



Shiva Trilogy As a Contemporary Mythology

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Abstract : Culture is the characteristics and knowledge of a particular group of people, encompassing language, religion, cuisine, social habits, music and arts amongst many things. Each social group has a distinct culture through which it promotes learning and teaching. In the Indian scenario, the oral culture was the one in prevalence for the most parts of the known ancient history. The mythologies and stories of 'Gods-Demons' was not just a Manichean difference but a deeper understanding of difference. There have been instances where demons in the Indian mythology have been shown as having exemplary characters. The need to read between the lines to understand the cultural heritage is vast the tradition of educating and transforming people to follow a righteous path has been a mainstay of the mythologies; the same has been present in the novels selected (Shiva Trilogy) by Amish Tripathi. The acts of Shiva, and the portrayal of him as a mere mortal is a way to signify that humans could rise to the stature of gods by their deeds.

This paper tries to exhibit the significance of mythology and how it manifests in the contemporary to be relevant by using the texts of Amish Tripathi's "Shiva trilogy".

IndexTerms - Culture, Oral traditions and relevance.

I. INTRODUCTION

Mythology as defined by the oxford dictionary means, "A set of stories or beliefs about a particular person, institution, or situation, especially when exaggerated or fictitious", mythologies are an integral part of a religion and belief system which convey their ideals through story form to captivate the masses and thereby propagate their teaching/philosophy. Mythologies have been a part of historical narratives where few events have been made larger than life of fictionalized. One of the best mythologies in the modern history being that of Marie Antoinette asking people to eat cake when they don't have bread. In the same way the mythology around 'Shiva' and his third eye, his love for dance, his ascetic life, his androgynous form and much more of him have made him as a cult figure in the Hindu religion.

To interpret 'Shiva' in the contemporary space, it's a must to acknowledge what he was represented as, earlier. Shiva, one of the three main deities of the Hindu religion is associated with destruction. But is that the only association about which we learn from the mythologies? No, even in the stories of yore we hear about the attributes which speaks of equality; not just between the genders but also between different entities like human, god, asuras, etc., these were very important for the time where the difference had to be accepted as a way of life rather as one opposing the other.

In the Shiva Trilogy, we see that the character of Shiva retains most of the visual traits as attributed in the mythology, but here rather than glorified as a god with supernatural powers he is picturized as a human. In this way there is no attribution of his actions with that of supernatural power, but rather to his will and his mental faculties. The culture of the people in the novel i.e., Suryavanshi's and Chandravanshi's has been put forth as 'masculine and feminine' respectively. The former as people who live by rule and would never step out of it and the latter as people who are freer in rules and generally disorderly. Both these people would be against each other as they think the other as the wrong doer and to be blamed for the deaths of their respective people, but it would only later be found out that neither of them nor the 'Nagas' were to be blamed, but their own abuse of 'Somaras' which would extend their lifespan.

In the conquest to find an answer and in so, to find solution to the problems faced by the people of the 'Sapth Sindhu' Shiva learns about each of these different people who are just leading their life in a different manner compared to one another. The goal is the same, but the path to reach the goal varies, this alone would be the reason for the people to hate and despise each other. This we see

in relevance even in this present day where people have an air of doubt over people who do not conform to their views. Its through stories we can learn the concept of universal brotherhood and to actually celebrate the difference and to accept it.

In the trilogy the characters of Shiva, Sati, Nandi have been portrayed in such a manner as in accordance with the narration and not changed to contradict the mythologies, Shiva is represented as much as a mortal as any other person, the only special feature of the character being the 'Neelkant'(blue throat), which again is given a reason(him being the benefactor of a medicine being administered at a particular age) than the mythological reason of him consuming the poison(Alahala). Shiva is revered as a saviour in the novels and one who has extraordinary way of thinking and analysing a situation, but later revealed as the preparation which was a training given to him by his uncle to help him in his journey. The plot of the novel is simple with the people failing to accept the difference, which leads to lot of frequent fights and eventual bloodshed, into this situation comes in the protagonist who is an outsider and hence does not have any sort of inclination or favour to one set of people over the other. The story is much as that of Shiva as its about the age, culture and its people; giving a logical explanation to the events and actions the story in the Shiva Trilogy goes onto be a replacement for the earlier mythology by the way it approaches each and every argument and aura around the characters and the events.

A Different Perspective

Superhuman – The god of learning and the who is always dearly remembered with the mythological 'Elephant head' in the Hindu religion is depicted not as a mysterious magical character but rather as a person who has deformity, which looks similar to that of an elephant, this apparent deformity which caused an enlargement of his nose and ears gave this appearance which is popular in the Hindu mythology.

In a similar way, the character of 'Kali' also is showcased as a deformity where she has an extra growth of limbs. Here, the author brings our attention to the case of Naga people; the ones born with deformity because of the abuse of 'somras' by the people of Sapt Sindhu.

Shiva is not just a single character, but is spoken of as a tradition of people who are important from time to time to lead the people from bad towards good by eliminating the corrupt from the world, this idea can be closely equated to the concept of reincarnation of the Hindu mythology, in a similar way the concept of Vasudev and Mahadev also has been explored in this text who aide in the decision making process for the protagonist.

Another important mention which is repeatedly mentioned in the Hindu mythologies is the formidable 'Bramhastra', which is often revered as the absolute weapon, with no way to stop once used., here in this novel too the same has been portrayed as a nuclear weapon than just as an arrow.

Furthermore, the novel also dabs with the idea of radio waves, "This is certainly not a theory. This is a fact. Just like light, which helps you see, there are radio waves to help you hear. While all humans can easily use the properties of light to see, most don't know how to use radio waves to hear. We are dependent on sound waves to hear. Sound waves travel much slower through the air and for much shorter distances. Radio waves travel far and fast, just like light." (The Secret of the Nagas, Pg.110) we see that the author has tried to give the mythology a modern retelling making it believable to the contemporary by using the elements of science and logic than magic realism.

METHODOLOGY

Comparative research in literature involves analyzing and comparing two or more literary texts from different cultural or historical contexts. This type of research is particularly useful for gaining a deeper understanding of the themes, motifs, and literary devices used in different works of literature, as well as for identifying similarities and differences between them. In a comparative literature study, researchers typically select texts that share a common theme or genre, or that are written in a similar time period. They then analyze the texts in depth, examining the narrative structure, character development, symbolism, and other elements that contribute to the literary value of the works.

One of the main benefits of comparative research in literature is that it can provide insights into how cultural and historical contexts influence the creation and reception of literary works. By examining texts from different cultures and time periods, researchers can identify how societal norms, political climates, and other contextual factors impact the themes and messages conveyed in the works.

Moreover, comparative research in literature can help bridge cultural gaps and promote intercultural understanding. Through analyzing and comparing literary texts from different cultures, researchers can identify shared human experiences and values that transcend cultural and linguistic boundaries.

Overall, comparative research in literature is a valuable tool for understanding and appreciating the diversity of literary expression across cultures and time periods. It can help us gain a deeper understanding of the human experience, and promote cross-cultural dialogue and understanding.

CONCLUSION

In the entirety of the gripping tale of Shiva retold in the contemporary with a new perspective, an opportunity is being given to ponder about the relevance of the story in the present time. The Indian culture had always had emphasized on the oral tradition to propagate the teaching and learning's as a way it encourages a particular thought process and way of life. Mythologies of the past spoke about people with supernatural capabilities while the modern take on the same would bring it closer to the realm of understanding and have not in the perspective offers the modern readers a chance to see and understand the legends of Shiva in a new light and to be still awed by the charisma of his figure and actions. With all the above-mentioned attributes, we can conclude that the trilogy can be a modern mythology.

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