

## Binary of Major Character and Minor Character in Amruta Patil's Graphic Novel Sauptik: A Deconstructive Study

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### ABSTRACT

A novel is an organic whole and even its smaller components have significant roles to play. The bigger body components in a human are the head, the heart, the arms, and the legs. Minor parts include the fingers, ears, and eyes. A man who is blind, deaf, or without fingers may live a long life, but he will undoubtedly be inferior to a person with a well-built body. The same is true of a novel. It cannot gain a great readership if the smaller characters are missing or are not properly recognised. Minor characters are often not the main focus of a literary work, but they are crucial to a story's advancement since they make the narrative move. By spurring the primary characters' behaviour, they can influence how the story of the novel develops. They occasionally contribute to the novel's central conflict, but they also frequently aid in its conclusion. There are a number of supporting characters who contribute to the development of Amruta Patil's Sauptik. This paper demonstrates the significance of all secondary characters in this work, in addition to the main ones, for the unfolding of the story. For meeting this purpose this paper employs Jacques Derrida's concept of deconstruction to deconstruct the binary of major characters and minor characters.

### 1. Introduction

A character is an essential component of a narrative; they hold the key to all of the developments, are the driving force behind all of the events, and are responsible for all of the deeds. In other words, a character aids in the beginning, growth, and climax of a story. The reason we can relate to a tale is also due to the characters. Protagonist, antagonist, major, minor, and other types of characters are only a few examples. The Routledge Dictionary of Literary Terms defines 'character' as a "fictional representation of a person, which is likely to change, both as a presence in literature and as an object of critical attention, much as it changes in society. Ideas of the place of the human in the social order, of human individuality and self-determination, clearly shift historically; and this is often mimed in literature by the relation of characters to actions or webs of story" (23). The development of the characters in a story is essential to its development. The protagonist and antagonist, who play essential roles in the story, are considered major characters. Minor characters, on the other hand, serve distinct but less significant roles in the narrative. The main characters in a story are its focal points because they appear almost in every scene. To put it another way, a main character is a thing or a person who is frequently mentioned in a plot. A person who is only mentioned in passing but plays a part in the narrative is considered to be one of the supplementary or secondary characters. These characters are connected to the main characters directly or indirectly. They have great influence on the life of the main character. In reality, these secondary characters serve as the nuts and bolts that keep a large machine running properly. The development of the story and plot is greatly aided by the minor characters, who are crucial to the progression of the story in the novel. They play a brief part in the narrative. However, they frequently have a significant impact on how the plot unfolds. However, in general the major characters are given more weight than the supporting characters. The supporting characters in this book is typically one-dimensional, stereotyped, and peripheral to the plot. The researcher discovers that the supporting characters play just as vital a part as the main characters after evaluating this book from the perspective of deconstruction. The major characters chosen by the researcher are the Pandavas, Draupadi and the Kauravs, with Bheesma, Dron, karn, Eklavya, Shakuni, dhritrashtra, kunti, Subhadra, etc etc serving as the minor characters in the study.

#### Deconstruction

Deconstruction is one of the key theories in English literature. Jacques Derrida is credited with creating it. He was the one who first proposed it. Deconstruction is a phrase used to describe methods for analysing the connection between text and meaning. The goal of deconstruction as a literary theory is to reveal cultural

prejudices present in all texts. J. Hillis Miller, a prominent American deconstruction theorist, in his article "Stevens' Rock and Criticism as Cure" asserts, "Deconstruction is not a dismantling of the structure of a text, but a demonstration that it has already dismantled itself. Its apparently solid ground is no rock but thin air" (341). Deconstruction readers examine the words and sentences to spot any biases that may be present and challenge accepted readings of the text. Deconstructive critique frequently involves finding a binary opposition inside a literary work and attempting to challenge it. Derrida seeks to obliterate the line separating binary oppositions and to challenge the hierarchy that the oppositions imply. Deconstruction rejects the idea of idealised systems and single interpretations. Everything is multifaceted, unstable, and devoid of unity in the eyes of a deconstructionist. Deconstructive critics examine how number of meanings exist in literary works and how these meanings interact with each other. It denies the structural assumption that every literary work has a constant and closed meaning or a center that surrounds the other parts of the work.

Reading is the first thing a researcher does while dissecting a text. Derrida himself provided an explanation, stating that "the reading must always aim at a certain relationship, unperceived by the writer, between what he commands and what he does not command of the patterns of the language that he uses" (qtd in Dobie 162). Next, after a double reading, is the demonstration of the centrality and marginalisation of the oppositions. In order to reveal the meaning of the text, the opposition eventually overturns the hierarchy. Identifying and separating the privileged meaning from the non-privileged meaning follows. Moreover, weakening or subverting the hierarchy in order to make the text contradict what was intended or what at first seemed to make sense. It is because deconstruction is to "take what has previously seemed marginal and make it central. Elements customarily considered to be of minor interest can become the focus of interest, with binary oppositions and possible reversals of their own" (Dobie 150).

### Graphic Novels

The word 'Graphic' basically means pictures or images. Daniel Cooney, therefore, in his book *Writing and Illustrating the Graphic Novel* describes graphic novel as "a lengthy work of fiction told in pictures" (9). The phrase 'graphic novel' describes a style of narrative storytelling that uses both text and graphics to tell a story. Because the pictures are meant to be read in a set order, the process of creating a graphic novel is known as sequential art. The phrase 'graphic novel' is originated with the publication of Will Eisner's book *A Contract with God: And Other Tenement Stories* (1978). This phrase has generated a lot of discussion since it was first used. The graphic text *Understanding Comics: The Invisible Art* by Scott McCloud describes comics as "juxtaposed pictorial and other images in deliberate sequence" (9). Will Eisner, an American cartoonist, originally used the phrase "sequential art" in his book *Comics and Sequential Art*, published in 1985. It is not a sketching style, but rather a way of putting together a lot of pictures and words to make a whole story. Since many readers now enjoy indulging in visuals that enhance the story they read, graphic novels are becoming more and more popular. Text and visuals together may express intricate plots and topics in an interesting and understandable way. Prehistoric cave and wall paintings are the ancestors of the sequential art used to make graphic novels. Since the printing press was created, art forms have advanced significantly, becoming book-length narratives that span a variety of disciplines. Graphic novels are now acknowledged as a serious literary genre. Some of them have received important honours, like the National Book Award for *March: Book Three* by John Lewis, Andrew Aydin, and Nate Powell, and the Pulitzer Prize for Art Spiegelman's *Maus*.

### Textual Analysis

Amruta Patil's graphic novel *Sauptik* is a retelling of the great epic Mahabharata in general. It tells the story of the Pandavas and the Kauravs. Lord Krishna, Arjuna, and Yudhisther come to mind when people discuss the Mahabharata. The Kauravas, the anti-heroes, come next. Karna, Kunti, and Dron are the characters on which people focus the least. Readers often focus on the narratives of the main characters in the tale and neglect the other minor characters who are also crucial for the development of the tale. Main characters include the Pandavas, the Kauravas and Draupadi. The minor characters of the novel under study include Kunti, Bheeshma, Karn, Dron, Shikhandi. However, they still play a significant part in the Mahabharata.

One of the fiercely independent female characters in the epic poem is Kunti. Kunti is shown throughout the Mahabharata as the epitome of endurance, strength, and selflessness. The only thing that helped the Pandavas to get to their final objective was Kunti's painstaking, tenacious, and practical efforts: "Pritha guarded all five boys fiercely, making no distinction between those born of Madri's womb and those born of hers" (80). She sacrificed everything of her personal pleasures in order to raise her sons, helping them whenever she could.

Through her own example, she passed on to her children the timeless dharma philosophy. She devoted her entire life to her children. In addition to being Pandu's adored and devout wife, she was also a loving mother who gave her children the respect they deserved. She taught her sons to take care of each other in difficult times: "Bheem-Arjun can look out for themselves. Take care of the twins. The world is too wily for them" (80). She and her children went through a lot of suffering following her husband's death: "The paternity of the boys – born of four different fathers – was whispered about" (80). It was she who "refused to dignify rumours with response. The boys won everyone over with their humility and charm. Gossip and backstories were forgotten" (80). She was compelled to return to the jungle with her children because of her great concern over Dhritarastra and Duryodhana's wrongdoings: "Then came the episode of the burning house. At Duryodhan's insistence, his unseeing father invited the Pandavas to an out-of-town idyll. The lovely house they stayed in, though, had been coated with highly inflammable shellac and was set afire in the dead of night" (129).

The Pandavas' exile in the forest was dominated by Kunti's personality, but she used her intelligence and influence subtly and without much aggression. In fact, she was so low-key in her demeanour that an unwarned reader might not even be aware of how skillfully and effortlessly she took charge of her and Madri's sons' fortunes. Using a common wife named Panchali, Kunti skillfully united the Pandavas: "The only consent you must seek is hers. Your marriage needs no other approval" (145). She became a perfect representation of motherhood as a result. Through her life, she instilled the timeless philosophy of Dharma in her children and urged them to uphold the Ksatriya dharma.

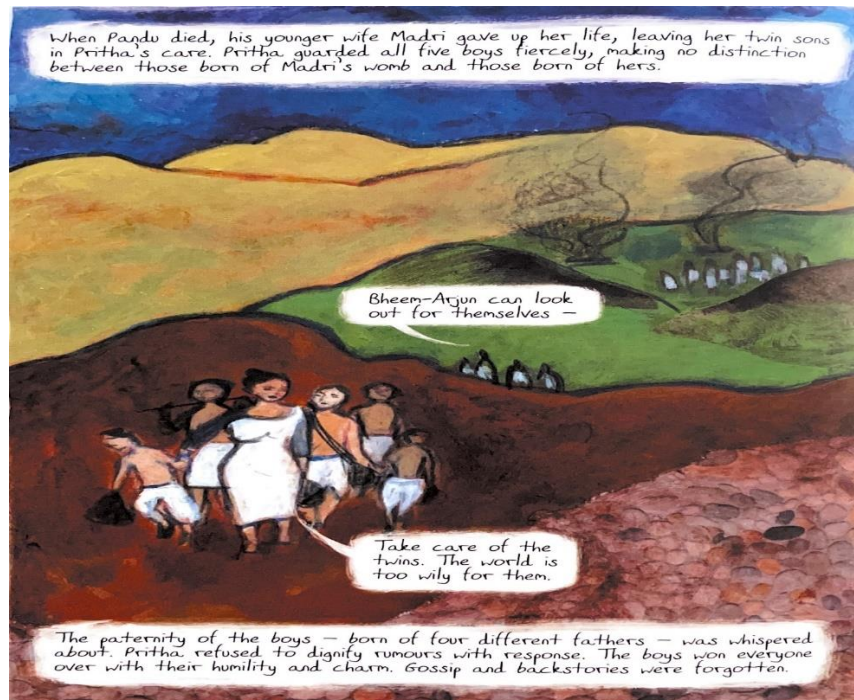


Fig. 1. Amruta Patil, *Sauptik*, 80.

Dronacharya played a very crucial role in the Mahabharata. He played important roles throughout several chapters of the narrative. He is the royal guru of the Kauravas and the Pandavas. He was an expert in modern military techniques such as the devastras. His favourite student was Arjuna. His son, was his greatest love, followed closely by Arjuna. Arjuna distinguished himself as the most devoted, diligent, and naturally talented of all the Kaurava and Pandava brothers training under Drona, surpassing even Ashwatthama, Drona's own son. Arjuna outperformed Drona's expectations in a number of challenges. As a result, Drona rewarded him the mantras to summon the incredibly potent divine weapon of Brahma known as the Brahmasra, but warned Arjuna not to employ this unstoppable weapon against any common warrior. This is the weapon that helped Arjun to kill Bheeshma, that ultimately helped in winning the war against Kauravs. Drona adored his son Ashwatthama, and as a guru, he cherished Arjuna beyond all others. Dron wanted to make Arjun the best archer: "I will make you the best archer this land has known. As your gurudakshina, you will capture King Drupad in combat one day" (104). For achieving this goal, he made Eklavya to sacrifice his thumb: "If I am your guru and you've become so good, don't you owe me gurudakshina? I'd like to have your right thumb" (114). Hence, Arjun is



given the title of the most powerful archer in the world.



Fig. 2. Amruta Patil, *Sauptik*, 114.

Guru Dron is the main reason behind Arjun's popularity as the best archer known in the world. It is Guru Dron who made the Pandavas capable of surviving in the forest and in the war at the field of Kurukshetra. The time comes when the Pandavas and Kauravas have to pay Drona a gurudakshina as a sign of appreciation. Drona remembers his goal of taking revenge from Drupad. He is waiting for this moment all along. He has trained the princes for this reason. Drupad is swiftly overthrown by Pandavas and brought before Dron. As a treaty, Drupad gives half of his kingdom to Dron. Despite their reconciliation, Drupad is still furious. He keeps thinking of taking revenge from Dron. This is at this moment when Draupadi is born: "From the fire emerged Drishtadyumn fully grown, fully armed. He wasn't alone. Krishna Draupadi emerged, as fiery and hypnotic as the element she came from" (35). Dron is the main reason behind the birth of Drishtadyum and his sister Draupadi who becomes the common wife of the five Pandavas later in the narrative.

Karna plays a very significant role in the life of Kauravs. He helps them in achieving their notorious goals against the Pandavas. Karna, who is ignored and subjected to repeated mockery because of his low caste throughout the epic, is revealed to be the real hero. Despite being the ruler of Anga and possessing a heavenly thread, Karna was mocked by society, including the powerful and upright Pandava princes. He had been cheated out of his innocence and taken advantage of by their unflinching honesty, which he joyfully accepted in accordance with his moral standards by designating the kavach and kundal as brahman-bhiksha:

As a little boy he gave his clothes away to the poor, came home naked. As a teenager he gave away the jewels he had. As a young man, if someone asked for his loyalty and heart – he gave both, unstintingly. He had no desire to hoard anything for himself. With the same fecklessness he viewed all material things with, Karna peeled off his golden armour and gave it away to the first person who asked. (106)

The incident itself was the height of unfairness. In the epic, Karna is seen as someone who is trying to get the respect and admiration of others for his ability. He is described as a rebel from a lower caste who was raised by a charioteer. An excellent archer, Karna, was exploited by Shakuni and Duryodhan for his abilities to further their own agendas. While playing the "round of dice" (168), he joined his companion in making blunders by insulting Draupadi. Karna performed his obligations as a friend, but his actions also spark discussions about ethics, rights, and morality. Karna, a legendary figure in his own right, is unquestionably one of the Mahabharata's most intriguing figures. His unwavering devotion to his friend Duryodhana was matched by his unsurpassed fighting prowess. Duryodhana recognised his abilities, and when everyone abandoned and even attacked Karna, Duryodhana stuck by him by treating him equally and by appointing him as the leader of his army in recognition

of his abilities in the great war of the Mahabharata. He would never forget Duryodhana's kind act. He promised to support Duryodhana throughout his life and under any circumstances, favourable or unfavourable, as a way of expressing his gratitude for this unwavering friendship. Because of this, he refused to support the Pandavas, even after Lord Krishna revealed that he is one of the Pandava brothers and the son of none other than Lord Surya. He started working to make Duryodhana the Emperor of the World. Duryodhana rises to become the richest and most powerful man in the universe. With the aid of Karna, Duryodhana planned to subdue Indra and take control of both heaven and earth. Karna was the biggest warrior the Kauravs had at the time of the war. He possessed the skill to match Arjuna. He took part in the war fighting for Kauravs. Duryodhan had full faith in him. He also promised Kunti that he would not cause harm to any of her son except Arjuna. He plays a crucial part in Abhimanyu's death by shooting him from behind and defeated Ghatotkacha in the midnight battle: "Few remember that Bheem lost a son the same day. Ghatotkach, born of Hidimba, was killed by the deadliest weapon Karna had, an astra he'd been saving to kill Arjun with" (221). He defeats Yudhishtir, Bhima, Nakula, and Sahadeva on four consecutive times, yet he spares their lives out of loyalty to Kunti. This is also one of the reasons that Pandavs won the war. He did great things for everyone surrounding him.



Fig. 3. Amruta Patil, *Sauptik*, 106.

## 2. Conclusion

Not all characters in a novel receive the same amount of attention, and readers hardly ever learn the secrets, aspirations, or opinions of characters who do not play major roles. Minor characters must still be carefully considered because they all have important roles to play. The protagonist and the other main characters may receive advice from a minor character, experience an epiphany, or suddenly remember something crucial that alters their course of action. Minor characters can be quite important to how a story develops in this situation. In conclusion, both the major and supporting characters play important parts in the story. It becomes challenging for a plot to progress if the book lacks these minor characters. Without supporting characters, the story remains unfinished. Deconstruction analysis of the graphic novel *Sauptik* reveals that marginalised and neglected characters are ignored by readers and highlight their significance so that readers pay attention to all of the characters in the story, not just the main ones. Therefore, each component of the text is significant, and deconstruction examination of the text removes the distinction between the major character and the minor character. It introduces a novel idea – that each character contributes significantly to the development of the narrative – and so gives the book a fresh interpretation. The researcher also analyses that the minor characters in the narrative such as Kunti, Dron, Karna have important roles to play. It is so, because they influence the actions of the main characters at one time or the other. These characters cannot be ignored although they do not always appear in the story. The story's flow will vary if any of the characters are eliminated from the story, opening up new possibilities.

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