



# Gendered Violence, Class Power, and Cultural Resistance: A Marxist-Feminist Analysis of Two Women's Narratives in Jana Sanskriti

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## Abstract

*The paper examines Sima Ganguly's "Either you do this work out of love, or not at all" and Pritilata Mondol's "The Needs and Norms of Sansar" to map how patriarchal domination, class relations, and ideological control operate within domestic and social life. Using a Marxist-feminist framework, the study argues that both narratives expose the family as a key site where capitalist patriarchy reproduces gendered subordination through emotional regulation, restricted mobility, symbolic violence, and the internalization of male authority. Ganguly's account unveils how patriarchal power persists even within educated, middle-class households, where surveillance and moral policing structure women's desires and choices. Her reflections highlight how ideological conditioning functions more forcefully than material deprivation, producing psychic violence that molds female subjectivity across generations. Mondol's narrative, conversely, foregrounds women's collective resistance against alcoholism, domestic abuse, and economic exploitation, highlighting the political potential of reproductive labor and community solidarity. Across both texts, Jana Sanskriti's theater emerges as a counter-hegemonic space that transforms private suffering into public critique, enabling consciousness-raising and collective action. The article presents these testimonies not only to critique patriarchal-capitalist structures but also to articulate alternative modes of agency grounded in cultural resistance. In examining how women negotiate, internalize, and resist domination, the study emphasizes the necessity of integrating cultural praxis into Marxist-feminist debates on gendered violence, class power, and social transformation.*

## I. INTRODUCTION

Violence is a dynamic phenomenon rooted in abnormal negative human behavior. The Oxford Dictionary defines violence as “behavior involving physical force intended to hurt, damage, or kill someone.” It also encompasses harmful actions inflicted by one individual upon another through physical, psychological, social, cultural, emotional, or any oppressive means. Scholars have identified multiple forms of violence, including economic, physical, psychological, sexual, social, and political (Galtung, 1969; Scheper-Hughes & Bourgois, 2003; Stark, 2007; Johnson, 2008; Anderson, 2016). Among these, physical, social, and psychological oppression are particularly intertwined with domestic turmoil.

Domestic violence remains a significant societal issue, often perpetuated by patriarchal structures that stiffen male dominance over women (Gondolf, 1990; Dobash & Dobash, 1992). Men influenced by misogynistic attitudes frequently express frustration through physical or verbal abuse, subjecting women to immense suffering, including grief, anxiety, depression, and trauma (Johnson, 2008). In rural Indian society, for instance, domestic violence is prevalent, with women enduring physical beatings, torture, slapping, and verbal abuse under patriarchal authority (Dobash & Dobash, 1992). This oppression is deeply rooted in societal structures, sustained by power dynamics that transcend gender roles (Stark, 2007). Globally, intimate partner violence affects approximately one in three women (Smith et al., 2001; Howell et al., 2016; Patra, 2018; Cimino et al., 2019; Spencer & Stith, 2020; Braamcamp de Mancello, 2021; Fogarty et al., 2021).

Several factors exacerbate domestic violence, including gender inequality, power disparities, mental health issues, and histories of abuse (Garcia-Moreno et al., 2005; Johnson & Leone, 2005; Capaldi et al., 2012; Carrington et al., 2020). The repercussions extend beyond immediate victims, severely impacting children who witness such violence, often leading to psychological trauma, stress, and behavioral disorders (Paulus et al., 2021). Victims themselves usually suffer from long-term anxiety, trauma, and depression (Campbell et al.,

2003; Finkelhor et al., 2015; Lifshitz et al., 2019; Flanagan et al., 2019; Barnett, 2020; Costello, 2022).

Despite its extensive presence, many victims hesitate to seek help due to cultural stigma, economic dependence, and meagre access to support services (McCart et al., 2010; Douglas & Fitzgerald, 2014; Farrugia et al., 2020). Immigrants and minorities face additional barriers, such as language difficulties, further isolating them from assistance (Madden et al., 2016). In response to oppression, resistance emerges as a protective mechanism for marginalised groups (Johnson 2008). It empowers individuals to challenge systematic abuse and seek justice (Dobash & Dobash, 1992). As violence intensifies, resistance becomes a voice for the voiceless, serving as a shield against societal domination (Stark, 2007).

In Bengal, domestic violence persists as a prominent social issue, driven by patriarchal norms and male dominance. This study examines domestic violence through the narratives of Jana Sanskriti artists, a theater group dedicated to raising awareness about oppression, exploitation, and societal inequities (Fritz, 2012; Kemper, 2012). Their work addresses critical issues such as domestic abuse, child marriage, healthcare disparities, and education (Ganguly, 2012). By analyzing two primary texts authored by Jana Sanskriti artists, this research unveils societal struggles and the transformative power of activism and art.

The study specifically examines the portrayal of domestic violence and resistance in the write-ups of Jana Sanskriti artists: Sima Ganguly and Pritilata Mondol. These narratives provide a lens into the complex interplay of gender, class, and power within familial and societal structures, critiquing patriarchal systems that perpetuate violence.

Ganguly’s narrative, “Either you do this work out of love, or not at all” (2012), clearly presents domestic violence, unveiling how patriarchal attitudes are deeply embedded in familial relations. Through the portrayal of her father’s authoritarian behavior and her mother’s submissive role, Ganguly exposes the cyclical nature of oppression that traps women within patriarchal capitalist structures. Despite her

father's education, his ingrained patriarchal mindset perpetuates gender-based violence, showing how oppressive ideologies persist within family units. This narrative accentuates the normalization of domestic violence in everyday life.

Similarly, Pritilata Mondol's "The Needs and Norms of Sansar" (2012) shifts focus toward transformation and resistance. Mondol highlights male characters grappling with their moral conscience as they recognize their role in perpetuating domestic violence, advocating the possibility of change within patriarchal structures. By highlighting the discrepancy between professed values and harmful actions, Mondol provides a space for self-reflection and societal growth. Women in her narrative embody resilience, balancing their roles as nurturers and agents of change by addressing issues like alcoholism and advocating for social justice. Yet, the persistent presence of domestic violence accentuates the challenges of breaking patriarchal structures in both private and public spheres.

This study addresses a critical gap in the existing scholarship by analyzing Ganguly and Mondol's narratives through a Marxist-feminist framework, exploring how grassroots theatre movements such as Jana Sanskriti facilitate resistance and amplify the voices of subaltern women. While existing research extensively examines structural oppression in South Asia, few studies investigate how theatrical practices provide a unique means of resisting domestic violence and patriarchal domination. By juxtaposing Ganguly's autobiographical account with Mondol's performative narrative, this paper unveils the dual role of the family as both a site of oppression and a potential space for resistance. Thus, it highlights the transformative power of theater in challenging societal norms and promoting political consciousness.

### **Materials and Methods of Analysis**

This study draws upon a range of materials centred around the autobiographical narratives and lived experiences of women associated with the Jana Sanskriti theater movement, particularly the narratives of Sima Ganguly and Pritilata Mondol. These primary texts are drawn from scripts and plays performed under the Jana

Sanskriti repertoire, with specific reference to Ganguly (2012) and Mondol (2012). Embedded within these theatrical texts are autobiographical narratives that detail family histories, experiences of domestic violence, social restrictions, and the transformative journey from personal trauma to political consciousness. The method of analysis employed is qualitative in nature, focusing on close textual reading of selected narratives. This includes an interpretative analysis of character testimonies, the use of spatial metaphors such as the terrace, rhetorical strategies including questions and silence, and symbolic representations of violence, resistance, and awakening. The analysis also engages intertextually with scholarly literature to deepen interpretative insights and contextualize the findings. Central to the methodology is an emphasis on subjective reflection and lived experience as critical entry points into the examination of larger socio-political structures of oppression.

### **Theoretical Framework**

The analytical framework of this study is grounded in Marxist-Feminist theory, which enables a detailed understanding of the intersectionality between capitalism, patriarchy, gender, and class. Drawing on Silvia Federici's concept of reproductive labor, the study positions women's unpaid domestic work as a foundational element in the maintenance of capitalist structures.

Althusser's theory of the ideological state apparatus informs the reading of the family as a key site for the transmission of dominant ideologies; In contrast, Sylvia Walby's notion of private patriarchy and Sandra Bartky's articulation of ideological patriarchy help elucidate how domestic and cultural spaces reproduce gendered subjugation. Michel Foucault's concepts of disciplinary power and surveillance are employed to analyse the internalization of patriarchal control, as evidenced in the psychic and emotional regulation of women's behavior. Furthermore, Augusto Boal's Theatre of the Oppressed offers a performative counterpoint to these structures, underscoring the potential of theater as a space for consciousness-raising and collective resistance.

## Analysis

Sima Ganguly's "Either you do this work out of love, or not at all," unveils the mechanisms of patriarchal control prevalent in the family structure. Her lived experiences reflect the pervasive entanglement of capitalism and patriarchy, both of which render women voiceless and subjugated within the domestic sphere.

Ganguly's narrative highlights a critical interrogation of the gendered division of domestic violence, labor, and patriarchal control. As Silvia Federici asserts, "the housewife embodies the reproductive labor that sustains capitalism" (Federici, 2004, p.27). Ganguly's depiction of her mother, reduced to a submissive figure without authority or voice, highlights how patriarchal ideology, under capitalism, builds and positions women's subordinate roles, as evident in the text: "My father was very conservative. He did not give the women of the household any freedom. He always kept them on a strict leash-whether you are his sister or his cousins..." (Ganguly, 2012, p.33). This statement is not just a personal reminiscence but a critique of toxic masculinity and the family as a site of patriarchal domination, where male figures engross authority. The "strict leash" mirrors the coercive social structures that condition women's behavior. In this context, domestic violence is not limited to physical abuse; rather, it encapsulates the symbolic and systemic violence enacted through denial of emotional suppression and ideological control (Bhattacharyya, 2018, p.92).

Sima's mother's blind obedience and lack of participation in decision-making embody the double burden of women in patriarchal-capitalist societies, expected to serve and reproduce, yet denied independence and recognition, as found in the text: "My mother had no say on any issue... She only obeyed orders from her youth till today..." (Ganguly, 2012, p.34). This subjugation is both ideological and material, showing how patriarchal capitalism strengthens gendered power relations within the most intimate space of the home. The interweaving of class, education, and gender becomes obvious when Ganguly questions whether her mother's obedience stemmed from her lack of education. Yet, she points to her father, who is educated but

authoritarian, as proof that patriarchal behavior is not simply the result of ignorance but of structural indoctrination: "And it is education that made my father's behavior so uneducated?" (Ganguly, 2012, p.34). This rhetorical question sharply criticizes the complicity of formal education in reproducing patriarchal ideology, confronting the liberal notion that education alone guarantees gender equity.

The childhood experience of confinement and emotional detachment from her father highlights how patriarchal authority alienates not only women but also children, extending the home a microcosm of a repressive state apparatus. The family, as Althusser notes, serves as an ideological state apparatus, nullifying submission and the gender hierarchy (Althusser, 1971, p.148). Ganguly's critical consciousness, which developed retrospectively, epitomizes the Marxist-feminist emphasis on resistance through reflection, as evident: "Yet, his patriarchy caused me a lot of pain... Although I noticed my mother's pain at the time, I had no means of empathizing in any real way..." (Ganguly, 2012, pp.33-34).

Her pain becomes political; by narrativizing her family history through Jana Sanskriti, she transforms private suffering into public resistance. The Jana Sanskriti platform, as a theater of the oppressed, functions as a counter-hegemonic space where such stories confront dominant narratives and initiate a collective consciousness (Boal, 2000, p.122). Ganguly's narrative is not only a personal account of domestic violence but an indictment of the structural intersections of patriarchy and capitalism. It calls for disintegrating the normalized ideologies that legitimize male dominance and suppress female subjectivity. Jana Sanskriti becomes the battleground where these oppressive structures are uncovered and resisted.

The portrayal of familial dynamics in Sima Ganguly's testimony provides a poignant critique of patriarchal control ingrained within domestic spaces. Ganguly's reflections explain how patriarchal norms infiltrate private life, downgrading women to subordinate positions within familial hierarchies (Vogel, 2013).

In the first excerpt, where Sima notices her father seeking advice from a younger uncle's wife: "to give them a sense of belonging and esteem in the home" (Ganguly 2012, 34), the act may superficially appear as participatory or egalitarian. However, the narrator's rhetorical question: "Was he like this because of a patriarchal society? I don't know", deceives a deeper awareness of the performative nature of patriarchal civility. This moment mirrors what Sylvia Walby terms "private patriarchy," where women are suppressed and controlled in the household under the guise of decency or inclusion (Walby 1990, 24). Despite the apparent consultation, power still resides firmly with the male figure, reaffirming the traditional gender roles where women may advise but not decide. The semblance of respect is a subtle form of control, a hallmark of ideological patriarchy that conditions women to accept subjugation as domestic harmony (Bartky 1990). As Marxist feminists argue, the family acts as a site of both reproduction and regulation, reproducing labor power and disciplining female subjectivity (Federici 2004).

Furthermore, the spatial metaphor of the terrace as a temporary refuge speaks to the gendered architecture of confinement. Ganguly rightly pointed out that, "My father would not let us go out anywhere... I could see from above how many lovers were walking by" (Ganguly 2012, 34). Her restricted mobility mirrors the patriarchal anxiety surrounding female autonomy and sexuality. The terrace, positioned above the world she is denied access to, becomes a symbolic site of both resistance and alienation. While it provides her a sliver of emotional agency, it is simultaneously a reminder of her structural exclusion from social freedoms.

This tension between surveillance and selfhood manifests in the internalisation of patriarchal control. Ganguly's confession, "I had my father in my brain", indicates the psychic violence of patriarchy, where even in his absence, the father's authority lingers as disciplinary power (Foucault 1977). This aligns with Marxist-feminist critiques of ideological interpellation (Althusser 1971), wherein individuals internalize the dominant ideology, thus perpetuating their own oppression. The psychological trauma experienced by Ganguly is not merely personal

but collectively conditioned. Her narrative foregrounds how women internalize guilt, fear, and inhibition under patriarchal structures. The process mirrors what feminists like Adrienne Rich describe as "compulsory heterosexuality and lesbian existence," where women's desires are mediated and policed by male authority (Rich 1980).

Crucially, Jana Sanskriti's theatrical platform becomes a counter-hegemonic space. By dramatizing such narratives, it enacts what Augusto Boal terms "theatre of the oppressed," transforming spectators into active agents of critique and resistance (Boal 1979). Ganguly's storytelling becomes an act of symbolic resistance, a reclaiming of voice and agency in a domain that has historically silenced women.

Interestingly, Sima Ganguly's comparison of her life to Renuka's in the context of Jana Sanskriti theatre offers a critique of the interplay between patriarchal norms, class-based oppression, and gendered socialization. Through a Marxist-feminist framework, we see how ideological patriarchy operates not in isolation but in intersection with capitalist structures, creating a matrix of domination that constrains women's autonomy.

Sima, despite her urban, middle-class, and educated upbringing, experiences patriarchal control that curtails her self-expression and freedom. Her father, a physics teacher, denies her the simple act of singing in public due to the presence of young men. This denial exemplifies toxic masculinity and patriarchal surveillance disguised under the veneer of education and moral guardianship: "Even as an urban educated girl, my father did not let me sing at a neighborhood club event because there would be young men there. My father is a physics teacher in a higher secondary school" (Ganguly 2012, 36). In contrast, Renuka, from a working-class agrarian background, experiences a surprising degree of freedom. Her father, although lacking formal education, permits and supports her engagement with dance, singing, and street theater. This juxtaposition reveals the contradictory nature of patriarchal capitalism, where education does not necessarily align with egalitarian values. Instead, it often reproduces patriarchal control through

class-based ideologies that assign women roles of domesticity and obedience (Vogel 1983; Federici 2004).

Sima's internalized helplessness further exposes the deep-rooted patriarchal socialization women undergo. Her inability to confront her father's authority despite her education suggests that ideological conditioning can be more binding than material deprivation. The silent acquiescence to male authority becomes a form of self-censorship ingrained by systematic patriarchy, which Marxist feminists argue is both economic and cultural in nature (Eisenstein 1979).

Moreover, Ganguly's rhetorical question, "which of them is educated?" problematizes the bourgeois notion of education as inherently progressive. She writes, "Renuka's father is not one of a kind in the villages. I can tell you about countless others. I have seen Satya's father accompany his daughter-in-law to meetings" (Ganguly 2012, 36). Here, Ganguly exposes the performativity of formal education and unmasks class-based privilege as a mask for deeper misogynistic control. In doing so, she criticizes how capitalist patriarchy uses education not as a tool of liberation, but as a mechanism of ideological reproduction (Althusser 1971). Her frustration lays bare the false promises of capitalist modernity, where economic progress does not equate to gender justice. The "educated" father embodies a regressive masculinity, while the "uneducated" farmer father dismantles patriarchal expectations through his progressive actions. Through this narrative, Jana Sanskriti's theater becomes a platform of resistance and consciousness-raising. The platform not only amplifies subaltern female voices but also exposes the structural contradictions of patriarchal capitalist societies. Women like Sima, Renuka, and Pritilota, and others reclaim public space, narrate their trauma, and break the hegemonic narratives of masculinity and class power, embodying what Marxist-feminist scholar Silvia Federici terms "autonomous women's struggle" against intertwined forms of oppression (Federici 2004). Thus, Ganguly's narrative shows how gendered oppression is both universal and class-contingent. Her reflections display that education alone cannot break patriarchal structures unless it is accompanied

by radical consciousness and collective resistance. The Marxist-feminist lens thus unveils the layered nature of women's subjugation and the emancipatory potential of cultural resistance through platforms like Jana Sanskriti.

The recollection of a violent moment, "My mother had thrown an iron rod on my sister's face... Her anger towards the family, my father's negligence towards her... she was probably expressing her repressed anger... by beating us" (Ganguly 2012, 36), signifies how patriarchal violence is cyclically internalized and transmitted through generations. This maternal aggression is not merely a personal failing but a manifestation of systematic conditions, where the mother, denied agency and subjected to her husband's neglect and her mother-in-law's domination, channels her pain through violence towards her daughters. This act embodies what Marxist feminists such as Silvia Federici and Angela Davis have emphasized: that patriarchy is not only enforced by men but is also embedded in the structures and expectations that shape women's behaviors under capitalism and feudal familial setups (Federici 2004; Davis 1981).

The violence directed at the sister for her "brief encounter with dreaming of love" (Ganguly 2012, 36) is a powerful illustration of how patriarchal systems view women's desire and autonomy as transgressive. Women's bodies and emotional lives are regulated, surveilled, and punished under a patriarchal moral code, which sees female desire as dangerous and needing control. The mother's act of violence is, therefore, not only disciplinary but also ideological, a reaction born of internalized patriarchal norms that regard love as the prerogative of male choice and female submission.

Moreover, Ganguly's own journey toward love with Sanjoy, while initially emancipatory, becomes entangled in social surveillance and condemnation. The love that provides her with a "sense of freedom" also subjects her to societal scrutiny, embodying the paradox of women's resistance within patriarchal regimes (Ganguly 2012). This is emblematic of what Marxist feminist theorists argue that women's liberation cannot be complete without breaking both economic exploitation and gendered control

(Vogel 1983). The social backlash Ganguly faces affirms the durability of patriarchal hegemony, which not only punishes women who deviate from prescribed roles but also reasserts its control through communal shaming and moral policing.

Through the Jana Sanskriti stage, these lived experiences are not merely narrated but dramatized in public, providing a space for collective catharsis and resistance. Theater becomes an emancipatory tool, what Augusto Boal calls the “rehearsal for revolution” (Boal 1979), where women reclaim agency by transforming personal pain into political critique. The staging of domestic violence, toxic masculinity, and gendered oppression in Jana Sanskriti's performances invites spectators to interrogate their complicity in patriarchal structures and inspires action through collective consciousness. Thus, Ganguly's narrative and its theatrical articulation question the very foundations of patriarchal morality. It foregrounds the systematic nature of gendered violence and offers a Marxist-feminist critique of the family as an institution that perpetuates class and gender domination. In doing so, it asserts the importance of art, particularly political theater, as a medium of resistance capable of unveiling the toxicity of patriarchy and imagining new possibilities for gender justice and social transformation.

Similarly, Pritilata Mondol's *The Needs and Norms of Sansar*, as performed under the Jana Sanskriti theatre movement, unveils the entrenched structures of patriarchal domination and gendered violence in domestic and social spheres, while foregrounding the resistance and moral agency of women. Mondol highlights how class and gender intersect to perpetuate inequality and exploitation in patriarchal-capitalist structures.

At the heart of the narrative is a critique of masculinity and the normalization of domestic violence within patriarchal households. The male character's internal struggle and subsequent moral awakening, “I beat my wife. And I think this is not a good thing... it hits my conscience” (Mondol 2012, 81), marks a rupture within the ideology of patriarchal masculinity. This admission signals a crisis of conscience,

signifying the cognitive dissonance that emerges when patriarchal behavior confronts collective ethical praxis. From a Marxist-feminist perspective, such moments unveil the contradictions of patriarchy, wherein ideological transformation becomes possible through praxis and collective engagement.

Mondol's narrative challenges hegemonic gender norms by positioning women not only as caregivers but as active agents of change, embodying what Silvia Federici describes as the “political potential of reproductive labor” in resisting capitalist and patriarchal structures (Federici 2004). Women in the play performance resist through community-based action, particularly in their struggle against alcoholism: “The women in our region fought a fearless battle over liquor” (Mondol 2012, 83). This activism directly contests patriarchal control over women's lives, bodies, and domestic spaces, where alcohol often functions as both a tool and symptom of male dominance.

Moreover, Mondol's text aligns with Marxist-feminist critiques of how economic inequality, dowry, and lack of infrastructure exacerbate gendered oppression. Her representation of collective struggle shows what bell hooks calls “the power of female bonding and solidarity in the fight against domination” (hooks 1984). The protagonist's declaration, “I can say that if I had not found this work, then perhaps my life would have been lost in the darkness” (Mondol 2012, 85), reaffirms the transformative power of consciousness-raising and participatory theater in facilitating women's liberation.

Jana Sanskriti's theatrical platform becomes a site of ideological resistance, enabling subaltern women to challenge systemic violence not just through representation but through embodied, public expression. As Paulo Freire notes, such practices promote critical consciousness, which is essential to breaking oppressive structures (Freire 1970). Thus, *The Needs and Norms of Sansar* illustrates how Marxist-feminist praxis, embodied in collective action and cultural resistance, can unmask and dismantle toxic patriarchal norms. Mondol's work serves as a testament to the possibilities of transformative gender politics emerging from

below, forged in struggle and sustained by solidarity.

A significant yet frequently understudied dimension of patriarchal-capitalist domination is its absorption of women's emotional labor into an extended apparatus of social control. While research on domestic violence and patriarchal authority typically emphasizes physical, economic, and ideological mechanisms, an expanding body of feminist scholarship argues that the regulation of women's emotional lives, including care, guilt, compassion, shame, and empathy, functions as a subtle technology of governance within the household (Hochschild, 2012, Gilligan, 1993). In the narratives of Sima Ganguly and Pritilata Mondol, emotional labor exceeds the status of a gendered expectation and emerges as a contested domain through which patriarchal authority is normalized and reinforced. This interpretive perspective demonstrates that capitalist patriarchy monitors not only women's movements, bodies, and productive work but also infiltrates and reshapes their emotional landscapes, turning affect itself into a site of political struggle.

Within patriarchal households, women are routinely positioned as emotional stabilizers responsible for maintaining harmony, moderating conflict, and absorbing male anger (Hochschild, 2012). This emotional responsibility becomes central not merely to domestic continuity but also to the reproduction of patriarchal hierarchy. For example, when Ganguly reflects on her mother's continuous silence and compliance, her submission extends beyond physical obedience. It involves the disciplined management of fear, disappointment, and aspiration to preserve the patriarchal arrangement of the home. Such regulated emotional behavior corresponds with feminist analyses of affective discipline, in which women are trained to suppress their discomfort and prioritize the emotional security of men (Bartky, 1990). Through this process of internalization, patriarchal authority is maintained not only through coercion but also through habitual emotional responses that women learn to perform.

A Marxist-feminist interpretation enriches this discussion by showing how emotional labor becomes fundamental to capitalist reproduction. Federici (2004) argues that unpaid care work strengthens capitalist economies by reproducing labor power daily. Extending this logic, emotional labor such as consoling husbands, mediating disputes, protecting men from humiliation, and reinforcing male self-worth becomes an essential affective infrastructure that sustains both patriarchy and capitalism. Mondol's narrative demonstrates this clearly, as women assume the emotional burden of stabilizing households disrupted by alcoholism. They manage not only domestic responsibilities but also the emotional volatility generated by men's addictions. Their capacity to maintain affective balance ensures household continuity, which in turn supports the broader socioeconomic system.

At the same time, emotional expectations operate as disciplinary mechanisms. Women who express anger, assert autonomy, or question male authority are often labeled deviant or improper. This process resembles Foucault's (1977) notion of disciplinary power, which shapes conduct through internalized norms. Ganguly's internal struggle, her longing for affection set against social judgment, illustrates how emotional expression becomes a regulated sphere. Women's emotional lives are scrutinized with the same severity that governs their physical presence. Love, joy, sexuality, sorrow, desire, and even ambition are subjected to patriarchal evaluation.

Yet emotional labor can also function as a catalyst for resistance. Mondol's account of women mobilizing against alcoholism demonstrates how shared emotions such as anger, frustration, and hope can activate collective political engagement. This dynamic aligns with Ahmed's (2017) view that emotions can serve as repositories of feminist understanding, enabling women to identify oppression and build collective solidarities. When women redirect their emotional labor away from reinforcing patriarchal norms and toward challenging them, affect becomes a powerful source of transformation. Jana Sanskriti's theatre practices intensify this process. By presenting sorrow, indignation, humiliation, and

longing in public settings, the performances reclaim emotional expression as a mode of political intervention. Boal's (1979) concept of the spect-actor highlights this further, as emotional involvement becomes a rehearsal space for collective empowerment.

Emotional labor, therefore, operates as a dual mechanism within patriarchal capitalism. It reinforces structures of domination by conditioning women to regulate emotional environments in ways that protect and stabilize male authority. Simultaneously, it contains the potential for critique and collective awakening. Understanding emotional labor as a contested domain reveals a deeper layer of patriarchal governance that manipulates affect for the sake of compliance while also providing opportunities for resistance when women reclaim emotion as a transformative political force. This interpretation enriches Marxist-feminist analysis by demonstrating that the struggle against patriarchy is not solely material or ideological but also profoundly affective/emotional.

## II. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The narratives of Sima Ganguly and Pritilata Mondol, as articulated through the Jana Sanskriti theatre movement, disclose the deeply entrenched mechanisms of patriarchal domination and resistance within South Asian domestic and social spheres. Ganguly's autobiographical reflections reveal the ideological and material violence ingrained by patriarchal capitalism, where women's desire, labor, and autonomy are systematically suppressed. Her father's authoritarian control, despite his education, presents how patriarchal norms are reproduced rather than broken by formal institutions (Ganguly 2012, 34). This aligns with Marxist-feminist critiques that view the family as a site of gendered and class-based oppression, reinforcing women's subjugation through economic dependency and ideological conditioning (Federici 2004; Althusser 1971).

Similarly, Mondol's "The Needs and Norms of Sansar" dramatizes the contradictions of patriarchal masculinity, where male characters experience moral crises upon confronting their own violence (Mondol 2012, 81). The write-up highlights women's collective

resistance, especially against alcoholism, a symbol of patriarchal control, emphasizing the intersection of gender and class struggle. Both narratives illustrate how Jana Sanskriti's theater functions as a counter-hegemonic space, transforming private suffering into public critique (Boal 1979). By staging oppression, these performances break normative gender roles and promote collective consciousness.

This analysis emphasizes how Sima Ganguly's and Pritilata Mondol's narratives, as articulated through Jana Sanskriti theater of the oppressed, expose the deep entanglements of patriarchy, capitalism, and gendered violence within domestic spaces. Key findings unveil that patriarchal domination is not merely enforced through physical coercion but also through ideological conditioning; women's subjugation is internalized, reproduced, and even weaponized by oppressed women themselves. Ganguly's reflections on her father's authoritarianism, her mother's enforced silence, and her own restricted autonomy illustrate how patriarchal capitalism operates within the family, reinforcing women's roles as voiceless laborers. Similarly, Mondol's critique of domestic violence and alcoholism shows how systematic oppression is both economic and cultural, requiring collective resistance to dismantle.

A key finding is the paradoxical role of education: Ganguly's father, though educated, epitomizes retrogressive patriarchy, while Renuka's uneducated father supports her artistic freedom (Ganguly 2012, 36). This challenges liberal assumptions that education inherently breaks gender oppression, unveiling instead how patriarchal capitalism co-opts institutions to sustain domination. The cyclical nature of violence, seen in Ganguly's mother perpetuating abuse, further accentuates how patriarchy is internalized and reproduced across generations (Davis 1981). Thus, Jana Sanskriti's stage offers a model for resistance, merging Marxist-feminist critique with cultural activism to envision emancipatory futures.

## III. CONCLUSION

This paper has examined the narratives of Sima Ganguly's "Either you do this work out of love, or not at all" and Pritilata Mondol's "The Needs and

Norms of Sansar” through a Marxist-feminist lens to demonstrate how patriarchal domination operates within the intimate sphere of the family while remaining structurally aligned with capitalist reproduction. Ganguly’s testimony exposes the household as a primary ideological site where gender hierarchy is normalized, sustained through emotional suppression, restricted mobility, symbolic surveillance, and the disciplining of women’s desire. Ganguly’s account makes visible how patriarchal authority is not simply enforced through overt coercion but secured through everyday affective governance, where women internalize fear, guilt, duty, and emotional endurance as moral obligations. This internalization embodies how unpaid reproductive and emotional labor, as theorized by Federici, becomes integral to the reproduction of capitalist-patriarchal relations, ensuring both material survival and ideological continuity.

Mondol’s narrative deepens this critique by illustrating that patriarchal power is not absolute. Her representation of collective female activism against domestic violence and alcoholism unveils moments of ideological rupture in which ethical reflection and communal praxis challenge entrenched masculinist norms. Through solidarity and public action, women redirect emotional labor away from stabilizing male authority toward forms of political consciousness and resistance. This shift highlights the transformative potential of affect when mobilized as a collective resource rather than a private burden. The contrast between male characters across class and educational divides further dismantles liberal assumptions about education as a guarantor of gender justice, exposing it instead as a vehicle for the reproduction of patriarchal ideology under capitalist modernity.

Crucially, Jana Sanskriti’s theater emerges as a counter-hegemonic space where personal trauma is transformed into political critique. By staging lived experiences of gendered violence and emotional oppression, the theater interrupts ideological interpellation. It cultivates what Boal terms “spect-actors”, participants who actively interrogate and resist dominant power structures. These performances render emotional expression a public, politicized act,

thereby reclaiming affect as an instrument of transformative praxis.

Collectively, the narratives analyzed affirm that patriarchal domination is not only material and ideological but deeply emotional. The regulation of women’s emotional lives becomes a silent technology of governance within capitalist patriarchy, while the re-politicization of emotion through collective cultural practice offers a pathway to resistance. This study thus demonstrates that breaking gender oppression requires engaging not only economic exploitation and ideological indoctrination but also the affective architectures that bind women to subordination. Jana Sanskriti’s theater exemplifies how cultural activism can challenge these interlocking systems by transforming pain into consciousness and emotion into resistance, illuminating the emancipatory possibilities embedded within feminist performance praxis.

### **Broader Implications**

These narratives extend beyond personal trauma, providing a lens through which to understand structural oppression in everyday life. They challenge the liberal assumption that education or economic status alone can emancipate women, unveiling instead how patriarchal ideology persists across class lines. For policymakers and activists, this research paper emphasizes the need to address gender oppression not only through legal reforms but through cultural interventions, such as Jana Sanskriti’s theater, that break hegemonic narratives. The findings urge a reevaluation of the family as a site of both repression and potential resistance, emphasizing the need for grassroots feminist movements that center subaltern voices.

### **Main Research Contribution**

This study’s most significant contribution lies in its Marxist-feminist interrogation of how patriarchal violence is sustained and resisted within domestic and theatrical spaces. By analyzing Ganguly’s and Mondol’s testimonies, the research highlights:

- The ideological function of the family in naturalizing gendered oppression (Althusser, Federici).

- The contradictions of education and class in reinforcing or challenging patriarchy.
- The transformative potential of political theater as a counter-hegemonic tool (Boal, Freire).

These insights deepen feminist discourse by centering lived experiences as sites of theoretical and activist intervention.

### **Future Directions & Call-to-Action**

While this research illuminates the mechanisms of patriarchal domination, it also opens new avenues for inquiry:

- How can feminist movements better integrate cultural resistance (like theater) with material struggles (labor rights, economic justice)?
- What role does intergenerational trauma play in sustaining patriarchal violence, and how can it be disrupted?
- Can alternative pedagogies (beyond formal education) break patriarchal conditioning more effectively?

Future scholars should explore these questions while amplifying marginalized voices in feminist praxis. The call-to-action is clear: solidarity must move beyond rhetoric into embodied resistance. Jana Sanskriti's model proves that storytelling and performance are not just art; they are acts of rebellion. The next phase of feminist struggle must harness such creative dissent to forge a world where love is not a leash, but liberation. If patriarchy is so deeply internalized that even its victims perpetuate it, how do we build a feminism that heals as much as it resists?

### **The study is significant for three reasons:**

1. Theoretical: It bridges Marxist-feminist frameworks (Federici, 2004; Vogel, 1983) with performance studies (Boal, 1979), showing how cultural praxis can break ideological domination.
2. Empirical: It presents contradictions in education's role, showing that patriarchal norms persist despite class mobility and institutional credentials.
3. Political: It affirms the urgency of alternative resistance models, especially in postcolonial contexts where neoliberal capitalism exacerbates gendered violence.

By analyzing Jana Sanskriti's work, this research paper contributes to debates on gendered labor, ideological state apparatuses, and the emancipatory potential of collective art, calling for a reimagining of resistance that centers lived experience and communal solidarity.

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