

FEMININITY, POWER, RESISTANCE AND POLITICS OF OUTRAGE: THE LEGEND OF PADMAVATI

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This paper refers to the *Padmavat* poem as a source of social and cultural history along five major themes. The first is the historicity of *Padmavat*, the second is the construction of *Padmavat* as the esoteric 'other' in Jayasi's account. The third is the role of image and power in women's histories. The fourth is patriarchal honor in historical memory, and the last engages with the politics of recent protests in relation to Rajput historical consciousness about Padmavati.

Key Words: Women in Medieval India, Delhi Sultanate, Feminism, Rajput History, Identity Politics, History of Indian Cinema

Malik Muhammad Jayasi one of the oldest vernacular poets from India immortalized by his Sufi-romantic epic *Padmavat*¹ was born in the important Sufi centred Jayas (modern day Uttar Pradesh) around 900/1494. His works, especially *Akhari Kalam*, contain his biographical account but he is not mentioned at length in any other contemporary records.² As a disciple of the Bhakti saint Kabir (817-924/1414-1518) Jayasi's work reflects the synthesis of Indo-Islamic literary traditions.³

Jayasi inscribed a love saga under the patronage of Afghan founder of Suri dynasty Sher Shah Suri (878-952/1473-1545) featuring Sultan Ala al-Din Khalji (r. y. 696-716/1297-1316).⁴ Other important works of Jayasi in Awadhi language include *Akhrawat*, *Akhiri Kalam*, *Kanhavat Mahari Baisi*, *Masalanama*, *Kanhavat* and *Citrarekha*.⁵ These works came in mass circulation after their publication by *the Asiatic Society of Bengal* in the final decades of the nineteenth century. Jayasi's magnum opus *Padmavati* is a unique symbiosis of Rajput culture, Bhakti and Sufi mystical ideas and thus was aptly identified as *mélange* of Indian and Persian culture by Annemarie Schimmel.⁶

The work *Padmavat* has become a reason for Hindu-Muslim communal rift in India in recent times was originally penned in 947/1540 in Awadhi language.⁷ This love saga is a spiritual journey of a Rajput queen that culminates in the transformation of her romantic love into the 'sublime' love for her homeland. *Padmavat* is a polyphonic and composite treasure trove of information for the historians working in the domains of social, religious, political, literary and cultural history of medieval India. It alludes from many literary traditions including Persian *Mathnavi*, the Sufi *Premakhyanas*, the Indian vernacular traditions of *nath* yogi didactic poetry, stories of Ram and Krishna and oral story traditions.⁸ Nonetheless, according to Thomas de Bruijn, Malik Muhammad Jayasi maintained a deliberate distance from the above mentioned literary traditions from where he had borrowed style, themes and vocabulary as well. Thus, it will be incorrect to label *Padmavati* as an exclusive representation of any of the above mentioned genre. Jayasi has addressed the themes of spirituality, aesthetics and heroism. The purpose of present article is not to present an all-encompassing commentary on *Padmavat*.⁹ This paper utilizes Jayasi's version of *Padmavat*¹⁰ as a corpus of social and cultural history and investigates the following themes: historicity of *Padmavati*, construction of *Padmavati* as the exotic 'other' in Jayasi's account which is in line with Indian aesthetics (*nakh-shikh varnan*), role of image and power in women's histories, issues of patriarchy and honor while remembering the past and lastly politics of offence and politics of protest, its connection with the Rajput historical consciousness about *Padmavati*.

The Plot

Before making a critical analysis of the poem *Padmavat* it would be useful to introduce the plot of Jayasi's epic. The story revolves around three protagonists; the alluring Rani Padmini also known as

Padmavati, her avidly doting husband Raja Ratansen also known as Ratan Singh and the 'licentious' Delhi Sultan Ala al-Din Khalji. The protagonist of the story Rani Padmavati was a princess of the Sinhala kingdom of Sri Lanka who eventually became the favorite queen of Rajput Raja Ratansen of Chittor. Padmavati thus surrendered her maiden identity and became an embodiment of Rajput honour. Besides these three main characters, others include: Gandharv-Sena (king of Sinhala); Naghmati (the first wife of Raja Ratansen); Hiramani (pet parrot of Padmavati who was her source of knowledge about the outside world and eventually became a messenger between her and Ratansen); Ratansen's loyal Rajput warriors Gora and Badel; Raghav Chetan the disgruntled mentor of Ratansen who incited Sultan Ala al-Din Khalji to attack Chittor; and Raja Devapala of Bhelnar who eventually murdered Ratansen.

According to the story, Padmavati was exceptionally beautiful and very close to her talking parrot Hiramani who was also her mentor. Her father, king of Sinhala, Gandharv-Sena disapproved of Padmavati's ever growing obsession with Hiramani. Consequently, Hiramani was sold to the Rajput Raja of Chittor, Ratansen. The bird soon became a confidant of the Raja. Naghmati, the beautiful queen of the Raja, was exceedingly vain and this made Raja Ratansen look for love elsewhere. Therefore, when Hiramani eulogized the beauty of Padmavati in front of Ratansen the latter became obsessed with her to an extent that he abandoned his palace and became a 'yogi'.¹¹ To the dismay of Raja's mother and Naghmati, the Raja resolved to remain powerless until he married Padmavati. It was because of his yoga that Padmavati also fell in love with Ratansen. Eventually, Ratansen persuaded Padmavati's reluctant father, the king of Sinhala, and married her. Padmavati left the royal palace of her father with a huge dowry and travelled from Sinhala to Chittor to live with her husband Ratansen.

Initially, there was a fall out between Naghmati and Padmavati but due to the apt mediation of Ratansen, both wives made peace with each other and thereafter remained on good terms. Soon after, conflict arose between Ratansen and his mentor Raghav Chetan. The piqued mentor left the Rajput court and offered his service and loyalty to the court of Delhi. Revengeful Raghav Chetan became close to Ala al-Din Khalji and enticed the sultan with the tales of Padmavati's matchless beauty. The conflict between Ala al-Din and Ratansen started when the former expressed his wish to see Padmavati but Ratansen refused. Ala al-Din accidentally saw Padmavati's reflection in mirror which validated Chetan's

claims. The Sultan's wish to include Padmavati in his harem led to a between the Rajputs and Ala al-Din Khalji. Unlike his contemporary Muslim writers, Jayasi refrains from enforcing religious identities in his work. Nonetheless, we find ethnic identities such as Turks and Rajputs in this work.

A neighbouring Raja Devapala of Bhelnar also wanted to marry Padmavati. When Ratansen was summoned to Delhi by Ala al-Din Khalji, Raja Devapala sent his wife Kumudini with a marriage proposal to Padmavati. This riled Ratansen when he returned to Chittor. War broke out between kingdoms of Bhelnar and Chittor and Raja Ratansen died fighting Raja Devapala. Padmavati and Naghmati then performed *sati* (individual self immolation). The forces of Ala al-Din Khalji then attacked Chittor and Rajputs unsuccessfully fought under the leadership of Badal. The Rajput women performed *jauhar* and forces of Ala al-Din Khalji annihilated the Rajput army who had come to the battlefield after performing *saka* (Rajput ritual when armies fought till death instead of surrendering).

Jayasi brings into light the symbolic and spiritual layer of interpretation to his work and mentions that Arabic, Hindi or Turkish all languages converge on the path of love. Love is the only way towards the communion with the Divine which according to him is the ultimate purpose of human existence. Chittor stands for the body, the Raja for the mind, the Singhala Kingdom for the heart and Padmini for intellect and Sultan Ala al-Din for *maya* (Hindi for lust), the parrot as a spiritual guide, and Ragav Chetan as the messenger of Satan.¹² His notions of love, wedding and bridal symbolism hint towards communion with God as it does in most of Indian Sufi sources.¹³

Historicity of Padmavati and the Case of Archaeology of Knowledge

The poem *Padmavat* provides rare insights about Indian social and cultural history, breaking the otherwise ubiquitous historical silence on women in the medieval Indian sources. In terms of textual evidence, Sultan Ala al-Din Khalji and Raja Ratansen are historical characters and there is a debate about the historicity of Rani Padmavati in the secondary sources. A contemporary historian, Amir Khusrau (651-725/1253-1325) provides a detailed account of Ala al-Din Khalji's 702/1303 siege of Chittor in his work *Khazainul Futuh*¹⁴ but does not mention Rani Padmavati.¹⁵ The case of Padmavati's historicity further weakens as

Amir Khusrau (who wrote love poems and produced masterpieces like *'Ishiq* where he mentions the siege of Chittor again) doesn't mention queen Padmavati.¹⁶ A modern historian, S.C. Datta is of the view that in *Khazain ul Futuh* Amir Khusrau makes a mention of a bird 'hudhud' and Queen Saba in reference to Ala al-Din's siege of Chittor, which may possibly hint towards Rani Padmani's existence.¹⁷ Similarly, scholars like A. L. Srivastava, Dasharatha Sharma, and Mohammad Habib, are of the view that Amir Khusrau leaves a hidden reference to Padmini in *Khaza'in ul-Futuh*. K. S. Lal and K. R. Qanungo, have questioned this interpretation of Amir Khusrau's text.¹⁸

Furthermore, this story remains absent from the accounts of Sultanate historians such as Zia al-Din Barani (684-758/1285-1357),¹⁹ Abdul Malik Isami (711/1311-?),²⁰ Shams Siraj Afif (d.ca. 802/1399),²¹ and Yahya Sirhindi (c. 15th Century).²² Interestingly, the 17th century historian Abul Qasim Farishta writing some seventy years after Jayasi does not use the name Padmavati and instead mentions her as Rani Padmini the embodiment of beauty who possessed all characteristics of an ideal beloved. He starts with Ala al-Din's curiosity to see the Rani Padmini because of the fame of her beauty. To the disappointment of her Rajput followers, Raja Ratansen, who was already in Ala al-Din's prison submitted to his captor's demand and sent for Rani Padmini. The Rajputs of Chittor resented this demand and decided to poison, him in Ala al-Din's prison. However, the exceptionally perspicacious daughter of Ratansen with her stratagem not only rescued her father but was also able to deflect the possible dishonour of presenting Rani Padmini to the Delhi Sultan. In this version Rani Padmini does not perform *jauhar* and fate of Raja remains unclear.²³

The sixteenth century Gujarati historian Haji-ud-Dabir, writing the history of Rajput-Turk conflict in Chittor provides his own set of variants. He neither mentions Raja Ratansen as a person nor does he acknowledge Padmavati as a particular person. He is unclear if Ala al-Din had a resolve to possess Padmavati before the conquest of Chittor. He also claims that Ratansen was never imprisoned in Delhi and it was the Raja and not Padmavati who planned the escape.²⁴ Syed Alaol's Bengali version of epic poem Padmavati was written in 1648, almost ninety years after the original piece was written by Jayasi. The Bengali version is inspired by the original version but this version is a corporeal romance in contrast to the Sufi text written by Jayasi.²⁵ However, both the accounts still accommodate the spirit of 'dialogic coexistence' for instance, it mutates the Jaysian tragic existential ending into a histrionic humanitarian

one, and it adroitly contrasts “anga” (body) and “ananga” (without body) while describing the beauty of Padmavati, an image innovated by Alaol.²⁶

Padmavati as a tale of Rajput resistance has remained central in Rajput oral history and bardic traditions of the eighteenth century. Historians like Ishwari Prasad and K. S. Lal affirm the historicity of Padmavati. According to Ishwari Prasad, if Padmavati was a literary concoction then why would it gain such a wide currency in Rajputana?²⁷ The issue of historicity of *Padmavati* can be concluded in the words of K.S. Lal who hints towards Michel Foucault’s concept of archaeology of knowledge:²⁸

...setting aside the traditional narratives of the story, the true facts are that Sultan Alauddin invaded Chittor in the year 1303 and after a hard fight of about eight months captured it. The brave Rajput warriors died fighting the invaders; the brave Rajput women perished in the flames of jauhar. Among those who perished was perhaps a queen of Ratan Singh whose name was Padmini. Except these bare facts all else is a literary concoction and lacks historical support.²⁹

Due to the communal controversy that this poem has led to, a plethora of secondary academic literature ranging from commentaries to critical analysis of the poem. On one hand the poem is perceived by many authors as a mystical, esoteric and metaphysical account that suggests nuances of divine versus mundane love. For instance, Thomas De Bruijin’s account *Ruby in the Dust: Poetry and History in Padmavat by the South Asian Sufi Poet Muhammad Jayasi* (2012),³⁰ is an important study that argues *Padmavat* as a semi-historical account and anchors on the theme of mystical love as a journey of a mundane soul towards the divine. The writer considers the union of the human soul with God as ultimate and the purpose of life.

Sayyid Naqi Hussain Jafri in his work *Essays on Literature, History and Society, Selected works of Professor Sayyid Naqi Hussain Jafari*,³¹ is of the view that while the Chittor siege of Ala al-Din in 701-2/1302-3 is an historical event, the character of Padmavati is the creation of Jayasi himself. Jafri is also of the view that the way Jayasi described the separation of Padmavati and Ratansen is parallel to the love of the mortal for the Supreme Being.

In his work R. Sreenivasan, *The Many lives of the Rajput Queen* explains the possibility of a mix up by Jayasi who confused Ala al-Din Khalji with Ghiyath al-Din Khalji of Malwa Sultanate (874-906/1469–1500).³² The latter was fond of women and was in search of a Padmini (not a particular Rajput princess, but the perfect woman according to

Hindu erotology). This idea is further strengthened by availability of a Hindu inscription in the Udaipur area that Ghiyath al-din Khalji, was defeated in battle in 893/1488 by a Rajput chieftain named Badal-Gora, the names of two Rajput warlords of Ratansen.³³ Yet a ballad, *Hemratan's Gora Badal Padmini Chaupai* (c. 1589 C.E) provides an alternate version of the legend, presenting it as based on factual events.³⁴

One of the important sources of present research is book of Catherine B. Asher and Cynthia Talbot, *India before Europe*, in which the writer argues that Ala al-Din's obsession with Padmavati and siege of Chittor had little historical merit.³⁵ Aditya Behl's chapters in his book *Love's Subtle Magic: An Indian Islamic Literary Tradition, 1379-154*, debate the construction of Padmavati as an icon of resistance during the colonial era.³⁶

Jayasi's Construction of Padmavati as the Exotic 'Other'³⁷

Malik Muhammad Jayasi's description and categorization of aesthetics is in line with *nakh-shikh varnan* [the (*shikh*) head to (*nakh*) to description of female protagonist].³⁸ In the context of literary theory, especially feminist discourse, otherness is defined by difference and alteration. This difference is constructed by identifying contesting binaries of 'us' and 'them'. The earlier being more relatable and the latter is usually distinct and exotic. Jayasi in his account *Padmavat* establishes gender binaries of men and women and describes women as the other and Padminis as the exotic other.³⁹ He writes about women as a man, divides them in four arbitrary categories that are Hastini, Sankhini, Chitrini and Padmini and lacks empathy while describing women. The detail of these categories from lowest to highest (Hastini) (Padmini) is given below:

Hastini (Elephant like women)

She has the complete nature of Elephant. Her head and feet are large, her neck is small: she is narrow-bosomed and wide-waisted. Her breast is like the elephant's temple: there is rutting humor in her bosom: she has gait of an elephant and well modeled arms. She does not take any notice of her own husband: her life is devoted to other men. She eats much, and delights much in dalliance: she has no cleanliness and little adornment. Her sweat smell foul like rutting ichor: she cozens everyone by treachery. She

has no fear or shame at all in her heart: she will only remain if one keep her by applying the goad.

Sankhini Woman:

She shows great strength but eats little food. Her bosom is very large, her waist very small: she is full of pride and shows no hesitancy in her mind. Much is her wrath: she is ready to slay her husband: she counts no one worth a straw. Her own finery is pleasing to her: she cannot bear to see the adornment of another. She has many hairs on her thighs and shin. She is stout and delights to feed on flesh: down-cast, she does not look before her: it is as though blinkers were fastened on her head.

“When she consorts with her lord in bed she plies the arrows of her nails upon his bosom. She who has all the qualities of the lion, she is the Sankini woman.

Chitrini Women:

“The third I shall tell of is the Chitrini women: very clever is she, and fond with the essence of love. Her form is beautiful and her adornment is rare: her cleanliness is like that of an Achari. She knows not what anger is; she knows how to worship her own husband: she will not leave one man and take another. Moon-faced she has a smiling faced her color is that of white water-lily: her gait is pleasing like that of a swans. She delights in rice-milk and super candy, but eats little: she is exceedingly fond of pan and of flowers. In comparison with the Padmini she is two degrees short: with respect to all others, her qualities are spotless.

As the Chitrini has the hue of a water lily, so she has its fragrance in her limbs. The ‘Padmini’ is in all respects like sandal wood: the bees hover about her.

Padmini Women:

God has made her like a moon with the fragrance of the lotus. She is Padmini by race and has the hue of a lotus: she has the scent of a lotus and the bees resort to her. She is not too tall and not too short: not too slender and not too broad. She has pure radiance with all the “sixteen’ marks of beauty: I will not recite these in fashion in which the world describe them.

First, she has long hair, which entrances the mind: the mind and: and long fingers of her hand are beautiful. She has long eyes, and glances brightly therewith: she has a long neck three lines on her throat. Next she has short teeth which are like diamonds: she has small breasts which protrude like lemons: she has small forehead, like a radiant crescent moon: and her navel is small, the scent of sandal fragrance, her nose is slender, like the edge of a sword, her waist is slender, as though she has defeated a lion. Her stomach is slender, as though she had no intestine, her lips are slender: her cheeks are broad; you may see in them the splendor of her face: her buttocks are broad; when one sees them, the mind is entranced. "Her forearm are made exceedingly broad, her thighs are broad, she had the gait of an Elephant."⁴⁰

All women are 'other' to him but the category of Padmini was the archetype of physical perfection - the exotic other. Padmavati who falls into the category of Padmini was gentle, demure, gentle hearted and naive. Jayasi's construction of male characters was relatable as they were powerful, dependable and knowledgeable.

For him among all those of seven continents⁴¹: Saran, Jambu-land, Lanka-land, Kumbhasthala, Mahusthala, Diya-dpia, and Carvana-dipa, the Padminis (Hindi for women) of Sinhala were the most perfect women.⁴² In Sinhala there were sixteen thousand queens and all these Padminis were more beautiful than others. 'Their limbs were scented like a lotus, waists like lionesses, with eyes like lotuses, swan-like in their motion, sweet-voiced as the cuckoos, black cloud of hair from head to feet, shining teeth, red lips, colored veils and with studded ear-rings.' Mother of Pamavati was like a sun among them who used to sit upon throne with full grace; all other women gave her respect and was talented women. This reflects ranks of respect among women because mother of Padmavati was more respectable among women because she was the chief queen.

'Padmavati was the most beautiful like a ray of light, with eyes like antelopes, nose like a parrot, face like lotus, lips like rubies and teeth like diamond.' The standards of beauty described by Jayasi are comparable to Amir Khusrau's construction of beauty for instance, princess Duval Rani in '*Isiqia*, who also possessed proverbial beauty,⁴³ that performed miracles. According to Amir Khusrau, 'with her eyes she can break the hearts of Turkestan, with her hairs she bought up all of Hindustan.'⁴⁴ This reflects the conventional standards of beauty in medieval times. In

a nutshell, for Jayasi, a woman's most notable characteristic was her immaculate physical appearance.

The second important characteristic of the construction of 'exotic other' was that she was naive, hidden and sheltered by her father the king who was powerful, protective and vigilant. At the age of twelve, Padmavati entered womanhood and encountered the questions of marriage and suitors.⁴⁵ She had many suitors but her father considered no one good enough for her. Despite her own willingness to marry she had a hard time persuading her father. In the later part of the poem, Jayasi also wrote the way her father controlled her smile and weeping and posted informers for continual surveillance over her.⁴⁶ Her mother out of fear couldn't talk to the king about her daughter.⁴⁷ These details not only shed light on the convention of marriageable age in medieval India but also father's prerogative over a daughter's life decisions. Thus in Jayasi's poetic universe women had little say in the matters of matrimony a theme which was a reflection of the society the poet was a part of.

Malik Muhammad Jayasi fails to imagine women travelling or exploring the world beyond the four walls of their household on their own. This particular detail indicates that the mobility of women was restricted and depended upon the wishes of their men. With the exception of one occasion where Padmavati visits Mansarodaka Lake before her marriage with her fellow Padminis,⁴⁸ she does not enjoy the freedom to visit the outside world on her own. Her mobility otherwise seems dependent upon the male chaperons; for instance, the travel of Padmavati with her husband Ratansen from her maiden home Sinhala to Chittor. Likewise, Rani Kumudini⁴⁹ the wife of Devapala went to Padmavati's harem to persuade her to accept her husband's marriage proposal. In addition, the female envoys from Delhi visited Padmavati carrying message of Ala al-Din Khalji. Furthermore, according to Farishta's account, Rajput men were transported as Rani Padmini's entourage to Delhi in palanquins in order to rescue Raja Ratansen.⁵⁰ Since palanquins were carried by men therefore, it is hard to imagine that elite women could see the outside world independently.

While Malik Muhammad Jayasi explains polygamy as an accepted convention; he does not judge men for being unfaithful to their wives. He describes the ultimate fear of women as the loss of their husbands or sons. This insight provides an interesting reading into medieval patriarchy as women associated with politically powerful Rajas drew their social influence and political power from their men, therefore loss of a man's attention meant loss of all privileges that came with him. Naghmati, the

first wife of Ratansen, earned her distinction over other women in Chittor due to her beauty. Her story resembles Snow White's mother.⁵¹ Once Naghmati looked into the mirror and asked Hiramani the parrot if there was anyone more beautiful than her in the entire world?⁵² The reply was Padmavati. Naghmati was unwilling to accept Hiramani's reply out of jealousy and insecurity that if the parrot described the beauty of Padmavati to the Raja, she might lose her status as the most beautiful one in the eyes of her husband.⁵³ The status of women in the harem was linked to their image in front of the Raja and even the most powerful women were insecure about losing this status. When Ratansen went to pursue Padmavati, he did not return to Chittor for an entire year, Jayasi explains the plight of Naghmati and the queen mother who wept for him endlessly.⁵⁴ Similarly, when Ratansen was arrested Padmavati wept for her husband. Also, the wives of Gora and Badal grieved for their husbands when they went to rescue Ratansen. In the words of Jayasi, when a woman lost affection of her husband she also lost perfect happiness and a woman, no matter if she was a queen or slave-girl, needed favour of the man (king) to survive.⁵⁵ Jayasi points towards racial heterogeneity in addition to polygamy when Raghava Chetan tried to entice the sultan by mentioning the beauty of Padmavati, Ala al-Din replied 'I have sixteen hundred queens, I have selected them from seven continents'.⁵⁶ This claim is validated from other sources writing about Ala al-Din Khalji.⁵⁷ As mentioned earlier, ethnically Padmavati herself was not a Rajput.

Another important characteristic of Jayasi's exotic 'other' was her fallibility. As mentioned earlier Padmavati is the symbol of wisdom and intellect, yet the entire poem centers round her wrong life choices. In situations created by Jayasi, men never listened to women's advice and considered them lovable but intellectually inferior. When Ratansen decided to become a yogi to win Padmavati, his mother forbade him to abandon the wealthy kingdom of Chittor but he disobeyed his mother.⁵⁸ In the same way, queen Naghmati grieved over the situation in the harem and requested to accompany Ratansen. However, the Raja discouraged her and said that she as a woman was deficient in sense and men who listen to advice of women are fools.⁵⁹ Likewise, when Badal was bidding farewell to his wife before war he consoled her by saying that "you are a weak woman, what do you know of warfare?"⁶⁰ Jayasi's ideal men are infallible as the lords Gora and Badal extensively plan the war to avoid any mistake because 'a man cannot act on imprudent impulse like women'.⁶¹ However, Farishta's account does not portray Rajput women as powerless or naive. In his account the sage daughter of Raja Ratansen

rescues him from Ala al-Din's prison through her military strategy. She is able to achieve this feat when Raja Ratansen had surrendered to Ala al-Din's whim of handing over a particular dark eyed Rani Padmini. Raja's folks considered handing over the Padmini a disgrace and in order to avoid humiliation they wanted to poison the Raja in prison. The daughter of Ratansen then decided contrary to the wishes of her kinsfolk and everyone agreed. Farishta wrote that because of her intelligence they were able to free their Raja from prison of.⁶² Jayasi reinforces this that women are intellectually inferior by explaining many erroneous life choices that Padmavati, made, which, eventually, led to her doom. She opposed her father when he wanted to kill the talking parrot Hiramani. This parrot brought Ratansen and her tragic fate followed them, when Padmavati heard about the banishment of sage Raghava Chetan, 'she with her mind's eyes calculated the outcomes'.⁶³ She thought that Raghava should be treated with caution to avoid any danger.⁶⁴ Nonetheless, she had her role in enraging Raghava Chetan and the episode of coming in front of the conspiring mentor enchanting him with her beauty and presenting him with a bracelet of precious stones that expedited her tragic death.⁶⁵

Jayasi constructs female characters as dependent upon men to set things right for them. For instance, when Naghmati heard about Ratansen's return she felt ecstatic and rejuvenated however she felt revulsion the moment she saw the palanquin of Padmavati.⁶⁶ In a short time this passive aggression culminated into a public quarrel in the royal gardens. When Ratansen heard about the row he not only 'extinguished the flame with which they both were burning....both (queens) laughingly fell upon his neck'⁶⁷ Ratansen permanently resolved this crisis in harem by bestowing golden palace to Naghmati and a silver palace to Padmavati. The way Ratansen managed rivalry between both wives reflects Jayasi's lack of empathy for woman who are constructed as single dimensional characters. Nonetheless, through this Jayasi drew picture of a successful medieval husband. From Jayasi's account it can be easily inferred that powerful women were the facilitators of patriarchy and status quo. For instance Raja Devapala's wife queen Kudmini herself conveys her husband's marriage proposal to Padmavati alongwith gifts and offerings.⁶⁸ Similarly, women who conveyed the message of Ala al-Din to Padmavati also served the status quo. Pamavati who had never set her feet outside the Chittor palace went to the houses of the Rajput warlords Gora and Badal in order to convince them to rescue her husband from Ala al-Din's prison.

On several occasions Jayasi emphasizes the power of description

and persuasion over human to human contact. Hiramani though a parrot carries masculine attributes and goes about describing the beauty of Padmavati in a manner that Raja Ratansen decides to travel long distance (seven seas according to Jayasi)⁶⁹ abandoning his kingdom just to possess Padmavati. Jayasi uses a literary metaphor of 'love of a bee for the lotuses in order to explain Ratansen's passion for Padmavati.⁷⁰ Similarly, Raghav Chetan's description of Padmavati's beauty and kindness⁷¹ in front of Ala al-Din Khalji becomes the major cause of his siege of Chittor. In both cases the rulers fall for Padmavati without even seeing her.

Hiramani informed Padmavati about the passion of Ratansen. Spirituality that was the outcome of Ratansen's pure love and yogic practices attracted her towards Ratansen and she eventually fell in love with him without even seeing him in person. Love-struck, she was unable to eat or sleep.⁷² Her nurse dissuaded her from romantic pursuits and advised her to remain chaste by self control since youth and passion were transient and not worthy of risking the family honour.⁷³ After multiple failed attempts Ratansen finally persuaded Padmavati's father for permission to marry. According to Jayasi, both Ratansen and Padmavati were 'looking like sun and moon', and 'girls sung songs in the name of both bride and groom.'⁷⁴ Furthermore, the poet's picturesque account of a medieval wedding with dance, festivities and how brides were decked with germ-studded ornaments and sandal-scented saris provides unique cultural insights. Jayasi associated color of peacock (dark blue, green, yellow and indigo) with women.⁷⁵ He also mentions jewelry such as diamond necklaces, bracelets and bangles.⁷⁶ These happy times can be juxtaposed with the time when Padmavati was getting ready to perform *sati*, she put on silk clothes and her strings of pearls around her necks were taken off.⁷⁷ In Indian society the ornaments of women are used as symbol of happiness, joy and status. Ornaments have their ritualistic meaning as well; for instance the ornaments Padmavati wore on her wedding were different from those used prior to performing *sati*. Similarly, the music played on marriages was different from the music played for mourning: 'bands went in front playing music; there was one kind of music at our wedding and another kind at our last rites'.⁷⁸

Initially, Padmavati remained in Sinhala with Ratansen. A year later the first wife of Ratansen, Naghmati sent a messenger who persuaded Ratansen to return to Chittor. When Padmavati was departing from palace to her in-laws's palace, her brother, father, mother and companions bid her farewell in an emotional manner.⁷⁹ Here Jayasi is able to portray

emotionally powerful image of *rukhsati* (Urdu: woman's departure from her maiden home to her husband's home after marriage).

An important feature of Jayasi's writing is his explicit anachronism. He claims the use of cannons in the battle of Chittor, while it is a known fact that siege machinery was used by Ala al-Din however; arrival of cannons in India coincides with advent of the Mughals. The poet refers to cannons as a metaphor for Rajput women in terms of their body and spirit. For example the bravery of Rajput women, their physical appearance (they carry fire on their heads, their wheel are their ear-ornaments, cannonballs are their breasts which are attached to their bosoms, their teeth are indefatigable missiles), speech (from their tongue there are flames at the opening of their mouths and by their speech Lanka is set on fire), dress (their skirts are far-flung banners) and their bravery were all reflecting their erotic and heroic qualities. The poet calls both women and cannons foemen's bane and fortress breaker.⁸⁰

From Exotic Other to Icon of Rajput Resistance

Public spectacle of burning women alive has been a known practice in the ancient and medieval world. The practices of witch burning in Europe⁸¹ and *kaftar* burning in the Islamic world⁸² were important means to persecute and eliminate women who were a threat to the existing social fabric. The witches and *kaftars* were perceived as the seeds of evil threatening the goodness in the society thus were burnt publically and disgracefully in order to discourage the potential offenders. It was a common belief that after death witches became poltergeist who haunted the living. Evenly, burnt *kaftar's* ashes were collected by man and women of the towns to save themselves against other *kaftar*.⁸³ In the Indian context, a similar practice of *Jauhar* meant the ritual of mass self-immolation performed during the times of war by potentially vanquished women. They turn themselves, their belongings and children into funeral pyre to avoid a possible captivity of war and other abuses that it may bring. Men of the *jauhar* women then perform *saka* a ritual of then entering the battlefield to fight till death. *Sati* on the other hand is self immolation on becoming a widow. *Jauhar* is termed as *sati-jauhar* by some scholars.⁸⁴ Such practices of *sati* and *jauhar* were seen as honorable public deaths elevating the status of the women to martyrs and heroines.

The annual festival of *jauhar mela* (festival) in Rajasthan commemorates Rajput women who performed *jauhar* and thus celebrates

Rajput resistance to the Muslim invaders.⁸⁵ The *jauhar* of Padmavati was neither the first one nor the last one in Indian or Rajput history, since there were several *jauhars* reported in India before and after this event. The claim that *jauhars* were only performed against Muslim invaders⁸⁶ is also untrue since this practice precedes Muslim presence in India and was present even during the Greek invasions of India.⁸⁷ Furthermore, the impression that the *jauhars* were only performed by Hindus is erroneous since on several occasions the Muslim elite and Mughal nobles performed *jauhars* while fighting one another and sometimes non-Muslims. The list of nobles that performed *jauhar* includes Baz Bahadur (962-969/1555-1562), Khan-i-Khanan a Mughul converted noble mentioned in *Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri*, Emperor Jahangir's (977-1036/1569-1627) governor Qasim and the famous Mughul governor Shaista Khan (c. 1009-1105/1600-1694) who killed his womenfolk before his battle with Shiva ji.⁸⁸

The practice of *jauhar* was known in all parts of India but the *jauhars* performed in the Rajputana against Muslim armies have remained most prominent. In Chittor three *jauhars* were performed namely the *jauhar* of companions of Padmavati during Ala al-Din Khalji's 703/1303 siege, the *jauhar* of Rani Karanawati and her companions in 942/1535 against Bahadur Shah (933-944/1526-1537) of Gujarat, and 976/1568 the third *jauhar* of Chittor against Mughul emperor Akbar.⁸⁹ Nonetheless, in terms of details and fame Padmavati's companion's *jauhar* is the most notable one.⁹⁰ There are only passing references mostly in the Muslim historical sources about *jauhar* in Sindh during the campaigns of Muhammad bin Qasim, *jauhar* in Gwalior during the time of Iltutmish, *jauhar* in Ranthambore during the time of Ala-al-Din Khalji, *jauhar* in Kampili during Muhammad bin Tughluq's reign, *jauhar* in Chanderi during the invasions of Babur and another three *jauhars* in Raisen during the time of Mughal Emperor Humayun (914-963/1508-1556).

The latter half of Jayasi's *Padmavat* focuses upon eight years long tension between Ala al-Din and Ratansen on the issue of Padmavati. During these years Ratansen was arrested by Ala al-Din and then rescued by the Rajput forces. In the final battle it is not Ala al-Din Khalji that killed Ratansen but Devapala, the neighbouring Hindu Raja. At the death of her husband Padmavati performed the ritual of sati along with Naghmati. The women of Chittor performed *jauhar* before the next battle against Ala al-Din Khalji. The poet considers *jauhar* as the ultimate sacrifice and sublime death that resulted in the eternal communion between Ratansen's and Padmavati's souls.⁹¹ Ashes become the fate of both lustful kings Devapala and Ala al-Din for whom the battle remains pyrrhic.

While most consider Padmavati's companions *jauhar* as a heroic act of sacrifice, honor and bravery,⁹² in popular imagination some see similarities between her character and Helen of Troy⁹³ and *jauhar* as a 'horrible sacrifice' of female self immolation.⁹⁴

According to Aditya Behl, with James Tod 's narration of Padmavati, started a process of 'retrospective creation of Rajput chivalry and the ideological construction of Rajputs as the last 'Hindu' bastions of 'resistance' against the invading Turkish armies.⁹⁵ He constructed a radically dualistic narrative of Muslim versus Hindus which was absent in Jayasi's work which does not create such religious binaries.⁹⁶ Tod's narration, though now considered unreliable,⁹⁷ left a permanent mark on Rajput understanding of their past. His compilation of the legends of Rajasthan during the 1820s, portrayed Padmini as a historical figure associated with the famous siege of Chittor. During the Swadeshi movement of the 19th Century, Padmini was transformed into a symbol of Indian patriotism. Indian nationalist writers utilized her story as an example of a heroic sacrifice for the motherland. Her story became a part of popular culture and a number of plays were staged after 1323/1905 to commemorate this story.⁹⁸ Ireland-born nun Nivedita (1283-1391/1866–1971) visited Chittor and historicized Padmini. Similarly, *Rajkahini* by Abanindranath Tagore (1288-1371/1871–1951) popularized her as a historical figure among school children. This legend soon became a part of nationalistic discourse,⁹⁹ as Jawaharlal Nehru in his work *The Discovery of India* (1946) mentions Padmavati and Ala al-Din Khalji.¹⁰⁰

Apotheosis of Padmavati is completed by the 20th century. In present times Rajput Hindu women of Rajasthan revere Padmini as a heroine who represents Rajput womanhood.¹⁰¹ She has earned admiration for not surrendering herself to the 'Muslim invader'¹⁰² and become vulnerable to abuse and humiliation. She with her companions instead chose to commit *jauhar* and thus was a chaste exemplar like the Bhakti saint Meera (904-953/1498-1546).¹⁰³

From the Icon of Resistance to Reason for the Politics of Offense

The story of Padmavati has been a part of Rajput oral history, eighteenth century Rajput ballads, and stories and in present times multiple TV serials and movies suggest how the legend of Padmavati has evolved according to the perceptions and expectations of its audience.¹⁰⁴ For instance, the 1959 version of this love saga *Maharani Padmini* was directed by Jaswant Jhaveri. This movie does not highlight the communal

tensions and instead features episodes of cordiality and brotherhood between Hindus and Muslims that are absent from Jayasi's account. Ala al-Din Khalji is depicted as a middle aged sultan who is made curious about Padmavati's by his conspiring *Siph Salar* (military commander) Malik Kafur and courtesan Qatlani in their bid to take over the throne of Delhi. In one scene the queen of Ala al-Din Khalji makes Raja Ratansen her brother. Besides, the movie has plenty of dialogues where male characters challenge Padmavati's intellect and treat her as inferior but eventually accept her strategy to rescue Raja Ratansen. Furthermore, after Padmavati performs *jauhar*, the ashamed Ala al-Din Khalji has a long dialogue seeking redemption and deliverance from God for his evil actions.¹⁰⁵

The historical journey of *Padmavati* explains the role of power in writing of history and construction of legends as symbols of resistance. The 1440/2018 feature film *Padmavati* brings forth the issue of reliving of history and its utilization as a source of interest aggregation and interest articulation for political and ethnic groups in contemporary India. From Sanjay Leela Bhansali's controversial 2018 movie *Padmavati*, viewers expected larger than life,¹⁰⁶ Palace of Versailles Hall of Mirrors styled gilded sets adorned with crystal chandeliers and giant candle holders. A stunning female lead actress like Deepika Pudhokone as Rani Padmavati and Ranvir Singh as her Rajput husband Ratansen. The expectation was to see a Shakti Kapoor-like Ala al- Din Khalji, with streaks of comic dumbness and revolting debauchery.¹⁰⁷ Owing to Ala al-Din Khalji's Muslim genealogy villain was expected to have all major characteristics of Muslim stereotype from Bollywood movies¹⁰⁸ including a beard without moustache, a prominent black wart on the upper cheek, *surma* (antimony) in his eyes, and addressing himself as 'hum' (Urdu for us) in Lakhnawi style. To the surprise of many the heart throb Ranvir Singh played Khal Drogo¹⁰⁹ inspired cold blooded and treacherous Ala al-Din Khalji with a black mane and bare chest, usually shown eating raw meat. Certainly a refinement of the stereotypical image of Muslim villains in Bollywood cinema is a reflection of viewer's evolving expectations.

The story of Bhansali's movie *Padmavati* is slightly different from Jayasi's *Padmavat* catering to the evolving worldview of the contemporary Indians and the political realities that surround them. For instance, the female characters are not as powerless or impressionable as are depicted in Jayasi's poem. Unlike the poem, in the movie Padmavati performs *jauhar* and not *sati*.

The past can help us understand the present. Historical imagination

can be factual or mythical. A group's selection of heroes and icons from the past best explains the difference between identity and lineage. Identity means a group's perception of self and preference about how it wants to be identified and the issues it stands for. Every hero embodies certain values and the selection of heroes reflects what values people would like to celebrate and what actions they will disown.¹¹⁰ Ranajit Guha explains the present politics and historical imagination as "rhetoric creates the culture and then culture recreates the rhetoric".¹¹¹ *Padmavat* is a story of Rajput pride. Why the story of Padmavati has become a part of Rajput historical consciousness and has remained alive for so long, is even at the costs of glamorizing *jauhar*. The movie *Padmavati* (2018) is also an illustration of this type of mythical- historical consciousness.¹¹²

Nevertheless, the popular response for the movie in India was somewhat surprising. In a culture where it is acceptable to perform the stories of goddesses and sacred women like Sita, Radha and Dropadi, instead of celebrating the legend of the queen, there were protests in Rajput areas by Rajput Karnik Sena and regional chapters of BJP.¹¹³ When the trailer of the movie was released, a big controversy emerged in India. Strikes broke and for days it ran as breaking news on different news channels. Rajasthan was the center of protests and after the agitation the name of the movie was changed from *Padmavat* to *Padmavati* in December 2017.¹¹⁴ This raises certain important questions; what is the group identity of the offended, Hindus or Rajputs? If Rani Padmavati is a glorified martyr then what is the reason behind the outrage? There was no popular protest for misrepresenting Ala al-Din Khalji who is shown as a notorious, barbaric marauder. Is there a popular response from Muslim circles about distorting the image of administrative genius Ala al-Din Khalji?¹¹⁵

There were some protesting voices from Indian academia that it was sheer misrepresentation of the character a gifted Sultan of Delhi who was famous for defending Indian borders against the formidable Mongol threat, launched economic and market reforms, price control policy, agrarian reforms and enabled penetration of Muslim rule to South India. Reading from Jayasi's version, Padmavati's lineage was Sinhala (Sri Lankan) but her identity became Rajput. Similarly, Ala al-Din Khalji's had Muslim lineage but his identity is not owned by a vast majority of modern Indian Muslims who identify more with Sufi shrines and *ulema*. Ala al-Din Khalji's identity is not a part of any well knitted ethno-religious group's historical consciousness thus voices in his support were fewer than those protesting against Padmavati's alleged misrepresentation.

A further link between communal imagination and emotional anchoring can be established by saying that there are few takers of composite culture. People are either on the side of Mughul Emperor Aurangzeb Alamgir (1069-1119/1658 –1707) or on the side of Maratha king Shivaji (1085-1091/1674–1680). People who like Mughul emperor Akbar (963-1014/1556 –1605) are neither good Hindus nor good Muslims. The case may be the same for Ala al-Din Khalji.

The widespread protests should be seen in the light of contemporary India's internal political and social issues including Gujarat elections, politics of vote bank and protests as a means of employment. Thus, Padmavati as a 'historical' icon of resistance provided an opportunity for political actors to engage common people with identity politics and increase political mobilization.¹¹⁶

History is not just about text, it is about people living it. The popularity of the tale of Padmavati also provides an insight into its audiences' adherence to norms of patriarchy that have persisted over centuries. In many parts of the sub-continent *sati* and *jauhar* are still accepted as heroic feats, women are still labeled as the repository of male honor. 'Sacrilege' of Padmavati and women protesting on streets impersonating Padmavati¹¹⁷ without a feminist reading of *jauhar* suggests that even in the contemporary India, for many it is admirable for women to show devotion to the community, and devotion to a person is considered a second-rate emotion.

To conclude: the case of *Padmavat* explains the relationship between historical imagination, remembrance and politics. Past consists of history, myths and legends. The famous quote of J. Nozipo Maraire "Until the lion learns how to write, every story will glorify the hunter," aptly explains the connection between written history and power. However, it is important to note that the case of Padmavati is an example of the connection between power and remembrance. The legend of Padmavati survives for centuries and remains relevant because it suits Rajput historical consciousness about political resistance against the racial and religious other and continues to satisfy the codes of patriarchy and honor. Ironically, Jayasi while writing his love poem had risen beyond his religious identity and had written a poem about passion, devotion and spirituality. The movie Rani Padmani (1959) explains the incident of *jauhar* in a communally composite environment. However, in the recent (2018) history this legend is utilized to reinforce politics of identity and communalism and research a fractioning of India's composite nationalism.

Notes and References

1. The words Padma (Sanskrit for lotus flower) and Padmini appear frequently in Hindu mythology. Padma is another denomination of Hindu goddess Lakshmi. The Mughals were familiar with river Padma in Bengal that is a branch of the river Ganges in Bengal. *Ain-i-Akbari* mentions one stream of river Ganges in Bengal as Padmavati with reference to Hindu mythology that its origin is Mahadeva's head. Abul Fazal bin Mubarak, *The Ain i Akbari : by Abul Fazl Allami* ; translated from the original Persian by H. Blochmann (Calcutta: Asiatic Society of Bengal, 1873). 120.
2. Munshi Ahmad Ali, ed, *Padmavat: Bhakha Mutarjim*, Mirza Inayat Ali Baig, trans. (Bihar: Saulat Public Library, 1847); Malik Muhammad Jayasi, *Padmavati*, translated by A. G. Shirreff. I.C.S (Bengal: The Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal, 1944), vi.
3. Malik Muhammad Jayasi, *Padmavati*, ii, In the pages 1-9 of the preface the poet acknowledge the greatness of the Creator (God) whose characteristics are both Hindu and Muslim and later he pays homage to the Prophet Muhammad and his companions and then multiple Chishti Sufi masters. He also acknowledges various Hindu gods including Indra.
4. *Padmavat, Bhakha Mutarjim*, 17. ; and Malik Muhammad Jayasi, *Padmavati*, ii, 9.
5. Devyani Onial, Padmini's Poet: The man behind the first Known narrative of Rani Padmavati is known more as a peer (*The Indian Express*, November 2017)
6. Annemarie Schimmel, *The Mystical Dimension of Islam* (North Carolina Press, 1975), 159.
7. Awadhi is major dialectic of Eastern Hind, Hindi branch of Indo-Aryan languages spoken in Northern India. It is primarily spoken in the Awadh region of present day Uttar Pradesh India.
8. For a detailed discussion on this see the chapter 'the literary context of Padmavat' see Thomas De Bruijin, *Ruby in the Dust: Poetry and History in Padmavat by the South Asian Sufi Poet Muhammad Jayasi* (Leiden: Leiden University Press, 2012), 101-114. For the Sufi Premakhyans see, *Ibid.*, 14.
9. Bruijin, *Ruby in the Dust*: 101-143.
10. Multiple translations of this poem are available. For this work we have used Munshi Ahmad Ali, ed, *Padmavat: Bhakha Mutarjim*, Mirza Inayat Ali Baig, trans. (Bihar: Saulat Public Library, 1847) and the English translation of A.G Shirreff which is published by The Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal in 1944 is used for this research article. A.G Shirreff, I.C.S *Padmavati* (The Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal, 1944).
11. Yoga is part of many religions including Hinduism in which Yogi advances in the path of self discipline practice and aspires to spirituality realize the truth. In Sufism such human is referred as a Murshid.
12. *Padmavat, Bhakha Mutarjim*, 634.. and Malik Muhammad Jayasi, *Padmavati*, 371.
13. For further elaboration see; Tanvir, Anjum. "Bridal Symbolism in the Sufi Poetry of Islamicate South Asia: From the Earliest Times to the Fifteenth Century"

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14. Amir Khusrau, *Khaza'-i-nul Futuh*, trans, Muhammad Habib (Bombay: D. B. Taraporewala, Sons and Co, 1931), 50.
 15. Catherine B. Asher, *India Before Europe* (United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 41
 16. Michael Bednar, "The Content and the Form in Amir Khusraw's Duval Rani va Khizr Khan," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 24 no. 1 (Jan 2014): 17-35.
 17. Ramya Sreenivasan, *The Many Lives of a Rajput Queen: Heroic Past in India C. 1500-1900*. (University of Washington Press, 2007), 22-24.
 18. Kalika Ranjan Qanungo, *Studies in Rajput History* (S. Chand, 1960), 1-17; and Ram Vallabh Somani *History of Mewar, from Earliest Times to 1751 A.D.* (1976), 97-8.
 19. Zia al-Din Barani, *Tarikh-i-Firuz Shahi* trans in Urdu by Syed Muin ul Haq (Lahore: Urdu Science Board, 2004), 440. For siege of Chittor.
 20. Fakhr al Mulk Isami ; *The Futuh-us-Salatin or the Shahnama of medieval India of Isami*, ed. Mahdi Husain (Agra : Educational Press, 1938).
 21. Shams Siraj Afif, *The Tarikh-i-Firoz Shahi, of Shams Siraj Afif*, ed. Maulavi Vilayat Husain, Calcutta, 1888-91
 22. Yahya bin Ahmad Sirhindi, *Tarikh-i-Mubarak Shahi of Yahya bin Ahmed Sirhindi* (Baroda: Oriental Institute, 1932).
 23. Muhammad Qasim Farishta, *Tarikh-i-Farishta*, trans Abdul Hai Khwaja. M.A (Lahore: Sheikh Ghulam Ali and Sons, ND), vol.1. 379.
 24. Hajjuddabir, *Zafar ul Vali, An Arabic History of Gujarat*, edited by Denison Ross. (C. early 16th Century),786-88.
 25. Alaol, *Padmavadi*, S. A. Ahsan ed, Dhaka, 2003, 30-31.
 26. Mashrur S Hossain, "Framing Ananga: A Contrapuntal Reading of Jayasi's _Padmavat_ and Alaol's _Padmavati_" "South Asian Experience" CLAI Biennial International Conference 2019 on "Studying South Asian Narratives Through Pluralist and Dialogic Frames"
 27. Ishwari Prasad, *History of Medieval India* (Michigan: The University of Michigan, 1940), 226.
 28. Gutting, Gary, *The Cambridge Companion to Foucault* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press,1994), 231.
 29. K. S. Lal, *The History of the Khaljis (1290-1320)* (Allahabad: The Indian Press, 1950), 130.
 30. Bruijin, *Ruby in the Dust*.
 31. Sayyid Naqi Husain Jafri, Saiyid Zaheer Husain Jafri and Syed Muzammil Hasan Jafri, *Essays on Literature, History and Society: Selected works of Professor Syed Naqi Hussain Jafri* (Primus Books, 2010).
 32. Ramya Sreenivasan, *The Many Lives of a Rajput Queen: Heroic Past in India C. 1500-1900* (University of Washington Press, 2007), 3, 4, 209.
 33. Sreenivasan, *The Many Lives of a Rajput Queen*, 3,4.
 34. Sreenivasan, *The Many Lives of a Rajput Queen*, 3,4.
 35. Catherine B. Asher and Cynthia Talbot, *India before Europe* (Cambridge University Press, 2006), 41.

36. Aditya Behl, *Love's Subtle Magic: An Indian Islamic Literary Tradition, 1379-1545* (Oxford University Press, 2012), 177.
37. "Otherness means..... within the context of literary theory, particularly feminist and post-Colonial discourse. In this context, otherness is defined by difference, typically difference marked by outward signs like race and gender. As such, otherness has also been associated predominantly with marginalized people, those who by virtue of their difference from the dominant group, have been disempowered, robbed of a voice in the social, religious, and political world. Difference, in literature is often articulated as either some kind of weakness or superior strength or intellect depending on the sympathies of the dominant cultural voice. For example, (and as a generalization) in Colonial literature the native is either portrayed as the innocent Noble Savage or the barbaric cannibal." Lisa Onbelet, "Imagining the Other: The Use of Narrative as an Empowering Practice" retrieved from <https://www.mcmaster.ca/mjtm/3-1d.htm>.25 Jun.2019. see also : Bernhard Leistle, "Otherness as a paradigm in anthropology." *Semiotica*. 2015(204): 291-313. Retrieved 24 Jun. 2019, from doi:10.1515/sem-2014-0089
38. Brujin, *Ruby in the Dust*, 144.
39. For instance see Ragive Chaitan's sixteen characteristics of Padminis, *Padmavat, Bhakha Mutarjim*, 459; and Jayasi, *Padmavati*, 276.
40. *Padmavat, Bhakha Mutarjim*, 455-459; and Jayasi, *Padmavati*, 273-276.
41. This is self-constructed division of earth in seven continents.
42. Padminis were companions of Padmavati in the palace of Grandharva-Sena who were also famous for their beauty.
43. Amir Khusraw, *In The Bazar of Love: The Selected Poetry of Amir Khusraw*. trans, Paul Losensky, Sunil Sharma. (Penguin Global Paper, 2013), 117.
44. Amir Khusraw, *In The Bazar of Love*, 125.
45. *Padmavat, Bhakha Mutarjim*, 50; and Jayasi, *Padmavati* ,40.
46. Jayasi, *Padmavati*, 151.
47. *Padmavat, Bhakha Mutarjim*, 51; and Jayasi, *Padmavati* , 41.
48. *Padmavat, Bhakha Mutarjim*, 56; and Jayasi, *Padmavati*, 44.
49. Kudmini was Rani of Devapala. Her husband was also fond of beauty of Padmavati and wanted to marry her.
50. Farishta, *Tarikh-i-Farishta*, vol.1, 378.
51. <https://www.huffpost.com/entry/vanity-b-2293002>.
52. *Padmavat, Bhakha Mutarjim*, 82; and Jayasi, *Padmavati*, 59.
53. *Padmavat, Bhakha Mutarjim*, 83; and Jayasi, *Padmavati*, 60.
54. *Padmavat, Bhakha Mutarjim*, 338; and Jayasi, *Padmavati*, 219.
55. *Padmavat, Bhakha Mutarjim*, 88; and Jayasi, *Padmavati*, 64.
56. *Padmavat, Bhakha Mutarjim*, 454.; and Jayasi, *Padmavati*, 272.
57. For Ala al-Din's reign see, Fouzia Farooq Ahmed, *Muslim Rule in India: Power and Religion in the Delhi Sultanate* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2016), 119-127.
58. *Padmavat, Bhakha Mutarjim*, 126; and Jayasi, *Padmavati* , 90.
59. *Padmavat, Bhakha Mutarjim*, 126; and Jayasi, *Padmavati*, 90.
60. *Padmavat, Bhakha Mutarjim*, 601; and Malik Muhammad Jayasi, *Padmavati* , 353.
61. *Padmavat, Bhakha Mutarjim*, 603; and Jayasi, *Padmavati*, 356.
62. Farishta, *Tarikh-i-Farishta*, 707-708.

63. *Padmavat, Bhakha Mutarjim*, 443; and Malik Muhammad Jayasi, *Padmavati*, 267.
64. Thomas De Bruijn, *Ruby in The Dust: Poetry and History of the Indian 'Padmavat' by Sufi Poet Muhammad Jayasi* (Leiden: Leiden University Press, 2012), 216.
65. *Padmavat, Bhakha Mutarjim*, 443; and Jayasi, *Padmavati*, 267.
66. Thomas De Bruijn, *Ruby in the Dust*, 253.
67. Thomas De Bruijn, *Ruby in the Dust*, 263.
68. *Padmavat, Bhakha Mutarjim*, 572; and Jayasi, *Padmavati*, 335.
69. *Padmavat, Bhakha Mutarjim*, 126; and Malik Muhammad Jayasi, *Padmavati*, 91.
70. *Padmavat, Bhakha Mutarjim*, 91; and Bruijn, *Ruby in the Dust*, 66.
71. Malik Muhammad Jayasi, *Padmavati*, 146. 'When he heard the loving kindness of Padmavati, it was surprising tide for king'.
72. For Hiramani's description of Padmavati see, page 66-83 and for Ragav Chatten's description of Padmavati' page 275-286; and *Padmavat, Bhakha Mutarjim*, 459-477.
73. *Padmavat, Bhakha Mutarjim*, 164; and Jayasi, *Padmavati*, 113.
74. *Padmavat, Bhakha Mutarjim*, 272.; and Jayasi, *Padmavati*, 177.
75. *Padmavat, Bhakha Mutarjim*, 177; and Jayasi, *Padmavati*, 200.
76. *Padmavat, Bhakha Mutarjim*, 178; and Malik Muhammad Jayasi, *Pasmavati*, 183.
77. *Padmavat, Bhakha Mutarjim*, 632; and Malik Muhammad Jayasi, *Pasmavati*, 369.
78. *Padmavat, Bhakha Mutarjim*, 631; and Malik Muhammad Jayasi, *Pasmavati*, 370.
79. *Padmavat, Bhakha Mutarjim*, 369; and Malik Muhammad Jayasi, *Padmavati*, 232.
80. Jayasi, *Padmavati*, 295.
81. Richard A. Horsley, "Who Were the Witches? The Social Roles of the Accused in the European Witch Trials" *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, no: 4 (Spring 1970), 689. Accessed 24-06-2019. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/203380>.
82. *Kaftar* were those women who practice certain method for several days to become an ascetic. Some of them spend months without eating or drinking and use to live in a specific place away from crowd. They got such power that even if they looked at a man he fall dead of the spot. Further another stereotype is associated with this that if the breast of man who was killed in the way is cut open and it is found he contain no heart then his heart has been eaten by the *Kaftar* women.
83. Ibn Battuta, *Travels in Asia and Africa: 1325-1335*, trans by H. A. R. Gibb, ed, Sir E. Denison Ross and Eileen Power (London: Darf Publishers LTD 50 Hans Crescent, London SW1, 1983), 255.
84. John Stratton Hawley. *Sati, the Blessing and the Curse: The Burning of Wives in India* (Oxford University Press 1994), 189; Lindsey Harlan, *Religion and Rajput Women: The Ethic of Protection in Contemporary Narratives*. (University of California Press, 1992), 160 footnote 8. Quote: "In this she resembles the sati who dies in jauhar. The jauhar sati dies before and while her husband fights what appears to be an unwinnable battle. By dying, she frees him from worry about

- her welfare and saves herself from the possible shame of rape by triumphant enemy forces.”: Arvind Sharma, *Sati: Historical and Phenomenological Essays* (Motilal Banarsidass Publ, 1988), xi, 86.
85. Catherine Weinberger-Thomas. *Ashes of Immortality: Widow-Burning in India* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press. 1999), 121–123.
 86. Mandakranta Bose, *Faces of the Feminine in Ancient, Medieval, and Modern India*, (Oxford University Press, 2014), 26.
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 96. For the themes of non-binary identity construction and role of text in medieval times this article relies on: Ahmad, Aziz. “Epic and Counter-Epic in Medieval India.” *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 83, no. 4 (1963): 470-76. David Gilmartin, Bruce B. Lawrence, *Beyond Turk and Hindu: Rethinking Religious Identities in Islamicate South Asia* (University Press of Florida, 2000).
 97. Jason Freitag, *Serving Empire, Serving Nation: James Tod and the Rajputs of Rajasthan*. (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 3-5.
 98. Ratnabali Chatterjee , Madhusree Dutta; Flavia Agnes; Neera Adarkar (eds.). *The Nation, the State, and Indian Identity*. (Popular Prakashan.1996), 37.
 99. *Ibid.*
 100. *Ibid.*
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 103. Harlan, *Religion and Rajput Women: The Ethic of Protection in Contemporary Narratives*, 182-7.
 104. A list of Padmavati in Indian popular culture includes; Debaki Bose's silent film

- Kamonar Agun* or *Flames of Flesh* (1930), the Hindi language *Maharani Padmini* (1964), In 1963, for the first time, this story was made into film in Tamil as *Chittoor Rani Padmini*. The film was written by C. V. Sridhar and directed by Chitrapu Narayana Rao and starred Sivaji Ganesan and Vyjayanthimala in lead roles. In 1986, Hema Malini played the role of Rani Padmini in one of the episodes of anthology series *Tera Panhey*. In 1988, Seema Kelkar played the role of Rani Padmini in an episode of the Hindi drama series *Bharat Ek Khoj*, which was based on the book *The Discovery of India* (1946) by Jawaharlal Nehru. In 2009, Chittod Ki Rani Padmini Ka Johur, a Hindi-language television series aired on Sony TV, in which Tejaswini Lonari played the role of Rani Padmavati.
105. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d_fPfv-V1Ww and <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt2762842/>
 106. For insights about Bhansali's creative style see Varsha Panjwani, "Sanjay Leela Bhansali: In the Realm of Innovative Cinematic Expression" in Aysha Iqbal Viswamohan and Vimal Mohan John eds., *Behind the Scenes: Contemporary Bollywood Directors and Their Cinema* (New Delhi: SAGE Publications India, 2017). Bollywood's Film Padmavat and Poet Alaol of Arakan <https://www.rohingyalanguage.com/2018/01/bollywoods-film-padmavat-and-poet-alaol-of-arakan.html> (January 27, 2018)
 107. For a narrative of villainy in Hindi films and evaluation of villainous characters vis-à-vis sociopolitical conditions in the country. see Tapan K. Ghosh, *Bollywood Baddies: Villains, Vamps and Henchmen in Hindi Cinema* (SAGE Publications India, 2013). The scope of this work spans over decades and not only analyses villains, vamps, and henchmen of Bollywood cinema but also the actors who performed these characters.
 108. Interestingly, the 1959 movie *Rani Padmini* lacks these stereotypes. For details on this issue see; Taneja, Anand Vivek. "Stereotyping the Muslim in Bombay Cinema." *Economic and Political Weekly* 45, no. 4 (2010): 30-32. Salma Umer, Muhammad Junaid Ghauri & Hassan Nawaz, "Exploring the Image of Muslims in India," *South Asian Studies: A Research Journal of South Asian Studies Vol. 33, No. 2, July – December, 2018: 475 – 490*. Muhammad Ashraf Khan, Syeda Zuria Bokhari, *Portrayal of Muslims in Indian Cinema: A Content Analysis of Movies during (2002-8)* *Pakistan Journal of Islamic Research Vol 8, 2011, : 1-14*.
 109. A popular TV serial *Game of Thrones's* character based on historical fiction novels by George R. R. Martin <https://awoiaf.westeros.org/index.php/Drogo>. Remy J. Verhoeve, *Re-Reading a Game of Thrones: A Critical Response to George R. R. Martin's Fantasy Classic* (Nimble Books LLC, 2011), 213.
 110. For instance see the ideas of myth and history in Romila Thapar, *Origin Myths and the Early Indian Historical Tradition*, Oxford University Press. <https://indianculturalforum.in/2018/01/25/origin-myths-and-the-early-indian-historical-tradition-romila-thapar/>
 111. Octolog, "The Politics of Historiography", *Rhetoric Reviews*, Autumn 1988, vol 7, page 5-49; Ranajit Guha in Cohn, Bernard S. *An Anthropologist Among the Historians and Other Essays*. E-book, Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1987, <https://hdl.handle.net/2027/heb.02428>. Accessed 4 June 2020; and Steven Fielding's, *Political History* <https://archives.history.ac.uk/makinghistory/resouces/>

- articles/political history.html.
112. <https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/news/national/rajput-community-holds-massive-protest-against-padmavati/article9954812.ece>
 113. see details about the protests <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-india-42048512>
 114. <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/surat/protests-against-padmavati-swell/articleshow/61620340.cms> <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-india-42048512>
 115. One of the very few articles that support Ala al-Din Khalji is written and published in Pakistan. <https://tribune.com.pk/story/1620272/4-padmaavat-proves-rajput-protests-baseless/>
 116. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-india-42048512>
 117. Rajput Women Joins Protest Against Padmavati | Padmavati Controversy CNN-News18 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QV831uwqWdA>.