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Gender Analysis of the Dev DD Series

Genderová analýza seriálu Dev DD

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Abstract

This thesis analyzes the Dev DD series, which is available at the online platform ALTBalaji, from the gender perspective, using the archetypal analysis of characters with regard to the image of a Hindu woman and more broadly, to gender identity in Indian society, especially the Hindu one. It will also discuss the issue of gender normative models in Indian society and how a TV series like Dev DD contributes to such a discussion and perhaps a transformation of conservative traditionalist attitudes.

Abstrakt

Tato práce analyzuje seriál Dév DD, který je dostupný na online platformě ALTBalaji, z genderové perspektivy za užití archetypální analýzy postav s ohledem na obraz ženy v indické společnosti, zejména té hinduistické. Bude se také věnovat diskusi o problematice genderových normativních vzorců v indické společnosti, a jak seriál jako Dév DD přispívá k této diskusi i případně k transformaci konzervativních, tradicionalistických přístupů.

Key words: gender, sexuality, Indian women, series, uncensored media, archetypes, Devdas

Klíčová slova: gender, sexualita, Indické ženy, seriál, necenzurovaná média, archetypy, Dévdás

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1. Introduction

In India, things change very quickly, however material changes happen much faster than the social ones. The changes this work will focus on are those regarding the status and indeed the image of woman in Indian society, particularly within the Hindu community, and how certain social taboos still impact women's lives. This work will therefore attempt to investigate how certain media platforms engage with and represent issues of gender and in turn how they attempt to highlight those issues that still persist in impacting the majority of women's lives today. In India today, screen media, i.e. cinema and television, are a powerful influencer and are collectively followed by masses of people. The *reflection hypothesis* suggests that such media reflect prevalent behavior, values and norms in society. Screen media is said to give people what they expect, what they demand, but it does not just reflect society, it also informs and impacts it. Therefore, due to such widespread popularity and accessibility, screen media can also influence and shape people's attitudes towards culturally sensitive issues such as sexuality, gender representation and the role of woman in modern society.¹

In India both film and television have to adhere to certain regulations; films have to pass a Central Board of Film Certification before their release, television however is regulated by the Cable Television Networks (Regulation) Act of 1995. This act states that the Central government has the right to prohibit transmission of certain cable TVs should they broadcast programs against the public interest which includes public order, decency and morality.² Such categories seem rather vague and may apply to various kinds of content, however, regulation of internet media is non-existent and so the internet has become a platform of free and unrestricted expression. ALTBalaji is one such subscription-based outlet offering various TV series and films which would probably not have received the necessary certification to be screened in cinemas or found to be too "problematic" for TV broadcast as well. Established in 2015 by Ekta Kapoor, Indian film and television producer, ALTBalaji's aim is to reach out directly to individual audiences, offering "fresh, original and exclusive stories. Tailored especially for Indians across the globe, the platform hosts premium, high quality shows featuring popular celebrities, acclaimed writers,

¹ Claire M. Renzetti and Daniel J. Curran, *Ženy, muži a společnost* (Praha: Karolinum, 2003), 182-183.

² "The Cable Television Networks (Regulation) Act, 1995," *Government of India*, Accessed April 21, 2019 at <http://legislative.gov.in/sites/default/files/A1995-7.pdf>.

and award winning directors, making ALTBalaji a true alternative to mainstream entertainment”.³ One such show is Dev DD.⁴

Dev DD is an adaptation of a renowned Bengali novel *Devdas*⁵, written by Saratchandra Chattopadhyay and published in 1917. This popular novel has seen many film adaptations in various languages over the years (most popular possibly being *Devdas*⁷ (1955), *Devdas*⁸ (2002) and *Dev.D*⁹ (2009)) and Dev DD is one of such adaptations, radically different from the others with the change of gender of the main hero, being set in modern times. Devdas becomes Devika, while Paro and Chandramukhi are transformed into male counterparts. On the top of this gender switch of characters, the show openly points out several social issues still embedded in the modern Indian society, and struggles that a woman who doesn't fit the image of the ideal Hindu woman faces.¹⁰ Devika is a controversial character presented as rebellious towards gender stereotyping of women in the society around her, but it is not only her who stands out of the crowd with her problems, protests and attitudes. In contrast, some characters in the series are intentionally depicted stereotypically in such a way it creates a critical ridicule of people they represent. Apart from the image of woman, this series highlights other taboos in the society such as homosexuality, discrimination based on skin color, alcoholism etc. By offering this package, Dev DD becomes a good material for analysis, especially when the director Ken Ghosh claims that “the series will challenge the notion of being a “good girl””.¹¹ It is nonetheless important to highlight that the purpose of this work is not to search for links and make comparisons between neither the book nor other screen media versions of *Devdas* and the Dev DD. In fact the purpose

³ “About us,” *ALTBalaji*, Accessed April 21, 2019, <https://www.altbalaji.com/about-us>.

⁴ *Dev DD*, Directed by Ken Ghosh, Written by Nikhil Vyas and Kamyani Vyas. Produced and Conceptualized by Ekta Kapoor and Shobha Kapoor (2017; India: Alt Balaji), <https://www.altbalaji.com/show/123>.

⁵ Saratchandra Chattopadhyay, *Devdas* (Gurgaon: Penguin Random House India, 2002).

⁶ For the purpose of this research the abovementioned English translation of *Devdas* has been used as I am not familiar with the Bengali language, in which the novel was originally written.

⁷ *Devdas*. Directed by Bimal Roy. India: Distributed by Bimal Roy Productions and Mohan Films, 1955.

⁸ *Devdas*. Directed by Sanjay Leela Bhansali. India: Distributed by Mega Bollywood Ltd Pvt, SLB Films and Red Chillies Entertainment, 2002.

⁹ *Dev.D*. Directed by Anurag Kashyap. India: Distributed by UTV Motion Pictures, 2009.

¹⁰ Description of the attributes of an ideal Hindu woman may be found in the Law Code of Manu and various Dharmashastra texts.

¹¹ “Ekta Kapoor to Give Female Twist to 'Devdas',” *Business Standard*, November 25, 2016, Accessed April 22, 2019, https://www.business-standard.com/article/news-ians/ekta-kapoor-to-give-female-twist-to-devdas-116112500492_1.html.

is the gender, archetypal and film analysis of this unique screen media version along with its social contextualization.

One of the objectives of this work is to show that it is the alternative, uncensored media which gives opportunity to depict and adapt popular stories not just in a way that is publically acceptable and controlled by social norms. What more, it also tries to analyze this series under a closer scrutiny from the feminist perspective, observing patterns which may seem obvious but under closer look crystallize and prove that one should stick to being a *resisting reader* or rather, in this case, a *resisting spectator*. This paper not only points out above mentioned phenomena and observes their significance from feminist perspective; it also critically assesses them in regard to their background and the apparent intention of the makers of the series. The reason why this series was chosen to be analyzed in this paper is firstly the fact that it was made to provoke, change views, extend boundaries and to break stereotypes. With growing popularity of digital media such as ALTBalaji but also Netflix or Hotstar, more and more people view material of this kind which offers them an alternative and also gives them the choice to watch “something different”.

However, due to the fact that this series is available only on the paid internet platform, it is likely that the reader of this thesis will not have had the opportunity to view it accordingly. Hence I thought it necessary to include plot description in my analysis and that simply for the comfort of the reader who may then connect the described plot with the analysis there and then and will not be lost due to unfamiliarity with the show’s overarching narrative.

This work consists of two parts - Theoretical Aspects and Methodology and the Analysis of the Dev DD Series. The first one will offer a background for a complex understanding of the position of women in Hindu society and its development along with theories and methods used for the analysis itself. Not only will it propose the image of a Hindu woman but it will also look deeper into reasons of what is the need of keeping women in Hindu society under control and shall focus on one of such predictable reasons, i.e. the restriction of women’s sexuality. In order to complete the framework, it will briefly present certain film theories and images of women in Indian cinema. The analytical part will closely observe and analyze the series episode by episode and will identify its archetypal occurrence while assessing its scenes and ideas from the gender perspective.

1.1. Why Gender Analysis and why Dev DD?

It was my own experience of attending a girls' college in New Delhi for two semesters that initiated my interest in the gender problematic in India. As a European woman, I was of course in a different position than Indian women in their natural environment. Nonetheless, surrounded by a number of young Indian women from various social backgrounds struggling or complying with the patriarchal system they lived in was highly inspiring and made me first realize the importance of focusing on gender issues as especially in India, they shape women's lives to a great extent. As time passed and I stayed in touch with many of my former classmates, I could see the changes they have gone through and in many cases, it was a total transformation. Some of them got married to a man chosen by their parents almost immediately after graduation, while others pursued their studies further and went on in fulfilling their personal aspirations of travelling the world or accomplishing their career goals regardless the social norms which they eventually didn't fit in. All these young women I interacted with, aged approximately 18 to 25, were active on social media and watched films and TV shows often imitating their heroines by the way they dressed, spoke or behaved. I can vividly imagine Dev DD being one of such shows where these women can identify with any of the heroines, but at the same time, I can see many of my classmates being offended by what the show represents.

As a student of Indian studies at the Charles University in Prague, I have had many opportunities to focus further on gender issues in the Indian cultural context via literature and other disciplines such as anthropology and history. In my B.A. thesis named Women in British India I explored the situation of women in the second half of the 19th century and observed laws that were passed in order to improve their status. While working on that thesis already I was introduced to feminist theories and methods of creating an adequate context using various secondary sources. Gender-related topic for my M.A. thesis was an obvious choice, however, this time I preferred to opt for a more contemporary topic.

2. Theoretical aspects and Methodology

The fundamental theoretical basis for this work is an archetypal analysis, in particular of the female characters in the series, approached with the attitude of the method of a *resisting reader* while making an effort to make an adequate framework for the context and avoid generalizations and simplified victimization discourse of *Third World Women*. Even though this work analyzes digital series, it has its theoretical basis mostly in literary analysis, which is nonetheless adequate to be used for this kind of material as well. This work will be focused mainly on the narrative aspects and archetypal analysis of characters and thus the methodology for literary analysis is in this case suitable.

The sources of this work are both primary and secondary, the core primary source being the 11 episodes of the analyzed series Dev DD. Also, a number of theoretical and methodological literature is used in order to create a foundation and tools for an effective analysis. Secondary sources offer wide range of publications covering the discussed topics into great detail and creating a complex background needed for appropriation of the researched phenomena.

However, even though it is not one of the main intentions of this work, it is occasionally going to refer to the novel, *Devdas*, on which the series is based. A short summary of the original story follows: Devdas and Paro were childhood friends whose paths went apart as Devdas was sent away to Calcutta for his studies. When after some years as a young adult he returns to the village, Paro suggests they get married. However, the family of Devdas doesn't approve of it and Paro eventually decides to marry someone else. Thereupon Devdas returns to Kolkata filled with feelings for Paro and wants her to elope with him, which she refuses. That breaks his heart and he turns to alcohol as a refuge from his grief. Chandramukhi, a courtesan, makes him company and falls in love with him while he shows her nothing but despise. He is doomed to self-destruction as he drinks himself to death, full of feelings of self-pity. He is found dead in front of Paro's house where he came to see her for one last time, which unfortunately never happened.

Devdas is a metaphor for unfulfilled love and the original of 1917 is actually just the first of many versions. The story is universally popular among people for its adaptability and offers plenty of options for reinterpretation. "Speak the name of Devdas and the mind conjures up the visage of a haggard, world weary, love lorn soul, driving himself to drink and hurtling on

relentlessly on the path to self-destruction.”¹² Devdas’ attributes are typically masculine and it is interesting to see how they project into the character of a female.

2.1. Feminist Theories: Selected Concepts

Pam Morris defines feminism as a political view reflecting two fundamental premises. Those are a) that the gender difference is the base of a structural inequality between sexes and b) their inequality is not a result of biological necessity but is a consequence of cultural interpretation of their differences. Feminism is hence trying to understand social and psychological mechanisms which create and fortify inequality between men and women and consequently attempts to change them.¹³ She also states that “Feminism is a consciously held ideology which opposes consciously held ideologies that maintain the primacy of masculine authority and power.”¹⁴ According to certain feminist theories there is a significant inequality of power between men and women in general. It is demonstrated in various social interactions from disrespect in conversation to sexual harassment at work. Men also have the economic power over women due to the persistent gap in their salaries and women are also often made economically dependent on men.¹⁵ Though what is important to add is that feminisms have since break of 80’s and 90’s focused rather than on dichotomized categories of men and women on the plurality of gender identities.

Judith Butler argues that woman as a subject of feminism, being a term that denotes a common identity, is quite troublesome. Being a woman must not be seen as the identity, for it intersects with other categories constituting identity - those being race, class, ethnicity or sexuality. These intersections of a political and cultural character become inseparable from gender, so to speak.¹⁶ She also points out that even though the category of sex is binary, the category of gender is not necessarily such. “When the constructed status of gender is theorized as radically independent of sex, gender itself becomes a free-floating artifice, with the consequence that man and masculine might just as easily signify a female body as a male one and woman and feminine a male body as

¹² Saratchandra Chattopadhyay, *Devdas* (Gurgaon: Penguin Random House India, 2002), v.

¹³ Pam Morris, *Literature and Feminism: an Introduction* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Blackwell, 1995), 1.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 5.

¹⁵ Janet Shibley Hyde and Mary Beth Oliver, “Gender Differences in Sexuality: Results from Meta-analysis,” in *Sexuality, Society and Feminism*, ed. Jacqueline W. White and Cheryl Brown Travis (Washington DC: American Psychological Association, 2000), 64.

¹⁶ Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the subversion of identity* (New York: Routledge, 1999), 6.

easily as a female one.”¹⁷ Apart from other notions, Butler in general tends to criticize the pervasive assumption of heterosexuality in feminist literary theories.

Third World Woman is a construct, by Chandra Talpade Mohanty said to be created by western feminists. She claims that many of these feminists homogenize and systematize the oppression of women in the Third World. According to her, western feminists often assume a homogenous notion of *Third World Women*'s oppression which then produces an image of an “typical *Third World Woman*”. A woman like this is usually sexually constrained and also characterized by her “Third Worldness” as poor, traditional, uneducated, victimized etc., while on the other hand, western feminists contrast themselves in description in which they portray themselves as educated, independent and modern.¹⁸ The suggestion of some kind of self-acclaimed superiority of western feminists is quite evident here as well as Mohanty's criticism of it. She criticizes too much victimization, generalization and universalization of women's struggle in the writings of western feminists about *Third World Women*. She highlights the importance of cultural specifics of a certain group of women. Mohanty thus develops the concept of orientalist discourse¹⁹ and adds the aspect of gender to it. The orientalist discourse attempting to describe and interpret orient, though, may be in general seen as indeed stereotyping and lacking objectivity.

This paper tries to refrain from generalizing Indian women as being generally oppressed by portraying them as the exploited and men in general as the exploiters. It focuses mostly on their cultural representations and tries to understand their meanings and logic. Even though it does question discrimination of women and points it out at many instances, it nowhere states that all Indian/Hindu women are weak and exploited. In order to avoid such superficial attitudes Mohanty is critical about, this paper attempts to minimize generalization as well as the victimization and proposes a deep contextualization in order to specify the category of analyzed women.

It is also important to understand that a *Third World Woman* is not a coherent group. The category of woman analyzed in this paper is the urban middle class Hindu woman in the

¹⁷ Ibid., 10.

¹⁸ Chandra Talpade Mohanty, *Feminism without borders: decolonizing theory, practicing solidarity* (Durham & London: Duke University Press, 2003), 19-22.

¹⁹ Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (London: Penguin Books, 2003).

productive age. Nevertheless, some generalization is difficult to be avoided especially while talking about the Hindu woman's image in history.

In some western feminist discourses aspects such as legal, economic, religious and familial structures are often judged by their respective western standards, which create a kind of ethnocentric universality. Such structures in the Third World are defined as "developing" or "underdeveloped" and so are the women.²⁰ Such a statement emphasizes the need of contextualization and avoiding the evolutionist approach to the research of cultural phenomena. In this work, there is no intention whatsoever to compare the development of the status of Hindu women to the status of any group of women in any other part of the world and deny the society's coevalness.

2.2. Resisting Reading

Literature, most generically, is a body of written work that commits a range of thoughts and ideas to text that offer readers certain interpretations about human life. Literature is also a construct of words representing a reality, not reality itself, but a shared reality similar to other modes of expression, such as contemporary media, that serve to inform and construct images of what is masculine and what is feminine, and from which people derive their own perceptions.²¹

"The practice of reading as a woman, then, needs to oppose the ideological implementations of classic plot structures, prising open alternative spaces of freedom for women within the text against the often relentless logic of the story. We need, too, to resist the interpellative power of narrative point of view drawing us into compliance with the text's dominant values, and seek instead the moments or sites of resistance where writing subverts or questions itself."²² Women can – or perhaps should – hence read with resistance towards men's views of the world presented as universal and construct ways of reading as women which would look deeper under the surface and reveal what is both consciously and subconsciously hidden between the lines of the narrative.

Jonathan D. Culler focuses on the interpretation of reading and the reader's experience, where a critical reader is anyone, be it a man or a woman, yet still, he points out that the factor of being a woman reader may change the "reader's experience". "If the experience of literature depends

²⁰ Ibid., 40.

²¹ Pam Morris, *Literature and Feminism: an Introduction* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Blackwell, 1995), 6-8.

²² Ibid., 33.

upon the qualities of a reading self, one can ask what difference would it make to the experience of literature if this self were, for example, female reader rather than male. If the meaning of the work is the experience of a reader, what difference does it make if the reader is a woman?"²³ The approach to reading, however, is a question of ideological attitude, certainly not of biological disposition.

In the sphere of American literature (written mostly by men), Judith Fetterley comments on the self-proclaimed pretentious universality of designs in this literature and highlights the subjectivity behind it and the expectation imposed on women to identify themselves with the represented images of them but not created *by* them. For women's consciousness, accepting these images presented as reality or the universal truth is encouraged and even legitimized, which ultimately result in confusion of her consciousness. Fetterley then offers a way to give voice to a different perspective and challenge the universality with different subject position.²⁴ If new interpretations of literature are made possible, then a new effect of literature on readers is enabled. New effect means providing conditions for transformation of culture which is mirrored in literature. When the mythologies and ideas about men and women, as they prevail in a society in specific time and on specific place and are confirmed in literature, are questioned and exposed, it means an opportunity is created to open a discussion and to change the system of power which is embodied in literature. However, it can only be questioned and exposed by a consciousness different to the one that informs the literature in the first place. Feminist criticism is that kind of consciousness which challenges values and assumptions in literary works in form of resisting reading with reveals what is often intended to be hidden.²⁵ A female reader is encouraged to approach universal truths presented to her critically and advised not to accept the male thoughts instilled into her.²⁶

This work uses the approach of *resisting, critical reader/spectator* to assess patterns in the series, not simply accepting what is shown, but attempting to reveal what can be found beyond the palpable message the series presents.

²³ Jonathan D. Culler, *On Deconstruction: Theory and Criticism after Structuralism* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1982), 42.

²⁴ Judith Fetterley, *The Resisting Reader: A Feminist Approach to American Fiction* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1978), xi-xii.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, xix - xx.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, xxii.

2.3. Archetypes & Archetypal Analysis

Firstly it is important to delineate the difference between the words archetype and stereotype. Understanding the difference between these two terms is crucial, as both are abundant through and through this paper and are mutually unmistakable.

Stereotypes in general are simplified ideas and images about a certain person or a group of people. Gender stereotypes are therefore simplified descriptions of what should a masculine man and a feminine woman look and be like. Traditional discourses consider these stereotypes as bipolar and cross cultural. Any deflection of an individual from these stereotypes may be considered as abnormal or wrong. This stereotyping happens both on small scale as well as on the structural level of a society.²⁷

When speaking of archetypes however, it is necessary to mention Carl Gustav Jung, who introduced the theory of archetypes in psychoanalysis, who simply described such phenomena as contents of collective unconscious and is part of all individuals, whereas its counterpart, personal unconscious, is represented by the personal and private side of psychic life. According to Jung, collective unconscious is not gained by experience but is inborn and hence universal and it incorporates contents and models of behavior that are relatively alike for everyone.²⁸

Even though Jung's concept of archetypes was a basis for other theorists working with archetypes, this work consults Jung very scarcely and rather carefully, as his views are quite problematic from the feminist point of view. A good example of this reasoning is his approach towards the two archetypes of *anima* and *animus*. *Anima* is the a priori element in a man's psychic life, it includes his impulses, reactions, moods etc., it is the element of femininity, it may be a nixie, magical feminine being or a nymph. On the other hand, the *animus* is the masculine counterpart in a woman's psychic life.²⁹ Interestingly, while Jung describes the archetype of *anima* in greater detail and dedicated a number of pages to it, the attention paid to *animus* is comparatively marginal. What makes archetypes an apt tool for analysis is that "There are as

²⁷ Claire M. Renzetti and Daniel J. Curran, *Ženy, muži a společnost* (Praha: Karolinum, 2003), 20-21.

²⁸ Carl Gustav Jung, *Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1969), 3-4.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 24-30.

many archetypes as there are typical situations in life.”³⁰ Stating this, Jung gives the opportunity to create and apply archetypes in endless number of cases and varieties.

“Archetypes thus constitute images, symbols, and narrative patterns that differ from stereotypes in being complex variables, subject to variations in perception.”³¹ The essential methodology for this paper is provided by a feminist author Annis Pratt according to whom archetypal images are literary forms which are derived from the unconscious originals.³² In the introduction of her book *Archetypal Patterns in Women’s Fiction* Pratt points out her disagreement especially with the Jungian approach to gender perspective. She notes that Jung and his followers clamp down rigid simplifications upon arcane phenomena and that especially when it comes to “masculine” and “feminine” qualities. His system of “masculine” and “feminine” is according to Pratt inconsistent and indeed stereotyping.³³

Although Annis Pratt focuses on English literature and archetypes she describes are derived from it, many of them are more than suitable to be used for analysis of the Dev DD series even though it is set in a completely different cultural environment. Be it archetypal situations or archetypal images of characters, many of Pratt’s described archetypes can be applied cross-culturally. Certain archetypes were carefully selected for their universality and applicability to the analyzed material. For instance, the archetype of *outsider* can be found in every society regardless culture, geography or religion. It is someone who experiences alienation to his/her own country, home or community. *Outsider* may either choose to become one or is forced to his/her position by the social group he/she doesn’t fit in. The occurrence of this archetype across literature and film all over the world proves its universality. Be it renowned Indian Hindi writers just like Jayashankar Prasad, Bechan Sharma Ugr, modern Dalit writers or European existentialists like Albert Camus and Jean Paul Sartre, the archetype of *outsider* appears in their stories no matter their cultural background. However, it is necessary to contextualize the archetype of outsider in time, culture and in particular circumstance as it proposes wide spectrum of actual meanings and characteristics.

³⁰ Ibid., 48.

³¹ Annis Pratt, *Archetypal Patterns in Women’s Fiction* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1982), 4.

³² Ibid., 3.

³³ Ibid., 9.

Annis Pratt also describes archetypes such as the *green world* archetype where a young girl turns to nature as her refuge. She fantasizes about her own world where she is free and later in her life returns to this memory of a *green world*. The *green world lover* is an archetype of a man who is a part of the *green world* and has all the positive attributes the woman imagines in a man. The *growing-up-grotesque* archetype portrays a world where the young woman ends up being disappointed as her expectations of freedom, career, education or erotic expression clash with the norms imposed by the patriarchal system. She experiences frustration as she is restricted in most aspects of her life.³⁴ This is just an example of archetypes that will be used in the analytical part along with others like the outsider or gothic villain and more focus is paid to them there and then.

In female literary fiction Pratt describes three interrelated repositories of archetypal materials. Those are the Demeter/Kore and Ishtar/Tammuz rebirth narratives, the grail legends and stories about witchcraft and motives from them are parallelly used in women's fiction, which proves that narratives of this kind appeal to women. And what all these narratives also have in common is their disfavor towards patriarchy. All these repositories also "express the desire of women for erotic autonomy, meaningful social roles, and celebration of femininity".³⁵

Blanka Knotková-Čapková offers characteristics of women's archetypes in Indian literature. In Indian literary tradition there is the archetype of a *woman-ruler* conditioned by her divine origin, hence such an archetype is not generally and always applicable to a human woman. More mundane archetype is the one of the subservient woman or the *weaver*, who obediently accepts her role in the patriarchy and her subordinate position. A subcategory of the *weaver* is the so-called *collaborator of patriarchy* who accepts the role of the keeper of patriarchal values. Then there is the archetype of a *dancer* or the *seductress* who stands as erotic symbol seducing and arousing men. She enjoys more freedom than the *weaver* but is still defined by her relationship to a man and not considered an independent being. Her function is to provide men with pleasure - she is doing it for them and not for herself. On the top of that, the matter is neither about their mutual emotional or sexual experience. In case the woman's seductiveness is destructive for the man it is her fault and in this case she is represented as *vamp*. Ascending from this archetype, another level is the *witch*. For the *witch* it is characteristic that she is independent on the social

³⁴ Ibid., 16-29.

³⁵ Ibid., 176.

order, doesn't conform to it and has rebellious tendencies. She is a threat to the order and brings back the natural disorder. According to the system, she should be destroyed or banished.³⁶

Similarly, Renata Svobodová applied and described these archetypes in her analysis of Arundhati Roy's book *The God of Small Things*, a tragical family saga from South India with distinctive female characters. Svobodová elaborates certain archetypes and applies them on the characters in the book. For example *weaver* in her nature sacrifices herself for others, especially for her family and by conforming to the system she gains respect within the borders of patriarchy. Traditionally, she is a good heroine who is liked by the society. Her contrast, the *witch*, is a symbol of rebellion against patriarchy and a dangerous character. In Indian literature she is usually a negative character whose behavior leads to a catastrophe. On the other hand though in the age of modernity, a *witch* isn't thought of as that negative, but often doesn't end up with a good fate. Last but not least, Svobodová describes the archetype of a *hENCHWOMAN* who is a negative version of a *helper*, who is usually an older wise woman who helps younger heroine and protects her. Be it a *hENCHWOMAN* or a *helper*, they are usually characters of mothers, grandmothers or other older women who gained their respect by obeying the patriarchal order.³⁷

Susan S. Wadley illustrates what we may call an archetype of a woman who is seen as the "Ghost" in Hinduism. A *ghost's* nature is out of control; she is bad and appeased and embodies an antithesis to the image of a good wife.³⁸ This archetype could be identified with the above described archetype of a *witch*, who is also a negative character of a woman who is feared and despised.

Rashna Imhasly-Gandhy in her book *The Psychology of Love* highlights archetypes such as *love* and *marriage*. *Love* is an archetypal emotion which always happens on a similar basis. Falling in love is an experience with an open heart which has both positive and negative effects. One falling in love may bring forth his/her best qualities but at the same time he or she also becomes vulnerable and sees no faults of the beloved person, no matter how obvious they might seem.

³⁶ Blanka Knotková-Čapková, "Archetypy femininity a jejich subverze v moderní bengálské literatuře," in *Konstruování genderu v asijských literaturách*, ed. Blanka Knotková-Čapková (Praha: Česká orientalistická společnost, 2005), 145-146.

³⁷ Renata Svobodová, "Genderový aspekt porušování společenských rolí v románu indické autarky. Arundhati Royová a její předlady, čarodějnice, přísluhovačky," in *Konstruování genderu v asijských literaturách*, ed. Blanka Knotková-Čapková (Praha: Česká orientalistická společnost, 2005), 170-171.

³⁸ Susan S. Wadley, "Women and the Hindu Tradition," *Signs* 3, no. 1 (1977), 120.

Archetype of love makes life brighter, hopeful and positive. The author also says that love is always an involuntary archetype, that lovers are possessed against their conscious will.³⁹

The patriarchal concept of the institution of *marriage* can also be approached as an archetype. It gives the illusion of wholeness; man becomes the center of woman's life as she leaves everything behind for him and their children. An archetypal pattern in *marriages* in India often is that man has to provide for his family and doesn't have enough time for the family which may lead to neglecting the family which leads to the weakening of love.⁴⁰ On a similar note, Pratt who commented on the *marriage* archetype says that the archetypal enclosure understood as *marriage* takes away the heroine's authenticity as her freedom of movement and decisions is no more there and her attribute of intelligence is not looked upon positively, while her erotic expression is suppressed too. Her husband embodies an archetype of a gothic villain who replaces the ideal lover in her imagination. What gradually occurs is the "madness" of the wife if she realizes this degradation.⁴¹

Indira J Parikh and Pulin K Garg in their book *Indian women: An Inner Dialogue* define certain primary locations of women's role identity, which are closely tied to archetypal identification - these primary locations of role identities are defined as characteristics unconsciously manifesting themselves in one's personality and actions. The authors describe three distinct identities - the *adjuster*, the *asserter* and the *drifter*. The *adjuster* overlaps with the archetype of a *weaver* as she echoes the ideals promoted by the cultural lore. She is adequate, knows how to run the house and commits herself fully to the family. The *asserter* in contrast doesn't like her restrictive life-role and tries to be in charge of her own life, she is pushed into fighting mode by her environment. By others she is seen as aggressive, impulsive, stubborn and unmanageable, but by nature she is intelligent, ambitious and has the need to be proven right. Asserters experience disillusionment, disenchantment and skepticism towards men as men have let them down. The identity of the *asserter* corresponds with the archetype of a *witch*. Lastly, the *drifter* has no cogent perspective of life and she is afraid of consequences of her wishes. She is lost, refuses many grooms but at

³⁹ Rashna Imhasly-Gandhy, *The Psychology of Love* (New Delhi: Roli Books Pvt Ltd, 2001), 23-24.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 35-38.

⁴¹ Annis Pratt, *Archetypal Patterns in Women's fiction* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1982), 45.

the end anyway marries someone incompatible. The *drifter* also needs to belong and needs the affirmation that she will find God, father, guru, husband or a cause to live for.⁴²

The analytical part of this paper will not only identify and list archetypes in the narrative; it will assess them from the feminist perspective and will untangle their meanings within the given context. The archetypal analysis will also help in observing the paradoxes and provocations the series projects as it tries to be critical towards gender stereotyping and discrimination in Hindu society in India.

2.4. Women in Film and Television

2.4.1. How to Read a Film

While watching a film or TV it is important to ask certain questions like ‘Why was the film/show made in this way?’ or ‘What are the questions it is trying to put forward by its cardinal content?’. These questions help in seeing a film and TV less as a single and tendentious statement and more as an occasion for multiple perspectives. Watching with an attitude of a resisting spectator does indeed reveal more than simply accepting a single interpretation no matter how obvious it may appear.

People find pleasure in looking at films basically in two different ways. One is pleasure from looking at another person who stands as an object of sexual stimulation while the second is a sense of narcissism causing pleasure from identification with the image in the film.⁴³

“In a world ordered by sexual imbalance, pleasure in looking has been split between active/male and passive/female. The determining male gaze projects its fantasy onto female figure, which is styled accordingly. In their traditional exhibitionist role women are simultaneously looked at and displayed, with their appearance coded for strong visual and erotic impact so that they can be said to connote to-be-looked-at-ness”⁴⁴ Woman in film traditionally plays and signifies male desire and she is there to be looked at while man and even male hero are the bearers of the look. What is often seen in the cinema is active male hero with a passive female character, who is more of an icon without much importance on her own and she is rather a supplement to the hero.

⁴² Indira J Parikh and Pulin K Garg, *Indian women: An inner dialogue* (New Delhi: Sage Publications India Pvt. Ltd., 1989), 117-121.

⁴³ Laura Mulvey, *Visual and other pleasures* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989), 15.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 19.

“Identification is a process which commands the subject to be displaced by an other; it is a procedure which refuses and recuperates the separation between self and other, and in this way replicates the very structure of patriarchy. Identification demands sameness, necessitates similarity, disallows difference.”⁴⁵ The process of cinematic identification happens unconsciously in three stages, having its own implicit ideology which is transmitted to spectator. First stage is the *Pre-cinematic identification* which precedes the viewing of the film. Freud’s note on this identification is that spectator experiences displacement during which he/she identifies with compensatory others and the satisfaction he/she gets from it springs from “blowing off steam” or in other words in venting unfulfilled desires. Identification of the *Pre-cinematic* level can be projective (subject identifying other with self) as well as introjective (subject identifying self with other).⁴⁶ *Cinematic* identification can be further classified as primary and secondary. Primary is the identification with the “look” of the camera, with the angle of the projector and is hence gender neutral. Secondary identification is the one when spectator identifies with the actor or the character which becomes gendered. Lastly, the *Extra-Cinematic* identification with a film character or actor extends beyond mere watching of a film. The system uses these stars as an economic commodity in a market of entertainment products as they are popular among masses and are a good influential tool not only on the grounds of financial profit.⁴⁷

The way media in general portray women may be described as *symbolic annihilation*, which means that women in media are traditionally ignored, simplifies or judged.⁴⁸ It may be said that the way media traditionally present images of women reinforces patriarchy. Narrative organization produces an authoritative voice or a viewpoint and since the narrative organization is perceived as patriarchal, the spectator is automatically masculine and the pleasure from viewing is purposely constructed to console the patriarchal ego along with its unconscious. Femininity is simultaneously repressed, sublimed and represented in such a way that it fits the patriarchal unconscious.⁴⁹

⁴⁵ Anne Friedberg, “A Denial of Difference: Theories of Cinematic Identification,” in *Psychoanalysis & Cinema*, ed. E. Ann Kaplan (New York: Routledge, 1990), 36.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 38.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 40-45.

⁴⁸ Claire M. Renzetti and Daniel J. Curran, *Ženy, muži a společnost* (Praha: Karolinum, 2003), 183.

⁴⁹ Christine Gledhill, “Pleasurable Negotiations,” in *Female Spectators: Looking at Film and Television*, ed. Deidre E. Pribram (New York: Verso, 1988), 65-66.

Furthermore, it is also necessary to present a range of theoretical approaches that are useful for an analysis of such small screen media. Screen media communicate meaning to us in two ways – the *connotative* and the *denotative*. By *denotation* we mean understanding images and sounds as they exist whereas *connotation* represents a variety of meanings that serve to suppress denotation. Even though moving image is comparatively more *denotative* than literature, *connotative* features are integral to screen media as well. We can distinguish *paradigmatic* and *syntagmatic connotation*. American film critic and author James Monaco distinguishes *paradigmatic connotation* thus: “When our sense of the connotation of a specific shot depends on its having been chosen from a range of other possible shots, then we can say that it is, using the language of semiology, a *paradigmatic* connotation. That is, the connotative sense we comprehend stems from the shot being compared, not necessarily consciously, with its unrealized companions in the paradigm, or general model, of this type of shot.”⁵⁰ While in the *syntagmatic connotation* “the meaning adheres to it because it is compared with other shots that we do see.”⁵¹ These two approaches help provide an “axes of meaning” which can further assist our understanding of such small screen media and help identify the intent of the author, writer, director and/or producer.

2.4.2. Women in Indian Cinema

Indian mainstream cinema reinforces certain values and addresses various social issues often in order to suggest the way they should/shouldn't be dealt with. Women on the screen pose as passive and submissive and their characters in Bollywood have been shown as simplified, unidimensional characters that are either good or bad but nothing in between. Good heroine (weaver) contrasts vamp which usually projects as a dichotomy of wife and “the other woman”. Heroine is secondary to the hero and depends on him in some way; she is a distraction for the viewers especially in action films with a lot of violence. The essence of Hindi films is said to be the recording of man's dreams, experience, ambitions etc. and woman is just a supplement.⁵² There are, however, films in the Indian film tradition which have central female characters. There films belong to the *Parallel cinema* or to the so called *Indian New Wave*⁵³.

⁵⁰ James Monaco, *How to read a film: the art, technology, language, history, and theory of film and media* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1981), 131.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 132.

⁵² Mousumi Manna, “Cinema and National Identity: Representation of women in Indian Cinema - Reference to Bollywood,” *New Man International Journal of Multidisciplinary Studies* 4, no. 3 (2007), 5-8.

⁵³ 1950's - early 1990's in West Bengal.

Shoma Chatterjee is a Kolkata based journalist, film scholar and author who has won several awards for film critics and cinema research. In an interview for the Film Education website conducted in 2010 she revealed that for a long time women mostly played roles similar to decorative objects in Hindi cinema and if they got important roles they were victims, martyrs or victimizers of other women. It was in the 1990's that the *Sati-Savitri*⁵⁴ image of a woman was gradually getting made over and its deviations appeared. Woman as a character got stronger and in some films even equal to the male hero. Nonetheless one has to consider that blockbuster Hindi films made post 2000 are often remakes of Hollywood films and the way they portray women is in fact borrowed and in effect distant from the real Indian woman.⁵⁵

And how distant are real women from the women in films? Shoma Chatterjee answers thus "Feminist film theories that draw mainly upon psycho-analysis, semiology and structuralism do not have much bearing on an analysis of portrayals of women in Hindi cinema. So one has to develop a new theory of such analysis against the backdrop of the Indian socio-economic backdrop within which the real woman lives and works and study intersections of these with celluloid women in Indian cinema."⁵⁶

2.5. Conceptualization of Womanhood in Hinduism: Mythology and Social Reality

Susan S. Wadley summarizes the principles in Hindu philosophy which give the very base to the reasons of the control of women by men. According to this philosophy, universe has both the male and female components. The female component is called *shakti*, the Energy or Power in the universe but at the same time the female component is also *prakriti*, Nature or the universe's undifferentiated Matter. She is an active female counterpart of *purusha*, the inactive male aspect, which, as opposed to the Matter provides Spirit. The merge of these aspects leads to the creation of the world. Subsequently, during the process of creation, the male provides the hard substances such as bones or structuring elements while female the soft ones like flesh and blood. Woman is the soil while man is the seed just like women symbolize nature and men culture. Hence, if

⁵⁴ Sati-Savitri is a term used for a good wife loyal to her husband, a clever wife brave enough to retrieve her husband from the hands of the God of death. She is the ideal wife fully devoted to the husband. The story of Savitri is a popular tale in Hindu mythology.

⁵⁵ Oorvazi Irani, "Interview with Shoma Chatterjee - Role of Women in Indian Cinema," *Film Education*, 8th October 2010, <https://oorvazifilmeducation.wordpress.com/2010/10/08/interview-with-shoma-chatterji-role-of-women-in-indian-cinema/>

⁵⁶ Ibid.

woman is an equation of Power and Nature, she becomes dangerous and should be controlled by culture.⁵⁷

This chapter explains the identity of a Hindu woman as set in the old texts and the message they spread about women's roles in the society. *Dharmashastras* are ancient theological texts which outline the ethics and regulations of people's lives in interactions with both the public and the family. Many of rules and roles imposed on women in these texts are still present today and explain women's struggles. It is not only these law books but epic tales abundant in Hindu mythology as well that add to the creation of the ideal Hindu woman's image.

“Written and oral mythology, in Sanskrit and Vernaculars, provides examples of female behavior and its consequences and thus establishes explicit role models.”⁵⁸ The mythology gives people ideas of what they should be like and what they should expect from others and they always look for answers and inspiration from the riches of their epic stories. Women are often depicted either as good or bad and it is not so common for a woman to be a complex active character. In Hindu folk tales we see the dual character of a female in her roles of wife as obedient, benevolent and controlled and mother as fertile but at the same time dangerous and uncontrolled.⁵⁹

Manusmṛti or the Law Code of Manu is one of the most authoritative and respected law books in India, composed sometime between 200 BC and 200 AD. Among other rules, many regulations and attitudes ostracizing women can be found in the text. It tries to describe the “correct way” of living one's life and attempts to cover every life situation from one's birth to death. What is quite obvious is that Manu doesn't consider women as bearers of action but as passive elements as most of what he writes is advice to men and women are always addressed marginally or with connection to man's life. A few instances from Manusmṛti will be presented below to demonstrate women's image and position designated by Manu.

What should a good bride for a Brahmin be like? A wife of a Brahmin should belong to the same class and should possess the “right bodily characteristics” and she should not be a blood relative. A bad bride for a Brahmin is such who has too much or too little body hair, red hair or an extra limb, a girl who talks too much, who has a frightening, unpleasant or an inauspicious name. On

⁵⁷ Susan S. Wadley, “Women and the Hindu Tradition,” *Signs* 3, no. 1 (1977), 113-116.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 117.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 117.

the contrary, she should be pretty and pleasant in every way possible. Manu also advises against marrying a woman with no brother or an unknown father.⁶⁰ A woman should possess all these positive attributes, while in contrast, she should pay no attention to beauty or age of her husband. It shouldn't matter whether he is ugly or not and she should make love to him with a single thought that "He is a man".⁶¹

An emphasis on the image and role of a wife can be found all across *Dharmashastras*. From her study of *Dharmashastras*, Prabhati Mukherjee derives the following: "a loyal and chaste wife alone, having an abiding interest in her household affairs to the exclusion of all outside interests, came to be the ideal in the society."⁶² Woman's life is to be dedicated to her husband, children and family.

Woman's main purpose in Manusmṛiti is said to bear children, especially sons. If she is barren, her children die or if she has only girls or behaves in a way her husband considers unpleasant, he may take another wife.⁶³ At moments, Manu almost seems to think about women as sensitive beings when he says that a couple has good fortune if the husband finds delight in his wife and vice versa. Right after that he explains that if the woman didn't have the right sparkle, she wouldn't arouse her husband and hence would not conceive.⁶⁴ This implies that Manu saw women in a utilitarian way as bearers of children, as instruments necessary for men to continue their lineage.

Imposing restrictions of such character that took women's freedom away could also be found in The Law Code of Manu. He says that no woman should have any independence and all her life she should be under control of a male be it her father, husband or a son. She should be faithful to her husband during life as well as after he dies. "A good woman should always worship her husband like a god".⁶⁵

There have also been different interpretations of the *Dharmashastras* which avoid reading them as the basis of any discrimination towards women. In the introduction of her book, Chandrakala

⁶⁰ Manu, *The Law Code of Manu*, transl. Patrick Olivelle (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 43-44.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 156.

⁶² Prabhati Mukherjee, *Hindu Women Normative Models* (Calcutta: Sangam Books Limited, 1993), 50.

⁶³ Manu, *The Law Code of Manu*, transl. Patrick Olivelle (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 160.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 48.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 96.

Padia describes *Dharmashastras* as texts not at all discriminative, but based on mutual complementarity of the members of society. In a society based on this principle, there is no space for individualistic values and that it is the interest of the collective that matters. In this case it would not be possible to consider a woman an inferior unit of the society as she has her roles and identities just like man does. Padia also claims that *Dharmashastras* have been misinterpreted by modernists and that their interpretation was partial and biased and highlights flashes of positive description of women in the texts.⁶⁶

Even though Padia gives examples of passages from *Dharmashastras* indicating that women had their rights, there are some ambivalent instances. She points out that Manu declared that wife may abandon her husband should he be impotent, suffering from terminal or infectious diseases, but may remarry only under the condition that her earlier marriage has not been consummated.⁶⁷ Although woman's right to remarry is there, her sexuality is controlled since she should have sexual interaction with only one man. The reason is possibly as clear as the fear that she may bring another man's child into the new marriage or maybe the fear of a man that his performance may be a subject of comparison with another.

Pushpa Tiwari explains that the restrictions on sex are in *Dharmashastras* imposed on both men and women and have to be understood in regard of their historical timeframe in order to avoid simplification and conclusions such as women's sexual restriction being the consequence of men's discrimination and dominance. She also points out that even though Manu declared that men and women enjoy equal position by gods and only those families where women are worshipped would be blessed, he in contrast also says that the life of a woman should always be controlled by a male. Tiwari in her article summarizes that Manusmṛti simply regulates social etiquette and sets rules of what is and isn't permissible in marriage sex and those rules are applicable to both husband and wife. The conclusion is that all the restrictions are there actually to control male sexuality and desires.⁶⁸

⁶⁶ Chandrakala Padia, introduction to *Women in Dharmashastras: a phenomenological and critical analysis*, ed. Chandrakala Padia (Jaipur: Rawat Publications, 2009), 3-7.

⁶⁷ Chandrakala Padia, "Women in India's Intellectual Tradition," in *Women in Dharmashastras: a phenomenological and critical analysis*, ed. Chandrakala Padia (Jaipur: Rawat Publications, 2009), 42.

⁶⁸ Pushpa Tiwari, "Social Dimensions of the Discourse on Women and Sex as Reflected in Manusmṛti - The Earliest Known Indian Code of Law," *Women in Dharmashastras: a Phenomenological and Critical Analysis*, Chandrakala Padia (Jaipur: Rawat Publications, 2009), 63-66.

The old Indian epics are yet another source of reading about perceptions of Hindu women. Be it heroes from Mahabharata or Ramayana, they described women as sinful, vile and often dangerous creatures and various authorities stated that women were fickle, and unfaithful seducers.⁶⁹ Prabhati Mukherjee in her book *Hindu Women Normative Models* also describes heroines from Hindu epic stories who were considered as ideal women. The crown of the ideal bears *Sita* from Ramayana, whose most notable trait her immense capacity to bear suffering.⁷⁰ Draupadi on the other hand is seen as a bit more controversial character, but still loyal and passive. Savitri is a “paragon of chastity of Indian womanhood”⁷¹ for her triumph over the god of death in order to save her husband. Mukherjee states that to reach the ideals of such women in Hindu mythology is impossible but yet, women are expected to aspire to get as close to the ideals as they can.⁷²

2.5.1. Hindu Women Today

Over the course of Indian history, women have undergone changes from era to era, with the level of change depending on their caste and other social factors. The image of a woman has been changing throughout the history from the woman as bearer of life and a goddess, gradually evolving into being an object of men’s desire. Nonetheless the role of Indian women has remained relatively unchanged for almost a thousand years until the British ruled India and Indian reformers along with Christian missionaries started the social change that lasts until present.⁷³ Unfortunately, there are great patches in the history that are dark and it was only from the 18th century that more information about the lives of women was available. The improvement of their status started to take place during this period and gradually got faster.⁷⁴

It was during colonial times when the “women’s question” aroused and it wasn’t only because of Indians being exposed to western liberal ideas but also because of the newly developed tensions in families of educated men. An abyss was being created between men and women of these

⁶⁹ Prabhati Mukherjee, *Hindu Women Normative Models* (Calcutta: Sangam Books Limited, 1993), 10-11.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 40.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 29.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 49.

⁷³ Indira J Parikh and Pulin K Garg, *Indian women: An inner dialogue* (New Delhi: Sage Publications India Pvt. Ltd., 1989), 83.

⁷⁴ Prabhati Mukherjee, *Hindu Women Normative Models* (Calcutta: Sangam Books Limited, 1993), 142.

families and subsequently the social interaction between women and their educated husbands and sons became problematic.⁷⁵

It was also the colonialists who brought the concept of public health to India. There the rules of hygiene were rather re-interpreted caste rules and it was the literate, high caste Hindus assimilating them. Davar describes popular Tamil health journals of that time where “purity” and hygiene were inter-defined and used by the Hindus of upper castes to justify their social privileges. These journals included also various texts describing women as being polluted because of menstruation and childbirth. The redefinition of women’s role in pre-independent India was also strongly influenced by traditional Hindu values. The mother/wife was to be educated, aware of home science and hygiene, combining the traditional self-sacrificing image of a mother, the educational autonomy of the Vedic woman, and at the same time a modern mother well informed about hygiene.⁷⁶

It would be interesting to shortly review what one of the most well-known thinkers of modern India, Mahatma Gandhi, thought about the position of women. Madhu Kishwar in her article Gandhi on Women presents some of these views. Apparently, Gandhi saw women as a potential force in the struggle to build a new social order. He was trying to articulate connections between private and public life and to bring women into the struggle and he saw women as self-conscious subjects who could become the makers of their own destiny. For Gandhi there were three ideals of Indian womanhood and those were Sita, Damayanti and Draupadi, not only because of being symbols of subservience, but also in the case of Sita as symbols of Swadeshi for she was wearing only local homespun sari. What more, Draupadi was seen as embodiment of strength and courage. He believed that weakness was imposed on women culturally and that it is not their physical weakness that made women subordinate and denying women freedom leads to their infantilisation. Claiming that women should protest against being treated as sex objects, Gandhi equated women’s purity and nobility with absolute sexlessness by which he negated women’s sexuality.⁷⁷ He admits woman the right to say no to her husband but on the other hand he denies her any sexuality. Gandhi’s views on women were trying to be modern and progressive but still

⁷⁵Maitrayee Chaudhuri, “Indian “Modernity” and “Tradition”: A Gender Analysis,” *Polish Sociological Review*, no. 178 (2012), 282.

⁷⁶ Bhagravi Davar, “Indian Psychoanalysis, Patriarchy and Hinduism,” *Anthropology and Medicine* 6, no. 2 (1999): 175-176.

⁷⁷ Madhu Kishwar, “Gandhi on women,” *Economic and Political Weekly* 20, no. 40 (1985): 1691.

couldn't deal with certain problematic points such as sexuality which over the history and different points of view appears as the core of the "men's problem with women".

The change in Indian women's lives started to escalate especially in the immediate pre-independence times when Gandhi included women in the freedom struggle and showed that woman's role is not confined only within the four walls of the house. Later after independence it was mostly education and globalization that supported and fortified the ongoing change. Growing urbanization in India is another factor often causing women to abandon their traditional role of a homemaker and adjust to the new lifestyles they have to follow often due to economic reasons.

After the independence education was no longer only a privilege, but it became the right of women. Education started to be a necessity for development and socio-psychological independence. Female is then similarly, like a male, encouraged to study and work hard in order to achieve the best results. Families now often consider their male and female children equal and thus equally invest in their education.⁷⁸ Many families, especially middle class and high class do educate their daughters as educated brides are in demand. Even if a woman gets educated, after marriage she usually doesn't pursue her career anymore. A university degree has become more of a question of prestige rather than prerequisite for a job. However, in big cities and also in cases of socially disadvantaged women, there is often no choice for them but to work due to economic reasons.⁷⁹ In contrast, as in many cases women are prepared for their future life as wives, they should be skilled in home making and education is sometimes seen as a flaw that may negatively affect her performance in the role of a wife.⁸⁰ Maitrayee Chaudhuri in her article describes that from matrimonial ads in newspapers it is evident that quite a number of men search for brides with "a blend of traditional and modern". Ideal bride should therefore have domestic skills, should be religious but at the same time educated or having an employment experience. "*The perfect Indian woman ought to be smart but not too smart, traditional but not too much.*"⁸¹

⁷⁸ Indira J Parikh and Pulin K Garg, *Indian women: An inner dialogue* (New Delhi: Sage Publications India Pvt. Ltd., 1989), 104-105.

⁷⁹ Blanka Knotková-Čapková, "Marginalizace, reprezentace a identita podobných v kontextu současné indické společnosti," *Gender, rovné příležitosti, výzkum* 8, no. 1 (2007): 21.

⁸⁰ Indira J Parikh and Pulin K Garg, *Indian women: An inner dialogue* (New Delhi: Sage Publications India Pvt. Ltd., 1989), 46.

⁸¹ Maitrayee Chaudhuri, "Indian "Modernity" and "Tradition": A Gender Analysis," *Polish Sociological Review*, no. 178 (2012): 278.

Even nowadays young Indians are not expected to find their future partner while dating and trying different partners. Some Indian psychologists explain the reason for a girl dating to be her loneliness caused by insufficient attention especially from her busy mother. Dagmar Marková in her article about marriages in India also mentions a statement of a young Indian girl who describes the perks of letting parents choose her husband and above all she highlights that if something goes wrong in the relationship of an arranged marriage, parents take some responsibility whereas problems in love marriage are not likely to be solved with full support of the family.⁸² Love marriages are generally less common in India as the tradition of the arranged marriages has always helped control familial relations, purity of caste and maintenance of property. Even though more and more people today prefer love marriages, the institution of arranged marriage is still prevalent and brings about a lot of controversy as well as praise.

Women have maintained the stability of the society and its cultural institutions for centuries. They have been bounded in prescribed roles, considered to be virtue-holders of their society. In order to keep up with the society's expectations they have suppressed their own aspiration which in one way or the other did not fit in the screenplay according to which they were supposed to perform their lives. Today, when world goes through changes and so does Indian society, changes affect the dynamics in lives of Indian women and may offer the window of opportunity to transcend from the traditional roles. A new dimension of education, work and self-realization has started to slowly alter their status and identity, their horizon is extended beyond the prescribed border.⁸³ However, this is quite a relative notion and cannot apply to all Indian women as it is especially middle class women in cities who are facing these changes as the technology, opportunities and dynamics in their surroundings take place on a much bigger scale and with higher intensity than in rural areas.

Middle and upper class women are by some believed to embody the modernizing national cultural identity. Nonetheless, there is a fear that comes along with this belief and it is the fear that these women are being corrupted by this modernization and particularly by westernization.⁸⁴

⁸² Dagmar Marková, "Love Marriage and Arranged Marriage in India," *Archív orientální* 1, no. 67 (1999), 75-76.

⁸³ Indira J Parikh and Pulin K Garg, *Indian women: An inner dialogue* (New Delhi: Sage Publications India Pvt. Ltd., 1989), 13-14.

⁸⁴ Jyoti Puri, *Woman, Body, Desire in Post-Colonial India: Narratives of Gender and Sexuality* (London: Routledge, 1999), 3.

Durganand Sinha suggests that one should keep in mind that European society has been going through changes slowly and gradually over long period of time, while such revolutionary changes in the Indian pattern of life have been happening rapidly only in the past few decades. Identity confusion is a consequence of such a quick change during which traditional values break down and adults fail in proper guidance for the youths. Suddenly the guidelines given to them seem blurred or even contradictory.⁸⁵

2.7. Control of Women's Sexuality

Sexuality has long been seen as one of the key issues by feminists. The term sexuality can have many meanings such as sexual identity, sexual preference or sexual behavior. Understanding any of these phenomena depends on one's perspective and they can be defined in psychological, intrapersonal and transpersonal terms.⁸⁶ The ways we perceive and experience sexuality are constructed by social and political frameworks such as habits, customs, norms, expectations or values of sexual behavior and sexuality. Above all, it is social framework that stipulates who has the authority and power to make choices. Also it is the privileged groups who construct the definitions of sexuality in accordance with their own interest. Sociopolitical circumstances have given men the upper hand over women and gave them the chance to establish a systematic control over their lives and sexuality. Social frameworks in their essence prescribe women to be selfless and adjust to the needs of men and the ideals of beauty as if suggested women that their sexuality is only realized through responses to men. If a woman is said to be sexual she is thought of as an object of desire and it is somebody else who decides whether she is sexual or not.⁸⁷

In many societies in the world there are double standards in attitudes towards sexual activity of men and that of women. While man's sexual activity is tolerated, woman's is criticized, judged or even punished. While a man who has had a number of sexual partners is admired, called a "stud", a woman for the same is rather titled as a "slut".⁸⁸ Women are in general expected to evoke

⁸⁵ Durganand Sinha, "The Young and the Old - Ambiguity of Role-models and Values among Indian Youth," in *Identity and Adulthood*, ed. Sudhir Kakar (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1979), 57-58.

⁸⁶ Jacqueline W. White, Berrie Bondurant and Cheryl Brown Travis, "Social Constructions of Sexuality: Unpacking Hidden meanings," *Sexuality, Society and Feminism*, ed. Jacqueline W. White and Cheryl Brown Travis (Washington DC: American Psychological Association, 2000), 11.

⁸⁷ Cheryl Brown Travis and Kayce L Meginnis and Kristin M. Bardari, "Beauty, Sexuality, and Identity: The Social Control of Women," *Sexuality, Society and Feminism*, ed. Jacqueline W. White and Cheryl Brown Travis (Washington DC: American Psychological Association, 2000), 239-240.

⁸⁸ Claire M. Renzetti and Daniel J. Curran, *Ženy, muži a společnost* (Praha: Karolinum, 2003), 219.

sexual attraction but at the same time they get punished for their promiscuousness. Often they are also denied proper access to contraception and reproductive care.⁸⁹

Speaking of contraception, Madhu Kishwar states that when cheap and effective contraceptives started to be available to a great number of women in the West, feminist movements started to consider the idea of sexual liberation seriously. Woman's sexuality could suddenly be separated from reproduction which gave them the chance to focus on assertion of their own sexuality. This created space for insights into the structure of sexual relations between men and women as well as to discussions about the ideals of women's sexual loyalty or virginity and led to an acceptable social concept of serial monogamy among women. Yet Indian women have been more reserved towards this trend and that is by Madhu Kishwar given by the fact that in the West people prioritize interests of the individual, whereas in India, it is the interest of the family.⁹⁰

Pam Morris describes that according to Freud the paradigm of all sexual pleasure is the masculine sexual pleasure. Hence his understanding of female sexuality is that it only functions to affirm the primacy of masculinity, as if femininity mirrored masculine sexuality. For Freud, sexuality is actually a priori masculine as derived from his Oedipus theory - woman lacks penis and therefore conforms to valorize masculinity which represents the possession of phallus and power.⁹¹ This paper though doesn't take in consideration Freud's theories as just like in the case of Jung they are problematic from the feminist point of view and it is only mentioned as a note, representing the range of different approaches to the subject of sexuality.

2.7.1. Hindu Women's Sexuality as the Traditional Reason for Control

Family Planning Association of India (FPAI) is an Indian nongovernmental organization cooperating with the state and it publishes educational texts promoting responsible sexual behavior. Sex Education, Counseling, Research Training/Therapy

(SECR) is FPAI's division dealing with marriage counselling to reduce divorces, abortions, pregnancies outside wedding, spread of venereal diseases and usage of drugs and alcohol. Among

⁸⁹ Cheryl Brown Travis and Kayce L Meginnis and Kristin M. Bardari, "Beauty, Sexuality, and Identity: The Social Control of Women," *Sexuality, Society and Feminism*, ed. Jacqueline W. White and Cheryl Brown Travis (Washington DC: American Psychological Association, 2000), 240.

⁹⁰ Madhu Kishwar, *Off the beaten track: rethinking gender justice for Indian women* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1999), 209-211.

⁹¹ Pam Morris, *Literature and Feminism: an Introduction* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Blackwell, 1995), 115.

other related topics, the educative materials they publish describe the process of growing up in a variety of languages. Researching these materials, Jyoti Puri states that this literature approaches the development of boys and girls differently. The described changes of pubertal female and male bodies are based on aspects of a completely different nature. For girls it is the onset of menstruation, i.e. the ability to bear children, while for boys it is erections, nocturnal emissions, masturbation and ejaculations, i.e. his sexual activity connected with the ability to have an intercourse and to feel sexual pleasure.⁹² This approach may be seen as promoting or affirming the notion of male's naturally active and female's passive sexuality.

Alternatively, as mentioned in Pat Caplan's book *The Cultural Construction of Sexuality*, it is widely believed in India, that a woman's sexuality is of a greater extent than the sexuality of a man which becomes yet another reason to keep women under control. Caplan presents a various studies carried out in different parts of India, which record men's views about women's sexuality. For instance in one village in the state of Rajasthan a certain study shows that it is believed that women vary in their sexual appetite just like men and if a woman's sexual appetite is not appeased at least once a month, she is thought to be prone to finding her satisfaction elsewhere.⁹³

In India sexuality and especially female sexuality is a taboo and in many cases a stigma. The fact that it is not talked about neither in families nor it is that common to be discussed in schools, may lead to psychological issues and uncertainty about one's relationship and sexual interactions with another. Restrictions imposed on people's contact with the other sex are meant to "protect" the girl, but are often proven to have various negative effects. B. K. Ramanujam gives account of a case where a woman while growing up had no contact with boys, in fact, she was not permitted to even play with them as a little girl and anything concerning sexuality was a taboo. She was quite distant from her parents, brought up by uncle and aunt who offered her no guidance during puberty and adolescence but rather portrayed sexuality as something vulgar. Menstruation was only explained to her as the necessary unfortunate ordeal she had to endure. When married off against her will, yet hoping for affection from her husband, she faced sexual demands from him which traumatized her. Ramanujam characterizes her as unhappy and points out that this is

⁹² Jyoti Puri, *Woman, Body, Desire in Post-colonial India: Narratives of Gender and Sexuality* (London: Routledge, 1999), 28-32.

⁹³ Pat Caplan, "Celibacy as a solution? Mahatma Gandhi and Brahmacharya," in *The Cultural Construct of Sexuality*, ed. Pat Caplan (New York: Routledge, 1995), 282.

definitely not an individual case, but rather an example of “*the existing socio-cultural flux in India*”.⁹⁴

Pam Morris notes that a lot of writing by men implicitly expresses their anxiety about the power of women’s sexuality, labelling it as a dangerous, unknown force of which they need to retain control.⁹⁵ It is the power of women’s sexuality that stands as both disempowerment and desire for men and needs to be controlled. Apart from that, it is the bearing of children that men can’t do themselves; hence need to keep women under control in order to eliminate any risk of false paternity.⁹⁶

In Hindu societies, the purity of a group, be it caste or family, is bestowed upon women. Woman is seen as a carrier of the group’s identity and proper marriage arrangements have to be made as well as precautions that the woman doesn’t have an intercourse with anyone before marriage, and especially not with a lower caste man. Hence it is thought that a woman should be under control as her sexual activity may result in pregnancy. The mother with her extramarital child then would be considered as “pollutants” of the group.⁹⁷

⁹⁴ B. K. Ramanujam, “Toward Maturity - Problems of Identity Seen in the Indian Clinical Setting,” in *Identity and Adulthood*, ed. Sudhir Kakar (New Delhi: Oxford University Press: 1979), 45-46.

⁹⁵ Pam Morris, *Literature and Feminism: an Introduction* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Blackwell, 1995), 42.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 20.

⁹⁷ Victoria Goddard, “Honor and shame: the control of women’s sexuality and group identity in Naples,” in *The Cultural Construct of Sexuality*, ed. Pat Caplan (New York: Routledge, 1995), 180-181.

3. Analysis of the Dev DD Series

To access and view content on ALTBalaji, it is necessary to first sign in and pay a fee, just like with Netflix, HBO Go, Hulu and other digital platforms offering a similar range of entertainment. A three month subscription of ALTBalaji costs 4.99 USD, which is comparatively less than its counterparts and also offers the option of watching a few episodes of various shows for free. After paying the fee and accessing the main menu resembling that of Netflix, several categories of content appear. “Home” offers content classified by genre, while other categories consist of “Shows”, “Movies”, “Comedy”, and “Music Videos”. In the “Shows” category, among many others, Dev DD with a subtitle saying “Wilder than your imagination”⁹⁸ is ready to be watched. Even though most shows available are in Hindi, many of them have been dubbed into other Indian languages and what more, some of them even into Bahasa Indonesia and Bahasa Malaysia. English and other subtitles are also available, which makes the films and shows accessible to a wide audience.

The publicity picture for the TV show depicts a traditionally dressed Indian woman sat at a bar drinking from a bottle next to a heap of sleeping, presumably drunk, men. Superimposed in the top right corner of the scene is the show’s title, stylized in such a way that the first D of “Dev DD” has the face of a woman subtly hidden thus possibly indicating that this Devdas, the show’s principle protagonist, will be a woman.

In the following analysis of the series I apply a typological paradigm, mostly based on the theoretical studies of Annis Pratt⁹⁹ and Blanka Knotková-Čapková¹⁰⁰ as was indicated in the Theoretical & Methodological chapter of this thesis. Nonetheless, what is important to realize is that the archetypes (*weaver, witch, outsider* etc.) need to be understood in metaphorical way as explained in the above cited references.

⁹⁸ “Shows,” *ALTBalaji*, Accessed July 9, 2019, <https://www.altbalaji.com/shows>.

⁹⁹ Annis Pratt, *Archetypal Patterns in Women’s Fiction* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1982).

¹⁰⁰ Blanka Knotková-Čapková, “Archetypy femininity a jejich subverze v moderní bengálské literatuře,” in *Konstruování genderu v asijských literaturách*, ed. Blanka Knotková-Čapková (Praha: Česká orientalistická společnost, 2005).

3.1. Episode 1¹⁰¹: The “Witch” and the “Weaver”

The opening scene presents us, the viewer, with a traditionally dressed young woman smoking while sitting on a bed in a room surrounded by Rajasthani artisan furniture; her face obscured in the shadows with only the tip of her cigarette visible. Suddenly without warning the tranquility of the scene is abruptly broken by the dramatic entrance of a male character who is seemingly frantic with passion as he swiftly proceeds with haste towards the mysterious woman. His advance towards her though is quickly checked by the woman raising her foot up against his chest and firmly pushing the intruder away. The theatricality of the scene suggests that the two characters are in fact known to one another and we are in fact engaged in witnessing some kind of bizarre game of courtship between the two. Subsequently the female character now commands the intruder to get undressed and dance for her to which he complies without question. Her display of control over him and her apparent total dominance is further enforced by her demands that he now simulates sex with a pillow! In this scene we see the traditional positions of a dominant male vs. submissive female inverted and it is the female who dominates and what more humiliates the man to her pleasure. What we see is the woman being *connotatively* represented as the archetypal *witch* who subjugates the man to her wishes instead of being subjugated. It is also the cigarette that symbolizes witch *witch*-like character of the heroine, since smoking is traditionally considered to be the privilege of men only.

The scene however is interrupted by the sudden arrival of a third character - a young woman dressed as a bride - who enters the room expressing outrage at the scene presented to her. She demands an explanation and in so doing reveals the identities of the characters present asking her sister (cousin Devika) what she is doing with her husband, who at this point has briskly jumped out of bed, accusing his brides' sister for the whole situation.

This rather dramatic introductory scene establishes the theme of the series and very effectively introduces the three main protagonists, that being the characters of an atypical self-confident dominant woman, a traditional woman and a hypocritical man. What is shocking about this scene most though isn't the initially induced sexual atmosphere, but the reaction of Devika's cousin on the situation as the only person whom she turns to blame is not the man, but the woman. The reason may be as simple as being betrayed by a friend hurts more than by a partner or it may be

¹⁰¹Dev DD, “Dev DD vs. Sri Kunt,” ALTBalaji video, 18:50, April 21, 2017, Accessed September 15, 2019 at <https://www.altbalaji.com/show/123>.

simply because of the cliché that it is the woman who is often considered to be at fault when it comes to seduction.

The introductory scene is in fact the closing act of the first episode which now, cued by screen text, rewinds 12 hours to the beginning of the plot. A middle-aged woman dressed in a saree walks through the house and instructs people to lay decorations in certain ways and her archetypal projection of a mother becomes obvious as soon as she opens the door of her daughter's room. She attempts to wake her up - the tone of her voice implying her rather dominant nature and indeed her frustration with her daughter as she picks up some small items of clothes carelessly discarded all over the floor. When Devika does indeed wake up, she quickly hides a pack of cigarettes from the sight of her mother along with a bottle of alcohol. Cigarettes and alcohol are one of those many things that Indian women are discouraged from consuming. In fact, smoking is often seen as an undesirable western import that threatens the traditions of Indian culture. A BJP politician Uma Bharti even distinguished between modernization and westernization saying that women becoming doctors and engineers etc. are a desirable part of modernization but smoking, drinking and other such traits of a western lifestyle and are, as a consequence, not appropriate at all.¹⁰² Devika is therefore being introduced as a woman who defies the traditional prescription for an Indian woman. A rebel. An iconoclast even – a *witch*. The bottle of alcohol and a pack of cigarettes in this scene are symbols of defiance and with this the show itself establishes its attitude of a *resisting reader* of the Indian social norms. It is common in India that women who drink and smoke are looked upon as immoral or shameless. We talk about *resistance* here in the sense that the series presents the heroine as a woman who drinks and smokes without making her an antagonist even though she does appear to behave in a way that is considered shameless and immoral in the Indian cultural context. On the contrary, her rebellion against the social norms here is highlighted and focused on and in this scene is symbolized by the bottle of alcohol.

As the mother retrieves another item of underwear this time hanging on the pillar of the bed, she says in exasperation: “Your B! In front of everyone! What if someone sees it?” by which she presents herself as being stereotypically conservative. Devika reacts rather humorously and mockingly teaches her mother how to say bra, highlighting her mother's embarrassment and

¹⁰² Rupal Oza, “Showcasing India: Gender, Geography and Globalisation” in *Urban Women in Contemporary India: A Reader*, ed. by Rehana Ghadially (New Delhi: Sage Publications India Pvt Ltd, 2007), 209.

awkwardness regarding this particular item of underwear. This sentiment about a bra might have been because it is a piece of clothing that serves to cover a woman's breasts and if any man should perchance enter the room, he might be aroused and in turn pose a threat to Devika's chastity if not her reputation, or indeed the reputation of the family in fact. The mother asks Devika why can't she be more like other girls to which Devika responds by sending an SMS message to her father, ridiculing mother's distress. This very gesture not just shows that Devika considers her father an ally but also cues his entrance in to the scene as he tries to reconcile the ensuing conflict. It is alleged that in some cases it is the father who is closer to the daughter, she perceives him as more caring, fun, pampering while the mother seems to be harsh. However, in general, these "super fathers" later tend to turn into conservative and restrictive and the mother may turn out to be the new ally.¹⁰³ We can already see an atypical phenomenon where the father, an alleged patriarch in his cultural context, slightly sides with his daughter against the conservative mother and instead of scolding Devika for defiance, he rather opts for a diplomatic way of the conflict moderation.

Devika then joins her cousin Aruna and her friends as they sit together on the floor where the bride-to-be who brags endlessly about her groom saying he rejected 12 girls before selecting her. The manner in which this is expressed by her implies that she feels very lucky to be the one finally chosen, while her cousin in contrast rather sarcastically points out that "he is a choosy man". Aruna doesn't seem to find anything wrong with the fact that she got *selected* by her future husband. Furthermore, she shows the girls some pieces of clothes her fiancé bought for her, and says giggling "But he told me, sleeveless only on honeymoon. Actually the thing is, it is not allowed at home, that's why." Devika twists her face in disgust but her cousin finds it funny thus inclining further towards the archetypical *weaver*, as she appears to enjoy her superior position when her future husband and his family dictate her dress code. Aruna then displays an oversized dress which her future husband, Srikant, bought for her to which Devika responds by laughing and confessing she wears a much shorter dress for parties. Aruna reacts defensively and says, "I know what type of a girl you are", suggesting how little she thinks of Devika's character, only for Devika to sharply respond saying, "Sister, I am a girl who doesn't let anyone else decide what I can wear and what I cannot." The distinction between the archetypes of the *witch* and the *weaver*

¹⁰³ Indira J Parikh and Pulin K Garg, *Indian women: An inner dialogue* (New Delhi: Sage Publications India Pvt. Ltd., 1989), 112.

is being further reinforced. While the weaver is happy to comply and let others tell her what to do, the *witch* couldn't bear even the idea of it. While Aruna, the *weaver*, is comfortable and accepts her social role of an obedient bride, Devika, the *witch*, mocks her for it. This relationship between the two cousins and, more importantly, between these two archetypes is in its nature bound to be problematic as the *witch* poses a threat to what secures *weaver's* comfortable existence.

In the next scene Devika meets with her friend Chandini with both dressed in very traditional yet fashionable clothes - Devika wearing a *lehenga choli*¹⁰⁴ and Chandini a *salwar kameez*¹⁰⁵. The traditional style of clothing of Devika and Chandini is consistent through the whole series with only a few minor exceptions; This is possibly intended to highlight that even though the heroines' behavior and attitudes are not common in Indian society, possibly being labelled as more western, they are nonetheless Indian women by cultural identity.

In the next scene, on their way to the chemist to buy sanitary pads, Chandini becomes alarmed as she recognizes a young man on the side of the road who has been telling stories about Devika, claiming he had sex with her. Troubled with this knowledge she decides to inform Devika but at the same time advises her to refrain from any confrontation fearing for her reputation. However, Devika being the archetypal *witch*, does not fear for her reputation and chooses to confront the issue there and then not just by confronting the allegations but by actually endorsing the young man's claims. However, confirming to having indeed slept with him, she then proceeds to mock 'his performance' and ridicule the size of his penis. The point being to emphasize how unacceptable it is to spread lies about a woman's sexual behavior whether true or not. The scene ends with Devika threatening the young man that she too will spread equally disparaging stories should he ever spread such lies about any other woman again. The phenomenon of men telling sex-related lies about women is not uncommon in India. The reasons of men doing so may vary from the need of showing off in the eyes of their peers to the actual intention of hurting the woman due to her rejection. Sexual activity of women in India is a taboo but of equal gravity is the question of family reputation¹⁰⁶, therefore it is highly undesirable for a woman to be made subject of such falsehoods, not because it is damaging to her but because it would be damaging to

¹⁰⁴ A long skirt with a blouse covering chest.

¹⁰⁵ A traditional-styled long shirt or a tunic with a pair of trousers.

¹⁰⁶ Victoria Goddard, "Honor and shame: the control of women's sexuality and group identity in Naples," in *The Cultural Construct of Sexuality*, ed. Pat Caplan (New York: Routledge, 1995), 180-181.

her (future) husband and his family; Devika's fearless and open confrontation highlighting that it is still very much a problem today and one that should no longer be ignored or indeed tolerated.

In the next scene at the chemist store, Chandini, too embarrassed to ask directly, asks the male shop assistant, with visible embarrassment, for "that" (sanitary pads). Devika, seemingly annoyed by Chandini's awkwardness, loudly asks the assistant for "Whispers¹⁰⁷ with wings". In reaction to this Chandini requests her to speak quieter so that people can't hear. In this scene Devika makes a very apt point saying the name of the pads is "Whispers" but it doesn't mean one has to actually whisper when asking for it. In fact, the said products manufacturer, Procter and Gamble, consciously re-named the product "Whispers" for the Asia and Pacific region market, whereas in most of Europe and the US, they are sold under the product name of "Always".¹⁰⁸ It is most likely that the company is aware of the cultural settings in particular regions and adjusts the product marketing including its name accordingly. What is interesting is that the European brand "Always" signifies that the pads will *always* be there for the woman, *always* at hand, *always* protecting her from feeling uncomfortable, *always* reliable, basically assuring women about the comfort they provide, whereas the name "Whispers" stands for something completely different. Not only in India but in most of the region of Asia, menstruation is a taboo or at least something that is not considered a matter to be discussed openly or indeed publically. Hence "Whispers" reflect the cultural background where women have to *whisper* when they talk about their menstruation so no one should over hear as it is something not publically talked about or for that matter discussed; menstruation still being a subject regarded as very much taboo in more countries than not. In India, for instance, women during their period are often restricted from entering certain places, even the kitchen in their own home. They are considered polluted and unclean while menstruating and are encouraged to refrain from excessive contact with other people. Various ritual restrictions on menstruating women may be seen as expressing female inferiority, means to secure gender inequality or subordination of women's interests to those of men.¹⁰⁹ Devika as a *witch* strongly opposes such patriarchal notions and so when the assistant passes her a black bag containing the sanitary pads, she responds with derision, enquiring sarcastically whether he is handing her black money or indeed a bomb. After leaving the shop,

¹⁰⁷ Whispers is a popular brand of sanitary pads sold in India, manufactured by the international company Procter and Gamble.

¹⁰⁸ "Locations," Procter & Gamble USA, Accessed September 11, 2019, <https://us.pg.com/locations/>.

¹⁰⁹ Jyoti Puri, *Woman, Body, Desire in Post-colonial India: Narratives of Gender and Sexuality* (London: Routledge, 1999), 56-57.

Devika, fueled with indignation, decides to walk through the streets of Jaipur with the pack of pads clearly visible to others. This candid display soon catches the attention of another woman passing by who in turn registers surprise, shock even, at such an apparent lack of discretion. Devika's *witchcraft* is grounded in her bravery and in her conviction that certain social norms are oppressive and should be either ignored or challenged. The fact that she ridicules the chemist himself about giving her black money in a black bag clearly shows that she considers taboos around menstruation and sanitary pads completely unnecessary. She even points out that half of the population uses these pads, so why treat them as something secret? Another demonstration of a witch is the simple walk through the busy street with the pack in her hands. The scene gives the impression that Devika wants other people to see the pads in her hand and that she intends to break the taboo and in turn possibly inspire other women to follow.

In the next scene Devika and Chandini are at home to meet with Devika's aunt while her mother stands by holding a plate of sweets. Devika, wanting to have some of the sweets, tosses the pack of pads to her aunt who clumsily drops them in apparent shock and dismay. This scene may be a little difficult to decipher as it shows a middle aged woman being made to look awkward and scandalized. However, this scene does present Devika's character going out of her way to be shocking, to provoke and cross the boundaries of what is generally considered an acceptable behavior. It is possible that the pack of pads becomes a symbol of change of attitudes. By throwing the pack at her aunt, Devika may want to induce shock in her and via that demonstrate that sanitary pads are not filthy objects but a natural part of all women's lives and her aunt should better get used to this fact even though all her life she has most probably been taught and told otherwise.

Devika and Chandini exit the house to the garden where, as they dance to some music, they are approached by Srikant and his friend. Srikant then attempts to dance with Devika but after several attempts to do so Devika, for reasons not immediately clear, runs away. This reaction, to flee rather than confront a situation of conflict, presents the audience with an unexpected inconsistency with her character. In all the previous scenes she is portrayed as strong, forthright and independent, a typical archetypal *witch* who doesn't get intimidated. Why she doesn't react accordingly but instead retreats is not really clear; a possible explanation may be that because of the need for peace within her family she decides to avoid any further conflict, displaying

selflessness and maturity. Or maybe, deep down inside, she isn't as tough as she presents herself to be.

However, Devika, hurries from the scene to Aruna's room to plead with her sister against getting married. Aruna reacts by accusing Devika of flirting with her husband-to-be and of being jealous to which Devika sarcastically responds saying that there is no way she could be envious of such a "lucky girl" and she uses a very sanskritized expression for a lucky girl, "bhagyashree".¹¹⁰

The sarcasm in Devika's words also implies that she is aware of Aruna acting like a *weaver* whose behavior serves to preserve the patriarchal system and in contrast to everything the *witch* stands for. Aruna calls Devika lazy and difficult and tells her that because of her age (22) she too will soon be married, to which Devika responds by saying she would never get married to a man like Srikant implying that Aruna seems to consider marriage as some kind of rights-of-passage, not seeming to care at all about what kind of man she is actually going to get married to.

After exiting Aruna's room Devika is once more confronted by Srikant who, blocking her way, pleads that they go to her room at once, "I want to see your room, show me your room!" he demands. To Srikant's surprise, and the audiences too no doubt, Devika agrees to his demands and invites him to come to her room later that day. However, as Devika turns away to leave we see her smile to herself and immediately we realize that all is not what quite what it seems. The scene that follows is the one we saw at the beginning of the episode and it is revealed that it was Devika's plan all along to lure Srikant to her room and to expose him as immoral and perfidious. She was perhaps hoping that when her cousin witnesses her future husband attempting sexual interaction with another woman, she would realize that he is not the kind of man she should marry. Despite Devika's good intentions though her attempts backfire and the whole situation turns against her.

In the next scene we witness another confrontation between Aruna, Srikant and Devika in which Aruna slaps Devika further to Srikant again proclaiming his innocence. Aruna tells Devika: "No matter how he is, he is my to-be husband and he has chosen me, so stay away from our lives." To

¹¹⁰ According to native Hindi speakers, "bhagyashree" is a term used in informal conversations to address a girl who "was born with a golden spoon in her mouth", a girl who always had the comfort and never needed to make an effort of her own to achieve something in her life. It is often used to mock rich and at the same time traditional women. The information was retrieved from an interview with a native Hindi speaker, conducted on September 2, 2019 and the interviewee wishes to stay anonymous.

which Devika responds by saying “But he is so sleazy.” However, much to Devika’s surprise, Aruna replies “I know he is. He is a man after all and all men are like that!” Annis Pratt suggests that female characters in fiction who become wives of so called *gothic villians* choose to do so, allowing the man to invade their authenticity as if it was inevitable.¹¹¹ Aruna is such a character it would seem. She apparently does not believe in the concept of equal marriage, she does not care about her own authenticity nor the concept of a woman’s own authenticity. Maybe deep inside she was fully aware of her groom’s bad character and yet she was prepared to tolerate it and adjust to the inevitable state of affairs and personifies the identity of *adjuster*. Though her presumption that “all men are like that” may source in her previous negative experiences with men and she has decided to distance from any emotions or attempts to find marriage with love. Regardless that she is aware of her position in the patriarchal system of these men and she is prepared to take and to protect her position against the *witch*, Devika, who poses a threat to this position and the order of the system. Eventually, Devika is called a “slut” both by her cousin and also by her mother who enters the room at that very moment. The mother says Srikant told her everything that happened and that she won’t even touch Devika as she has become such a huge source of shame to the family. She commands Devika to stay in her room thus denying her taking part in the wedding celebrations.

Later Devika starts drinking heavily and as a consequence determines ‘to jinx’ the wedding by going to shut off the power to the whole house. However, when she arrives at the rooftop where the mains are located, she meets a young attractive man who, by incredible coincidence, is actually attempting to do the same thing as her!

3.2. Episode 2¹¹²: The “Witch” against the “Gothic Villain”

In the first scene of this episode we see Aruna in her wedding dress descending stairs towards a car, crying, her mother holding her by the arms. A few steps behind her walks Srikant, also crying, his cheeks being wiped by the young man we saw previously in the last episode. They are being watched by Devika and two women standing next to her. “Vimla, I understand the bride is crying because she is going away but why is the groom crying?” Devika joins the conversation

¹¹¹ Annis Pratt, *Archetypal Patterns in Women’s Fiction* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1982), 48.

¹¹² Dev DD, “Yah Shaadi Cancel!,” *ALTBalaji* video, 16:35, April 21, 2017, Accessed September 28, 2019 at <https://www.altbalaji.com/show/123>.

and explains: “Aunty, I heard that the groom was thrashed.” And the aunty asks “But how did that happen?”

It is a common tradition in India that after marriage it is the bride that leaves the house and goes to the so called *sasural*.¹¹³ The fact that one of the onlookers points out that she understands why the bride is crying means that it is commonly presumed that the bride feels upset about leaving her house and her parents and goes to a house she is not familiar with. Henrike Donner in her book *Domestic Goddesses* describes that in Kolkata [as in most parts of India] not only is the bride expected to relocate to her in-laws’ house after the marriage, but her own happiness is also to subjugated to the one of all the family members.¹¹⁴ It is then understandable that the bride gets upset and cries because she doesn’t know what exactly to expect from her new family.

The next scene starts with a shot of the agitation in the house caused by the leading heroine’s actions in the previous episode and does something unacceptable for a “well-mannered” Indian woman. She sneaks out of the house with the same man from the rooftop and on a motorbike drives off with him into the night. Omitting all the predictable risks of getting raped or kidnapped, even if the man was known to her, she would still be considered a disgrace to her family for the simple fact of leaving the house with a man whom she was not allowed to be with, who is neither her husband nor other relative as the patriarchal system requires.

In the next scene we are introduced to a new character, Parth, the young attractive man who attended the wedding uninvited only to spoil it at the end of the first episode. His character is *connotatively* depicted as likeable by both his attractive looks and anti-patriarchal attitudes, which are revealed to the viewer in this scene:

Parth and Devika drive to the Nahargarh fort, where they find a quiet rooftop with the apparent intention to spend time on their own. Devika confesses having made a video of Srikant “humping the bed” and Parth in return that he intended to take a revenge on Srikant, for he had humiliated his friend as he rejected her to be his bride due to her being “too dark”. Both characters, Devika and Parth, at this point demonstrate sense for justice or rather an alliance against the antagonistic

¹¹³ Hindi word used for the woman’s in-laws’ house.

¹¹⁴ Henrike Donner, *Domestic Goddesses: maternity, globalization and middle-class identity in contemporary India* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2008),73.

character of Srikant who has so far only been depicted as narrow-minded, dishonest and certainly ill-mannered towards women.

Preference for brides of fair color is common in India. “Indians have great love for fair skin. No one directly wants to talk about it but the love is so apparent that many actions reflect it. Matrimonial advertisements of all castes and religion in national newspaper [Hindustan times] can provide a great insight into the one constant attribute in a potential partner - fair skin.”¹¹⁵ For instance, in the matrimonial advertisement section of The Hindu online, it is quite standard for grooms to require fair skin from their future brides especially when they consider themselves “fair”. “Very Fair, Handsome, Clean Habits, Rich, 176cms 31yrs Seeks Well Educated, Very Fair Bride.”¹¹⁶ Advertisements like these are to be found throughout the matrimonial advertising sphere in India and they are a proof that women with darker complexion are subject to discrimination.

The viewer is now presented with the fact that Parth stole Srikant’s ring as he jokingly presents it to Devika, asking her to marry him but she answers him by making a face suggesting exasperation. In the next scene we are taken to the wedding party in the next scene where the disappearance of the ring caused a commotion, where we see how Chandini reveals to Devika’s father that his daughter and wife had an argument. In defense, the mother says to the father “She is out of control!” but the father with a surprisingly calm attitude answers “She has been out of control since she was two. Accept it!” The father tolerates a lot of her rash behavior for he seems to understand both her youth rebelliousness and also because he apparently didn’t intend to control her and bring her up as a submissive person. The Hindi expression *gadah pachisi* meaning “donkey’s 25” is commonly used to describe the perceived stereotypical behavior that youths demonstrate in the first 25 years of their lives, including being indiscreet, impulsive, unwise, foolish etc. and it is advised to be ignored and understood by the elders.¹¹⁷ Devika does demonstrate this behavior and her father so far ignores it and what more, advises the mother to do

¹¹⁵ Neha Mishra, “India and Colorism: The Finer Nuances,” *Washington University Global Studies Law Review* 14, no. 4 (2015): 738.

¹¹⁶ “Matrimonial news,” *The Hindu*, Accessed October 6, 2019, <https://www.thehindu.com/classifieds/matrimonial/?categoryName=bride&page=2>.

¹¹⁷ Durganand Sinha, “The Young and the Old - Ambiguity of Role-models and Values among Indian Youth,” in *Identity and Adulthood*, ed. Sudhir Kakar (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1979), 56-57.

so too, possibly hoping for his daughter to transform her rebelliousness into maturity and wisdom of a strong personality in the future.

In the next scene at the Nahargarh fort we see Devika taking a joint of marijuana out of her purse, by which she reinforces her archetype of *witch* who does what according to the society she shouldn't do. We can consider this joint of marijuana as a *syntagmatic connotation*, having the same meaning as the alcohol and cigarettes in the previous episode, and that is a symbol of rebellion against social norms. Parth again teases her to marry him and she replies "I am not interested in *marriage-varriage*"¹¹⁸. She thus openly refuses her womanly role that society expects from her. Not caring about what she *should* do according to the patriarchal system. However, the flirtatious interaction of Devika and Parth continues until the point when her father calls her, Parth picks up the phone and Devika has to make up a story about being with some uncle. Even though her father appears to be liberal, Devika is still very uncomfortable with telling him she is out with some man and gets angry at Parth for picking up the phone "What if dad would have got to know about it?". The inconsistency in her behavior is again now apparent to the viewer. Even though she tries hard to be the *witch*, at this point she supports the patriarchal need of fathers to think of their daughters as pure and chaste. Parth asks: "Now suddenly you have become *sati Savitri*?" According to the mythology, Savitri saved her husband from the death and is one of the ideals of good Hindu women¹¹⁹ - i.e. good wife. "I am a *slutty Savitri*!" answers Devika and underpins the apparent fact that she is not what the idea of an ideal Hindu woman, in fact ridicules the symbolism of Savitri and transforms it the a form of oxymoron.

The next scene is set back in the house the viewer is confronted with Srikant shouting at Aruna and her family as he complains about their poor hospitality. Despite Aruna's pleading and tears Srikant wants to cancel the wedding. Aruna, the *weaver*, whose life has just been stained by a patriarchal *gothic villain* not caring about anyone else's wellbeing but his own, sobs saying she will never get married now.

Even though Devika is a *witch* traditionally looked upon in a negative way, in the upcoming scene she uses her *witchcraft* against the *gothic villain*, Srikant, as she reveals to him that she has a video of his sexual simulation in the opening scene and threatens to upload it on to Youtube. In

¹¹⁸ Mixed term of English and Hindi meaning "marriage and similar things".

¹¹⁹ Prabhati Mukherjee, *Hindu Women Normative Models* (Calcutta: Sangam Books Limited, 1993), 41.

defense Srikant says “You won’t upload it because you will be dishonored the most.” to which she replies that she doesn’t care: “My sister hates me but she wants all this wedding and stuff. Listen to me carefully, conclude the wedding, conclude the farewell and take my sister away and if I hear any complaint from her ever, this clip will go viral and you will be defamed forever.” By saying so Devika shows sympathy for Aruna’s emotions but at the same time helps her maintain her desired position in the patriarchal system, because it is apparently the only role she would be happy with and without it she would feel lost as indicated by her weeping at the idea of not being able to marry again. Devika and Parth thus force Srikant to apologize to Aruna and marry her. The *weaver*’s position has been secured as she wipes her tears and begins to smile.

The second episode concludes with Devika and Parth kissing each other in a way that would be censored in Indian cinema as it shows the man and a woman touching each other’s lips and tongues. Devika’s mother is reduced to tears by the sight of her daughter behaving in a way that in India is considered unchaste.

3.3. Episode 3¹²⁰: Pleasures of the “Witch”

The third episode begins with the main protagonist, Devika, shocked as she discovers Chandini in the bed kissing another girl. Devika’s first reaction is surprise, followed by her yelling “I’m so sorry, it’s okay!”. Her loud screams apparently caught attention of Chandini’s mother, who now enters the door, drops a plate with ritual flowers and her expression is beyond shocked, in fact she looks horrified. The scene then freezes and the picture goes grey as we are taken to a few weeks back in time to the scene of Devika and Parth kissing, at the end of episode two.

In the next scene Devika and her mother enter her room while Devika attempts to chat about the wedding the mother stops her by saying: “Shut up! What is going on? During the farewell with that boy - disgusting!” The *collaborator of patriarchy* in the mother demonstrates again as she scolds her daughter for an apparent deflection from the norm of the patriarchal order she defends. Devika tries to rationalize with mother by saying “What’s disgusting mom? Didn’t you ever kiss anyone?” but meets with another scolding reaction “Back in those days we never even looked at boys, forget about kissing them.” She makes Devika swear that she will not see the boy ever again on which Devika agrees but as soon as the mother leaves the room, she ignores her plight,

¹²⁰ Dev DD, “Horny OK Please,” *ALTBalaji* video, 19:01, April 21, 2017, Accessed September 30, 2019 at <https://www.altbalaji.com/show/123>.

sends Parth a text message and suggests a meeting. The mother apparently thinks that by forbidding her daughter from meeting Parth, she protects her even though she practically attempts to restrict her freedom and thus her archetypal projection of the *collaborator of patriarchy* clearly crystallizes and is now obvious to the viewer.

The next shot is of Devika approaching the chemist counter, where she asks for condoms with an expression that suggests excitement and happiness. Both the chemist and a man, probably another customer standing next to her, give her a gaze of shock. They are shocked doubtlessly because it is unseen for Indian women, especially in a small town, to buy condoms. It is indicatory that she intends to have sex and isn't ashamed of others knowing. "What are you looking at? We girls need to be really careful." Not only she demonstrates being in control of her reproduction, but by selecting whole range of condom flavors she also makes known that she knows her preferences and enjoyment when it comes to sexual interaction. As she puts a number of condom packets in her bag a bit of discomfort is visible in her expression for she is still being stared at by these two men. "Please don't judge me. If I come to buy pregnancy test kit tomorrow, you will judge me even more." She sends the message of responsible sexual behavior and completely puts aside the fact that they would judge her anyway just for the simple reason that she is a young woman who doesn't hide her intentions of having sex. "Women who are overly sexualized are considered to be unclean, immoral and even pathological... somehow, if women are too beautiful or too sexual, men's sense of pleasure - or power - is diminished."¹²¹ She, the *witch*, is a threat to their cultural notion of masculinity and to their position of superiority and control in the patriarchal system. The scene is concluded with Devika smiling as she leaves the counter while the rock theme music *connotatively* implies her accomplished act of rebellion, her mission to buy instruments for her own pleasure was accomplished as well as cracking the nutshell of another taboo in front of those men.

A substantial part of the episode consists of various scenes depicting Devika and Parth trying to find privacy since public displays of affection are not tolerated in India (and as they both live with their parents, their own bedrooms are not an option). The couple's efforts to find a place to have sex further proceed to Parth's friend's room which is abundantly decorated with religious images and symbols depicting a number of gods from the Hindu pantheon. Devika explains that

¹²¹ Cheryl Brown Travis and Kayce L Meginnis and Kristin M. Bardari, "Beauty, Sexuality, and Identity: The Social Control of Women," *Sexuality, Society and Feminism*, ed. Jacqueline W. White and Cheryl Brown Travis (Washington DC: American Psychological Association, 2000), 240.

her sexual arousal is numbed by the present of sacred objects and also by the lack of cleanliness in the room. “I don’t think we need protection. The whole room is contraceptive. No, we are not doing it here.” Her refusal to have sex surrounded by religious pictures may source in either her respect for these idols, in superstition or in the simple discomfort with the room that symbolizes the basis of the society that doesn’t approve of sexual interactions before the “sacred union” of marriage.

It is quite difficult to find a private place for intimacies for unmarried couples in India, as if the guardians of the patriarchal order meant to make chances for sex between young couples as minimum as possible. Hotels in many cases ask for marriage certificate before they confirm the reservation, even though for foreign couples this rule in majority of cases doesn’t apply. Yet, there is no such law in India that would forbid unmarried couples to stay together in a hotel room. It almost seems as if the hotel owners across India cared only about the chastity of Indian women since they are part of their own patriarchal system and their own cultural identity. For instance, in 2015 Mumbai police dragged 40 couples out of a hotel and charged them for public indecency.¹²² This series draws attention to the problems young couples face and again, reads the problematic with a *resisting* approach, as it doesn’t portray the couple in a negative way, as almost outlaws, just like they are often treated in reality, but contrarily sympathizes with them which reflects in the atmosphere induced in the scenes.

Devika and Parth at last decide to ask Chandini to let them be alone in her bedroom. “I’m so horny, I need your room just for an hour!” says Devika and by such attitude she distinguishes herself from the archetype of a *dancer*, who tends to please men sexually for their pleasure and not her own. By the simple fact that she was the one who asked for sex in the first place, expressed lack of sexual arousal in a religiously decorated room and actually uttered “I am so horny” she proved that she cares about her own pleasure the most and that the man is her companion in pleasure and not someone she would dedicate herself to for his pleasure only.

What follows is a compilation of different shots from Devika and Parth’s romantic physical interactions in Chandini’s room, suggesting the viewer that they found a sanctuary where they come on regular basis. The scenes show the two characters kissing and removing their tops. What is of notice is the fact that we never see more than topless Parth and Devika in a bra and trousers.

¹²² Sara Malm, “40 Couples Dragged out of Hotels by Mumbai Police for Being Unmarried,” Daily Mail Online (Associated Newspapers, August 11, 2015), Accessed October 20, 2019, <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3193566/Forty-couples-dragged-hotel-rooms-police-arrested-indecent-behaviour-Mumbai-unmarried.html>.

At no point we see any excessive nudity and yet we see more than in most Indian films and TV. Even though to many Indian viewers this scene may appear as obscene, none of the shots is focused on specific parts of their bodies. Devika in fact doesn't show more of her body than women who wear traditional *choli*. It is interesting that even though we watch an assumable erotic scene, Devika's body is not sexualized and hence the scene doesn't attract the viewer for the sake of *sexual pleasure* but rather makes him or her happy for the couple to finally have found the chance to move their relationship to another level. The viewer feels *pleasure from identifying*¹²³ with the plights and joys of the heroes.

3.4. Episode 4¹²⁴: The Homosexual as an "Outsider"

In the first scene we are confronted with the drama in Chandini's house where she has just been surprised both by Devika and her mother while kissing a girl in her bedroom. We witness a short yet crucial dialogue between the mother and daughter: "Chandini, what was going on? I went to lord Shiva's temple to ask for a suitable groom for you and you were... Did I not do enough as a parent?" by the end of her speech she is in tears and on Chandini's attempts to console her she says: "Now I will stop crying only when you're fully cured!" Devika and Chandini look at each other with apparent expression of astonishment blended with worry. The mother continues: "But, don't worry my child, I will send you to our guru's ashram tomorrow itself. She is the one who cured your aunt as well. She will cure you with love and discipline." Devika interrupts the mother and ridicules her ideas "But why only love and discipline? Chandini will be cured with prayers, devoutness and piety. I mean what can go wrong in an all-chicks ashram for hot lesbians?" Then the mother's realization makes her sit as she exclaims "My daughter is a lesbos. Did you hear that Chandini, you are a lesbos!" the scene takes twist when Chandini suggests that her mother is overreacting. The mother suddenly grabs her by the hair but at that moment Devika intervenes to prevent the mother from further assaulting her. "I've brought you up without a father, that's why you are like this. Just you wait! Let me call your uncle from Bikaner, once you get a thrashing from a man, you will sober up!"

A new lesbian-themed storyline opens up to the viewer. At the beginning and also at the end of the third episode it was hinted that this revelation will entangle dramatic denouement. Chandini's

¹²³ Laura Mulvey, *Visual and other pleasures* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989), 15.

¹²⁴ Dev DD, "Love of Every Kind," *ALTBalaji* video, 16:46, April 21, 2017, Accessed October 2, 2019 at <https://www.altbalaji.com/show/123>.

mother's character now clearly manifests as the archetype of the *collaborator of patriarchy* for she condemns her daughter for deflection from the patriarchal norms. Not only does the mother judge and condemn her daughter for a different sexual orientation, she consoles herself with the vision of "correcting" her so that she can be "normal" again. The fact that the mother confuses the word *lesbian* for *Lesbos* and thus uses the name of a Greek island instead of the actual term for a homosexual woman shows that the screenplay writers wished to highlight the mother's lack of awareness, education and above all her narrow-mindedness. To the viewer it almost seems that the mother is simple minded for she doesn't know what she is talking about and possibly it is meant to make the viewer instantly sympathize with Chandini who, according to the Indian social norms is indeed "abnormal". The mother makes Chandini look and certainly feel like a complete alien and in fact, she does indeed become what in Annis Pratt's book is described as the archetype of *outsider*, who is an alien in her own country or in her own home if she doesn't behave as is expected from her and she is likely to be cast out.¹²⁵ In this case, though, the mother feels the need to "save" her daughter instead of casting her out, to make her "normal" again through penance in ashram as she originally suggests or with the help of the uncle from Bikaner who should use violence to "suppress and destroy" her homosexuality.

With the tool of *resisting reading*, it is necessary to point out that the mother blames her daughter's homosexuality on the fact that she was brought up without a father, in a family that is not the patriarchal standard. The utterance of the mother is not challenged and it comes around almost as an accepted notion. Nonetheless, there is a possibility that the writers inserted this sentence in the script only in order to answer the viewer's question about the attitude of the father to his daughter's homosexuality.

Homosexuality is still a taboo in most parts of the world. Even though lesbian and gay groups are trying to achieve visibility in India, they often meet with various forms of homophobia and what is more, they also face allegations that homosexuality is not natural to India and hence it is a foreign import.¹²⁶ However, in the Law Code of Manu which dates back approximately two millennia back in Indian history, we already find notes on homosexuality included lesbianism which disproves the above-mentioned allegations. "If a virgin violates another virgin, she should

¹²⁵ Annis Pratt, *Archetypal Patterns in Women's Fiction* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1982), 67.

¹²⁶ Jyoti Puri, *Woman, Body, Desire in Post-colonial India: Narratives of Gender and Sexuality* (London: Routledge, 1999), 172.

be fined 200, pay three times the bride-price, and receive ten lashes. When a woman violates a virgin, however, her head ought to be shaved immediately - alternatively, two of her fingers should be cut off - and she should be paraded on a donkey.”¹²⁷ This extract also suggests that lesbianism has been understood as something shameful and unacceptable since the ancient period in India.

Another scene is set in Devika’s room where she has a chat with Chandini about her homosexuality. Upon acceptance of a joint from Devika, Chandni says: “My mother thinks that I am a freak. Government says I am a criminal. At least I deserve a joint, right?” On Devika’s question about when did Chandini realize she was a lesbian Chandini answers with yet another question “When did you realize you were straight?” By this dialogue the writers possibly meant to highlight that being a lesbian is nothing extraordinary, one realizes his/her homosexuality just like another realizes his/her heterosexuality. The show is being *resisting* towards misleading myths about homosexuality and tries to approach the problematic with common sense, depicting the heroine as just a “normal young girl who likes girls” and not like a young girl who is “abnormal because she likes girls” just like her mother implied. At the end of the conversation, Devika consoles Chandini that the mother will cool down after a few days and Chandini sighs possibly hoping that mother’s love is stronger than prejudice.

When this series was being shot, “unnatural sex” was indeed a crime in India. However, since September 6th 2018 homosexuality has been decriminalized by the Indian government. “The court has now ruled discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation as a fundamental violation of rights.”¹²⁸ Scrapping the colonial-era law was a milestone in the lives of the LGBT people in India, even though their journey towards social acceptance is definitely not at its successful end.

In the next scene Devika and Chandini arrive to Chandini’s house, where they are expected by the mother and the uncle from Bikaner, who came to “correct” Chandini. “Where did you go? I asked you not to leave the house, didn’t I? Your uncle will take you back with him today and once you are cured, get you married off as well.” says the mother to the perplexed Chandini while sprinkling ritual flower water over her. The uncle from Bikaner adds. “Just leave her with me for

¹²⁷ Manu, *The Law Code of Manu*, transl. Patrick Olivelle (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 150.

¹²⁸ “India Court Legalises Gay Sex in Landmark Ruling,” BBC News (BBC, September 6, 2018), Accessed October 20, 2019, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-india-45429664>.

three days Sarla. I will get rid of all her newfangled notions!” As Chandini enters her room she notices all the posters of her film heroines torn off and posters of male heroes stuck on her closet instead. She confesses that she can’t live like this and with Devika’s encouragement she decides to leave home and go to Mumbai, where she was to go for a job interview anyway.

Annis Pratt describes that “Battles about dominance and submission, self-punishment and despair before gender norms characterize many novels of love and friendship between women - often resulting in excessively punitive denouements.”¹²⁹ Chandini is disappointed by her mother’s actions as is suggested by her facial expression as she says she can’t live like this anymore. She refuses to comply and leave with uncle from Bikaner, who would use presumably unpleasant methods while trying to change her sexual orientation. Chandini doesn’t seem to even consider sacrificing her sexuality and her identity just because her mother, *the collaborator of patriarchy*, thinks it is the best for her and orders her to do so as if there was no other option. Staying at home doesn’t seem like an option as both the mother and uncle from Bikaner are determined to “correct” her even by force. Chandini thus becomes archetypal *witch* as she decides to leave and prioritize her own feelings and interests above norms of the patriarchal system which her mother honors.

3.5. Episode 5¹³⁰: “Collaborators of Patriarchy” against the “Witch”

The plot of the fifth episode begins with Parth’s mother busting Devika in his room. “Who is this girl? What is happening behind my back?” The mother is seemingly very unhappy about finding her son having presumably sexual interaction without her knowledge. “Give me her residence number, right now!” Yet another character archetypically classified as *collaborator of patriarchy* has entered the story. This first and short encounter with her character can hint us her inclination towards this archetype as she gets scandalized by finding a girl in her adult son’s bedroom and needs to inform the girl’s parents because her sexual freedom must be put under control.

At this point of time we have identified a number of *collaborators of patriarchy* archetypes. All of them were middle-aged women and mothers whose actions were ostracizing younger women’s freedom in order to keep them within the “safe” boundaries of the patriarchal system. The series

¹²⁹ Annis Pratt, *Archetypal Patterns in Women’s Fiction* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1982), 95.

¹³⁰ Dev DD, “Serious Delirious,” *ALTBalaji* video, 21:59, April 21, 2017, Accessed October 4, 2019 at <https://www.altbalaji.com/show/123>.

portrays them in a rather negative light by making them look unreasonable and at times almost malevolent and thus takes its stand towards such behavior of these women.

In the next scene we see Devika sitting on a bed in her room watching her parents shouting at each other as they try to blame one another for their daughter's behavior until she shouts: "Stop it! Why are you two overreacting? I am almost 22, what's so shocking about me having a boyfriend? At least I didn't drink and run over someone on the road like Mr. Sharma's son!" Despite Devika's attempts to rationalize with her parents, they don't seem to listen. Her mother again asks why Devika can't be like other girls and gives example of her cousin Aruna, the archetypal *weaver*, whom we saw in the first and second episode. The mother says that Aruna didn't even have male friends before marriage and thus appreciates her character and tries to influence her *witch-like* daughter whom she would like to turn into the conforming *weaver*, accepting her role in the patriarchal system. Devika categorically refuses that, she doesn't want to become like Aruna because she will not conform and exchange her freedom of choice and freedom of sexual expression for a comfortable yet inferior position in the patriarchal system. At this point it is noticeable that the series approaches *resistively* towards the social views of women being morally corrupted if they "dare" having a boyfriend, i.e. someone they are not married to and yet have emotional and physical relationship with, which is looked upon as illegitimate because it has not been approved by the parents who consider themselves having the right to control their adult children's life. The fact that Devika mentions certain man, possibly her peer, running over someone while being drunk and contrasts it with the fact that her parents judge her for having a boyfriend is a point where the series rationalizes and challenges illogical notions of this kind.

In the next few shots we see Devika trying to interact with her parents during various daily encounters in the house, but they treat her as if she didn't exist. She broke the rules of chastity; she crossed the acceptable line and became contaminated because she had a relationship with a man without being married to him, without having the permission to do so and she is not ashamed of it. The parents are choosing to distance themselves from her as a display of disapproval of her actions; they punish her by ignoring her presence in the house. They punish her for her "deviance" and rebellion which is analogous to the punishments of *witches*, as Annis Pratt describes in her book¹³¹. *Witches* were punished for their deeds that were disliked by the

¹³¹ Annis Pratt, *Archetypal Patterns in Women's Fiction* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1982), 175.

society, even though those deeds were more often than not of no malicious character, they simply posed a threat to the tradition and power of patriarchal societies.

In the next scene we see the mother approaching Devika's bed in order to wake her up. Before she does so, though, she grabs a pack of cigarettes from her bedside table and puts it on the floor next to an almost empty bottle of rum and pushes it further under the bed. The cigarettes and the bottle of rum may be in this case perceived as symbols of Devika's defiance and her refusal of the chaste role of a girl in the marriageable age. By manipulating these objects without scolding Devika for keeping them and by pushing them further under the bed it is as if the mother symbolically decided to put Devika's "past" of a rebellious girl to the background, put it further under the bed where nobody can see it, not even Devika. In the following shot the viewer is revealed why she did so as she puts a caring motherly smile on her face and wakes Devika up. "Devika? Vicky, get up! Come on, get up! Now freshen up and get ready quickly! Some special people are visiting."

As is revealed in the next scene, the mother has invited Parth with his parents to the house for marriage negotiations, thus possibly attempting to save her daughter's and the family's reputation. Her behavior from the previous scene is hence explained for she would willingly forgive her daughter and accept her in case she does things the "proper" way as the social norms dictate.

We see Parth and his parents approaching the threshold of the house as Devika's mother receives them with enthusiasm. Devika comes to the porch, wearing a t-shirt with a logo saying "Don't kill my vibe" which *pragmatically connotes* her persisting defiance towards her mother's conventional intentions.

They all now sit in the living room and the marriage negotiations start. Parth's family seems to be of a higher social rank judging by the haughty behavior of the parents. Devika's mother tries to highlight Devika's studiousness as the father grins at the absurdity of his wife's pretense. After Parth's mother says that they came to meet Devika, Devika's father says he would also like to get to know Parth and asks him what he does. Almost in defense, Parth's mother replies with irritation: "He doesn't need to work. His father has three showrooms." Parth only smiles as his father adds that they have given him freedom to have fun now before he is passed on the business. "Devika, what are your plans?" Parth's mother asks. "Aunty, I haven't thought about it.

Hopefully, I will get a job in Mumbai.” Now for the first time Parth joins the conversation: “Mom, why are you interviewing her?” The mother explains: “What else can I do, dear? In our culture it is rare that the boy and the girl are already together.” What is of notice in this scene is the agency of both mothers. They, the *collaborators of patriarchy*, make the most effort to fix this marriage and maintain the patriarchal order. Parth’s mother, though, seems to have the upper hand with her arrogant attitude which manifests, among others, in her facial expression. Devika’s mother is nervous and almost anxiously tries to show her daughter in the best light possible to make the groom’s family like her. Parth’s father being apathetic and Devika’s father caring to know who this boy to marry his daughter is first, suggest that it is the women who put most effort into the maintenance of traditions and patriarchal order. In fact, Devika’s father appears as “progressive” as he would first of all want to know more about Parth’s character possibly to be able to assess whether he is good for his daughter or not, unlike her mother.

Parth’s mother then asks Devika to speak to her in private and takes her to the garden. After she mocks Devika for being a “modern girl” because she doesn’t help in the kitchen, she asks: “Before Parth, were you involved with anybody else?” and Devika replies: “Aunty, Parth and I never asked each other this question. This is between us.” The mother is not satisfied with her answer and proclaims categorically: “If you want to be our daughter-in-law then you should make a few changes. Like forget about going to Mumbai. Anyway, in a year you will give us a grandson. Wearing such kind of clothes, roaming around on a bike... This won’t be tolerated in our family.” In reaction Devika asks: “Aunty, don’t you think you are trying to change me, more than trying to get to know me?” and the mother replies: “You won’t understand now. But a woman’s happiness lies only in handling the kitchen in her in-laws’ house.” Devika then gives up leading this conversation further and suggests returning back to the house.

This crucial dialogue between Parth’s mother and Devika further elaborates the relationship between a *collaborator of patriarchy* and a *witch*. The mother doesn’t care about what Devika is like as long as she is corresponding to the patriarchal idea of a good daughter-in-law. She doesn’t want a *witch* in the family, but a *weaver* and by eliminating all the traits and features she mentioned Devika would only then have a chance to be accepted. The fact that she utters the expression “modern girl” in a pejorative way suggests that this trait is undesirable in patriarchy as well.

The relationships between mothers and daughters-in-law are quite specific. Marriage of a man may bring forward the conflict between his relationship with his mother and his relationship with his wife. While mother is the protective element in his life and a wife with her sexuality may be seen as dangerous. “It is well known that sexual intercourse is considered dangerous for a man as it leads to loss of semen. Semen is considered to be concentrated blood and a woman who makes repeated demands on her husband can make him ill and tired.”¹³² The potential mother-in-law needs to make sure her daughter-in-law will accept her inferior position and by inquiring about her sexual life, she tries to make sure her son will be her only sexual partner which confirms the need of securing the assurance of no doubt regarding the future progeny’s paternity. The mother-in-law needs the daughter in law to be completely obedient and “pacified”.

Devika then asks Parth for a talk in private before the marriage negotiations develop further. They go to Devika’s room where Parth sits as she paces up and down restlessly. “What happened? You don’t seem excited about our marriage.” He asks. Devika asks in return: “Tell me the truth, Parth. Do you want me to change? Do you want me to become some fucking ideal homemaker?” and her tension with his lack of sympathy escalates: “Your mom told me I can’t work after we get married. And I can’t wear these kind of clothes. I can’t go to Mumbai if I want to. I can’t go out with my friends.” Parth explains: “Chill, I will take you to Mumbai. As far as clothes are concerned, when we travel and go abroad you can wear whatever you want. Why do you need to work? I have three showrooms. We have lots of money. So chill and enjoy life.” Devika almost shouts in defense: “But what if I want to work? What if I want to wear the clothes of my choice? What if I don’t want a kid within a year of our marriage? And God forbid if it is not a boy, then?” Parth tries to calm her down: “But we will obviously have kids after marriage. So, I mean the sooner the better!” Devika then possibly realizes that her lover doesn’t understand her concerns: “Fuck! No Parth! I don’t want to get married or have kids at this time of my life. I don’t want to be someone’s perfect daughter-in-law who dances on the tunes of her mother-in-law, because that’s exactly what your bloody old-fashioned narrow-minded mom wants.” Parth then stands up and shouts at her: “Hey, fuck you! Don’t talk about my mom like that! If you didn’t want this then why did you invite us?” Devika answers that it was her mother who invited them and that she is glad to have just realized what Parth really is like and she compares him to

¹³² Veena Das, “Reflections on the social construction of adulthood,” in *Identity and Adulthood*, ed. Sudhir Kakar (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1979), 99.

Srikant and Parth confirms such accusations by saying: “Remember one thing, you are a girl! And every girl has to compromise after marriage.” Devika then mocks his hypocrisy of wanting a “hot bomb” for a girlfriend and *Sati Savitri* for wife. She tells him she is done with him and makes her way back to the living room where she asks him and his parents to leave because she doesn’t want this marriage.

This scene presents a variety of phenomena the series attempts to highlight and challenge. Parth’s line “Every girl has to compromise after marriage.” underpins the fact that woman’s freedom is thought to be automatically and inevitably ostracized after marriage. Devika, the *witch* opposes this notion. First of all, she couldn’t tolerate not having the option to work. Based on various examples from women’s fictions, Annis Pratt states that “Men can combine love and work as two facets of normal lives, but women must subordinate their love and work to male priorities.”¹³³

Moreover, it is now evident that Parth agrees with his mother that Devika should “give” him a child as soon as possible, which suggests their understanding of woman’s role as instrumental. For them, the bride is to become an instrument to extend the paternal family line to next generation. Marriage and motherhood are from the cultural point of view seen as the primary gender roles for all women in India, regardless their social class.¹³⁴ Marriage as an archetypal enclosure now indeed appears as intending to take away the heroine’s authenticity.¹³⁵ The *witch*, however, prefers her own authenticity to life within the narrow borders of patriarchal institution that marriage is.

Devika’s remark “God forbid if it is not a boy, then?” while opposing the idea of having a child soon after marriage signifies that she is aware of the preference of boys over girls in the Hindu society. Boys and girls are perceived differently in Hindu families; a boy is the future heir as well as future support of the parents while a girl is thought to be somebody else’s already as she would one day be sent off as a bride. However, she does have an important role as a symbol of honor of her family.¹³⁶

¹³³ Annis Pratt, *Archetypal Patterns in Women’s Fiction* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1982), 80.

¹³⁴ Jyoti Puri, *Woman, Body, Desire in Post-colonial India: Narratives of Gender and Sexuality* (London: Routledge, 1999), 136.

¹³⁵ Annis Pratt, *Archetypal Patterns in Women’s Fiction* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1982), 45.

¹³⁶ Veena Das, “Reflections on the social construction of adulthood,” in *Identity and Adulthood*, ed. Sudhir Kakar (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1979), 90.

In general, it is more women than men who are labelled traditional or modern; nonetheless, it is significant that if a man is described as traditional or modern depends on his purported attitudes towards women.¹³⁷ Parth has proven, just like Srikant, to be the traditional type of a man, who doesn't accept women's equal position in the society. The only distinction between them is that, as Devika points out, Srikant has been obvious about being like this from the beginning, whereas Parth hypocritically stood for his female friend, cherished his "modern" girlfriend, but expects to have a traditional simple wife. This may explain Aruna's distrust towards men demonstrated in the first episode, where she thinks that all of them are essentially the same.

This breakthrough dialogue changes the dynamic of the show. Parth now turns into the archetype of a *gothic villain* but Devika refuses to let him invade her authenticity as she doesn't accept the marriage proposal which would legitimize him and his family to suppress her personal freedom in various ways.

The episode concludes with Devika in a bridal gown shouting at Parth to come out of his house and asks him to elope with her. He harshly tells her off and asks her to leave. By the time his mother calls Devika's father to take her away and the episode finishes with Devika's desperate weeping.

3.6. Episode 6¹³⁸: Banishment of the "Witch"

Devika and Chandini go to a bar/restaurant where Devika drinks alcohol while Chandini doesn't. The bar is dimly lit and we notice that in the background there are two middle aged men watching them. The drinks make Devika feel sick and Chandini goes with her to the toilet where she vomits and cries for the sake of the heartache inflicted by the recent events. Upon their exit from the toilets, the two men who previously watched them block their way. Devika starts at him: "What's your problem, uncle? You are enlivened just at the sight of a girl?" and he answers: "Madam, I am here to help you." His voice and posture imply that he is drunk. Devika raises her voice at him saying: "You are the one who need help!" Even though Chandini advises her to leave it, Devika starts hitting these men making a point that she is their daughter's age. They are on the floor as start apologizing as she takes out her phone, records them and threatens to post the

¹³⁷ Maitrayee Chaudhuri, "Indian "Modernity" and "Tradition": A Gender Analysis," *Polish Sociological Review*, no. 178 (2012), 278.

¹³⁸ Dev DD, "Heartbreak and Run," *ALTBalaji* video, 20:12, April 21, 2017, Accessed October 5, 2019 at <https://www.altbalaji.com/show/123>.

video on Facebook. As the girls leave the place, we can see the billboard saying “Family restaurant”.

In this scene the heroines faced what in Indian English is called “Eve-teasing”. Oxford online dictionary describes Eve-teasing as “physical contact, comments about sex, etc. by a man to a woman in a public place that the woman finds annoying and offensive”.¹³⁹ Collins online dictionary adds that “The reference is to Eve’s role in the Biblical fall of Man, thus implying that the victim is responsible for provoking the harassment.”¹⁴⁰ The negative connotation the term carries implies that the general idea is that the women who experience it are actually at fault. According to this notion, Devika and Chandini provoked these men by being out after dark without a male companion, by drinking alcohol and possibly by wearing clothes that are not conservative enough. All these features are in conflict with patriarchal images of a good woman’s behavior.

To ignore sexual aggressors is a culturally advised strategy for women. Ignorance should minimize their interaction with the man while offensive behavior is rather discouraged. Retaliation is not considered safe as it may harm the woman even more. In fact, women “seek to minimize sexual harassment by monitoring their clothing and behavior.”¹⁴¹ Nonetheless, Devika doesn’t want to ignore these approaches, she is the archetypal *witch* and she will not run when someone tries to intimidate her. In fact, she attacks the “eve-teasers” and her words rationalize her stand. What we see for the second time in this series is Devika using social media as a weapon of her *witchcraft* against those who try to intimidate her. The intimidators do so for the simple reason of her being a woman who doesn’t behave exactly the way the patriarchal system dictates. By threatening to expose them to the wider public, Devika’s character makes a point that a woman is not completely helpless in situation such as these and that modern technology opens option of “fighting back”.

When Devika comes back home, her parents are waiting for her. As the father requests Devika to sit next to him on a bench he starts talking, first saying that he understands what happened with

¹³⁹ “Eve-Teasing Noun - Definition, Pictures, Pronunciation and Usage Notes” Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, Accessed November 1, 2019, <https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/english/eve-teasing>.

¹⁴⁰ “Eve Teasing Definition and Meaning,” Collins English Dictionary, Accessed November 1, 2019, <https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/eve-teasing>.

¹⁴¹ Jyoti Puri, *Woman, Body, Desire in Post-colonial India: Narratives of Gender and Sexuality* (London: Routledge, 1999), 90-91.

Parth and asks Devika what will happen next but when he finds out she doesn't know, he starts explaining: "Vicky, don't you get it? You are different from other girls. You are not the girl who will get married and be a glorified maid of a family. You have a mind of your own and men find it very scary. Dear, in our society, if a guy is a no-nonsense type, then he is considered a hero. But a girl like him is considered to be a trouble-maker. And you are my trouble-maker. I raised you to be one!" Devika, listening carefully to father's words now asks: "But what is the use of being like this if the guy you love doesn't even love you back?" and she leans on his chest seeking for consolation. The father thus answers her question: "There is a benefit, dear. Because the day a man really loves you, he won't be scared of your intelligence. He will cherish you for being you. Because true love happens between equals. So wait for the man who is good enough for you. You might not want to hear this but that Parth is not the right guy for you. Promise me, this chapter ends here today." As Devika nods in agreement the dialogue is concluded.

This scene depicts the father in a very positive way as an understanding and supportive parents. What is interesting about this scene is the position of the mother who stands a few meters away and doesn't take part in the conversation but appears to be concerned about what the father tells Devika. It almost sounds as if he was supporting her in her rebellion and that undermines the mother's attempts to make her daughter adjust to her role in the patriarchal system. He is presented as a feminist father who doesn't bring up his daughter differently just because she is a girl. He cherishes her defiant character despite the fact that as a patriarch in the patriarchal society he should make sure his daughter is obedient and conforming to the rules imposed on her by tradition. He appears to be the masculine version of what Renata Svobodová describes as the archetype of a *helper*.¹⁴² He stands by her and protects her in a difficult situation such as this, giving her advice that doesn't lead towards her subordination to the system. He believes in love between equals and interestingly admits that men are scared of intelligent women.

This scene also underpins the archetypal feature of the *growing-up-grotesque*.¹⁴³ Led by her father to be independent in her opinions and to have a strong and sound character, Devika's expectations for self-realization in this world meet the wall of the social norms that don't allow

¹⁴² Renata Svobodová, "Genderový aspekt porušování společenských rolí v románu indické autarky. Arundhati Royová a její přadleny, čarodějnice, přísluhovačky," in *Konstruování genderu v asijských literaturách*, ed. Blanka Knotková-Čapková (Praha: Česká orientalistická společnost, 2005), 171.

¹⁴³ Annis Pratt, *Archetypal Patterns in Women's Fiction* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1982), 29.

her to do so. She is upset and frustrated that her lover wants to restrict her after the marriage and that she would lose all that she was taught to be and got used to having.

In the next scene, we find Devika sitting in a café with Chandini. By chance, Parth with Suman, the same girl we saw with him in episode 4, are there too. As soon as Devika notices them, she wants to leave, but Suman comes to her table first and deliberately provokes her by giving her invitation card to her and Parth's engagement party. Chandini answers for Devika saying she is not interested while Suman asks: "It was her dream to see Parth as a groom. So let her come, at least her one wish will be fulfilled." On Suman's further provocation where she talks about Devika coming to see them "seal the deal" Devika reacts in defense saying: "You know what? I have kind of broken his seal many, many, many times." To contrast Devika's rebelliousness and sexual experience, Suman says: "Anyway, I saved myself for marriage unlike you." In answer to that Devika then describes various sexual activities she did with Parth and when Suman notes "He is all mine now!" Devika replies: "Keep him! Anyway, he has been used so many times. Next time he is on the top of you, remember that I was there before, many times."

Another character of an archetypal *weaver* appears in the narrative. Suman, Parth's fiancé goes out of her way to approach Devika, the *witch*, and tries to demean and upset her. As Devika answers, attempting to objectify Parth, Suman misses the point and stresses what the patriarchal system considers to be a virtue and that is for a woman to be a virgin before marriage. By doing so she tries to make herself look superior to Devika, the *witch* who has lost her virginity before marriage and in consequence lost her value in the patriarchal society. Premarital sex is considered to be "against culture", keeping virginity until marriage is a virtue.¹⁴⁴ The fact that Suman says she "saved herself for marriage" almost suggests that sex before marriage would somehow damage her and lower her value.

"Once a woman's body has been made the subject of a man's sexual desires, she becomes forever contaminated."¹⁴⁵ Devika is trying to twist this notion by saying that Parth "has been used" so many times but it doesn't bother Suman because she seems to be blinded by patriarchal values.

¹⁴⁴ Jyoti Puri, *Woman, Body, Desire in Post-colonial India: Narratives of Gender and Sexuality* (London: Routledge, 1999), 109-111.

¹⁴⁵ Veena Das, "Reflections on the social construction of adulthood," in *Identity and Adulthood*, ed. Sudhir Kakar (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1979), 95.

What occurs the second time in this series is an almost enemy-like interaction between the character of the archetypal *witch* and *weaver*. While the *witch* tries to fight against the rigid traditional social views and make the *weaver* realize their irrationality, the latter accepts them as her own and what is more is proud of being the carrier of these views as she looks down upon the *witch*.

Next is from the point of view of a *resisting spectator* quite a problematic scene. Devika and Chandini are chatting on a rooftop and Devika is upset, starting to doubt herself because of Parth's attitude. Chandini is consoling her and at once kisses her on the lips. As Devika moves back and stops her, Chandini apologizes and Devika says: "Chandini, don't be embarrassed. This is what happens when a hot girl cries." The fact that Chandini, who was revealed to be a homosexual in episode 4, kisses her friend Devika, undermines the *resisting reading* of social phenomena that this series aspires to engage with. What is a common and stereotypical fear among both men and women is that same sex people would attempt unsolicited intimacy. While viewing this scene, the analyst needs to be a *resisting spectator* and not overlook this stereotypical depiction of a behavior of a lesbian character. Nonetheless, the makers possibly included this scene so that Devika can project rejection of Chandini's move without aggression or awkwardness as she turns it into a joke.

The storyline of this episode escalates as Devika, possibly out of broken heart and anger, comes to Parth's engagement party and plays a video of the two of them being intimate in bed on a big TV screen where the guests can see it. However, there is no nudity in shown in the video as it was possibly taken after the act. Devika's father is called again to pick his daughter up and while he apologizes, Parth's mother says to him: "She must have learned this from you. Like father, like daughter." In reaction Devika threatens to kill her but the father tells her to be quiet and again apologizes, telling Parth's mother that she is right. Upon their arrival at home, the father says to the mother: "Kanta, henceforth I consider that we have no daughter. This girl will get whatever she wants, but she has lost my love and respect forever." Then he turns to Devika and says: "You've ruined my family's reputation and also my relation with you."

What Devika probably intended was to expose Parth and that he has not stayed "chaste" by which she possibly might have aimed to ruin the wedding which would indeed be ruined had she been a man and Parth a woman in a reverse scenario and it was her being exposed as not a virgin

anymore. In this case though, the situation has turned against her and Parth's mother called her father by which she ignored the fact that Devika is an adult person responsible for her actions. The *collaborator of patriarchy* needs to maintain the tradition where it is the male relatives who control the woman. As she blames the father responsible for Devika's actions, something as if broke inside him and he turns against his daughter. It is a twist from loving father to someone who condemns his daughter only for being scandalous in public. As she pointed out earlier, she did not physically harm anyone, she only violated what is considered "decent" in the society around her. The family's reputation has eventually become more important to the father than his rebellious daughter. The *witch* has become the problem and thus he renounced her. A girl is regarded as precious by her parents only if she follows the norms of modesty. Should she violate them, she becomes a "harlot" and is a disgrace for the family.¹⁴⁶

Devika is so upset by this situation that she packs her bag, takes the jewelry her mother bought for her future wedding and runs away.

3.7. Episode 7¹⁴⁷: Devdas - Devika's "Animus"

A number of city views present us with the change of location in the story. Captured landmarks such as the Chhatrapati Shivaji Terminus and the heritage building of Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation suggest that the narrative is now placed in Mumbai.

Devika goes to see her friend Chandini, who moved to Mumbai in episode 4. Devika initially tries to hide any kind of sorrow when Chandini asks her about Parth and instead focuses on the impressive interior of the apartment which appears to be expensive. When Chandini hugs her, Devika does indeed tell her that "everything is over" and makes a sad face. Chandini consoles her: "Mumbai is a new life, nothing is over, ok?" At that very moment, a woman in sports attire enters the apartment and shuts the door with anger, asking who Devika is. Chandini introduces them, clarifying to the viewer that the new character, Radha, is her girlfriend who she now lives with.

The vision of Mumbai being a place for a "new life" offering self-realization may be considered analogous to what Annis Pratt describes as the *green world* archetype.¹⁴⁸ The *green world* is in

¹⁴⁶ Ibid., 93.

¹⁴⁷ Dev DD, "Vexed in the city," *ALTBalaji* video, 20:32, April 21, 2017, Accessed October 12, 2019 at <https://www.altbalaji.com/show/123>.

her book primarily connected with nature and describes heroines imagining “inhuman” world to which they escape and also they often return to this dream world in retrospect in their memories. Despite certain fundamental differences between nature and Mumbai, we do find features in the heroines’ perception of the city that correspond with the idea of a *green world*. Just like nature, the “jungle” of the large metropolis has in the case of our heroines been the place in which they saw the option of freedom, a place without restrictions of a small town society, a place with the power to provide them with new life. Chandini escaped to Mumbai so that she could work and express her sexuality and Devika followed her to the place where she thought she would be liberated and it was already in episode 5 where she mentioned that once she would like to go to Mumbai and find a job there, hence the positive idea of Mumbai as a place for self-realization has been in her mind for some time.

The depiction of the character of Radha deserves further observation. Her looks bear a slight “masculine” *connotation* as her hair is cut short, which is generally considered an androgynous feature, and her posture and attire reminding rather that of men as well. With the eyes of a *resisting spectator*, the analyst needs to identify her appearance as stereotypical. Even though the series, as we have so far seen, favors homosexuality, in this case it portrays it in a clichéd manner. It almost seems as if the series was subjecting this lesbian couple of feminine-styled Chandini and masculine-styled Radha to the *male gaze*.¹⁴⁹ Hugs and kisses between Chandini and Radha, however, possibly symbolize the love and tenderness between the two women which may, nonetheless, also be subject to *male gaze* but with regard to the *resisting* approach of the series towards prejudice in general, it probably intends to make the viewer sympathize with the characters.

In the next scene we see Devika drinking alone in a bar, being asked by some man to join them on which she replies “Fuck off!” The men then returns to the rest of his friends who are watching Devika from behind a pool table. All these men are seemingly young and middle class, but despite that one of them says: “She is showing attitude now. Let her have two more drinks.” Upon saying that, these men are interrupted by another man, middle aged, sitting in the shadow behind them: “Don’t even think about that. She is drunk, doesn’t mean you can do anything with her. Have you heard of consent?” The young men don’t seem to grasp the meaning of his words.

¹⁴⁸ Annis Pratt, *Archetypal Patterns in Women’s Fiction* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1982), 16-24

¹⁴⁹ Laura Mulvey, *Visual and other pleasures* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989), 19.

The bar closes and this man offers to drop Devika home, but she so drunk she is not able to talk sense, only calls out the name of Parth and subsequently passes out on a sofa. The man stays with Devika in the bar until the morning, watching over her.

In this scene we are introduced to a new character, Anurag, who is an elegantly dressed, good looking man in his early 40's. The fact that he paid the bartender apparently a lot of money to keep the bar open until the morning also suggests that he is rich. He is *syntagmatically connoted* as a positive and attractive character, just like Parth was in the second episode where he took a stand against ill-treatment of women. He contrasts the group of the young men who do not seem to understand the notion of a woman's consent and profiles himself thus as a positive hero with regard to the *resisting* attitude of the series.

We see Devika wearing a short red dress in this scene and considering the way the men reacted on seeing a woman wearing this kind of dress, drinking alcohol and sitting alone in a bar, it is now apparent that the makers of the series chose these circumstances on purpose. Short "western-style" dresses are generally considered immodest and not only India, but worldwide, a woman showing "too much skin" is considered likely to agree to have sex when approached. This misogynist notion ostracizes woman's freedom to wear what she wants and if despite that she does indeed wear clothes of this kind, she puts herself in danger of harassment. The way Anurag scolds the men for their plans to approach Devika shows the *resisting* approach of the series towards the idea of men thinking of being lured by women wearing short dresses or drinking alcohol. This scene underpins the fact that despite Devika not behaving in accordance with what is considered modest, the men have no right to do anything with her without her consent.

The scene that follows shows Devika waking up unable to recall what happened last night as she requests the bartender to inform her. He points at that man who is about to leave the bar suggesting he stayed with her.. Devika approaches this man saying thanks and admitting she doesn't remember much. He reacts in a patronizing manner, saying: "You don't even remember what happened? So drunk you remember nothing?" and shakes his head. Devika in defence says: "Who are you to lecture me?" he doesn't answer that question but at Devika's further expressions of ungratefulness he eventually says: "You are just like every other girl who is used to attention. From your father, boys and others. Someone broke your heart and you turned into Devdas. Drama queen. Wake the hell up, there is no place for self-pity in this world. And stop being a

spoilt brat. Or else you would be in a bar, drunk and someone like me may not be there.” The disdain on Devika’s face now escalates as she says: “Fuck off! I don’t need saving from men like you.”

For the first time in the series Devika gets called Devdas. We may have noticed similarities between Devika and Devdas, whom her character is based on. They are both from a small town, egoist, ruthless and sometimes harsh, emotionally instable and lost in their grief from broken heart which they try to heal with alcohol. If we look at their personalities from the psychoanalytic point of view of C. G. Jung, we may identify Devdas to be Devika’s *animus*. We talk about animus if “a woman comes under the domination of the unconscious, the darker side of her feminine emerges all the more strongly, coupled with markedly masculine traits.”¹⁵⁰ Emma Jung, whose views are from the feminist perspective no less problematic than her father’s, describes that depending on the level and harmony of the integration of *animus* with the “feminine principles”, different sets of behaviors manifest in the woman. In case of a harmonious integration, the woman may be brave, active and energetic, whereas when her “feminine principles” are overrun by *animus*, she is ruthless, brutal and aggressive.¹⁵¹ Even though Emma Jung’s further theorizing and elaborating the *animus* archetype is not in this case relevant due to its incompatibility with the era and cultural area, I would like to use an aspect of this archetype to highlight the connection between the hero from the novel written over a hundred years ago and a contemporary heroine, manifesting the same behavior.

The makers of the show chose to incorporate Devdas’ traits into Devika’s personality and thus make her contrast and clash the image of an ideal woman in Indian society. Devika’s character was made of not only Devdas’ personal traits but also of what is considered otherwise masculine behavior and in consequence of that Devika is looked down upon by the society. It must not be omitted that Devdas was indeed a self-destructive character who was not in control of his emotions and his alcoholism was a negative motive in the novel, but when his characteristics project into the contemporary heroine, Devika, it is as if this negative *connotation* was raised to a yet another level due to the fact that she is a woman. Her inner struggle may be identical to the one of Devdas when he fails to deal with Paro breaking his heart, but what is of more importance

¹⁵⁰ Carl Gustav Jung, *Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1969), 247.

¹⁵¹ Emma Jung, *Animus and Anima* (Putnam, Connecticut: Spring Publications, 1985), 4.

in this case are the extra obstacles Devika has to face for behaving like Devdas and that being, for instance, denouncement from her family and the danger of sexual harassment when drinking in public.

Yet another possible explanation for the makers of the show to have chosen Devdas as a model for Devika's character might have been the persisting popularity of Devdas's story in India. Highlighting gender-related issues in a loose adaptation of this popular novel may be intentional in order to draw more attention to the problematic.

3.8. Episode 8¹⁵²: The "Witch" in the "Dancer's" World

In one of the first scenes of this episode we see Devika coming to Chandini's place only to sleep the whole day until Chandini wakes her up in the evening. Chandini scolds Devika for she only "sleeps and drinks" and accuses her of being an alcoholic. In reaction to that Devika inconsiderately in front of Radha shouts at her friend "I am an alcoholic you are in love with!" and she makes it worse further as she tells Radha about Chandini's kiss back in Jaipur. Chandini gets upset and angry and among other things, calls Devika Devdas and a loser and after further exchange of reproaches and insults, she asks her to leave, which Devika does with tears.

The viewer now sees that Devika was, for the second time and by a different person, called Devdas for her self-destructive and selfish behavior caused by the inability to cope with her emotions and by excessive consumption of alcohol. In general, men are three times more likely to become alcoholic rather than women. Drinking of alcohol is a part of the masculinity image and women are therefore judged for drinking alcohol more than men.¹⁵³

Devika, who attempted to excuse herself by saying she had a hangover, has now almost lost her track of the *witch*, who with vigor stands against patriarchy. She does remain to be a witch because of her behavior which the patriarchal order condemn, but she is now lost in her grief, delusions and reminds now rather what in Hinduism is seen as *ghost*-like woman as she is completely out of control and almost malevolent. The course of her self-destruction continues in the next scene as on the stairs of probably the same building we see her being invited to a party

¹⁵² Dev DD, "Rock Bottom," *ALTBalaji* video, 26:24, April 21, 2017, Accessed October 16, 2019 at <https://www.altbalaji.com/show/123>.

¹⁵³ Claire M. Renzetti and Daniel J. Curran, *Ženy, muži a společnost* (Praha: Karolinum, 2003), 506.

by a an attractive girl, possibly a few years older than her. In a number of shots from the party Devika is drinking, snorting drugs and kissing different men.

The the next scene we see Devika the next day fresh and energetic as she enters the office where Anurag works just to confront him and tell him she is no “spoilt brat” and asks for his apology. Interestingly, he is in a meeting where his colleague presents a new mobile application to help men find their “perfect bride” who should “not be career oriented” and who should “be seen not heard”. Anurag sends her away but she comes back now targeting this application which is being presented: “And your app is bullshit. It is going to be a flop. We girls have been taught since childhood “learn to cook, don’t laugh loudly, it’s okay to sleep till late here, but it is not going to work at your in-laws’ place” and all that shit. Well, there is already an app for that which is known as mother, aunts, grandmas, sisters, neighbors and the ladies who walk on the streets. You know what we need? Perfect husband app. We girls should diet and guys can have a big fat belly. Did you ever get threading or waxing done? You will shit your pants there and then, but 15 year old girls get it done. And you are making an app to make us better. We are better.”

Devika’s comments on the idea of creating such mobile application are a clear manifestation of her character as archetypal *witch*. She openly, yet aptly, criticizes that someone should dictate women what to be like in order to fit in the patriarchal image of an ideal woman. She also underpins that women are already adjusting to these ideas and creating such an app would only push these patriarchal requirements needlessly further. Instead, as she points out, the company should rather focus on women’s point of view and do the reverse and help them with finding the “perfect husband”. Devika also stresses that it is the collaborators of patriarchy, “mother, aunts, grandmas, sisters, neighbors and ladies in the street” who make efforts to shape young women in the image of a good wife with accordance to the patriarchal requirements. These women possibly think they are doing so for the best interest of the young women but in fact undermine their integrity and support the patriarchal order. These points the makers of this show highlight through Devika’s words are *resisting* these social paradigms and they reverse them, confronting the viewer with the almost absurd requirements of society for women’s looks and behavior.

In the next scene, after Devika receives a message from Chandini to pick up her bags and leave, she goes to the place of the girl from the previous night, who accommodates her. As this girl browses her short dresses Devika asks her: “You are an escort? Sleeping with men for money?”

the girl replies to her: “You know what Devika, I don’t. And even if I did, you can’t judge me for it. I mean everyone is selling one thing or the other. Some sell their minds, some sell their bodies. And even if I do choose to sleep with a guy for money, that will be my choice. Just like if you choose to be an escort, it would be your choice, right?” Then she offers Devika to try it and meet some clients later that night.

This new character that comes in the story is clearly an archetypal *dancer*. She has attained partial independence through making money out of “men’s pleasure”. This ostensible independence is nonetheless dependent on men’s sexual desire where they enjoy what she offers them whereas she only does it for the financial compensation they provide. The *paradigmatic connotation* of her dresses as escort-like only underpins the fact that she is prepared to objectify her body as she confirms in her statement “Some sell their minds, some sell their bodies.” She is identified by her relationship to men even though she claims having chosen to do so. She seems to be comfortable in her position and categorizes herself in patriarchy somewhere between the *weaver* and the *witch* - she couldn’t live like a *weaver* and she possibly finds it easier to live relatively comfortably as a *dancer* than to struggle like a *witch*.

In the next scene we see the two young women as they get in a car with a few middle-aged men who, judging by their manners, clothes and language come from a small town. As they arrive in a bar, the *dancer* keeps flattering these men and fakes laughter and comfort, which Devika fails doing. As she spots Anurag at the other end of the lounge, she gets more nervous and heads to the bar to have a few shots of alcohol. Anurag discourages her from interacting with these men further: “If this is really your choice, why do you seem so uncomfortable? That girl you came with, she seems to be happy. Is this really your choice?” Devika then goes to the terrace where Anurag follows her. She bursts out crying, saying she is lonely without everyone, that she hates those men inside and that she hates what she has become. Anurag reacts offering her a job.

In this scene we see the interaction between the *dancer* and the men, who have unpleasant manners and openly talk about having wives back home. For the *dancer* these things don’t matter and she plays along with them. Devika, in contrast, looks down upon these men and the idea of becoming a *dancer* too disgusts her as we can judge by her discomfort and facial expressions.

Anurag, it appears, becomes the male manifestation of the archetype of a *helper* for he is trying to help Devika in her quest of self-realization. By offering her a job he gives her a vision of real

independence and a challenge for her intellectual and creative skills. He is an older and experienced man who offers to guide Devika through the world of patriarchy of which he is a part of but seemingly disagrees with its paradigms.

Towards the end of the episode we see that Devika has indeed joined Anurag's office not just working there but living there too. After the first week of work, she goes to the bar and tells the bartender how good she feels about herself now. At that moment the character of Parth comes in the story again as he sits next to her on a bar stool.

3.9. Episode 9¹⁵⁴: The Beginning of the "Rebirth"

In the first scene we see Devika and Parth in the hotel room, her sitting on a sofa while he is lying in the bed. Devika appears to be rather reserved while he is trying to convince her to go back to Jaipur with him. Devika interrupts him realizing she has to go to work. Parth is surprised at her will to work "earning such a small amount" and asks her to go with him instead.

Possibly more than before we see now how the series changed its portrayal of Parth. From a positive, attractive hero in the beginning of the series he shifted into a character that the viewer doesn't sympathize with because of his now visible negative traits such as selfishness and arrogant disrespect towards other women but his mother. It is as if he thought of women as objects for when his marriage negotiations with Devika brought no results, he was ready to marry another and now, when we may assume Suman doesn't entertain him as he would please, he wants Devika back. What we also see is a negative, *syntagmatic connotation* of his posture and mimics that we already may have noticed in episode 5 where he first started to manifest as the *gothic villain* archetype. His posture and gestures are more negligent and by his eyes being more narrowed than before, eyelids as if dropped half way carelessly, we can judge that he misses keen interest and that his intentions are not completely honest. What he seems to care about is not Devika's happiness for he seems to mock her choice to work. It appears to be his need for her ownership that draws him into the attempts of convincing her to come back to him.

In the next scene where we see Devika in the office, her supervisor, an elegantly looking woman in her early 30's, scolds her for looking worn out and asks her to get changed and also commands her colleague, Muskaan, to make sure Devika looks fresh for the upcoming presentation. In the

¹⁵⁴ Dev DD, "Closure Exposure," *ALTBalaji* video, 26:14, April 21, 2017, Accessed October 20, 2019 at <https://www.altbalaji.com/show/123>.

subsequent scene we see Devika and Muskaan in a bathroom where Muskaan looks at Devika who is changing her top. “Will you give me some privacy?” Devika requests Muskaan who then covers her eyes with her palms and makes Devika’s need for “privacy” appear funny. Devika laughs and asks “So Muskaan, do you have a boyfriend?” and Muskaan answers: “Not a boyfriend – boyfriends. I have many.” With a slight surprise in her smile Devika asks further: “So when you break up, how do you know that it is over?” Muskaan answers with certainty of an experience woman: “Closure fuck. You fuck and you realize you feel nothing. So you get a closure. So you get your head back and your body moves on too.”

The character of Muskaan deserves closer observation. She is a young woman whose figure is rather short and slightly overweight, she wears no make-up and her clothes are very modest and yet she demonstrates an open attitude towards nudity and sex. Even though Muskaan, just like Devika, *connotes* to be a *witch* who defies the patriarchal requirement for sexual restraint and obedience of women, her depiction differs drastically from that of Devika. Devika’s attractive looks and her sexually expressive behavior could have so far been a subject to *male gaze* because her looks have strong visual and erotic impact¹⁵⁵ as well as her behavior. In contrast, the character of Muskaan stands for a woman who is aware of her sexuality, is sexually active and yet isn’t made to look seductive like Devika with her make-up, hairstyle, figure and clothes. Muskaan thus breaks both the stereotype of women who are deemed sexually open because of their distinctive looks and also the stereotype of women who do not look what is according to *male gaze* “seductive” enough to be sexually restrained.

In the later scene where we see Devika in the office, operating a computer, we overhear a chat of her male colleagues who are watching her from the end of a long table. Among other comments about Devika one whispers to the other: “I don’t know how good she is with a laptop, but I am sure she is a good lap dancer.” Devika notices that they stare at her and her facial expression *connotes* her discomfort for she possibly heard what they had said. Anurag approaches the table and admonishes those two men to focus on their work for which Devika thanks him.

Jyoti Puri in her book mentions a study about sexual harassment at workplace carried out at the University of Bombay, which showed that a number of students had thought that the problem of sexual harassment in India was happening due to “very low status of women and the high

¹⁵⁵ Laura Mulvey, *Visual and other pleasures* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989), 15.

dominance of men in our country [India] and the relative lack of free interaction between sexes compared to western countries.”¹⁵⁶ In fact, men are considered to have low opinions of each other as they don’t want their women to be exposed to the presence of other men especially at workplace. However, this mutual mistrust of men does not affect them as much as it affects women. For that reason women are often forced to stay homebound or having to pursue a career where the contact with males would be minimal.¹⁵⁷ In this scene, Devika was indeed a subject to harassment at workplace, but it was another man who stood up for her and at least indirectly scolded the harassers. An analyst with the *resisting approach* would ask though, why didn’t Devika stand up for herself this time? It could have been out of fear or a feeling of awkwardness of course, but the fact that the series shows that an intervention of another male is what stops the harassers somewhat undermines the ability of a woman to defend herself in situations like this.

In the next scene we see that Devika goes back to Parth’s hotel room and she starts kissing him as soon as he opens the door but when they go to bed, Devika tells Parth to stop because she “feels nothing” and as she puts her blouse back on, she tells him to go back to Suman as she is “not interested”. While he asks her whether she found someone else, she reveals to him that “she is finding herself”, also telling him he was her mistake. Eventually, with an expression suggesting tranquility and almost joy, she leaves his room.

Devika thus refused to be the object of his desire and she proved to prefer her own authenticity to the wish of a man who would again turn into the archetype of a *gothic villain* as soon as he would secure his complete power over her via marriage. The *witch* stood her ground, realized her own self and did not comply with what the man asked for that would eventually lead to her losing her authenticity. The fact that Parth could only think of her refusal to be a consequence of her having found another man further underpins his inability to understand that a woman’s life is not defined by her affiliation to a man.

Her leaving the room with an apparent positive mood suggests that she has grasped control over her emotions and over her life as well. She did not accept the call to go back and become what her nature would never be able to conform to, i.e. to live within the narrow borders of patriarchy

¹⁵⁶ Jyoti Puri, *Woman, Body, Desire in Post-Colonial India: Narratives of Gender and Sexuality* (London: Routledge, 1999), 78.

¹⁵⁷ Madhu Kishwar, *Off the beaten track: rethinking gender justice for Indian women* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1999), 163.

with a partner and a family who are strongly patriarchal and would not allow her to make her own choices. In fact, realizing and uttering that Parth was a mistake leads to the conclusion that she has learned from her mistake and accepts it as a part of her past and a trigger towards her quest to *rebirth*¹⁵⁸ where she is “finding herself”.

In a number of scenes that fill up the rest of the episode the viewer witnesses Devika and Anurag getting closer as they flirt and laugh together.

3.10. Episode 10¹⁵⁹: The “Witch” Judged and Betrayed

This episode starts as Anurag finds out that Devika has secretly been staying in the office building and decides to contact Muskaan and arrange for Devika to move in to her flat.

Anurag continues to demonstrate as the male version of the archetype of a *helper*. He uses his position of power, in this case, of a boss and a man who is respected in the office to help the young, struggling woman to find shelter.

The following scenes show a number of flirtatious interactions between Devika and Anurag which *paradigmatically connote* their mutual sympathies and also possibly a growing romantic ignition.

Almost half way through, the episode presents a scene where Devika, seated in her office and in the middle of work, receives a call and as she answers the other side replies: “Guess who! The one and only merit girl of the family, Aruna. Your sweet sister.” Devika walks a little further from the worktable in order to get some privacy and asks Aruna whether everything is okay with Srikant, to which Aruna replies: “Everything is perfect, in fact it is better than just perfect. That is why I called you. Actually, I’m pregnant. Tomorrow is my baby shower and you must come.” Devika congratulates Aruna but also suggests she is “a little busy” and Aruna in return tells her: “Yes I understand. You can’t face them. I heard about the fuss you created in Jaipur before you ran away.” Devika then defends herself: “I didn’t run away, I came here to make my career. You know, some girls have career goals.” and with an expression suggesting annoyance, Aruna tells her: “Whatever, be present if you can, if you are courageous enough to stand before uncle and aunt.” Aruna then also claims to give the whole family the only grandchild for no one expects

¹⁵⁸ Annis Pratt, *Archetypal Patterns in Women’s Fiction* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1982), 136-166.

¹⁵⁹ Dev DD, “Who’s Your Daddy?,” *ALTBalaji* video, 20:13, April 21, 2017, Accessed October 25, 2019 at <https://www.altbalaji.com/show/123>.

Devika to settle down. “Come if you have the guts! Or else I will tell everyone that you were too scared to come.”

The viewer in this episode witnesses Aruna’s confession of being happy about being a good wife and fulfilling the expectations patriarchal system has imposed on her. She sounds to be proud of herself and also, for her conformity, she thinks of herself as the favorite girl of the family and also perceives herself valuable unlike Devika. In fact, it sounds as if she considered herself superior to Devika, who seems to have inevitably fallen from the grace of the patriarchal society. All the provocative phrases such as “You can’t face them.” or “Come if you have the guts!” are a proof that Aruna attempts to instigate Devika to come as her presence at the party is likely to cause agitation among other family members. The result of such commotion, though, would possibly be further humiliating for Devika, while Aruna’s praise and favorable position in the family would amplify. This is another case of the *weaver* being malevolent towards the *witch*; because the *witch* is what the weaver despises for she is her opposite. Archetypal *weavers* like Aruna may possibly think that if there were more *witches* and most importantly, if they were accepted by the society, the patriarchal system would deteriorate and in consequence, the *weavers*’ comfortable conforming position would be at stake.

In the next scene Devika comes to Aruna’s baby shower party. The viewer now sees a modern, spacious apartment where women sit in one area together while men are seated together a little separately from them. Devika notices her mother sitting on the sofa and goes to sit next to her. The mother’s face suddenly transforms its before cheerful mimics into sombre and walks away. Nonetheless, Devika follows her and attempts speaking to her: “Mom, please! Why are you both not talking to me? Talk to me! Listen, I have come here for the both of you.” but the mother is rather upset about Devika’s presence and so is the father as he tries to make Devika understand: “Because we didn’t want to create a scene here. But Devika Drama Dwivedi is at it as soon as she has a chance. Did you forget all that happened at Parth’s engagement, that you’ve started again?” Devika defends herself: “Yes, I was wrong. But Parth was worse, wasn’t he? No one punished him but I am dead for you all.” Mother then asks her to be quiet but Devika continues: “That is your signature line “Keep quiet!” Do you give us girls names? Keep quiet is a nice name! If a boy teases you, keep quiet! If you are having your periods, keep quiet! If men are at fault or of their mothers are psychos or even if he cheats on you and marries someone else all you say is “Don’t say anything, keep quiet!” Her father then labels her as Devdas and points out her drinking and

she tells him: “Yes, I used to drink! Because I was in pain. I needed you the most then. But what did you do? You let me go.” upon her departure which happens without any consolation she remarks to all those present: “Do you know what Devdas’ problem was? He was a man. He couldn’t handle rejection. But we girls know how to put ourselves back together again and again and again. So, thank you everyone. And Aruna, see you and never want to be you.”

The first shot of this scene where we see the segregation of sexes in the flat *pragmatically connotes* a traditional patriarchal family. It is apparent that in such families, *weavers* are cherished while *witches* are condemned and thus we can see that a woman’s merit is judged by her conformity to the patriarchal standards.

The fact that Devika’s parents refuse to speak to her only underpins the statement that she has become an outcast because she refused to conform to the societal rules imposed on her. The *witch* has become the “curse” and the “shame” of the family. The scene also suggests as if rather than the parents’ own decision to denounce their daughter, it was the society around them that forced them to cease all contact with her and above all they worry about the family reputation which is measured by the scales of patriarchy. The *witch* scandalizes the family again by trying to rationalize with them but her attempts go in vain because the walls of patriarchy seem to be too hard to break with logic and common sense.

What is of notice in this scene is that Devika admits her past mistakes but tries to explain she has moved on. She is not Devdas her father labeled her as, because Devdas drank himself to death whereas she experienced *rebirth*. She emphasizes quite openly that she did not end up like Devdas because she is a woman and stressed that women have the ability to “put themselves together again and again and again” and implies that men don’t. This expression is, nonetheless, possibly hyperbolic, but it does indeed contrast her family’s opinion of her as Devdas.

Annis Pratt describes what is called women’s quest of *rebirth*. It is a *social quest* where the heroine is alienated to her surroundings and hence she looks for integration into a community where she has more space for personal development. The *social quest* is more typical for younger heroines whereas older women are more inclined to pursue a *spiritual quest*.¹⁶⁰ On Devika’s *social quest* leading to *rebirth* she gets close to self-destruction as she lets the influence of the

¹⁶⁰ Annis Pratt, *Archetypal Patterns in Women’s Fiction* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1982), 135-138.

negative aspects of her *animus*, Devdas, to stop her from development. On the *rebirth* journey she experiences states close to delirium which may be considered almost as insanity and yet she survives, finds her stable self and is ready to “reintegrate into society”. The society in this connotation is meant the new society, the less conventional society of her *green world* which is symbolically analogous to the cosmopolitan city of Mumbai and the office – a creative space with male and female employees, where she can exercise her talents and grow.

After she leaves the apartment, she approaches Anurag who has been waiting for her with relief, but he tells her she is fired which upsets her and she runs away from him.

3.11. Episode 11¹⁶¹: “No more Devdas” - the Completion of “Rebirth”

The initial scene shows Devika drinking rum and sitting on a rooftop of the building she lives in. She is seemingly upset judging by her facial expression. Anurag follows her and sits beside her, trying to explain why he had to fire her: “Isn’t it obvious that I really like you? You are 22 years old. You are of my daughter, Neha’s age.” Devika raises a point of why should that be a problem and Anurag replies: “People will badmouth us.” and Devika stands up mitigating the importance of what will people say, because “love is just love”. Anurag stands up and holds her hands, confessing his fear of how would his daughter react to their relationship on which Devika advises him to go and speak to her.

The bottle of rum in this *connotation* is the symbol of Devika’s suffering, the symbol of her escape from the world that builds obstacles in her journey to self-realization. In the initial episodes alcohol had the symbolic of rebellion but it has inverted into a symbol of an escape from unfavorable reality.

Devika was disappointed with Anurag, who, as a *helper*, has stood by her and seemed to be different from the patriarchal “mainstream” and she has apparently grown a strong sentiment for him. She is ready to ignore the judgmental society that Anurag fears, but he seems to be a bit more troubled by it as he considers their age difference a reason for other people to “badmouth them”. Even though in India it is not unusual that young women get married, actually by the choice of their parents, to men who are a generation older to them, it is indeed not a standard among middle classes and in the case of Devika and Anurag, when they have made their own

¹⁶¹ Dev DD, “Season Finale: The Girlfriend,” *ALTBalaji* video, 22:32, April 21, 2017, Accessed November 1, 2019 at <https://www.altbalaji.com/show/123>.

choices to be together and thus bypassed the controlling mechanisms of the patriarchal order, the society around them would probably consider them as immoral and outcasts. Devika again rationalizes against the prejudice and persists with her behaviour of a *witch*.

In the next scene we see Anurag sitting in a café and waiting for his daughter to come. At first the camera shows us Radha coming to the meeting but just a second later it gets revealed that Chandini is Anurag's daughter. Chandini's attitude towards her father is cold and sullen as she is upset because he left her when she was a child. Anurag expresses regret and wants to make amends. Chandini asks Radha to leave and as Radha approaches to kiss her, Chandini moves away. Anurag says: "I'm really sorry. I have hurt you and your mother. I had to leave that city because..." Chandini stops him and says: "Because you used to feel suffocated. Because no one understood you. Because you were never on good terms with mom..." and at last Chandini agrees to meet her father again.

It comes as a surprise to the viewer that the characters of Anurag and Chandini turn out to be father and daughter. Chandini's cold attitude comes around as understandable for she thinks of her father as someone who abandoned her, while Anurag regrets having done so. What is interesting is the fact that towards the end of their conversation, they find common grounds in identifying the reasons they both left Jaipur for they felt suffocated and misunderstood and Chandini's mother was similarly an element that played a role in their decision to leave.

Another aspect of notice in this scene was when Chandini moved away as Radha wanted to kiss her. Such gesture *paradigmatically connoted* that Chandini cared about her father's opinion of her and felt that he may judge her for being confronted with the fact that she is a lesbian.

In the next scene we see Devika and Anurag on the rooftop again and we witness Anurag's confession of loving Devika: "Because I never met anyone like you. You are intelligent but dumb. You are crazy but wise. I am trying to understand you. I am trying to understand a girl who is so crazy... How can I find her so beautiful, that all I want to do is hold you and never let you go? I love you, Devika." After the confession comes a kiss with the camera centered on their faces and mouths.

The final union of Devika and Anurag signifies the priority of love over prejudice and social norms. Anurag, whom we can now identify as the *green-world lover* contrasts with the *gothic*

villains of Srikant and Parth we could see in the previous episodes as he appreciates Devika for who she is, for what she is like. “Whether as an actual figure or a revery one, an ideal, nonpatriarchal lover sometimes appears as an initiatory guide and often aids at difficult points in the quest.”¹⁶² He has transformed from the *helper* to the *green-world lover* who doesn’t follow patriarchal order and cherishes timeless and cultureless values.

What Devika possibly imagines is a future of an equal partnership with him, which despite their age difference is indeed equal in the way they respect each other. Their kiss now not only symbolizes their love but it also *syntagmatically connotes* the *resisting reader’s* attitude of the makers of the series for they not only openly show physical contact of a man and a woman which may offend moral sentiments of many viewers, they also depict a romantic union of a couple of a significant age gap, that may in effect scandalize as well.

In another scene Anurag comes to Chandini’s palace and Radha opens the door. She calls Chandini to receive her father when he says: “Hi. I’m sorry, I thought you stay alone. I can come back later. I didn’t know you live with a friend.” Chandini replies: “I am not living with a friend. I am living in with my girlfriend. Dad, I am gay.” The camera then shows Anurag’s expression of surprise and in the next scene we see Chandini with Radha sitting on a sofa opposite to Anurag. Chandini says to him: “Dad, please! It is not a big deal. But if you think that I am abnormal or something just like mom thinks then... Then you know what, you should leave right away. Because this is who I am and that is not going to change.” Anurag reacts: “Chandini, I admire the fact that you are neither ashamed of this fact nor do you want to hide this. I understand that it would have been difficult to deal with this all alone. I want to tell you that you are not alone anymore. Any choice or decision of your life I will support you completely. I am proud to be your father. I don’t care if you are gay or not. I am not leaving you.” Chandini’s face wrinkles with emotion as she starts crying and hugs her father” After that Anurag admits that he has a girlfriend of the age of Chandini who thinks it is actually “cool” and she adds that “There is no barrier of love and gender in love.” However, when Anurag reveals her name is Devika, both Chandini and Radha’s facial expression show shock and almost an unpleasant surprise.

Anurag in this scene reacted as non-patriarchal caring father for whom the happiness of his daughter was more important than anything else. By assuring Chandini that he will always stand

¹⁶² Annis Pratt, *Archetypal Patterns in Women’s Fiction* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1982), 140.

by her he not only proved to be the archetypal *helper*, he also established an alternative role model of a good father - a father who doesn't care about his daughter's compliance with the patriarchal order but a father who supports her and cares about her well-being no matter what choices she makes.

When Chandini almost tells Anurag to leave for she wasn't sure whether he thought she was abnormal only underpins the fact that she can afford to leave her mother and turn down her father because she doesn't technically need their support as she now has the opportunity to earn money and thus support herself. By revealing her homosexuality to him she decides to make him pass a test of tolerance, she makes him show his true self to her and opens up to him only when he proves to be the tolerant and open-minded father.

The fact that Radha and Chandini considered Anurag having a younger girlfriend as "cool" shows that they consider themselves as allies in the patriarchal world for Anurag with his young girlfriend are also *outsiders*. The shock in the faces of the two young women after they have got to know that Devika is his girlfriend was possibly meant to raise suspense and curiosity of the viewer about what happens next, should second season be released.

The last scene of the series presents to the viewer Devika sitting on a rooftop looking at a bottle of rum. She picks it up, walks towards the edge of the rooftop and as she says: "No more liquor, no more crying, no more Devdas, who drinks without a reason. I used to drink to bear the suffering. Not!" she pours the alcohol away down the roof.

The scene that closes the narrative of the series symbolizes and both *connotes* and by her own words *denotes* Devika's achievement of *rebirth* as she eliminates the element of alcohol which has been her tool to deal with frustration and sadness. The symbolic of the bottle has now completely transferred as it is not presented as a symbol for rebellion anymore.

With the approach of a *resisting reader*, we must not miss that this shift in the symbolic of alcohol slightly undermines the fact that some women choose to drink not because they are suffering but often only for entertainment which is not against the law and if done with moderation it does not even have negative effects on their lives or on people around them. But what women who drink do face in general is condemnation from the patriarchal society that considers drinking the privilege of men. Devdas is considered a pitiful character for his excessive

drinking that lead to his destruction, but if only he drank with moderation, would he be judged in the same way as a woman would for doing the same?

4. Conclusion

While working on the theory, methodology and analysis, I have identified an alternative “optics” through which films/TV and literature can be watched or read. This thesis and the process of its creation have not only made me ponder and closely observe numerous gender-related issues along with their backgrounds but it also made me realize the necessity of critical thinking which leads to deeper understanding of researched phenomena.

One of the foundation stones of this thesis was an adaptation of the method of *resisting reading* which has eventually been used in two different layers: 1) the concession of the series and its makers as *resisting readers* of the social norms, taboos, traditions and reality and 2) using the approach of *resisting reader* of a critical analyst of the narrative and audio-visual material. The fact that the series manifests the attitude of *resisting reader* of cultural taboos and social reality was one of the main reasons why Dev DD was chosen as an appropriate material for this analysis, because it clearly does not accept the notions of the male-dominated society and thus reads them accordingly and subsequently transmits them into a challenging narrative and imagery. A number of scenes and dialogues throughout the series have proven to be a product of the *resisting reader's* approach as they reverse or ridicule traditional patriarchal notions from the social reality. In some scenes, the resistance was implied, such as in the depiction of the heroine who smokes cigarettes, marijuana and drinks alcohol that does not connote as negative, whereas in other scenes patriarchal notions deemed universal were challenged by the heroines where they argued and rationalized with their parents as we could see in a number of instances in episode 4. There were scenes, however, when it was necessary for the viewer and the analyst to adapt the approach of a *resisting reader* for their inconsistency or ambiguity that suggested a possible compliance with patriarchal stereotypization like in episode 6.

Furthermore, the analysis vindicated that the series takes a feminist stand by portraying certain characters in either totally positive or negative way, making the viewer sympathize with progressive characters who are looked upon negatively by the patriarchal society (Devika, Chandini) while making characters who act in accordance with the patriarchal system appear antagonistic (Srikant, Devika's mother). The series does indeed demonstrate feminist point of view as it intentionally focuses on distinct social phenomena where the persistent inequality

between genders manifests and it targets these phenomena in order to highlight their oppressive character and offer an alternative.

As far as the concept of the *Third World Woman*¹⁶³ is concerned, I have managed not to victimize the women based on the perception of their position in the patriarchal system as necessarily disadvantageous and therefore I accomplished the initial resolution as noted in the theoretical & methodological part of this thesis. Also, a thorough contextualization makes an indispensable part of this work and helps understand the specific aspects of Hindu society and social reality in India in order to prevent simplifications and generalizations.

What is more, the series contrasts what Laura Mulvey describes as the active male hero with the passive female heroine in film¹⁶⁴. In the case of this series it is in fact the active female heroine with male heroes being her supplements, even though they shape her way towards self-realization. The characters of Parth and Anurag are depicted as good looking and hence attract the *gaze* of both the heroine herself and the female viewer who is in consequence likely to experience *pleasure from looking* at them. Additionally, James Monaco's screen analysis tools of *connotation* were useful in further identification of certain symbols and nuances that shaped both the visual and narrative structure presented to the viewer.

Above all, it was the archetypal analysis that became an essential tool for analyzing the Dev DD series. The analysis mostly focused on female characters; nonetheless, various male archetypes were identified as well. Worth noticing are uncovered recurrent patterns of relationships between archetypes as we could observe throughout the series. For instance, we saw that *collaborators of patriarchy* had positive relations with *weavers* as they evenly conformed to the patriarchal order while *witches* were subjects of the *collaborators'* aims of their "correction". Interestingly, the relations between the *witch* (Devika) and the *weavers* (Aruna and Suman) have demonstrated as negative where the *weavers* behaved in a contemptuous and spiteful manner towards the *witch*, while the *witch* tried to fight their prejudice with rationality or mere provocation that would highlight and mock their bigotry. There was also an instance, though, in episode 2, where it was the *witch* helping the *weaver* to secure her position in the system, because she respected the *weaver's* almost existential desire to occupy the subscribed position of a bride and wife.

¹⁶³ Chandra Talpade Mohanty, *Feminism without borders: decolonizing theory, practicing solidarity* (Durham & London: Duke University Press, 2003), 19-22.

¹⁶⁴ Laura Mulvey, *Visual and other pleasures* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989), 19.

Another archetypal pattern identified in the series was the occurrence of traditional women and progressive older men who sided with the *witch*. Even though what is called an archetypal *helper* usually stands for a female character, I have decided to invert the archetype and use it for identifying male *helpers*, who in the story did indeed provide guidance and help to the struggling *witch*. Devika's father, however, has abandoned his tendencies of a *helper* in episode 6 when he was humiliated for being too tolerant towards his daughter and he decided to prioritize his family reputation instead. In contrast, the other archetypal male *helper*, Anurag, sustained in his efforts to help and support not only Devika but Chandini as well despite the pressure from society.

The archetypal *dancer* by her short appearance in the narrative only made herself distinct from both *witch* and *weaver* and placed herself somewhere in the middle of these two on the spectrum of independence. However, her story was not elaborated further in the series.

Even though patriarchy implies the rule of men, its definition is not that simple. Men who do not fit in the stereotype of what is masculine are marginalized whereas women who accept their prescribed role in the system could benefit from it materially or even power-wise. Hence the dominance of males is not a hundred percent accurate definition. However, for a woman to benefit from the system she has to conform to it and if she indeed does so, she holds a better position than a man who does not conform.¹⁶⁵ Just like was shown in the series, women who were deemed as *weavers* and *collaborators of patriarchy* held a strong and respected position in the society, whereas men who showed non-patriarchal behavior were looked down upon, such as Devika's father who was at the time blamed for not keeping his daughter restrained or Anurag leaving small town and family behind for its suffocating effect on him. The analysis has proven that certain women do indeed profit from the patriarchal system and thus have a reason to defend it from disturbing elements.

The main protagonist, Devika, identified as an archetypal *witch* has demonstrated behavior opposite to that of an "ideal Hindu woman". Yet, her character was depicted in prevalently positive way as the viewer was made to sympathize with her in the numerous difficult situations where her behavior and thinking clashed with the traditional cultural notions and practice. Another character positively depicted in the show, Chandini, doesn't fit in the image of an "ideal

¹⁶⁵ Blanka Knotková-Čapková, "Archetypy femininity a jejich subverze v moderní bengálské literatuře," in *Konstruování genderu v asijských literaturách*, ed. Blanka Knotková-Čapková (Praha: Česká orientalistická společnost, 2005), 143.

Hindu woman” either and thus proves the point that the series challenges such image and its requirements.

The plot followed Devika’s gradual development as she learned from her past mistakes and vanity but that, nonetheless, happened after the guidance of her lover and we may *resistingly* perceive that as an act of submissive conformity, for she could only reach her *rebirth* under the mentorship of a male hero. Nonetheless, if we accept the already *resisting* position of the series, it possibly meant to contrast the character of Anurag with antagonists such as Srikant or Parth. Anurag was understanding, gentle, wise and feminist and thus the exact opposite to those abovementioned two, who were bigoted and prejudiced.

In the analysis I have identified particular nuances when the characters reflected the selected gender archetypes as in the case of the *collaborators of patriarchy* or the *witch* but also identified those that couldn’t be applied to any female character but needed to be reverted into male counterparts such as the *helper* archetype. What was apparent and proven to be almost a rule was that the archetypal *weavers* corresponded with the image of “ideal Hindu women” while the *witch/outsider* opposed it.

Last but not least, the analysis has shown that in this series women’s sexuality and sexual expression are indeed very often the reason for oppression of women’s freedom and it was the older women who cared the most about young women’s sexual purity such as was the case of the mothers of Devika, Chandini and Parth. According to them as if young women were deemed “good” only if they remained “pure” and obediently waited to obtain legitimacy to sexual life with a chosen man after marriage. A woman who seems to have made her own choices regarding her sexuality was a *witch* – a kind of *witch* that is considered deviant, dangerous and out of control by the defendants of the patriarchal order.

To conclude, the analyzed Dev DD was a series that demonstrated *resisting* approach towards patriarchal social order and highlighted a number of gender issues in order to spread awareness among the viewers and challenge rigid patriarchal mechanisms in the society. Thanks to its availability only via paid internet platform the series had the chance to provoke in a way that would possibly be otherwise subject to censorship. It thus highlights the relatively new possibility of free expression which includes elements that may, nevertheless, clash with cultural or religious

sentiments of many viewers and institutions. Dev DD has above all challenged the notion of the “ideal Hindu woman” or a “good girl” as the director Ken Ghosh hinted.¹⁶⁶

¹⁶⁶ "Ekta Kapoor to Give Female Twist to 'Devdas'," Business Standard, November 25, 2016, Accessed April 22, 2019, https://www.business-standard.com/article/news-ians/ekta-kapoor-to-give-female-twist-to-devdas-116112500492_1.html.

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