



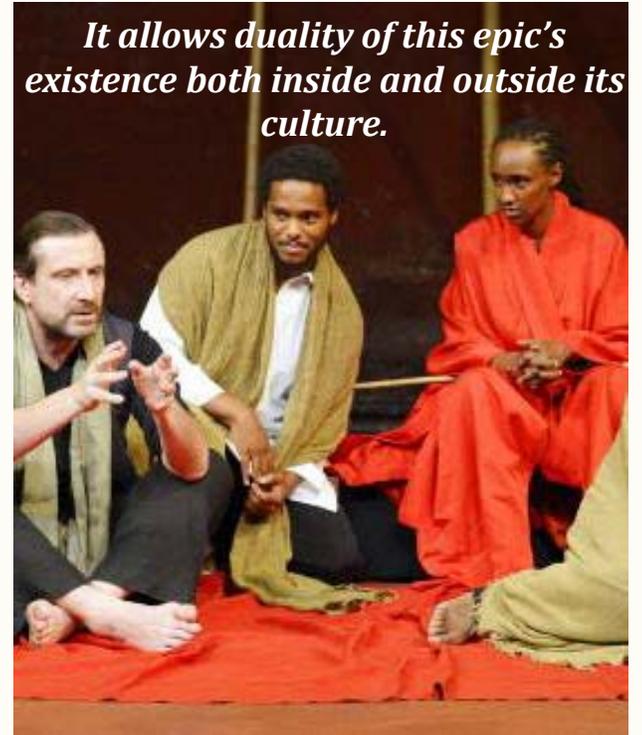
Mahabharata (session 2)

April 2017

Experiencing Mahabharata transculturally. Peter Brook's internationalized theatrical performance induces defamiliarization leading to a wider horizon of experiences--the audience identify and also see the difference.

- Reading, performing, and experiencing a play, thus, is like living between cultures, different constellations of beliefs, manners, and languages.
- Transcultural encounters creatively destabilize our received understanding of cultural formations and unsettle easy syncretic and synthetic tendencies in the constructions of socio literary significance
- “Trans” is planetization of literature and particularly of drama in profound ways. Affecting policed and legislated ways of reception.

It allows duality of this epic's existence both inside and outside its culture.





How does one respond to the Concept of Dharma in this explosive bricolage of the playwright. Dharma is what sustains and holds—the right action. This calls for citing one of the numerous episodes in the epic (not in the film).

- The story of Chirkari (the name means, one who is given to patient and scrupulous thought) (At the centre--a little left and a little right : *Endgame*)
- Once when in a fit of rage, his father orders him to kill his mother, he patiently ponders: “Obeying the father is the dharma of the son and protecting the mother is the individual self -dharma of a son. As a son, do I obey my father or as my self -dharma I protect my mother?”
- And he decides that a husband is the one who contributes in the support and subsistence of the wife. And therefore a husband remains a husband as long as he performs his role as a husband; when one rids himself of both the roles, then how could one be a husband. He decides not to obey his father.



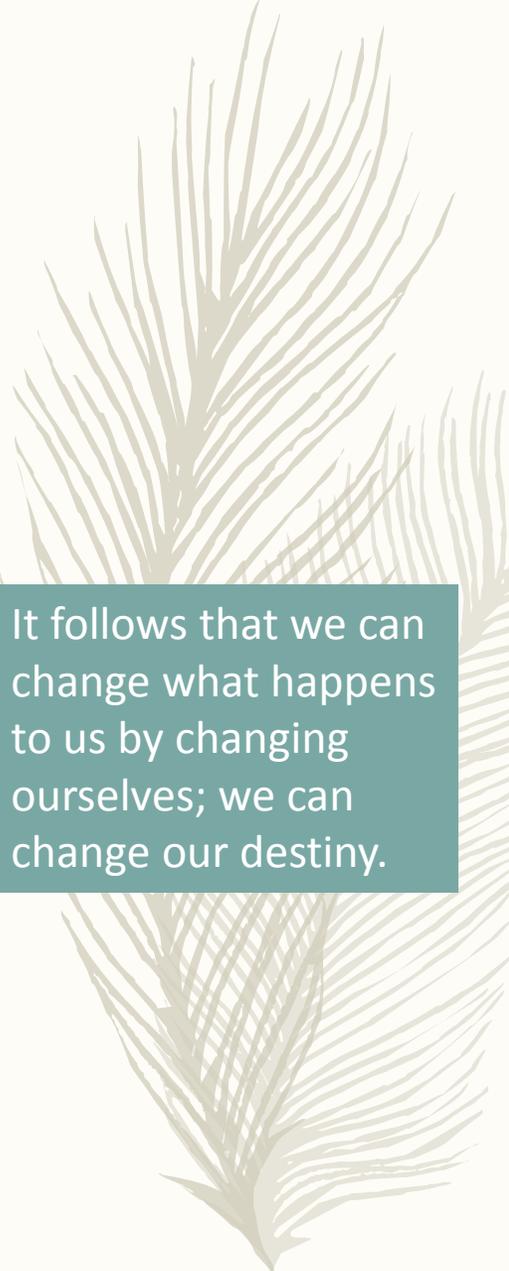
Numerous parables revealing the secrets of life and human nature

- Several of these record the vehement, bold dissent and resistance of women and also the so called subordinate class.
- The arguments presented by women speakers do not always conform to the passive and noninterfering images assigned to women. They could be comparable to the women characters in Greek tragedy
- Yudhishtira's answers to the questions of Dharma, Eklavya's story, Story of Yudhishtira defending his stepbrother instead of his own, story of saving Duryodhana, the story of Yavakri and Aravasus, and of Ashtavakra
- I have already talked about *Gita* that illumines the vicissitudes of human nature.

and not even one character who can be called “mostly good”

Like the noble figures in the Greek epics and tragedies and in Shakespeare’s chronicle plays they exhibit a wide range of human feelings and passions — love, devotion, bravery, chivalry, and also hatred, envy, rage, violence, deceit, cowardice, injustice, censurable conduct even by the prevailing standards

- Arjuna, the great and noble warrior was vacillating in purpose and though conscious of his actions, in his merciless burning of the Khandava forest in the company of Krishna many lives —the animals and birds and the Nagas (primitive tribal folk) were perished. Interpreters however justify their act as motivated by the need to expand the tractable lands.
- Gandhari, generally admired for wifely devotion, who as a girl was deceitfully betrothed to a blind prince, and in consequence, to share her husband's misfortune, wore a bandage over her eyes by day and night until shortly before her death, is shown at the end of life to have inflicted the voluntary blindness upon herself not so much from an exaggerated sense of marital duty as to give her husband and his family a guilty feeling in retaliation for the deception practised upon her. Kunti is selective in her attachment to Arjuna.



Discipline is a much mentioned term in Mahabharata

It follows that we can change what happens to us by changing ourselves; we can change our destiny.

- Krishna tells Arjuna that Duryodhan is his own worst enemy (Chapter 3, Shlok 37). Referring to Duryodhana's smouldering envy, he says, "know that anger, and lust are your real enemy. Neutralize this enemy as you cannot defeat it"
- The law of **Karma in Mahabharata (Gita)** states that everything that happens to us, good or bad, originated once in something we did or thought. We ourselves are responsible for what happens to us.
- While this applies to all the characters, a remarkable instant is of Dhritrashtra whose secret grouse about not being made the legal heir to the Kaurava throne makes him raise Duryodhana as a hot-headed and egocentric human being.

In India the historical-
mythic past is seen as a
cautionary tale.

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