Indian Mythology in English Literature: An Exploration of How Writers like Amish Tripathi and Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni Reimagine Indian Myths for Contemporary Audiences

MANJUNATH M
Research Scholar

ABSTRACT:

It explores how modern Indian authors such as Amish Tripathi and Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni both retell and reinvent traditional Indian myths for a national and international audience within a contemporary English literary framework. Reinterpreting ancient mythology, these writers give voice to enduring stories as they have always done: repackaging traditions to meet contemporary ears. In Tripathi's Shiva Trilogy and Divakaruni's The Palace of Illusions, the well-known mythological figures of Shiva and Draupadi become complex characters navigating such universal themes as love and duty, identity and purpose. Such reinterpretations save cultural heritage and at the same time allow deeper engagement with Indian philosophy. Together, in a mingled past-present sensibility, Tripathi and Divakaruni reclaim the pages of Indian mythology, evincing that such important writings still permeate present conversation and soil the underpinnings of the east-west experience. Question: Reflect on how the ideas discussed in this paper demonstrate the wider appeal of Indian mythology in world literature and the ways in which this ancient mythology continues to be relevant and powerful.

INTRODUCTION:

For thousands of years, Indian mythology has formed the backbone of India's culture, and its endless layers of meaning and thought have provided us with a fundamental foundation for understanding who we are at the core. Rooted in the ancient epics of the Mahabharata, Ramayana and many Puranas, these myths and legends capture universal themes of love, adventure, courage, betrayal, and the interplay of fate and free will in the human experience. A new generation of Indian authors writing in English, from the best-selling author Amish Tripathi to Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni, are recently rising to this challenge, re-reading age-old narratives. In implementing mythological figures and backgrounds in modern settings, these authors generate a connection between ageless insights and present-day perspectives, giving readers a freshTake on familiar stories.

Writers such as Tripathi and Divakaruni - and lesser known authors like Lisanna Leu, Sudhanshu Tak and others - do not just chronicle accurate stories, but pivot them into dimensions that provide layers of psychological depth expected in contemporary fiction. While Tripathi's Shiva Trilogy reimagines Shiva as a man through the mind of a mortal hero facing dilemmas, Divakaruni's The Palace of Illusions breathes life into the Mahabharata through Draupadi asking for her voice.

Retelling these works allows readers to imagine closer relationships with mythological characters, and create a modern sense of importance for Indian mythology with a rapidly changing world.

Examining the way in which such writers synthesize old stories with contemporary tropes in order to attract a wide-reaching readership, both in India and outside of it, this study traces the impact of translations as well. This also illuminates the enduring power of mythology to find resonance through time, culture and geography, and the exciting ways in which Indian writing in English is resiliently keeping myths alive in the global literary landscape.

MAIN ARGUMENT:

As modern works such as those by Amish Tripathi and Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni demonstrate, the stories of Indian mythology are not static but rather can exhibit hyperstasis, becoming transformed rather than left behind, adapted to new themes and sensibilities. These authors take familiar stories from classical mythology, layer them with psychological realism and realistic character development, and produce narratives just relevant enough to be appealing to contemporary audiences.

Not only does Tripathi move the deity Shiva from a figure of worship to a character battling human woes, but he adds shades of grey in his character, making him both vulnerable and morally ambiguous. When gods and god-like characters speak out loud they are expressing desires and aspirations, mixing mortal life with the divine, and as such they encourage - even demand comprehensive philosophical queries into the implications of duty to self, the needs of sacrifice, and the relative good and evil of the world.

On the same lines is Divakaruni's The Palace of Illusions, which tells the Mahabharata from a women's lens, the voice of Draupadi as the focal point. Divakaruni not only reclaims her narrative but also helps readers reflect on current issues of identity and agency, presenting her as a multifaceted character navigating the intricacies of power, gender, and destiny.

Such contemporary adaptations have a double benefit: they ensure the rich heritage of Indian mythology is not lost in transition, and they give it an appeal for the contemporary times involving austere diversity. Through these retellings, Tripathi and Divakaruni do more than honor their heritage; they show how myth can be reshaped to reflect timeless facets of human existence and confirm its rightful place in the world literary tradition. These writings question the confines of traditional storytelling, demonstrating the connotations of mythology as a living, breathing dialogue that can grow with each telling and continue to inspire and instigate across generations.

LITERATURE REVIEW:

The reinterpretation of myth in fiction is not a recent trend and has appeared in different cultures around the world. But in Indian literature transformation of the mythological narratives with the present themes by contemporarising it has become a very popular trend over the years. The past twenty years or so has witnessed a great deal of retelling and adaptation of folklore, especially in English, giving the genre more space for creativity and for wider appeal. Through this, the third segment will explore baz concepts in the context of the literature review on the function of Indian mythological adaptations in present times and their socio-political and cultural implications.

The rise of Indian English literature as a means of myth retelling is contemporary with the global activity of literature, which now includes myriad voices. The likes of Vikram Seth and Shashi Tharoor have opened the passage for Indian myths to be viewed in more sensitive light. Rukmini Bhaya Nair and Meena Kandasamy have noted that with modern narratives, older ideas about elaborate norms are disrupted and offer fresh perspectives on antiquated myths. In the critiques, context, character development and narrative style all factor into bringing these myths to a relevancy for a modern reader.

Moreover, the whole feminist debate over Indian mythology has grown, giving profit to scholarly impulses. Even in ancient accounts where female characters have a significant presence, scholars have reminded us that retellings over the ages have traditionally left women out of the picture. This empowerment of women is pivotal in Divakaruni's print as well especially where she subverts existing narratives of gender and power in her mythological discourses. Such critical engagement with gender dynamics is unprecedented and provides new windows into the gaze of the figure and its impact on the reader's long-held ideological views of these figures and their places in ontological frameworks.

ANALYSIS OF WORKS:

The Shiva Trilogy by Amish Tripathi

Tripathi gives his own narrative of Shiva in his Shiva Trilogy which humanizes him into a hero caught in the nuances of love, loyalty, and identity. This new retelling shows Shiva more than just a god but the nuance of human Quagmire. It deals with themes around destiny versus free will and how the choices made by characters create their own heaven or hell. This fusion of real history with mythology forms a compelling story tapestry for readers to explore age-old ideas against the very human backdrop of current dilemmas.

What makes the trilogy so great come down to its ability to tell an engaging story, flesh out a complex world and a philosophy that reflects so much of the modern age. Tripathi uses a subtle touch of magic realism that draws the reader into an imaginary but also relatable universe. The integration of the epic together with the quotidian creates a greater depth of moral ambiguity, inviting readers to contemplate their own values and beliefs. Tripathi not only reinvigorates retelling of Hindu mythology stories but also constructs a space for thought by recontextualizing them in paradigms centred on free-will.

The Palace of Illusions by Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni

Divakaruni, however, in The Palace of Illusions uses her imagination to give a long overdue feminist retelling to the Mahabharata through the lens of Draupadi. This act of voicing, of reclaiming agency, is significant in its subversive potential to challenge the patriarchal interpretations that so often colour traditional retellings of the Panchatantra, and to do so by allowing a character whose voice is decidedly absent in the texts to speak. The book brilliantly interlaces Draupadi's mind, feelings, and aspirations and exposes her journey of love, longing, and sexuality while also weaving through the wider epic battles of the larger Mahabharata.

The lyrical prose and the contemplative narrative style of Divakaruni create the impression of intimacy of the reader and Draupadi, making the reader empathize with her. In this portrayal of the story, it shows this well known legend as something human almost, making it relatable and making

the readers think about the roles of gender and society in general. With a general scope of retelling Draupadi's story in modern circumstances, Divakaruni sets forth a narrative supporting the notion that such notions are still central in modern conversation, depicting a genuine experience recognized among women now a day as that of our mythological characters.

CONCLUSION

The beautiful amalgamation of Indian mythology present in writing works by authors such as Amish Tripathi and Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni is the reflection of how these ancient stories are still relevant and can be explored in a modern way. Both authors rejuvenate ancient myths, bringing them to us in an accessible fashion through innovative and brilliant storytelling. These authors exemplify the ways in which mythology can provide a lens for examining perennial issues of identity, agency, and temporality in the human experience.

The enjambments of tradition and its transgression by authors like Tripathi and Divakaruni reflect a growing tendency in literature to return to canonical traditions only to redefine them in such a way that we as readers cannot help but engage with relevant social problems. In closing the distance between the wisdom of the ages and the values of the present, these authors do not just safeguard a cultural inheritance but also prompt the reader into engagement across both time and space. In short, their retelling of Indian mythology proves that the genre is far from being outdated as these stories continue to evolve and remain relevant today with renewed vision, reminding us of their enduring power to unite, enlighten, and create empathy between disparate cultures and eras.

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