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A Comparative Study of the Psychology of Founder Ymir (Attack on Titan) and Vishakha (The Fire and the Rain)

Anuska Das

Abstract

Indian Literature has always been a potent medium of representing the psychological aspects of characters through remodeling of myths to suit contemporary requirements of understanding. Girish Karnad's *The Fire and the Rain* is one such example. Though not entirely related, Vishakha's journey and psychological complexities bear semblance to that of Ymir, the progenitor of Titans from Hajime Isayama's *Attack on Titan*, an anime series adapted from its namesake manga. This paper explores the psychological intricacies of these characters, focusing on how personal experiences and societal constraints shape their respective actions and identities. Despite belonging to vastly distinctive cultural and temporal context, both characters navigate oppressive environments defined by betrayal, sacrifice and subjugation embodying universal struggles against power and control. Vishakha's journey is marked by patriarchal oppression and personal betrayal, reflecting the fractured role of women in traditional societies. Her inner turmoil and moral dilemmas reveal a desperate search for safety, acceptance, love and basic human dignity. Similarly, Founder Ymir's tragic arc unfolds against a backdrop of servitude and alienation, symbolizing the cyclical nature of generational trauma and systemic exploitation. While Vishakha's struggle remain grounded in interpersonal and societal dynamics, Ymir's narrative transcends into mythic proportions, grappling with themes of divine power and existential despair. This comparative analysis underscores the shared human struggle for autonomy, exploring themes of resilience, identity and the pursuit of meaning in the face of systemic injustice.

Keywords- Psychological intricacies, societal constraints, sacrifice, betrayal, systemic exploitation.

A Comparative Study of the Psychology of Founder Ymir (Attack on Titan) and Vishakha (The Fire and the Rain)

Dramas have been an integral part of literature, representing life and its complications. In the Indian context, the origin of dramas can be traced to Vedic times where plays were

based on myths, legends and religious scriptures. Bharat Muni, considered the Father of Indian drama, describes drama as the Fifth Veda in his *Natyashastra*. Indian English Drama officially started in 1831 with Krishna Mohan Banerjee's *The Persecuted* but found one of its greatest proponents in Girish Ragunathan Karnad for in his works novel thoughts and old tradition find a perfect complementary-supplementary relationship. Myths, folklores and legend are presented, reshaped and transformed into works of universal appeal, of deep psychological battles which ultimately determine the course of a narrative.

Anime (アニメ in katakana) is a type of animation that originated in Japan and is characterized by hand drawn and computer-generated techniques. The term is a shortened version of animēshon or アニメーション (in katakana) which is often misinterpreted as a genre but in reality, is an art form entailing many genres found in other mediums. The precursors of anime can be traced back to Edo period (江戸時代, Edo Jidai) or commonly known as Tokugawa period (徳川時代, Tokugawa Jidai) in the form of Emakimono or shadow plays. Animation began in 20th century through the works of Oten Shimokawa, Seitaro Kitayama and Jun'ichi Kouchi (considered as the “fathers of anime”). After facing competition with Disney and making its mark as an alternative format to live-action industry in 1930s, anime found one of its greatest champions in Hajime Isayama. His complex storytelling often delved deep into the dark faucets of emotions, existential quandary, colossal suffering and the resulting psychology.

This paper focuses on the psychology of two characters, the causes of their respective misery and how that affects their worldviews, issuing into actions which significantly influence their respective narratives - Vishakha from *The Fire and the Rain* (1998) and Founder Ymir from *Attack on Titan* (all the main episodes of the series, that is, 89, as of January 2025). The study aims to provide meaningful insight to the fact that despite the spacial and temporal differences of these works, the condition of women is not that distinct. Of course, there are thematic and structural differences but the core concept remains same – both women suffer unproportionately and due to little to no fault of their own.

Methodology

The paper utilizes a qualitative and descriptive method. The analysis is based on anime and literature as modes of presentation, as well as a medium of comparison of

psychological intricacies and how the clashing of discordant perspectives molds these characters, trying to survive in an age-old grind of systemic injustice and in turn generate significant impact on their narratives as a whole. Using method of content analysis, it analyzes the textual and visual components found related to the psychological analysis. It involves the categorizing of anime/text based on the themes emerging during the comparative study. Content analysis is used to study episodes of Attack on Titan and scenes of *The Fire and the Rain*, thus traversing psychological codes that unfold in the drama and the anime leading to the formulation of categories of psychological themes in a general way.

Literature Review

Literature is dynamic, formed and reshaped by complementary relationship of tradition and individual talent and psychological comparison is no stranger to it. The portrayal of psychology of characters in literature and anime often explores the intersection of personal trauma, societal oppressions and existential choices. Girish Karnad's *The Fire and the Rain* has been critically examined for its portrayal of psychological and emotional conflicts within traditional Indian settings. Scholars like Aparna Dharwadkar in *Theatres of Independence*, analyze Vishakha's psychological depth, focusing on her entrapment in patriarchal structures and her response to betrayal and alienation. Similarly, anime studies, as highlighted in Susan Napier's *Anime from Akira to Howl's Moving Castle (2005)* explore the psychological intricacies of characters similar to Ymir, who embody themes of sacrifice, subjugation and rebellion and how anime narratives use psychological dimensions to critique power dynamics and identity crises. Additionally, works like Roland Kelts' *Japanamerica* global reach of anime and its psychological resonance with universal studies.

Research Gap

While extensive scholarship exists on psychology and thematic studies both in Indian literature and Japanese anime, there remains significant gap in comparative analyses of specific characters from these genres. Existing studies on Karnad's works primarily focus on gender roles, mythological adaptations and social critiques. Similarly, scholarly engagement with Attack on Titan has extensively analyzed its themes of power, freedom, and morality, but lacks focused attention to nuanced psyche of Founder Ymir and her enduring legacy within the narrative. In the context of *The Fire and the Rain* by Girish Karnad and Attack on Titan by Hajime Isayama, the comparison of psychological complexity of Vishakha and Founder Ymir respectively, remain unexplored. This study tries fills the gap by comparing the

psychology of Vishakha in *The Fire and the Rain* with those of Founder Ymir in *Attack on Titan*, offering an innovative cross-cultural perspective on sibling dynamics and their influence on individual and collective identity.

Preliminary Findings

Attack on Titan or *Shingeki no Kyojin* is set in a dystopian world where humanity lives behind three enormous concentric walls, one inside the other (three large concentric walls were created – Wall Maria the outermost wall, Wall Rose – the intermediate, and Wall Sina at the core; each having its own outcrops or cities, situated on the outer side of the walls in all four directions), which protect them from getting eaten by Titans – giant man-eating humanoid creatures. According to the theory propagated in the opening of the series, it is the last standing vestige of human civilization. The inhabitants have been led to believe that a hundred years ago humanity was on the brink of extinction after the rise of Titans who attack and eat people on sight.

But the real history of the Titans is far from this alleged truth. 2000 years before the events of Eren's time (the protagonist), a tribal group known as Eldians had attacked a small village, plundering and pillaging, and enslaving the residents (even cutting out their tongues to steal their personhood) to their King Fritz. Amongst the defeated village's occupants was a young girl named Ymir. But at this point of time she was just like any ordinary girl with no Titan powers. One day, in keeping with her kind and gentle nature, she set free some pigs from the King's pen. When word got around, the King rounded up all the slaves and threatened to gouge out their eyes if the culprit is not handed over. As a result, Ymir is handed over and soon set 'free' only to be hunted down by King Fritz's men and dogs. Terrified, injured and running for her life Ymir came across a strange tree, taking shelter inside the base but she fell into a body of water inside the hollow tree base where a creature (later described as "the source of all living beings" and resembling what we now call Hallucigenia) attached itself to her giving her Titan powers and making Ymir the first Titan or Founder. Then she returned to King Fritz who used her to make Eldian tribe into Eldian empire, conquering lands and building infrastructure for him. Thirteen years after she gained her powers, Ymir took a spear, dying in an attempt to save King Fritz from an assassination attempt. But when she woke up, she found herself in the Paths, a place outside the concepts of time and space and full of sands, and from thereafter she would continue to serve the descendants of King Fritz, from beyond the grave. To preserve the Titan powers Fritz made

their daughters-Maria, Rose and Sina- eat their mother's corpse. Thus, the Titan powers remained in the royal family, developing overtime into Nine Titans. The people inheriting these Titan powers were called Titan Shifters and the powers were inherited by consuming the previous shifters (especially their spinal fluid which was later developed into injections). The descendants of Eldians came to be known as Subjects of Ymir and upon being injected with Titan spinal fluid, they are transformed into the Pure Titans, the Titans who mindlessly eat humans.

With the passage of time, as Ymir continued to serve the royal Fritz family from beyond the grave, the Eldian empire grew in prominence and the Titan powers developed into Nine main Titans – Armor Titan, Colossal Titan, Female Titan, Jaw Titan, Beast Titan, Attack Titan, Warhammer Titan, and the Founding Titan, each with their specific set of skills, passed down from one Titan Shifter to another. These powers were given to the families subservient to the royal Fritz family. Once the Eldian empire ran out of enemies, the subservient families turned against each other, creating a civil war – the Great Titan War. King Karl Fritz, the 145th ruler of Eldians and a descendant of King Fritz was ashamed of the actions of his ancestors and conspired with Tybur family (one of the subservient families) to arrange such that the civil war will lead to Marley (one of the nations King Fritz had conquered during Ymir's time) taking back their land. He then shifted some of his subjects and the royal family to an island – Paradis Island, creating the walls. He erased the memories of the Eldians of Paradis, forming a fake history and anyone who asked too many questions was subtly and swiftly executed with public knowledge. He took a pacifist vow that they won't harm others but if anyone tries to threaten their peaceful existence, massive colossal Titans would march out from inside the walls, flattening the world outside the Island. This was a kind of a hollow threat because he believed that if the world decided to exterminate the Eldians, they should accept it for their sins are too heavy to be atoned for. But trouble began as Marley took Eldia's place as the new oppressors, developing warrior programs for selecting candidates to inherit Titan powers and become Titan Shifters, furthering their plan for world domination. In Marley, whoever resisted the highly discriminative treatment meted out to the Eldians residing there, they were taken to Paradis and turned into Pure Titans by the Titan fluid injection and set to roam Paradis Island. Warriors (Marleyan Titan shifters) were sent to Paradis to retrieve the Titan powers as they had seven of the nine Titans, and also to neutralize the threat of Eren causing the Rumbling. They too distorted the history and legacy of Ymir, maintain her as a pawn of the Devil with whom she had made a deal, causing her

and all her subjects to be despised by much of the world. The Restorationists (the people fighting against the oppression of Marley towards the Eldians residing there) held that Ymir and her Subjects were the chosen children of God and that the atrocities committed by Marleyans towards them won't be accepted by Ymir. There was even a cult which deified Ymir. Her story was so distorted that Freida Reiss (a member of the royal family living in Paradis in hiding and the next in line to inherit Titan powers) used her to instruct Krista or later revealed as Historia to be lady like and obedient, loved by all. When the Rumbling does take place, Mikasa has to kill Eren to stop it and Ymir is thus set free from her slavery or as Eren claims, her love for King Fritz, relinquishing the power of the Titans from the world.

Karnad's *The Fire and the Rain*, originally *Agni Mattu Male* (in Kannada) traces it's origin to the tale of Yavakri narrated by Sage Lomasha to the Pandavas during their exile, in chapters 135-138 of the Vana Parva (Forest Canto) of *Mahabharata*. The original myth is a tale of misuse of knowledge. Bhardwaj and Raibhya are learned Brahmins, they are friends. Yavakri, Bhardwaj's son holds a grudge against the world, believing that his father is robbed of the recognition due to him. As a result, he goes to the forest to perform penances and gain the knowledge of Vedas from the gods. Indra appeared and though he tried to convince him that knowledge cannot be obtained through short-cuts, Yavakri didn't budge in his demands and ultimately his wish was granted. He molests Raibhya's daughter-in-law in a deserted place. An enraged Raibhya invoked a Brahma Rakshasa and a Kritya, resembling his daughter-in-law to kill Yavakri. The later steals Yavakri's urn containing the sanctified water by which he can protect himself, the Brahma Rakshasa chases him. Raibhya had offered the condition that if Yavakri could make it to Bhardwaja's hermitage before the spirits reached him, the invoked spirits will not be able to kill him. Yavakri starts running and reaches the hermitage but the blind guard of the hermitage couldn't recognize him and Yavakri was denied entry. The Brahma Rakshasa kills him. Bhardwaja is devastated and in his despair curses Raibhya that his elder son will kill him but later realizing his mistake, Bhardwaj immolates himself. Meanwhile Paravasus and Arvasu, Raibhya's sons, were engrossed in a yajna. The curse comes true when Paravasu returning from the sacrifice, mistakes his father for an animal and kills him unintentionally. Returning to the fire sacrifice Paravasu instructs Arvasu to perform the penitential rites for the brahminicide while he conducts the fire sacrifice as he feels Arvasu will not be able to conduct the yajna alone. Arvasu agrees, but when he returns after completing the last rites, Paravasu frames him for the murder of their father in front of the King, stating that a murderer shouldn't be allowed to enter the sacrificial

enclosure as his presence may pollute the sanctity of the precinct. Arvasu goes to the forest and prays to the Sun God for help, who appears along with other gods. Arvasu asks them to restore Yavakri, Bhardwaja and Raibhya and make Parvasu forget his evil act. The gods grant the boon and chide Yavakri for misusing his knowledge.

Karnad had reshaped the ancient myth, introducing Vishakha as more than just a mere trigger factor. In the original myth, Raibhya's daughter in law is molested but in the play the intimacy is portrayed as consensual; Yavakri doesn't molest Vishakha. Raibhya and Bhardwaj are not friends in the play, rather they are brothers, thus making Yavakri cousin to Parvasu and Arvasu. Bhardwaj never appears in the entire play. Vishakha's husband and Raibhya's elder son Parvasu kills his father intentionally, unlike the original myth where the event is portrayed as accidental. The play, in contrast to the myth, presents Yavakri and Vishakha as past lovers and Raibhya is stripped of the pious aura his mythical counterpart enjoys; he is a lusty and jealous old man violating his own daughter in law in the absence of her husband and jealous of his Parvasu's success as being chosen the Chief Priest of the seven year long fire sacrifice in attempts to put an end to the ten year long drought spell, by appeasing the gods. Vishakha becomes the pivotal point of three agents acting upon her, demonstrating the condition of women in a patriarchal structure and thus her psychology is affected.

Comparison of Psychology of Founder Ymir and Vishakha

Psychology plays a key role as building blocks of personality and perspective, shaped and casted by an array of factors, including but not limited to external circumstances, trauma, suffering, sacrifice and a desire for freedom. To begin with, external circumstances play a significant role in providing the framework of a person's psychology. Founder Ymir was caught up in the extreme of circumstances. Her village was attacked, everything she knew was destroyed and the tyrant King Fritz enslaved her, cutting out her tongue, a symbol of reducing her to servitude, taking away her sense of personhood. In a sick twist, he set her free only to hunt her down like some animal. So strong was the effect of such conditioning that even after gaining the Titan powers she returned to Fritz, knowing no better and thinking she can't have freedom. Even after serving Fritz, winning empires for him and building infrastructure, she was repaid by Fritz giving her the 'honor of bearing his children', turning her into a baby-machine. Throughout her life and even after death, she was treated not as a human but as a tool to further the ends of other people, people who didn't care for her or what she wanted. The only time she tried to revolt (by setting the pigs free), she was hunted and

almost killed. So, it is really not surprising why she developed a passive psychology, an alienated and servile mentality. Vishakha too was a victim of the circumstances. Born in a patriarchal setup, she was married to Parvasu who gave her only one year of happiness, as he had promised after which he just used her, experimenting with her, growing negligent towards her:

The night of the wedding my husband said to me: “I know you didn’t want to marry me. But don’t worry. I’ll make you happy for one year.” And he did. Exactly for one year. He plunged me into a kind of bliss I didn’t know existed. It was heaven- here and now- at the tip of all my senses. Then on the first day of the second year of the marriage, he said “Enough of that. We now start on our search.” And then.... But the question of happiness receded into the background. He used my body, and his own body, like an experimenter, an explorer.... Nothing was too shameful, too degrading, even too painful. Shame died in me. And I yielded. I let my body be turned inside out as he did his own... (Karnad, pp. 39-40)

She loved Yavakri but the later, driven by hatred for his uncle Raibhya and cousin Parvasu, left Vishakha to perform penances in the forest for ten years. In the meantime, Vishakha was married off to Parvasu. After being appointed as the Chief Priest of the yajna, Parvasu was not to return home until the sacrifice concluded. Raibhya, his father, was jealous of his success and Vishakha became the object of him venting out his hatred. He violated Vishakha multiple times during Parvasu’s absence. The constant abuse, alienation, and loneliness is finally revealed when she meets Yavakri after the later had completed her penances. Yavakri’s words and touches rekindle their old love (aggravated by her hunger for words) and Vishakha consents to his approaches. Even though she is judged for her infidelity, one cannot truly blame her actions. She was psychologically broken, and when Yavakri’s true motives come to the limelight she was devastated, going as far as to empty the consecrated water which was Yavakri’s only weapon against Raibhya, thus ultimately leading to his death as the enraged Raibhya had sent a Brahma Rakshasa in retaliation to Yavakri’s provocation. Sure, Ymir’s conditions were worse but that is not to say that Vishakha’s were easy.

Suffering, subjugation and breakdown of autonomy issue out of such adverse external circumstances. Ymir, since the beginning of her life was subjugated, used more as a cog in the grander schemes of Fritz’s ambitions than as a human being deserving dignity and freedom. Even after death she had to constantly serve his descendants for whenever the Titan

powers were invoked, she was the one carving out all the Titans from the sand which stretches across the entire expanse of the Paths. Throughout the entirety of Attack on Titan, through every transformation of Titan Shifters or Pure Titans from the leaders of Restorationists being forcefully turned by Marleyan Public Security Authorities, to the fights of Eren and the Marleyan Warriors, to Eren starting the Rumbling, every Titan was created by her. Her tragic life had so profound a servile conditioning that even after death she was unable to break free of the shackles of Fritz and his descendants. During the arguments of the Yeager brothers in the Paths, Zeke constantly emphasized on his royal blood commanding Ymir to take away the reproductive abilities of Eldians of Paradis Island under his Euthanasia Plan. The Marleyans, claiming to protect the world from the 'Devils of Paradis' and eventual Rumbling, led to the Warrior program and the intense training of it had resulted in Zeke internalizing the Marleyan hatred for Eldians. Thus, he formulated the Euthanasia Plan which would result in the Eldians being annihilated within a generation in the most peaceful way possible and end the Titan problem. For that he needed Eren's powers on his side, but in the Paths when Eren refused to comply, revealing that he has been pretending to support him the whole time, Zeke orders Ymir. But Eren stops Ymir, and for the very first time in her entire existence, she is given a choice. Eren gives her the choice:

Time to end this. I will put an end to this world. Lend me your power. You are not a slave! Nor are you a God! You're just a human! You don't have to obey anyone! You can decide! You get to decide! You choose! To stay here for eternity or to end it all!
(MAPPA,2022,16:37-16:58)

But unfortunately for Vishakha no such options are available. By the end of the people nobody talks about her; she is forgotten. Vishakha's suffering is psychological and emotional, stemming from a lack of agency in her relationships. Her marriage to Paravasu is devoid of companionship or intimacy. This emotional void compels her to seek solace in Yavakri, who betrays her trust by using her as a means of vengeance. Her suffering is compounded; she becomes the scapegoat for the ambitions and failings of the men around her and is often wrongly blamed for the chaos. This reflects a broader commentary on how patriarchal systems often vilify women for exercising agency, even in desperate circumstances. She tried to warn Yavakri and even tried saving him despite the latter's actions. When Paravasu had murdered Raibhya and asked his younger brother Arvasu to perform the last rites, Vishakha had sensed Paravasu's deceptions and tried to stop Arvasu, warning him not to fall into the trap. But Arvasu didn't pay heed and soon enough Paravasu frames him wrongly for the

murder. She, like Ymir, is broken multiple times but unlike Ymir whose soul finally finds peace by the end of the series, no such solace awaits Vishakha.

Alienation has a deeper effect on psychology, more profound than is generally recognized or given credit to. Vishakha's alienation is rooted in her inability to conform to the societal expectations. As a wife, she is expected to embody virtue, subservience, and silence. Her act of seeking love outside marriage, though driven by genuine emotional needs, isolates her further. Her alienation is not only societal but also personal, as she feels betrayed and used. Karnad uses Vishakha's alienation to critique the rigid moral codes of patriarchal societies. Her character becomes a symbol of how women are marginalized and vilified for challenging these norms. She leads a life of isolation despite being surrounded by people. To Yavakri she says:

...What you have done is to rekindle my need to talk. I thought it was dead and gone. Gently! Don't rush. Oh, Yavakri! The pleasure of calling someone a fool. Of the desire welling up inside one to protect him. I live in this hermitage, parched and wordless, like a she-devil. And words are like water-precious. I was afraid to bathe. Now I want to drown. Listen to me... (Karnad, p. 39).

Ymir's alienation is profound and cosmic. Despite her immense power, she is utterly alone. Her Titan form separates her from humanity, while her servitude to King Fritz isolates her from her sense of self. Even in death her existence in the Paths is one of solitude and submission. King Fritz says: "Even after I die, my Eldians will rule the great lands of this world with their enormity and my Titans shall reign supreme for eternity." (MAPPA, 2022, 16:22-16:33). Ymir's alienation underscores the tragedy of her character: she is central to the power dynamics of the world of Attack on Titan, it is because of her that Titan powers exist yet she is completely robbed of any recognition, agency or dignity. Her alienation is both a personal tragedy and a broader commentary on how systems of oppression dehumanize individuals. This is further presented throughout the series by the fact that until the very last scenes where Ymir is given a choice and the one where Rumbling ends with Eren getting killed by Mikasa and Ymir is finally liberated that we see her eyes. Nowhere before is she seen with real eyes, her eyes were always portrayed as shadowy dark sockets devoid of identity and emotion. It is said that eyes never lie, that eyes are the window to a person's soul and maybe since Ymir's very soul was not free, there was no window for her to express

herself through. It isn't until Eren gave her the choice that her eyes were portrayed to be tearing up.

Naturally, the constant alienation, deep seated trauma, resulting from constant sufferings and subjugation leads to fragmented, decrepit and broken psychology, a bend of mind and mentality different from the conventional psychology of an average person. Ymir's psychology is defined by resignation and passivity. Her trauma and subjugation led her to internalize her oppression, accepting her role as a tool rather than a person. This passivity reflects the extent of her psychological damage, as she is unable to envision a life beyond servitude. However, Ymir's psychology undergoes a subtle but profound shift when she chooses to empower Eren. This act, though still rooted in her role as a pawn, reflects a reclaiming of agency, however limited. It suggests a desire to break the cycle of oppression, even at great personal loss. Beaten down in every aspect of her life, she, for once was the master of her fate and the deciding power behind her own actions. Vishakha's experiences of trauma and alienation create a complex psychological profile. She oscillates between bitterness and resilience, societal expectations and personal desires. Her interaction with Parvasu and Yavakri reveals a deep longing for connection and validation, tempered by a growing awareness of her exploitation. Her psychological evolution is subtle but significant. Her transformation is a testament to the resilience of the human spirit in the face of systemic injustice – "My husband and you! He left no pore in my body alone. And you. You think a woman is only a pair of half-formed breasts." (Karnad, p. 40).

From a feminist perspective, Ymir and Vishakha are victims of an oppressive system; their conditions and trauma only differ in degree. Vishakha's experiences underscore how patriarchal systems deny women agency and autonomy. She is condemned for her desires while men around her – Parvasu, Yavakri and Raibhya- face no such scrutiny for their actions. This double standard highlights the gendered moral codes that vilify women for transgressing societal norms while excusing male behavior. Ymir's story magnifies the systemic dehumanization of women. Captured and enslaved by King Fritz, she is stripped of her identity and reduced to a tool for conquest and reproduction. Despite her immense power she is powerless in her personal life. Even after death she is not free; her existence in the Paths where she fulfills the will of her descendants, represent the eternal subjugation of women under patriarchal systems. Feminist theory critiques this perpetual objectification, where Ymir's body and abilities are commodified for the benefit of men and societal structures. Patriarchal society isolates women who challenge traditional roles, using societal

judgement as a tool for reinforcing conformity. Vishakha's story critiques this isolation, portraying her as a tragic figure trapped in a system that denies her the right to agency and individuality. As a wife she is expected to be dutiful and submissive, suppressing her own desires and emotions. When she seeks solace in Yavakri, her actions are deemed immoral. This alienation extends to her marriage, where Paravasu's neglect leaves her emotionally abandoned. Ymir's alienation is absolute. As a slave, she is physically and emotionally isolated, treated as less human by her captors. Even in death, she exists in a timeless purgatory, for even as the Paths connect all Subjects of Ymir together, she is still cut off from any meaningful connection. Ymir's alienation reflects the ultimate dehumanization of women in patriarchal systems, where their value is tied solely to their utility. Her story brings forth the systemic erasure of women's individuality and the ways in which power structures perpetuate their isolation. Vishakha's trauma is deeply rooted in her relationships and societal constraints. Her trauma manifests in a conflicted psyche, where she oscillates between guilt and defiance. Thus, oppressive systems inflict psychological damage on women by denying them agency and forcing them to internalize guilt for their actions. Vishakha's story critiques this dynamic, portraying her struggles as a reflection of broader societal injustices. Ymir's trauma is more existential, issuing from her complete dehumanization. Her psychological state is characterized by resignation and passivity, showcasing the depth of her oppression. Ymir internalizes her role as a tool, accepting her fate without resistance. The subtle act of granting Eren her power represents a moment of defiance against the system that enslaved her. This challenges the structures that have caused her oppression. This, thus highlights the potential of resistance even in the most oppressive situations.

Vishakha's legacy presents the hollowness and corruption of her domestic life. Karnad gives her some rapturous elegiac lines, vibrant with burning desire for a soul mate; mourning for lost time and apprehending a doomed future. The playwright's interest in the pathos of her life pushes the prose to such intensity that it reverberates with the images revealing the soul's dark dismal conflicts which is often considered to be the domain of poetry. Her account brings to the limelight the condition of elite class women in the ancient India (and in some cases of current condition of women too) who were fettered by the laws of the society, forced to put up with the contradictions of being coveted, desired, worshiped as well as abused and exploited. Ymir's story portrays the cycle of constant trauma, loss of autonomy, stripped of liberty and dehumanization of women (or slave women); she didn't get any solace even in death. Even 2000 years later, the intercourse of Marleyan propaganda and

King Karl Fritz's pacifist ways, her legacy was so distorted, her tragedy so mangled that the history of the Marleyans presented her as a girl who made a pact with the Devil – turning her into a deity in a folkloric story to tell young girls the importance of being submissive and obedient. Freida Reiss says: "Being like this girl in the book, perhaps?...She's a kind of girl who's always thinking of others. Because this world is full of pain and suffering, you should become someone everybody loves and live while helping each other out." (MAPPA, 2022, 7:47-9:05). Ymir's choice to end all human life outside Paradis Island shows the world the monsters they have created; her breaking free is as horrific as it is cathartic. To reduce her traumas, the psychological impact of the hell she went through to mere Stockholm Syndrome, that is, Ymir actually being in love with King Fritz is unneeded, even superfluous. And this to be revealed by the discussion between two males, one of whom is no less of abuser or tyrant is borderline mansplaining. This almost makes her servitude less of situations outside her control and more of her inability to let go of her love; this is the complete opposite of the truth and makes her seem like a villain – that she had a choice and she let all hell to break loose. This portrays how even after being at no fault of her own, a woman's trauma is trivialized – boiled down from the true horrors to a mere toxic relationship.

The parallel drawn between Mikasa and Ymir is crucial to understanding the psychological complexities of Ymir. The reason why Mikasa's actions are presented as significant for Ymir to attain her freedom is because Mikasa's life completely mirrored Ymir's own. Just like Ymir, Mikasa also had her life shattered as a child. When she was nine, slave traders broke into her home, killed her parents and took her away. Amidst this abduction she too met the person who would define her for the rest of her life – Eren. Eren swooped in to help her fight for herself, as his parents took her in. The two women definitely do not align in context to the traumas they faced but there is an undeniable parallel between them. Even the regular headaches Mikasa used to get were explained as Ymir peering through her eyes to watch her grow up, to see Mikasa also devote herself to a man, to love him and dedicate her whole being; a love where she would keep sacrificing herself for his happiness and dreams. Mikasa's love for Eren was blurring the fine line between affection and obsession; in a word Eren was literally the centre of her universe, the one constant in her life (especially after they lost their home in the Titan attack on Shiganshina district). When she thought Eren had died, she gave up all will to live and was ready to join him. His safety was her number one concern. This reflected Ymir's own life – how she gave herself to King Fritz – mind body and soul. Her belief being that protecting and obeying him was true love. Mikasa

killing Eren to end the Rumbling is what truly freed Ymir. Yes, Eren did give her the choice but she wasn't truly free. Being an Ackermann outside of Titan powers and controls and having enhanced abilities she could completely dominate him in a fight but still loving and following him made Mikasa the perfect candidate to be presented as parallel to Ymir. Mikasa having all this only to turn against Eren and kill him is what Ymir secretly wished she could have done. That's why she was so invested in Mikasa's life. To see someone like her break the cycle would allow Ymir to finally be at peace. Vishakha has, in contrast, little in parallel with Nittilai, the tribal girl and Arvasu's beloved. Nittilai becomes a victim of the same patriarchal structure. Arvasu is unable to reach her village on time and the girl is married off to a boy from her tribe. In a way the circumstances for such conditions to arise in her life is partly because of Arvasu being sympathetic towards others when he should have focused on reaching Nittilai's village on time. The reason for his delay – cremating his dead cousin Yavakri is, no doubt, a justifiable cause. But the way this indirectly impacts Nittilai's life is unfortunate. Further into the play, Nittilai returns to Arvasu's side when he later had been falsely framed, thrashed with no sympathizers to listen to him. She nurses him back to health, running away from home to tend to him. She dies during the chaos of the desecration of the yajna precinct, caught by her brother and killed by her husband while Arvasu is unable to defend her or save her. True, she is not stuck in as grim a condition as Vishakha but the classical conditioning doesn't leave her untouched, as she considers the treatment meted out to her by her husband as good when it's just bare minimum. Her words reflect how women are pitched against themselves, against each other – "...If any other girl had done what I have done, I'd be the first to thrash her in the village square..."(Karnad, p.61). She, like Vishakha, suffers due to actions for which she is not wholly responsible, but unlike Vishakha, she actively takes her destiny in her own hands. Her actions portray the conventional codes of the time and how they act against the better survival of women. She is looked down upon for leaving her family and rushing to the aid of her past lover, yet praised for her maternal love which not only stays confined to Arvasu's care but extends to the starving people of the famine struck lands. The irony lies in the fact that she presents a more violent end in contrast to the unrecognized and forgotten treatment which encapsulates Vishakha by the end of the play. It also showcases the condition of women across cultural and class boundaries as same, their desires, autonomy and selfhood killed by men, be it the elite class or the downtrodden who live on the margins of society and are looked down upon.

Conclusion

Both Vishakha and Ymir illustrate how trauma, suffering, and alienation shape psychology. Their stories highlight the universal struggle for agency and identity in oppressive systems. While Vishakha's journey is rooted in human relationships and cultural contexts, Ymir's narrative explores existential and cosmic themes. Together they exemplify how literature and anime interrogate the impact of suffering on the human psyche and the enduring quest for liberation while also exploring the human resilience against such oppressive systems. From a feminist perspective, both characters embody the systemic oppression of women within patriarchal societies. Their stories highlight the psychological toll of subjugation, the consequence of alienation, and the potential for resistance. While their contexts differ, both characters serve as powerful critiques of the structures that deny women agency, offering a call for change.

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