

HISTORICISING A MOTHER'S MEMORIES: READING INTERSECTIONALITY, IDENTITY, AND MEMORY-SCAPES IN THE WORLD OF MAHASWETA DEVI

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ABSTRACT

Mahasweta Devi's momentous novel *Hajar Churashir Maa* (The Mother of 1084) is a historical document of a tumultuous time – Calcutta of the 1970s. In 1998, Govind Nihalani adapted her story into a Hindi film *Hazaar Chaurasi Ki Maa*. This paper seeks to traverse the media of literature and cinema and critically analyse the representation of intersectional identities, memories, and resistance. Neither works make a direct case for the Naxalite movement. The movement provides the socio-historical context that sets the stage for the narrative. My methodology will thus entail social history, feminism, memory studies, and qualitative comparative analysis of literature and cinema. At the heart of the story (and this academic work) lies the protagonist Sujata's grief and resistance in a patriarchal, crony-capitalist society. First, I'll elaborate on how the layers of grief helped her find herself anew. I'm interested in the portrayal of gendered norms and their subversion. For instance, how Sujata and her son Brati subverted the 'perfect', patriarchal family. Secondly, this paper aims to explore the differential impacts of Naxalite suppression on the subaltern, based on caste and gender. Third, I will dissect the employment of satire in popular culture as an act of resistance. Finally, I will explore the diverse ways in which the novelist and the filmmaker can create a 'geography of memories' by depicting historical periods through human trauma. This paper thus revolves around the diverse depictions of resistance across two prime genres of popular culture – the novel and the film.

Keywords: *Mahasweta Devi, Calcutta, Intersectional Identities, Memories, Resistance, Representation, Literature, Cinema, Feminism, 'Geography of Memories'.*

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