

Lost in the Labyrinth: Locating the ‘Mad Woman in the Attic’ in *Bhool Bhulaiyaa 2*

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Abstract

In classic representation of madness in literature, the figure of the mad woman as an unruly element in the smooth functioning of patriarchal society find frequent representation. Works like Charlotte Perkins Gilman’s “Yellow Wallpaper,” Shirley Jackson’s *We Have Always Lived in the Castle*, *The Haunting of Hill House*, Charlotte Brontë’s *Jane Eyre* and many others, inspired by actual treatment of women in general and women labelled as mad (literal or metaphorical), address the patriarchal tendency of trans-mogrifying women who suffer from mental illnesses such as schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, postpartum depression, etc. With no attempt at understanding the state of their mental health, women in these texts are consistently labelled as “mad” and are marginalized, not only on a metaphorical level, but also literally, by being assigned spots in remote corners of their homes, in an attic, in a corner room or in some out of the way place. As such, literally dwelling in the nether region of the house and society, the mad woman is neglected and forgotten that is until she makes her presence felt through some action or the other, which creates a stir. The eradication of the boundary between the somatic and the spiritual, the desperate masculine need to eliminate a woman’s agency, the question of power remain unproblematized in the film in an attempt to celebrate the male gaze that refuses to acknowledge the madness of the scheme altogether. The paper aims to explore the notion of madness lurking beneath the fabric of *Bhool Bhulaiyaa 2* by critically studying the two avatars of the lead character of the movie, *Tabu*, and the locked room her metaphysical counterpart is restricted to. Inclined toward a feminist discourse, the paper ultimately seeks to comment on the stereotyping of women as good and evil, powerful and powerless, femme fatale and femme castratrice.

Keywords: Femme castratrice; Film; Mad woman in the attic; Media representation; Popular films; Enclosed spaces; Women.

1. Introduction

In classic representation of madness in literature, the figure of the mad woman as an unruly element in the smooth functioning of patriarchal society find frequent representation. Works like Charlotte Perkins Gilman's *Yellow Wallpaper*, Shirley Jackson's *We Have Always Lived in the Castle*, *The Haunting of Hill House*, and Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* and many others, inspired by actual treatment of women in general and women labelled as mad (literal or metaphorical), address the patriarchal tendency of transmogrifying women who suffer from mental illnesses such as schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, postpartum depression, etc. With no attempt at understanding the state of their mental health, women in these texts are consistently labelled as "mad" and are marginalized, not only on a metaphorical level, but also literally, by being assigned spots in remote corners of their homes, in an attic, in a corner room, or in some out of the way place. As such, literally dwelling in the nether region of the house and society, the mad woman is neglected and forgotten, that is, until she makes her presence felt through some action or the other, which creates a stir in the surroundings. We here are engaged majorly with the writings of Gilbert & Gubar, *The Madwoman in the Attic* (1978) and Phyllis Chesler *Women and Madness* (1972).

These texts critique of the portrayal of the madwoman within the male-dominated Western literary tradition. Additionally, Foucault's *Madness and Civilization* (1988), aids in comprehending the historical evolution of perceptions surrounding madness. Foucault believed that history is the vehicle for learning and the importance of studying history lies in its ability to change. The book *Madness and Civilization* (1988), examines how Western society has categorized and perceived madness over the centuries. According to Foucault (1988), in the Middle Ages, leprosy was replaced by madness, and throughout the Renaissance, the mad were believed to have hidden knowledge. However, during Enlightenment, madness is seen as opposite of rationality, however, Freud called it mental illness. As a result, he reverses the perspectives and asserts:

The marvelous logic of the mad which seems to mock that of the logicians because it resembles it so exactly, or rather because it is exactly the same, and because at the secret heart of madness, at the core of so many errors, so many absurdities, so many words and gestures without consequence, we discover, finally, the hidden perfection of a language. . . . The ultimate language of madness is that of reason.

(Foucault 1988, 95)

In Foucault's point of view, madness is not natural, rather it is invented by our civilization (Foucault & Rabinow, 1984). The people who act outside the dominant societal norms are often viewed as insane. As far as Foucault is concerned, he has not dealt with gender issues. Gilbert and Gubar (1978), however, have shed light on madness from a gender perspective.

According to Gilbert & Gubar (1978), a madwoman is a powerful woman who refuses to submit to authority and to accept the prescriptions of feminine docility, silence, and submission from men. The construction and cultural deployment of female madness is fundamentally a tool of subjugation which aims to thwart the ambition and intellect of women, leaving them without meaning, purpose, and power. The paper aims to explore:

1. The notion of madness lurking beneath the fabric of *Bhool Bhulaiyaa 2* and stigmatizing people as harmful who do not succumb to the norm-ality (deliberately kept) as conceived by the society around by critically studying the two avatars of the lead character of the movie, Tabu, and the locked room her metaphysical counterpart is restricted to.
2. Inclined toward a feminist discourse, the paper ultimately seeks to comment on the stereotyping of women as good and evil, powerful, and powerless, femme fatale and femme castratrice.
3. When madness is used as a metaphor for feminist rebellion, are we romanticizing mental illness and erasing real medical problems?

We use Foucault, Gilbar & Gubar and Chesler as primary analytical framework for excavating the relation of madness and subjugation as depicted in film *Bhool Bhulaiyaa 2*. It has been observed in the discipline of psychiatry that women have occupied a unique position in the annals of insanity (Felman, 1997). They have outnumbered men. Society has constructed certain roles for women and these roles are somehow forcibly kept them away from their own-selves. These roles vividly portray the unequal treatment met by women. They are distressed because of the subjugation and oppression which they have experienced at the hands of men. Woman who tries to voice against these roles in any form are often placed at the mercy of systems definitions and representations. Such women are termed as madwomen. No one can undervalue this power of description and representation.

Madness is a cultural construct designed to position women as outsiders

to rational discourse: 'all body, no brain'(Schulz & Youn, 2020). Women are often depicted in literature and films as dolls or puppets, who are there just as passive characters. However, these passive depictions are also powerful, that helps us unmask the hidden truth. Movies undoubtedly, are powerful medium of representation, and therefore, one cannot deny the responsibility of movie makers. Visual representation of characters and stories leave an everlasting impact on the minds of everyone. But what if the movie makers also promote the same notions and depict women who refuse to succumb to these structures as harmful and dangerous. The principal argument in this article is, however, related to this association of rebel women as mad, and their actions are often despised. This perception of the rebel woman as fundamentally mad feeds into the logic and which is fashioned quite self-consciously.

The film we chose for our study is *Bhool Bhulaiyaa 2*. It resonates with the idea of madwomen as suggested by Gilbert and Gubar (1978), and perpetuates discrimination that stigmatize them as dangerous. We chose the film for two distinct purposes: first, we would like to engage with criticism in the context of feminism; second, we would like to problematize it from the contemporary point of view. Through this film we seek to understand how certain concerns of the "madwoman" persist simultaneously to the ongoing concerns of the larger feminist movement, despite criticism made against it. Thus, representation of Manjulika, the mad ghost provides numerous opportunities to ask whether such depiction still encounters a similar experience of patriarchy as that offered in Gilbert and Gubar (1978). This representation, however, confirms the notion that our society is wounded and the reflection is evident through the representation of how a woman and her twin, one living and one dead, are both consigned to the margins. Dreaded at first, the ghost (M)Anjulika turns out to be a mild spirit who wishes to avenge her death by destroying her sister. In the end, the living, and the dead, the canny and the uncanny, the two unruly elements, become synonymous, and are sent to the corner room of the house, while the family vacates the premises. The eradication of the boundary between the somatic and the spiritual, the desperate masculine need to eliminate a woman's agency, the question of power remain unproblematized in the film is an attempt to celebrate the male gaze that refuses to acknowledge the madness of the scheme altogether.

We conducted our analysis through the lens of feminism, post-structuralism, and rhetorical critique methodology. Rhetoric is fundamentally concerned with modes of persuasion within a communication. Words, visuals, sounds, gestures all forms of rhetoric that people use as persuasive

mode. In fact, we also tried to analyze the film through the gaps, silences, and paradoxes that exist throughout the film. Therefore, we examined *Bhool Bhulaiyaa 2*, identifying modes of persuasion and their manifestation throughout the film. Our emphasis traversed a variety of elements, from the film's overall structure to the style of the phrases chosen for inclusion. We examined the text as it pertains to the theme of madness through feminist rhetorical critique. Even though our method is rooted in feminist themes, we also feel that it is necessary to distinguish it from earlier feminist approaches. It is true that feminism holds much promise for critical analysis today; however, it was not without its limitations in the early stages of the movement. Through our unique critical approach, we tried to delve deeper and identified that mental illness could possibly be the result of the problems that one face in these confined structures.

2. Mind-forged Manacles

It is the ancient Greek notions of mind/body, nature/culture, and male/female dichotomies that largely influence Western rationality and reasoning. Since then, world is understood in these dichotomies. Similarly, madness is viewed as something opposite to rationality. Anything which humans find difficult to fathom/decipher is generally termed as insane, deranged, and demented. Foucault asserts in *Madness and Civilization*:

The dawn of madness on the horizon of the Renaissance is first perceptible in the decay of Gothic symbolism; as if that world, whose network of spiritual meanings was so close knit, had begun to unravel, showing faces whose meaning no longer clear except in the forms of madness. (1988, p. 18)

Because Gothic knowledge was complex and its meaning lay beyond the scope of ordinary human rationality, the Gothic form has long faded into obscurity. As Foucault (1988) suggests, in some cases, things become so weighed down by their own attributes and allusions that they gradually disappear. In such cases, knowledge becomes ever more separated from its expression through the form it takes. This phenomenon is also perceptible in dreams as well, which often seem = unreasonable and irrational. Madness is frequently related to irrational behaviour, which of course is an oversimplification of the human state. Anything which does not make sense to the rationality is considered as crazy, foolish, or unacceptable. Reasoning holds the primary status in our human world. Nothing was more illuminating during Enlightenment than the act of freeing oneself from self-imposed ignorance. Through their reasoning ability, human be-

ings can dispel every sort of ignorance that surrounds them. Madness is unreasoning, cognitive dissonance; it is regarded as a behavioural abnormality. Often repeated with major forms of rigid division, these dichotomies are 'formulae of exclusion' for Foucault (1988). The society functions in a structured manner, and there are significant norms which every human needs to adhere. It is important to be part of that specific order and the process of making-meaning. It is the cognition ability of an individual that provides meaning and the mind is conditioned to view it. Generally, humans are attracted to what is familiar to them. It would be easy if we try to understand it with the help of an example. When children are made to perceive and draw a rainbow, they are often told that a rainbow has seven colors (VIBGYOR). However, are these colors distinctly divided, or do they blend into one other? A holistic perception of reality, therefore, is one that embraces this merging of colors, and offers a more wide-angled view.

In *Women and Madness* (1972), Phyllis Chesler argues that any form of madness is a breakaway from traditional roles. Literature is replete with examples of such women who had been condemned as witches and harlots. It has been claimed by many scholars that in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, it was legal for a husband to incarcerate his perfectly sane wife and daughter in mental asylums if he so much as suspected that something was amiss with their mental state. Many women wrote heart-breaking, lucid accounts of their confinement and *The Yellow Wallpaper* (1981) by Charlotte Perkins Gilman is one such account, which narrates the story of an unnamed woman who bore witness to what is done to her in the name of "temporary nervous depression—slight hysterical tendency." In the *The Yellow Paper*, the author has deliberately concealed the identity of the protagonist to emphasize that the protagonist's experience is not unique, but rather shared by many women, who endure similar kinds of oppression under the socio-cultural regime they are compelled to follow. In this context, it deserved to be said that no matter how brilliant Virginia Woolf, Sylvia Plath, or Lara Jefferson were, none were helped.

Western literary history is patriarchal in nature. In general, literary genres are mostly devised by men to tell stories about the world from their perspective. Therefore, mostly the earlier texts in the view of Gilbert and Gubar (1972) were replete with the creation of "eternal feminine." Such depictions, according to Foucault, are responsible for reorganisation of knowledge, which is further intertwined with new forms of power and domination. Portrayals of women as either "angel" or "monster" have established an unspoken truth about female representation (Schulz & Youn, 2020), making it difficult for women to challenge these societally en-

trenched images. Here, we need to keep in mind that it is not just that the term *madwoman* is not only a part of the language of misogyny, but also serves to denigrate women who rebel against the patriarchal systems. As Gilbert and Gubar explain in *Madwoman in the Attic* (1972), women writers of the nineteenth century were constrained in their writing from expressing their female characters in either a way that embodied the angel or the monster; this struggle, they argue, stemmed from their male writers' tendency to categorize female characters as either pure, angelic, or rebellious.

... they attempt to enclose her in definitions of her person and her potential which, by reducing her to extreme stereotypes (angel, monster) drastically conflict with her own sense of her self – that is, of her subjectivity, her autonomy, her creativity. On the one hand, therefore, the woman writer's male precursors symbolize authority; on the other hand, despite their authority, they fail to define the ways in which she experiences her own identity as a writer. (1972, p. 48)

Therefore, as we perceive, the truth and the Other are at odds. Having superiority over the "other" is what constitutes hegemony. A superior, in turn, ensures the structure of binaries, a stability of oppositional force that imparts knowledge about the inferior. The truth, like the "other," is not a homogeneous, unvarying entity, but its reception is. Women also used the binary of angel and monster, to illustrate their ability to articulate themselves rather than to degrade themselves. Since then, it is often found in women's writing that madwoman represents fiercely independent women characters who struggle to destroy patriarchal structures. Madness in the *Madwoman in the Attic* (1972) is depicted as rebellion against patriarchy. Often, women feel frustrated and angry because of intolerable patriarchal oppression, leading them to escape it by resorting to some means or the other, including madness.

3. Romanticizing or Protesting

In our readings, we encounter to women's resistance to patriarchal structures, and their profound exploration of the meanings of madness. However, this has further confounded our understanding of the concept. Madness as metaphor of rebellion has its own implications (1972). Patriarchal domination has led to the subjugation and oppression of women and the women who resist against such structures are often termed as mad. Madness, in the view of feminists, is a "dis-ease" with a positive connotation, yet they acknowledge the fact that they cannot ignore the depressed wom-

en who have mental health issues (1972). There is something forbidding about patriarchal structures, like the mountain passes that have swallowed many an unwary traveller in the past. These structures have often taught us to behave in a certain way on different occasions. Individuals who possess unique freedom and do not conform to expected behavioural norms are frequently portrayed as "The Outsiders." This indifference is unacceptable to the society. The situation raises many questions concerning such women, who are sadly, often labelled as mad. Manjulika is also depicted mad in this sense of the world. She is termed as mad woman which somehow is a sexist taboo for her anger. The major point of concern for us is how the film fails to problematize mental illness as we understand it from a contemporary medical point of view and relegates it to the zone of the spectral and the supernatural.

Elizabeth Donaldson, on the other hand, argues against Gilbert and Gubar's position, which, Donaldson claims, unknowingly erases the real experiences of people suffering from mental illness by focusing on the real-world implications and fictional representations of mental health problems in her *Corpus of a Madwoman* (2002). The fact that mental illness is a real medical condition should not be overshadowed or erased, but does that mean we should disregard the pathologization of women's behaviour? Despite protesting in turn against patriarchy, Gilbert and Gubar do not romanticize madness. Phyllis Chesler (1972) also asserts, "It has never been my intention to romanticise madness, or to confuse it with political and cultural revolution (xxiii, *Women and Madness*)." Shoshana Felman (1997) on the contrary says that rebellion, depression, and fear are a result of cultural conditioning that has deprived women of the very means of protesting or expressing themselves. Donaldson (2002) argues that despite appearing to be an effective tool for combating mental illness stigma, the "madness-as-feminist rebellion metaphor" diminishes those who suffer from mental illness. Feminist disability theorists emphasize the importance of the material conditions of the body.

4. Findings

The 2022 Bollywood comedy horror film *Bhool Bhulaiyaa 2* is directed by Anees Bazmee, written by Aakash Kaushik and Farhad Samji, and produced by Bhushan Kumar and Krishan Kumar for T-Series Films and Murad Khetani and Anjum Khetani for Cine 1 Studios. This is a standalone sequel to *Bhool Bhulaiyaa* (2007), starring Tabu, Kartik Aaryan, and Kiara Advani. From the very beginning, the women in this text are depicted from the eyes of a man. The text is an important read from the point of

view of female identity. A few of the film's most notable elements are its use of misogynistic clichés, violence against women, vilification of a whole gender, and denigration of women.

The movie begins when the priests confine a malevolent spirit named Manjulika, who is bent on attacking the family's (Thakur's) daughter-in-law Anjulika at manor of Bhawanigarh, Rajasthan. As a result, the family abandons the manor and declare it haunted because the ghost of Manjulika is trapped in one of the rooms. Several years later, Ruhaan Randhawa (Kartik Aaryan) meets Reet Thakur (Kiara Advani), who is the daughter of Thakur family and who is traveling to Bhawanigarh to get married to her fiancée, Sagar. As the film progresses, Reet and Ruhan escape a fatal accident; however, the family of Reet assume that she has died. Reet tries reaching her family through telephone, but she overhears a conversation between her cousin Trisha and fiancée Sagar, realizing an affair has been brewing between them. This results in Reet deliberately concealing her existence from her family, so that Trisha and Sagar can marry. Undoubtedly, patriarchy permeates Indian society, making it difficult for women to make their own marriage decisions. In the meantime, she travels to Bhawanigarh with Ruhan and decides to hide in the deserted ancestral mansion. When Chote Pandit notices the mansion's open doors and alerts the Thakurs, they, along with the villagers, enter the mansion and find Ruhaan. Ruhaan fabricates a story, claiming that Reet's spirit guided him there. He reveals that Reet's final wishes were for Trisha and Sagar to marry each other and for her family to continue living in the ancestral mansion. Ruhaan, because of his ability to communicate with spirits, becomes famous as *Rooh Baba*. Eventually, he is led to the room where Manjulika was trapped, but Anjulika warns him to stay away, as the room is inhabited by a violent, dangerous spirit.

Then Anjulika narrates the story of the evil spirit (madwomen) Manjulika, who was the twin sister of Anjulika. They shifted to the mansion long ago when their Bengali accountant father was asked to manage the accounts of the Thakurs. The sisters are portrayed as similar in appearance, but Debanshu is portrayed as a biased father whose affection towards Anjulika instils hatred in Manjulika. In terms of their portrayal, Anjulika, the good one, is depicted in as the ideal "eternal feminine" – proper, agreeable, docile, and decorous – whereas Manjulika is portrayed as a witch with a knack for black magic. The portrayal of Anjulika and Manjulika is based on the angel/monster binary. Manjulika is depicted as a sorcerer and does the exact things that patriarchal society views as dangerous. As a result, she is not only portrayed as simply villainous, but also a deeply

flawed woman. Such women Gilbert & Gubar observe are, 'emblems of filthy materiality, committed only to their own private ends, these women are accidents of nature, deformities meant to repel, but in their very freakishness they possess unhealthy energies, powerful and dangerous arts' (1978, p. 29). That makes her an evil born daughter of her father. Manjulika is the reason for everyone's misery. By portraying two distinct images of woman – good and bad version of femininity, blatantly communicate a prototype image of gender, if not carried through by members of society, will harm everyone around. Such a woman, is often viewed as dangerous and violent according to patriarchal structures. Therefore, the film strongly adheres to traditional visions of femininity.

The character of Manjulika in the story is portrayed as both mad and disruptive. She is painted as an outsider, a force that is both unexpected and unwelcome. Her potential to unravel the regulatory system of control is a representation of her disruptive power and her refusal to conform to the status quo. Manjulika is depicted as a representation of chaos and commotion in the text; however, on close reading one may find her as a character who is annoyed with the system. It is despicable to many that she would act in such a manner, as women are not allowed to express their anger in patriarchal societies. In our view, it is the anger of the women which the text fails to depict appropriately. Since women's wrath is often considered as something unfeminine, the anger in Manjulika arises when instead of observing her as an individual, she is continuously compared to her sibling. Throughout the movie, her father favors Anjulika over Manjulika, fostering jealousy in the other. This resentment ultimately drives Manjulika to seek revenge. She is a victim of the patriarchal power structures that seek to oppress her. The environment she lives in also makes her vulnerable, as her family and community are not always aware of her difficulties or supportive of her. While Manjulika is not a complicated character, she is irritated by the way her own people have ignored her and undervalued her abilities. Angry and frustrated by her unloved fate, Manjulika committed various acts of violence. When women express rage, patriarchy portrays them as madwomen, despite stereotypes that define women as emotion.

The text also reflects on toxic parenting which is patriarchy's favourite Trojan horse, where parents are responsible for the sad plight of their children when they make comparison between children. Tormented daughter attempts to gain power through witchcraft. Diving deep into the nuances of the text, Manjulika somehow also makes one perceive home as a site of psychological violence, and its life-long effects. The film makes us ponder

on this subject as a serious concern and rather depicted Manjulika as conventionally aligned with a series of stereotypes relating to a vision of evil. Toxic and abusive parenting is deeply ingrained and even idolised in our culture. Manjulika was courageous in her own way whereas, Reet and Trisha submitted. Even though Reet (Kiara Advani) is portrayed as a modern woman with a medical degree, she still feels apprehensive about openly expressing her innermost desires to her family, particularly to her father. And this inability of girls, Reet and Trisha to express themselves freely reveals this obsessive control patriarchy has over them. The text, however, is replete with patriarchal values and stereotypes. Kartik Aryan is portrayed as a hero who rescued “damsels in distress.” Kiara is projected as object of desire and her character is constantly objectified throughout the movie. Most of the female characters are projected in limited roles and depicted as dependant and vulnerable in comparison to male characters. Overall, the text reinforces traditional gender roles and patriarchal values.

The film has various dialogues that denigrate women. There is a scene where *chota pandit* approaches *Rooh Baba* and wanted his help to talk to his dead wife. *Rooh Baba* told him that his wife has been reincarnated as donkey and hereafter *chota pandit* is seen loitering throughout the village with her beloved wife, who is a donkey. Comparing women to donkeys or animals is not uncommon; rather, it reflects how women and their roles are frequently devalued in a patriarchal system. Not just this, but there several other dialogues which belittle women. For example, when *Pandit* says that, every woman appears as *chudail* after three years of marriage. Though some might argue that these types of dialogues are just meant to be taken in jest, we are sceptical.

The film is a rollercoaster of emotions as it flips between comedy and horror seamlessly. But the central theme of the movie is the madwoman, Manjulika, who is the source of spooky occurrences. Manjulika was imprisoned behind the doors of the palace for eighteen years and is desperate to take revenge. However, as the movie unfolds, the audience are made aware that it is Anjulika, the twin sister, who is the real ghost and not Manjulika. Manjulika after killing her father, hypnotizes Anjulika and stabs her when she attacked Uday Thakur, the husband of Anjulika. However, Uday finds out the real identity of Manjulika but before he could disclose it to anyone, Manjulika threw him from the roof, thus making him disabled for lifetime. Ruhan comes to the rescue of Anjulika, which is a perfect example of the long shadow that patriarchy casts over humans. In spite of the fact that she is a ghost, Anjulika appears to be terrified of her living counterpart.

5. Results

In our opinion, the Director's attempt to elevate contemporary cinema fell short as he treated women's agency as an insignificant entity. The film in question appears to be an attempt to glorify patriarchy and ignore the power dynamics that exist between men and women. It is celebration of misogyny and a glaring omission of the social, political and cultural implications of such a representation. By ignoring the reality of the situation, the film reduces the story to the simple narrative of male power, which ultimately serves to reinforce the status quo. In many ways it fails to address the notion of female autonomy. Feminine rage, literally and metaphorically, takes the form of the "madwoman" archetype which has historically been feared and suppressed. It is depicted as self-destructive and an aberration—something which does not come naturally to women as opposed to men. Manjulika therefore is a representation of strength and power of feminine rage, which is often being stigmatised and has been used to shame women. The text is a reminder that further dialogue is needed to truly understand the dynamics of power and the struggle of women against oppression and subjugation.

6. Discussion

In this article, we have examined *Bhool Bhulaiyaa 2* using feminist perspective. More specifically, our approach contributes to the larger scholarly conversation about feminism's potential use as a critical approach in media studies. We have illustrated one way this framework may be taken up by media studies scholars. We contend that *Bhool Bhulaiyaa 2* points feminists and media studies scholars towards an alternative theoretical position capable of deconstructing power binaries. Of course, we do not argue that this is the only way to engage in critical feminist readings of texts; we do, however, agree with other scholars that there is much in feminist approaches yet to be explored.

We have discussed how patriarchy suppresses and subjugates women in *Bhool Bhulaiyaa 2* and represents them as mad without understanding them thoroughly. To analyse this film, we have focussed on the presence of various binaries male/female, good/bad, masculine/feminine, strong/weak etc. For our purpose here, we have observed that the representation of women by male director still faces same essentialised representation, stereotyping, thus associating and stigmatising women as mad when showing feminine rage. Manjulika's treatment and abandonment with her deceased sister illustrates the inhumanity of human behaviour. What

makes such a behaviour rational in the eyes of the so-called status quo. It is shocking to find that the text in contemporary times still highlights age-old notions and male desperation to eradicate a woman's agency.

While *Bhool Bhulaiyaa 2* is a text reinforcing traditional gender roles and stigmatising women that tries to express her rage at the wrongs done to her, our approach is not limited to what is present in the film; we also wish to comment on what is noticeably absent from the text. By doing so our observations can better address the kind of power concerns noted by different scholars such as Donaldson (2002). *Bhool Bhulaiyaa 2* fails to address the serious problems of patriarchy in India, toxic parenting in detail and mental illness a sensitive and serious concern. Though the text featured a strong female protagonist, yet they are depicted as weak in comparison to the men.

7. Conclusion

We wish to conclude our writing with a brief observation about the importance of representation and representability. The resistance on the part of women towards the patriarchy is often stigmatised in the films, leaving a long, deep impact on the world. Indian women's iconic status is often maligned as unrealistic, woman like Anjulika is often depicted as too good to be realistic. Re-reading the text helps us analyse madwoman as atypical human being.

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