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## From Desire to Destruction: The Ruinous Masculine Rage of Revenge in the Tale of Jaayi Bone in Galo Folklore

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### Abstract

The Galo folktale of *Jaayi Bone* offers a profound narrative illustrating the destructive consequences of wounded male pride and the inability to accept rejection., the study interrogates how the crisis of wounded masculine pride transforms the rejected male into a source of chaos, vengeance, and ultimately, narrative tragedy. It examines the figure of Didu Kube, whose fragile masculinity and refusal to cope with *Jaayi Bone*'s rejection and betrayal result in vengeance that devastates worlds both land and the water. By analysing this story through the lens of gender studies and psychological theory, the research reveals how toxic masculinity and male entitlement foster cycles of violence and social disruption. The tale serves as a cautionary reflection on the cultural and emotional costs of male ego wounded by rejection.

Key Words: Didu Kube, *Jaayi Bone*, Rejection, Toxic, Masculinity, Vengeance, Destruction.

### Introduction

Folklore serves as a mirror reflecting the cultural norms, values, and tensions of a community. Among the Galos of Arunachal Pradesh, a rich and enthralling oral tradition offers narratives that span love, sacrifice, reverence for nature, as well as tales steeped in lust, vengeance, and injustice. These stories not only entertain but also encode deep cultural meanings and ethical reflections.

One such significant tale is that of *Jaayi Bone*, a narrative that powerfully illustrates the destructive transformation of desire into

vengeance. At its core lies the turmoil of the male ego when confronted with rejection, and the catastrophic consequences of wounded pride left unchecked. This paper examines how the character of *Didu Kube* embodies fragile masculinity; his inability to accept *Jaayi Bone*'s refusal drives him into a spiral of rage, ultimately resulting in personal ruin and widespread ecological and social devastation.

By situating *Didu Kube*'s response within the framework of patriarchal constructions of masculinity, this study seeks to unpack the cultural and emotional implications

of his actions. The tale serves as both a psychological case study and a cultural critique, offering a cautionary message about the perils of unchecked entitlement, emotional repression, and toxic masculinity.

### Methodology

This study employs a qualitative research design grounded in literary and cultural analysis of the tale of *Jaayi Bone* within

the Galo oral tradition. The methodology is interpretive, aiming to uncover the cultural, psychological, and gendered meanings embedded in the narrative. By applying interdisciplinary theoretical frameworks from gender studies and psychology, the research investigates how the tale reflects and critiques constructs of masculinity, rejection, and emotional expression.

### The Tale of *Jaayi Bone*

In a quaint village, there lived a beautiful maiden named *Jaayi-Bone*. Her charm captivated everyone who saw her, earning her the title of the most attractive maiden in the land. With every step she took, she sang songs of her own beauty, knowing the allure she held over others.

One day, as she ventured into the forest in search of firewood, her melodious voice echoed through the trees, drawing the attention of *Didu Kube*, the prince of the forest. Enchanted by her ethereal beauty, he professed his love and offered her the throne beside him as the future queen of the forest. His promises of abundance and devotion stirred her heart, yet she deferred her answer, bidding him to return another day.

Undeterred, *Jaayi Bone* continued her pursuits, venturing to the river to catch fish. There, her enchanting song once again caught the attention of another suitor, *Bur Tapu*, the prince of the water. He, too, was bewitched by her beauty and proposed to her, offering her the riches of the aquatic realm and his unwavering love. Torn between two suitors, *Jaayi-Bone* deferred her response again, leaving both princes in anticipation.

As the days passed, *Didu Kube* and *Bur Tapu* prepared lavish gifts to win *Jaayi-Bone's* favour. Yet, when they presented their tokens of affection, she remained elusive, promising to give her answer on the morrow. In the quiet of the night, her mother counselled her to choose *Bur-Tapu*, for in him lay the promise of a world unseen beneath the waves and a life full of riches.

The following day, *Bur Tapu* returned, his heart brimming with hope. And with a smile, *Jaayi Bone* accepted his proposal, embarking on a new life as a princess of the water realm. Meanwhile, *Didu-Kube*, unaware of *Jaayi Bone's* decision, set out to seek her hand as well. After knowing that she chose *Bur Tapu* over him, he was consumed by rage and betrayal, *Didu Kube* sought vengeance, poisoning the river to kill them. However, his efforts were in vain, for only small fishes succumbed to the toxin.

Devastated, *Didu Kube* was vehemently storming around in his kingdom with vindictiveness. One day in the forest, he met a deer stumbling through the path; concerned, *Didu Kube* inquired about the reason behind his weakness. The deer revealed to him that he was poisoned by some berries that he had from a particular tree that intoxicated and almost killed him. He narrated that it was his good luck that he had had only a few of them; had he consumed more of them, he would have instantly died. *Didu Kube* fed him some banana leaves and helped him regain his lost strength. The rejuvenated deer was grateful. Then, *Didu Kube* asked the deer to help him source those poisonous berries that had poisoned him. The deer led him to the tree of those fatal berries. With newfound determination, *Didu Kube* collected the berries, crushed them and unleashed their deadly contents upon the river. Soon, the lifeless bodies of *Bur Tapu* and *Jaayi Bone* floated to the surface. However, this did not quench the rage of vengeful *Didu Kube*.

*Didu Kube*, with their demise, desecrated *Bur Tapu's* remains; he dragged the body ashore and meticulously chopped it into small pieces. Quietly, he ventured into the forest and surreptitiously distributed the pieces among the wild animals, deceitfully claiming they were remnants of a large fish. Yet, within a short span, sickness befell the entire animal race. From that moment onward, it is believed that a multitude of diseases began to afflict the once-healthy inhabitants of the forest. And so, the tale of *Jaayi Bone* serves as a cautionary reminder, warning against the destructive power of jealousy and vengefulness. Ultimately, the virtuous find peace, while envy and rivalry sow only seeds of ruin.

## Discussion

The Galo folktale of *Jaayi Bone* is more than a tragic romance; it is a haunting allegory of masculine fragility and the toxic emotional economy underpinning patriarchal desire. At its core lies a potent conflict between personal autonomy and gendered entitlement, where the refusal of love becomes a catalyst for ecological and moral collapse. By reading the tale through a feminist and critical masculinity lens, the narrative reveals itself not as a cautionary tale about faithless women, but a complex critique of the socialised expectations placed upon men and women within traditional gender hierarchies.

### Desire, Possession, and Courtship as Control

*Didu Kube's* desire for *Jaayi Bone* is immediate and overwhelming. Enchanted by her beauty and melodic voice, he offers her not just affection but authority—inviting her to share the throne beside him. This gesture, though romantic on the surface, is laden with patriarchal implication. The throne becomes not merely a seat of partnership but a symbol of possession. *Jaayi Bone's* rejection of this offer in favour of *Bur Tapu*, a suitor from the underworld who offers her treasures, disrupts this dynamic, asserting her autonomy and unsettling *Didu Kube's* expectations.

This tension brings into relief what Jackson Katz describes as “the entitlement of male desire” the idea that masculine worth is affirmed through the acquisition and retention of female affirmation. Katz writes, “Men have been socialised to believe that they are entitled to women’s bodies, attention, and love, and that when they are denied, they are somehow the victims of injustice” (Katz, *The Macho Paradox*, 2006, p. 87). *Didu Kube's* wounded pride is not merely a personal grievance but a challenge to an internalised structure that equates rejection with emasculation.

## Masculinity, Rejection, and Rage

In *Masculinities* (1995), R.W. Connell identifies hegemonic masculinity as “the configuration of gender practice which embodies the currently accepted answer to the problem of legitimacy of patriarchy,” guaranteeing the dominance of men and the subordination of women (p. 77). *Didu Kube's* masculinity is destabilised by *Jaayi Bone's* assertion of choice, a move that defies the narrative of male entitlement. His descent into revenge following this rejection reflects the deep-rooted connection between masculine identity and control. The poisoning of the river, the seeking of fatal berries, and the ultimate desecration of *Bur Tapu's* body all signify a violent reaction to a perceived loss of power.

Rather than accepting *Jaayi Bone's* decision, *Didu Kube* lashes out, not at the system that shaped his entitlement, but at the woman who refused to affirm it. This speaks directly to bell hooks’ assertion that patriarchy trains men to feel that “without the emotional support and affirmation of women, their lives are meaningless” (*The Will to Change*, 2004, p. 65). When denied this validation, violence becomes the language through which men like *Didu Kube* attempt to restore their sense of agency.

### Silencing of the Female Voice

*Jaayi Bone*, though the catalyst of the story, fades from the narrative after her act of agency. Her voice, once enchanting and central, is silenced in the aftermath of her choice. This narrative disappearance aligns with Gayatri Chakraborty Spivak’s foundational critique in *Can the Subaltern Speak?* (1988), where she argues that the subaltern woman is often denied narrative authority unless she conforms to dominant ideologies. *Jaayi Bone* is not granted a voice in her suffering or her death. Her rejection of *Didu Kube* is permitted as a brief moment of defiance, but the narrative cannot accommodate her continued presence as a woman who exercises choice and survives. Her silence reinforces the limits of patriarchal storytelling,

where female autonomy exists only as a provocation for male transformation or, in this case, destruction.

### Ecological and Communal Fallout

The revenge does not remain personal. *Didu Kube's* desecration of *Bur Tapu's* body results in a sickness that spreads across the animal kingdom. This narrative twist symbolises the expansive consequences of a wounded male ego. Toxic masculinity, once unleashed, does not merely consume the individual it infects the broader ecology. The story echoes contemporary ecofeminist critiques, such as those by Vandana Shiva, who argue that patriarchal violence is often mirrored in environmental degradation. The land, the animals, the river, all suffer because of one man's inability to accept rejection. The story, therefore, becomes a powerful metaphor for how emotional violence metastasises into collective harm.

### Cultural Critique and Contemporary Relevance

When examined through a critical feminist lens, the tale of *Jaayi Bone* challenges not only the moral failure of *Didu Kube* but the very systems that validate his entitlement. It subverts the patriarchal trope of the woman as reward and the man as hero, instead exposing the fragility of masculinity built on control and expectation. The tale anticipates modern critiques of emotional repression and gendered violence, calling attention to the need for cultural narratives that teach men to process rejection through reflection rather than retribution.

In this light, *Jaayi Bone* is not simply a tragic heroine, but a figure whose fleeting autonomy reveals the dysfunction of the world around her. Her silence, while painful, reflects the silencing structures still prevalent in many cultures, where women's choices are tolerated only when they serve male redemption arcs.

### Conclusion

The tale of *Jaayi Bone* emerges not simply as a folklore narrative of love, betrayal, and revenge, but as a powerful commentary on the perilous consequences of masculine entitlement. Through *Didu Kube's* descent into violence following rejection, the tale exposes how patriarchal norms equate love with possession and desire with dominance. *Jaayi Bone's* brief but bold assertion of agency stands as a radical moment that disrupts the expected trajectory of female submission in courtship narratives. However, her subsequent narrative erasure reflects what Gayatri Spivak identifies as the systemic silencing of the subaltern woman, who is only permitted a voice within structures that ultimately reaffirm male authority.

When interpreted through R.W. Connell's theory of hegemonic masculinity, *Didu Kube's* crisis becomes emblematic of a broader socio-cultural construct where male identity is upheld by the subordination of female will. His retaliation against *Jaayi Bone* and *Bur Tapu* and the environmental devastation it incites signals how such gendered insecurities, when unchallenged, can escalate into both interpersonal and ecological catastrophe.

Ultimately, the tale resists a moralistic reading that punishes female choice. Instead, it invites a critical interrogation of how patriarchal cultures script male emotional responses and constrain female autonomy. *Jaayi Bone*, when read through feminist critical frameworks, becomes a vital narrative for questioning how desire, rejection, and vengeance are culturally encoded, laying bare the violent undercurrents of wounded masculinity and the urgent need for narratives that uphold emotional accountability, mutual respect, and the right to refuse.

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