Conventions

In the older versions of the Mahabharata, Draupadi plays a central role; however, she is often framed through male voices, with her actions being interpreted and her feelings being muted. We never get to learn about who she is as a subject in her own right, only as a wife, daughter-in-law, and a symbol of honour. Ira Mukhoty's *Song of Draupadi* consciously and disruptively overturns that frame. Mukhoty resurfaces Draupadi as an intelligent woman of agency and embodied resistance through linguistic empowerment, symbolic embodiment, and narrative reorientation. Their squat, unplugged form operates here not just as a content revision, but as a formal, linguistic, and mythic feminist intervention, one that parallels, if not outwits, the critical tools of Paste's lineage, such as Sara Mills' *Feminist Stylistics* and Hélène Cixous' *Écriture Féminine*.

1.3.1 Making sense of traditional representations

A second painful patriarchal imposition comes from Kunti when she instructs Draupadi about the expectations of her new role as a Kuru bride:

"Now you are a Kuru bride, beti, you must forget everything close to your heart up till now. Forget your parents and siblings, your songs and ancestors. When you participate in the shraddha rites every month, the ancestors you will honour will not be your Panchala family but the Kurus, the Rajas Pandu, Vichitravirya, and Shantanu.' Moreover, to Draupadi, this had been more appalling still than the loss of her home and the familiar landscape of her childhood." (Mukhoty 2021, p. 191)

Kunti's direction is imbued with the performing codes of patriarchal assimilation. They also imply a belittling of the literal and metaphorical amplitude of her character, inviting comparison to the patriarchal linguistic strategies Mills (1995) identifies as integral to the imperative verbs "forget" and "must," which enact discursive domination by denying Draupadi subjectivity and history. Its sentimental intimacy is instantly undone by the emotional violence of compelled separatiocixousness, of forced severing. Kunti's instructions pertain not only to behaviour but to identity, memory, and lineage, capturing how patriarchal systems work by overwriting women's histories.

A telling example of patriarchal structuring and its feminist subversion crops up in the passage when Draupadi is made to rotate between the five Pandava brothers:

"It has been decided that Draupadi will live with one husband, for one year, exclusively. At the end of the year, she will undertake the ritual purification by fire, after which she will take the second brother as her husband. For that one year, she will live with only one man, her husband, in all matters, and will be treated as a sacred sister-in-law by the other brothers." (Mukhoty 2021, p. 187)

This proclamation exemplifies the desire to organise and constrain Draupadi's femininity within a strict structure created by men. The passive constructions, "It has been decided," and "she will undertake", erase Draupadi's agency, expressing what Sara Mills calls a linguistic structure that hides masculine discipline behind a neutral sound (Mills, 1995). Draupadi's voice is not taken into account in the decision, and the ritual of "purification by fire" reaffirms patriarchal anxieties around female purity, sexuality, and ownership.

The story continually positions Draupadi as an active participant in the socio-political world that frames her. This is not just a response to injustice, even though it is, and it is constantly evaluating, confronting and resisting injustice." Mills (1995) argues that traditional narratives nonetheless marginalise female voices, casting them as reactive or emotional, thereby dismissing their political significance. *Song of Draupadi* undermines this by always portraying Draupadi as politically astute and linguistically aggressive. Draupadi's rhetorical resistance culminates when she addresses the sabha in a piercing interrogation of dharma itself:

Is this the way to treat a woman? Any woman? Much less than the daughter-in-law of Raja Dritrashtra and the granddaughter-in-law of Bheeshma. For any woman to be dragged by her hair into an assembly of men, where she is mistreated and humiliated, is this dharma?" (Mukhoty, 2021, p. 217)

This is a moment marked by both stylistic and ideological inflexions. The reiteration of "any woman" with her lofty familial designations not only succeeds in humanising Draupadi but also compels the audience to confront a woman's violation at a universal level. As Sara Mills (1995) has pointed out, rhetorical questions are

also common in feminist texts to highlight the contradictions of patriarchal logic. The use of such questions by Draupadi throws off the court's claims of moral authority and positions her as the ethical voice of the narrative

1.3.2 Symbolism and Agency

In addition to language and action, Mukhoty uses symbolism to masterful effect in articulating Draupadi's resistance. One of the most powerful recurring symbols is Draupadi's hair. Patriarchal narratives often associate female hair with beauty, sensuality, and subservience. When Dusshasan drags Draupadi by her hair in the disrobing scene, he tries to do more than sexually abuse her; he also tries to demolish her honour and identity. In Mukhoty's version, Draupadi does not let her hair be a symbol of shame. Instead, she weaponises it: "She holds her hair in her own hands now and spits venom at Dusshasan." (Mukhoty, 2021, p. 218)

This image of Draupadi clasping her hair instead of giving it up to be a field for humiliation is a radical subversion of patriarchal momentum. She is taking her body back from the violence done unto it, declaring that no one has the right to her body or can tell her story. The physical gesture of "holding her hair" is an act of reclamation. Cixous (1976) notes that the body in *Écriture Féminine* is a site of expression and revolution. Here, Draupadi's body changes from being an inert canvas for male dreams of aggression into the site of feminist agency. The hair motif continues as Draupadi promises that she will neither tie nor wash her hair until she has avenged her degradation: "I swear this, by everything that I hold sacred, that I will wash my hair in the blood from his heart, only then will I know peace." (Mukhoty, 2021, p. 218) This vow unites her body, her faith, and her vengeance into a single declaration. The repetition of the word "I" creates a tone of complete agency. Unlike conventional renderings that submit Draupadi as a victim of circumstance, Mukhoty designs her as a woman who demands her resolution. In patriarchal texts, Mills (1995) argues, the language of oath-like structures admits only male subjects. By making "I" the subject of an oath, a woman redirects the narrative through her voice, usurping the subject position usually associated with each "speech act".

This is *Écriture Féminine* at its most visceral from a Cixousian perspective, and Draupadi's body becomes a site of both pain and prophecy. Moreover, her hair, which has been a source of femaleness and shame, has become a sacred altar that can only be sanctified through violent justice." The imagery is visceral, "blood from his heart," and spiritually anchored by everything that I hold sacred." Such intermingling of physical and metaphysical desire is absolutely at the centre of women's writing; what Cixous says can only come from flesh and soul at once. Draupadi is not merely fighting for dignity; she is writing her ritual of justice into being.

1.4 Annotated Version vs Retellings

Reimagining mythological women and the epics that feature them through a feminist lens has become a striking literary movement, with its mission being the

reworking of women as characters not only deserving of stories but also as heroes driving their destinies. It was to this tradition that Ira Mukhoty's *Song of Draupadi* was a welcome addition, providing us with a fiery, politically aware, and emotionally nuanced new Draupadi. However, it is not the only such effort. The Palace of Illusions, by Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni, is another seminal feminist reimagining of Draupadi's tale, offering fertile ground for comparison. While both novels centre on Draupadi's voice and seek to reclaim her narrative, they are quite dissimilar in tone, thematic focus, and narrative strategy.

1.4.1 Comparative Analysis

At the heart of the differences between the two works is their narrative voice. Divakaruni's *The Palace of Illusions* is narrated in the first person, placing Draupadi in complete control of telling her story. That choice affords intimate access to her thoughts and feelings, most notably when it comes to her relationships, insecurities, and desires. This novel frequently feels like a confession, adding a personal and subjective edge to all the telling. By contrast, Mukhoty adopts a third-person omniscient narrative voice in *Song of Draupadi*. Although this may initially seem distant from Draupadi, it offers a wide, panoramic view of her world, placing the narrator in a position to critically engage with both internal states and broader socio-political dynamics. Mukhoty's Draupadi, then, is not just a woman in love or a queen in distress, but also a thinker, strategist, and revolutionary, set within a higher order of historical and political commentary.

Stylistically, both authors deploy lyrical prose, but of very different textures. Divakaruni's prose is lyrical, dreamlike, and frequently meditative, fitting her romantic and introspective portrayal of Draupadi. Mukhoty's prose, in contrast, is jagged, assertive, and politically charged. The stylistic differences highlight their distinct narrative aims: Divakaruni is out to evoke empathy and contemplation, while Mukhoty seeks to elicit outrage and recognition of injustice. We can parse these stylistic nuances through the lens of Sara Mills' *Feminist Stylistics*. Mukhoty's sentence constructions often spotlight action and agency, making use of complex verbs and declarative statements to characterise Draupadi as an engine of change. Divakaruni, by contrast, delves into metaphor and internal dialogue, prioritising feeling over action. Each serves its narrative purpose, but Mukhoty's linguistic choices more directly subvert the language codes of patriarchy.

1.4.2 Thematic Focus: Romance vs. Resistance

Thematic priorities provide another crucial point of distinction between the two novels. Divakaruni's retelling devotes considerable attention to Draupadi's relationships, her forbidden feelings for Karna, her complex marriage to the Pandavas, and her rivalry with Kunti. These emotional entanglements, as compelling as they may be, threaten to overshadow the political and ideological stakes of Draupadi's journey. *The Palace of Illusions* presents Draupadi as a complex woman torn between love and duty, a character willing to do anything for love, consumed by

longing and regret, which makes the novel richly human yet, in its essence, an essentially romantic work. In contrast, *Song of Draupadi* foregrounds the themes of resistance, justice, and female solidarity. Mukhoty's Draupadi is not concerned with romantic fulfilment. Not longing, not desire, but loss and rage and a thirst for justice are what her emotional core is built upon. With this shift in focus, Mukhoty has the opportunity to explore feminist themes like bodily autonomy, gendered violence, and the silencing of women's voices in male-dominated spaces. Her Draupadi represents a collective rather than an individual struggle.

1.4.3 Models of Female Solidarity

Divakaruni's Draupadi sometimes seems alone in her battle, alienated from her mother-in-law, Kunti, and misunderstood by her husbands. Although the novel recognises the struggles of womanhood in a patriarchal system, it does not seriously explore female alliances or collective resistance. Mukhoty's narrative, by contrast, highlights connections between female lives. Marginalised women, such as Krishnaa (Draupadi), with her entourage, are allowed space to grieve and express their strength. Even in the most private of situations, this reiterates Hélène Cixous' notion of "writing the body," which articulates that a woman's experience is simultaneously shared and corporeal (Cixous, 1976). Mukhoty builds a community of women, each one adding to a tapestry of defiance, fury, and fortitude.

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