



**MYTH, HISTORY AND IDENTITY: A STUDY OF THE MAJOR WORKS OF  
GITHA HARIHARAN  
BRAHMA RUSTAM**

Ph. D. Research Scholar

Department of English, Debargaon, Bodoland University, Kokrajhar, Assam, India



**BRAHMA RUSTAM**

**ABSTRACT**

In contemporary Indian literature ancient myth, legend and history are revisited, revisioned and recast as an answer to the present theoretical demands for overthrowing the patriarchal absolutism, old tradition, misinterpretation and ideological hegemony, and it is claimed for novel representation, reinterpretation and reconstruction of lost identity and dignity of feminist 'other' and postcolonial 'subject'. Contemporary Indian English fictions, identified with different appellations of nationalist, feminist and postcolonial writings, are critiquing the discrimination, marginalisation and violence in terms of gender, caste, creed, race and nationality. The unquestionable human traditions for determining the ways of life, values, faith and morality and myths have been playing vital role in patterning the society, controlling the social orders and defining identity and relation of a particular individual, community and nation or of the world as a whole. These are now subjects to be critiqued, reinterpreted and reconstructed in the age of post-structuralism, post-colonialism and feminism.

The research paper will make a thorough study of 'myth', 'history' and 'identity' specially in Githa Hariharan's works of fiction and in contemporary Indian English fiction in general.

**Keywords:** Feminism, Feminist, discrimination, fiction, gender, identity, ideology, interpretation, myth, patriarchy.

©KY PUBLICATIONS

This research paper endeavours to study the 'myth', 'history', 'ideology' and 'politics of identity' with reference to Githa Hariharan's major fictional works. It will make a short analysis of contemporary major Indian writings in English in postcolonial perspective to frame a background of my study. The study mainly focuses on subversive feminist writings and their struggle to re-explore, revision, recast and reinterpret some of androcentric cultural texts in feminist perspective. Subversive interpretations of myth and history in feminist and postcolonial perspectives emphasize on unfolding patriarchal conditioning and ideological

subjugation in Hariharan's fictional works; imperial conditioning and disaster of colonialism in some major works of contemporary Indian English novelists. Mythopoetic tradition of patriarchal society involves a hidden politics of maintaining subject/object, master/subordinate, centre/margin relations for patriarchal mechanism, socio-cultural patterning and creating a situation of women conditioning for subjugation. Religious ideology is always associated with this dominant tradition of androcentric *mythopoesis*. Indian mythopoesis created the great *Sita-Savitri* tradition which has got more prominence than *Ganga-Amba* tradition, an

example of woman rebellion against man, in Indian society. Hariharan has created some challenging woman characters who are silently struggling against ideological conditioning, against the burden of traditionally prescribed variety of roles, a domestic monotonousness and numerous appellations. They break the patriarchal defined social bond and go away in search of self and liberty. She has used feminist politics of rewriting to subvert the androcentric texts, the texts which suppressed the real history of female experiences of life and world and to create new gynocentric texts for true representation of women experience of the world.

A confluence of myth and history of a nation or a people blurs the distinction between the two at particular point. Mythology shows different stages of historical development of social and cultural tradition or civilization of a people. Many scholars argue that myth is the history that has attained a character of timelessness or universalism in course of time and it received through the perpetual process of cultural translation, revision, recast and reinterpretation. Myth is the history of the primitive age or primitive literature which evolved with an unconscious attempt to give an account of the civilization or a world view and it was replaced by modern history. Myths apparently derive their universal significance from the way in which they try to reconstruct an original event or explain some fact about human nature and its worldly or cosmic contents. J. M. Levi provides an ethnographic view on the difference between the two, "Both the social science and the humanities inherited from nineteenth-century evolutionism curious wisdom: namely, that "history" is the product and possession of literate societies, while "myth" is the records of the past among the illiterate societies, especially among the non-western and so called "primitive" societies." (Levi 605-619)

Different scholars define myth in different ways at different time and space. Actually, myth is of multidimensional significations and functions. Many scholars observe myth as an allegory, sign, interpreter, narrative mode, metaphor, truth, or belief. It plays the role of signifier and rhetorical figure. Forward of *The Poetics of Myth* reads "metaphorical link is observed between mythical

signifier and social signified." (Meletinsky xi) William G. Doty's introductory note to *Myth: A Handbook*, reads, "Myth is regarded variously across a wide spectrum of opinions spanning several centuries." (Doty 1) As a prototype of literature, myth is an example of the first assertion of the creative faculty of human mind. It is the product of 'primitive unconsciousness'. Meletinsky says, "Literature, especially in its narrative form, is the offspring of two folklore genres, the tale and heroic epic. Over the centuries, many tales and monumental epics have either continued to evolve as independent forms or have emerged under the guise of literary works." (Meletinsky 259) Myth is a mode of explanation of the metaphysical concerns of how things are the way they are. It is an exploration of the man, nature and its universal forces and their harmonization. It is the result of the first human imagination, fantasy; an effort to interpret the incomprehensibility of life and nature and of the attempt to explain and justify human existence on the earth and inquisitive mind of the past to know the origin of the different universal elements.

Contemporary Indian English literature has produced many globally acclaimed works. Indian writing in English is deeply rooted in Indian mythologies, legends and history. Most of the Indian writers in English of all genres deploy Indian myths in diverse ways-as genre, narrative mode, metaphor, meaning and interpreter. Beginning from the first generation of Indian writers in English to the contemporary writers, Raja Rao to Vikram Seth, all of them use *mythopoetic* technique in their writings. Raja Rao's *Kanthapura* is mythification of modern Indian history of Freedom Movement, Gandhian<sup>1</sup> or Gandhism as it involves *mythopoeic* spirit in the process of narration.

Amitav Ghosh, writer of historical fiction, concerns with common people's history of predicaments which is always different in perspective to the established official history but it contains more facts and reality, emotion and sentiment of the people for causing that history, than the official history and it does not have any

---

<sup>1</sup> Mahatma Gandhi's philosophy and teaching, his ideologies-Swadeshi, non-violence, truthfulness, fearlessness, trusteeship economy etc.

boundary as it is universal in nature. He explores history through his characters and visualizes it on the prism of characters' experiences. Amish Tripathy is quite different from his contemporary writers like Tharoor and Rushdie in his treatment of myths and history as he subverted *mythopoesis* in his narratives. Rather, he has developed historical outlook over the ancient myths for he finds historicity in them. Rushdie's grand work of fiction *Midnight's Children* is a fusion of myth and reality, god and man, mortal and immortal, history and fantasy, reason and unreason. Indian fiction in English uses Indian mythical figures for their symbolic or metaphorical significance. It engages *mythopoetic* narrative technique to explore the colonial and postcolonial history of modern India in order to excavate the truth of this nation through an exploration of individual struggle for identity. Another remarkable Indian English work of fiction, a result of mythification of Indian modern history in association with traditional Indian mythology, is Shashi Tharoor's *The Great Indian Novel* which is retelling the saga of Indian struggle for independence wrapping it into a mythical frame of story of *Mahabharata*. Here lies confluence of myth and history.

Githa Hariharan<sup>2</sup>, an Indian writer and professional editor, is the first woman in India to write her surname for her children after a long time fight in Mumbai High Court against the Hindu Minority and Guardianship Act. in 1995. She is the author of many brilliant literary works like *Almost Home* (2010), *Fugitive Histories* (2009), *When Dreams Travel* (2008), *In Times of Siege* (2003), *The Ghosts of Vasu Master* (1998), *The Art of Dying* (1993) (short story) and *The Thousand Faces of Night* (1992). She is exploring the pathetic condition of the female existence in patriarchy, her pain and anxiety; her struggle for survival, self, desire, choice, freedom or private space and identity. Her fictional world represents various categories of women who are observing silent protest against the monotonous life encircled with the domestic sphere. They differ

in their status, caste, class and religion but are linked by the same set of life experiences. Being the victims of the same patriarchal mechanism they are struggling to move away from this system and make a space for self.

The second phase of feminist criticism accuses the male versions of the world view. Feminist critical discourses are very critical about the ancient scriptures, cultural and ideological texts for the feminists allege these texts as prejudiced and phalocentric. These texts clearly show exclusion of woman participation and inadequacy of interpretation/representation of femininity or female experiences of life and world. Androcentric epistemology has done injustice to women by giving patriarchal orientation in every aspect of knowledge production and now combative feminists question it, criticise and subvert it in entirety. This is why feminists condemn the traditional way of knowledge production and its methodology of study. If I put it in Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's critical term, "epistemic violence" (Spivak 2115), it would be more justified. Because from ancient classical texts to the modern literary and theoretical texts, all this text has misinterpreted and misrepresented or suppressed the accounts of the genuine female experiences of the world. In a sense the whole idea of knowledge creation involves gender "externalization-alienation". (Spivak 497) In her essay "Feminism and Critical Theory", Spivak severely attacks Marxism and Freud's psychoanalysis for their theoretical limitations; generalization and scanty of empiricism. She says "I would risk saying that their descriptions of world and self are based on inadequate evidence." (Spivak 496). Simone de Beauvoir, in her feminist classic *The Second Sex*, accuses the theorists for their phalocentric or gender bias theoretical formulation and interpretation without proper investigation of empirical data which have great impact on human thoughts and behaviour, framing mindset and attitude. To her philosophers and theorists ranging from humanities to psychology, anthropology to biology are responsible for creating different myths on women and negative attitude towards them. These traditional attitude and myths have been playing role in maintaining irreciprocal relation

<sup>2</sup> Githa Hariharan (born in 1954, Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu, India) is one of the most eminent writer and Delhi based editor. Till now she has published four novels and two short story collections.

between man and woman. Beauvoir's *The Second Sex* is giving the strongest challenge against all the existing theories, religious ideologies and literature with stern criticisms and thus it demands for rethinking, reformulation, rewriting and reinterpretation of these human discourses. Their texts became the perennial mechanisms of patriarchy as they contain numerous gender bias interpretations and propositions. If one critically examines the modern culture, religion and society, definitely, those texts are responsible for the traditional conceptualization of woman as mere object of sex, weaker sex, freakish in nature, dirty, morally and spiritually low, less intellectual, object of love, and inferior or subservient to man. Traditional outlook causes to look women not as individual but as community. Thus culturally constructed term 'woman' receives multiple interpretations and meanings. Women have got a position of 'otherness' in patriarchy and thus left neglected, unfocused, unexplored and unhonoured. Myths become the essential parts of those texts and they turn to be the strong vehicles of carrying those ideas, and beliefs; being the tools of dissemination and transmission of that tradition from generation to generation. In this way myths have been ideal means of communicating the past human ideology and living traditions in a society as they are often revived, referred, reinterpreted, reused, revisited and revised for different purposes because many generations have sharpened their tongues in retelling them in their own way. Patriarchal ideological tradition has developed a vast gulf between man and woman by sanctioning double status of superiority and inferiority in the same domain.

Many religions of the world have provided debasing interpretation of woman. Myths become the derivative sources of religious ideologies and philosophies. Mythopoeics appears to be a mythifying politics of patriarchy for perpetuating patriarchal mechanism and maintaining its values. The *Bible* defines woman as inferior to man, it holds woman responsible for the fall of the mankind. This scripture says that woman is subordinate to man because she is made of man. It says that first Adam was created, then Eve out of Him and thus it was He

who gave her name, Eve. The Biblical myths show woman as inferior to man and it instructs her just to follow man as guardian or lord. The *Bible* gives a stern instruction, "wives, submit yourselves to your husbands as to the Lord." (Ephesians 22) St. Paul declares, women should be silent during the Church meetings. They are not to take part in the discussion, for they subordinate to men as the scriptures also declares. If they have any questions to ask, let them ask their husbands at home, for it is improper for women to express their opinion in Church meetings." (1 Corinthians 14:34-35) Muslim scripture, *Koran*, also interprets woman as inferior to man, an object of sex and gratification. Her role, *Koran* says, is to gratify man with her modesty, beauty, sexuality and progeny. Moreover, *Koran* provides rigorous code of women.

Many Indian ideological books like *Manusmriti*, *Vedas*, *Purananas* and epics which are called *sastras* in Sanskrit have defined woman in derogatory manner and given inferior position and status. In Hindu society, woman is called *nari* or *stri* means low, inferior, impure, subordinate, while 'man' is called *purush* means high, lord, superior, pure, master, powerful, creative and so on. In Hindu cultural world *Manu* is considered as the first Human being who prescribes principles to woman. *Manusmriti* deduces rules for women in India and thus it offers secondary position to female folks considering them as inferior to men, fragile, dependent, and thus it designs a conditioning for female subjugation through the perpetuation of mythologies generation to generation. Indu Swami observes, "In the Ramayana, Sita's role is solely seen or estimated in relation to her husband, Ram. Her sole purpose in life is to follow the footsteps of her husband. Sita's image as mother is glorified and she is repeatedly referred to as Mata-Sita, but as wife she is subject to the whims of her husband, who abandons her only because of the derogatory remarks of a commoner." (Swami 3)

Mythifying, gendering, idealizing, othering and conditioning have been a long cultural practice of patriarchy. Mythopoeic tradition of patriarchal society involves a hidden agenda of maintaining subject/object, master/subordinate, centre/margin relationship between man and woman. Many

human discourses are concerned with myths of women. In her *The Beauty Myth*, Naomi Wolf severely criticises 'feminine beauty' as masculine desired value. Mythopetics involves a process of mythification which is practiced for phalocentric mechanism, socio-cultural patterning and creating a situation of women conditioning. Religious ideology is a complete framework of forming socio-cultural tradition of human society which is always associated with this serious women subjugation. Indian mythopoesis created the great *Sita-Savitri* tradition, based on patriarchal value of chastity, modesty, female identity and female roles are always defined by these two myths. In scriptures and myths, woman is depicted either as Goddess or sub-human creator, never as a complete human being. In one hand, she has been described as an object of reverence or worship; on the other hand, she is treated as an object of sexual gratification and considered to be man's property, masculine desired object or mere sex. There is a great discrepancy between idealized concept of woman in Indian myths and scriptures and her actual situation in life. On the surface she enjoys a very high status as she is known as Devi (Goddess of power), but in real life she is marginalized, harassed, oppressed and tortured in various ways.

Feminist writers have made their best effort to deconstruct this discriminating gender representation in literature, theoretical interpretation and they advocate for critiquing and rewriting those texts. A conflict is seen among feminists over the identity politics. Aggressive American feminists reject the patriarchal created term 'woman'. But Simone de Beauvoir, a French feminist, accepts this term for claiming separate identity because she understands it that a woman cannot be a man. She suggests the women to participate in action and represent the world from their point of view. They must come out of patriarchy for this identity. What a woman thinks and experiences of life should be reflected in any form of discourse. In her feminist classic *The Second Sex* Simone de Beauvoir advocates for reciprocal relationship between man and woman. The book is a strong critique of theorists and writers including Freud, Marx, Lawrence, Montherlant whom she

blames for providing incomplete definition and interpretation of woman, misrepresentation and encouraging the growth of different myths on woman which have reduced her to weaker sex, other sex, a desired object of man. This is why Hariharan has used deconstructive form of writing as feminist politics to subvert the androcentric texts dealing with patriarchal ideology and create new gynocentric texts for real representation of women's experience of the world. Deconstructive form of writing is concerned with production of parody, pastiche, collage, aleatory writing etc. Further, she has adopted feminist innovation of writing technique, *Écriture féminine* (Hélène Cixous). Her writing is presenting a world dealing with the feminine mystique of domesticity, subjugation and alienation, and against which women are silently revolting. But she is giving a new orientation to it for providing her narratives with female point of view. Her focus is on the real experiences of women, how they perceive the life and world, how they dream and envisage their world. So, her fictions as a reader usually finds are concerned with women's emancipation, imagination, dreams and visions. A family in patriarchy which is ruled by man is not a safe place but a prison or trap for woman. It is for her a social predicament created by marriage bond as here she is marginalized, exploited, alienated and oppressed. A family in India is a domain where lord-worshiper, master-servant, superior-inferior relation remains always. So, it seems to be a place of woman segregation. Hariharan's famous characters, Sita, Parbatamma, Mayamma, Devi, Shahryar, Shahrzada and Dilshad are segregated in the home and palace for they have certain limitation of movement, lack of choice and freedom even though they live with men in the same space.

Hariharan is showing her audacious spirit of resistance to deconstruct the great mythical tradition of male chauvinism which has got its basis in these ideological and cultural texts that are looked as the sources of moral and cultural ethics. They are apparently masculine aesthetics. In fact, they are the forces to control the entire female role in the whole sphere of life. In her writing she is basically revisiting myths and history, tradition and heritage and she has focused on *rediscovery*

(Showalter xv) of female experiences of the world. Her narrative involves Hélène Cixous' *Écriture féminine* as one reads female body's sensibility and impulse in her fictions. In some of her fictions woman body is narrativized to expose the real experiences of female body to oppose/alternate the patriarchal narrative technique. She is giving more emphasis on mother-daughter, sister-sister, and woman-woman relations than man-woman, father-mother, father-son and father-daughter relations usually found in androtexts. In her two most famous novels, *The Thousand Faces of Night (TFN)* and *When Dreams Travel (WDT)* she is retelling the ancient myths and fables, legendary stories of Arab and India which have been accepted for many years without any question and apprehension but now they are being apprehended and interrogated, and thus they are posited to a vulnerable position. Her writing has been an interrogation of ancient myths and history, and thus she has created a dialectic process as she is raising hundred of questions and arguments.

Hariharan's *TFN* has revisited and recast many ancient Indian myths like Gandhari, Amba, Ambika, Ambalika, Damyanthi, Sita and they all are reinterpreted from feminist point of view. Another famous work, *WDT* is work of metafiction or a parody of the world famous Arabian legendary story of Shahryar and Saharzada, a frame tale, *The One Thousand and One Nights* or *Arabian Nights (OTON* or *AN)* which is originally concerned with demeaning ideas of misogyny, woman adultery, cuckoldry, women's struggle and male sexuality. She has taken up metafiction as a tool to erase those culturally deep rooted wretched ideas on woman. Her new version of this age-old narrative is throwing insight into the female heroism, visions, dreams, emancipation and imagination. Feminist critics criticise the prevailing concepts of woman chastity, ideal wife, wifehood, womanhood as patriarchal values. Cultural texts propagated the conceptualization of female body as dirty, subjected to death and decay, and also freakish in nature. This patriarchal tradition has created an idea of the two different worlds in the same space: world of man and world of woman; one is engaged with domestic functions and other with the external functions of

adventure. With this attitude children are brought up, trained and treated. Thus an ideological conditioning is created which paves a way for a tradition of woman marginalization and subjugation. *Santunu-Ganga, Sita-Savitri, Bihula-Lakindar, Bheesma-Amba* traditions exhibit the women sacrifice their lives for the benefit of men and humanity. Indian Hindu tradition denies equal justice to women in all aspects of life by positing them in an ideological trap.

Githa Hariharan is writing back to the world wide popular legendary tale, the frame story, *AN* or *OTON*. She has changed the narrative pattern, motif, outlook, vision and politics of the source text seeking for re-exploration of the off-scene and marginalized background and characters, especially female characters and she is trying to showcase woman talent and heroism by giving the main role of narrator to Shahrzad, Duniyazad and Dilshad. The hypertext is concerned with new vision and politics which has given a new pattern and orientation to it for its extensive movement of narrative and examination of hypotext. Her novel *WDT* consists of two parts; the first chapter of part I is a parody of the original text telling the visible scene of the frame tale, while the rest of the novel is a metafiction as it explores the marginalized background and characters, tells untold stories and provides criticism of the prejudiced text, *AN*. Original text is all about one thousand and one nights' entertainment by Shahryar, an Arabian emperor, a pharaoh and his brother Shahzaman. And on the other hand it is about the one thousand and one nights' struggle of two poor sisters, Shahrzad and Duniyazad, wonderful story tellers, who risked their lives to save the lives of other women in the kingdom, who were indeed real heroines without history. Shahrzad's story of her off-stage struggle, plights, pain and anxiety have been retold by her accomplice, Duniyazad who witnessed both the realities, on-stage and off-stage of grant narrative session in royal court for the entirety. *WDT* has given a detail account of the suppressed history of the city of Shahabad, a middle point of meeting of east and west. Hundreds of slave girls and women belonging to different categories like attendants, maid, dancer, singer, poet, philosopher, teacher, story teller were brought to

the kingdom from various parts of world, especially from India, Europe and Africa, and they were used and exploited in the court. This repressed history of marginalized women is reconstructed by Duniyazad and when she tries to retrospect Shahrzad's lost history in Shahabad, her marvellous sister saviour of women in the city, saviour of progeny in the royal city, redeemer of king Shahryar from his sin. Indeed, she is the rescuer of the city. Hariharan's *WDT* has been a strong feminist critique of the traditional concept of women as a mere lustful traitor or cuckold, a child bearing machine, an object of male desire, an object of use and throw, established by *AN*, that has led the patriarchal society to demean, disrespect and devalue them in the society. To challenge this established ideological text Hariharan uses her innovative, visionary and imaginary power to give a new vibrant life, hopes and aspiration to the marginalized female characters for their new challenge and showcase their talent and creativity. She has reimagined the past and uses dreams as tools to reconstruct the lost reality.

She has created some challenging woman characters who are silently struggling against ideological conditioning, against the burden of traditionally prescribed variety of roles, a domestic monotonousness, and appellations and they break the social bond defined by the patriarchal norms and thus go away in search of self and liberty. In Hariharan's *TFN* various Hindu myths are highlighted and reinterpreted. In the novel a young girl educated in America still deemed to be a baby in Mayamma's eyes, is brought back to India and is married to Mahesh, an unsuitable husband, a reasonable stranger, and she is trained to be an Indian woman, wife, mother and acquaint with the various prescribed roles with reference to female figures of the past, Gandhari, Amba, Ambika, Ambalika, Damayanthi, Sita etc. Even though Devi was initially conscious about her "self" and "desire," later she was dragged into the old order of things; and she easily accepts her situation when she loses her choice and then finally she decides to set out for her free land, the only liberate place for woman, mother's womb (home). She derives inspiration from mythical figure, Amba, who being treated as an outcast finally turns into a rebellious one and takes

revenge on her enemies. It has created an impulse of inquisitive mind and rebellion in Devi. Santunu-Ganga myth has also been a source of inspiration as she reads it paradoxically- Ganga deserts Santunu when she loses her 'choice' of life.

Every female character of the novel is victim of patriarchal mechanism. Sita, Devi's mother, has a great talent of playing veena which remains unused and unhonoured after her marriage as nobody recognises it at her in-law's family. She finds Devi as her alternative to *veena*, but she is too young to understand her emotion and sentiment and then she sends her (Devi) to America for higher education giving some choice/promises but she pulls her back to her and throws her into the social predicament to maintain the tradition by pushing her to social marriage to an indifferent and loveless Hindu young man of business who belongs to middle class family. Sita appears here as stern director of traditional cultural practice and finally she seems to understand her mistakes as she once again collects her broken veena and starts playing it to call her Devi, lesbian lover for the last union between mother and daughter, lover and beloved. Her daughter considers her "speaking spinx who directs useless life so well." (Hariharan 95) Devi being in-between, modern and tradition, east and west cultural tradition cannot be any where, cannot play any role of woman and at end she goes to her mother's house for her own choice when she cannot give anything to her promises. She leaves her husband (Mahesh), finds new lover (Gopal) and turns toward her mother, beloved, protector and controller for the last security, the only secured place for a daughter, after completing a journey from husband's home to mother's womb (home). She has not got real love, respect and right attitude from any of the men she is associated. Mayamma is a waste of patriarchal atavism who is simply rejected for her barrenness. She is good for nothing as she does not provide any progeny.

Patriarchal tradition is deeply rooted in human psychology and tightly knitted in cultural system. It is going on and on in the same way. Going away from this existing order is not easy as feminist struggle for equality and liberty is often entangled with futility. Putting question against this tradition

is considered as a taboo in the opinion of fundamentalism and essentialism. Even women are involved in this mechanism as practitioners and supporters for which women's emancipation has been problematized even more. Sita in *TFN* is playing the patriarchal parental role when she brings Devi back to home and gets her married to Mahesh which is actually putting to the traditional way of life. Here marriage is looked as a patriarchal bond by which man attains rights to use women as his desired object, as servant and subordinate. This social bond prevents her enjoying own choice and liberty. Mala in *Fugitive History (FH)* is another character, lone after her husband's death, who cannot live her own life. She is in patriarchal system as she simply lives with her association with past experiences, memories, different past photographs painted by her husband. Thus she lives amidst her past, she revisits past family history, past memory and experiences. A family trunk appears as metaphor of the history which contains family album and sketch book by a dead artist, Asad, Mala's husband who painted about almost all the family members and near and dear ones, all relatives which recount all the events and stories of their lives. When Mala finds herself alone at her empty house after the marriage of her son and daughter and after the death of her husband opens his long time untouched trunk bulging with old albums, diaries and sketch book and thus she dissolved to the past, recall and meet all her close people. She can no longer detach from them in her loneliness and alienation.

Moreover, Hariharan is accusing ancient historiography of its ethical violence by subsidizing the female participation and heroism. She has given a grim warning about the future that might again endanger women's position and identity. However, her works have been the strong critiques of the phalocentric historiography and ideological traditions which did crucial injustice to the subaltern history of women, a large subordinate group, fifty percent of total world population, by showing apathy to their talent, creativity and heroic action and thus caused their marginalisation. She is retelling the myths with irony and aggression in order to express her antagonism to the conventional

meaning and interpretation of woman. Some of her fictions are citable example of successful reconstruction of the unrecognized history of the past through the artistic imagination which can revive the historical dialectic, an intellectual dialogue, and it can also help in forming community of opinions that is essential for reformation of mindset, reconciliation and better realization to correspond the changing outlook of human life and society. Thus it will help to establish a reciprocal relationship between man and woman.

In today's identity conscious liberal society patriarchal tradition, value system and aestheticity have been deliberately subverted or interrogated by the feminist thinkers, theorists and authors through their writings, dialogue and debates. They are challenging to reconstruct a new tradition and society where there will be no issue of gender discrimination and subordination. Hariharan is presenting women in challenge against their conditioning and predicaments to get own choice and self. It is advocated to break conventional relation and maintain a reciprocal relationship between man and woman. An effort has been made either to remove the difference between subject and object or to establish a world without object. Hence, in her early works of fiction Hariharan uses myth and history as fields of feminist warfare, for debate and she appeals for renegotiation between man and woman.

#### WORKS CITED

- Aki, Kader. *Mythology and Reality in Githa Hariharan's "Thousand Faces of Night"*. Norderstedt Germany: Druck und Bindung: Books on Demand GmbH, 2002. English.
- Balachandran, K. *Critical Responses to Indian Writing in English*. New Delhi: Sarup & Sons, 2004. English.
- Barry, Peter. *Beginning Theory An Introduction to Literary and Cultural Theory*. New York: Manchester University Press, 2002.
- Beauvoir, Simone de. *The Second Sex*. London: Vintage Books, 1997. English.
- Bhowmik, Pratusha. "Parsis and Partition: Reading Bapsi Sdhwa's Ice-Candi-Man in the Context." *Transcript, Journal of Literature and Cultural Studies Vol. no. 1 Annual October 2013 (2013)*: 86.

- Chakranarayan, Mohini. *Style Studies in Anita Desai*. New Delhi: Atlantic, 2000.
- Das, Kamal. "The Sun Cat." Paranjape, Makarand. *Indian Poetry in English*. Delhi: Macmillan, 2009. 143.
- Deshpande, Shashi. *That Long Silence*. New Delhi: Penguin Books, 1989.
- Devi, P. Aruna. "Myth in R. K. Narayan's The Man-Eater of Malgudi." Balachandran, K. *Critical Responses to Indian Writing in English*. New Delhi: Sarup and Sons, (Devi, P. Aruna. *Critical Responses to Indian Writing in English*, K. Balachandran p.213). 213. English.
- Doty, William G. *Myth A Handbook*. Westport, Connecticut, London: Greenwood Press, 2004. English.
- Ghosh, Mahua. "Studies in Women Writers in English." Kundu, Mohit K. Ray & Rama. *Studies in Women Writers in English*. New Delhi: Atlantic, 2005. 113.
- Guha, Ranajit. "On Some Aspects of the Historiography of Colonial India." Guha, Ranajit. *Subaltern Studies I Writing on South Asian History and Society*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1982. 1.
- Guha, Ranajit. "The Prose of Counter Insurgency." Guha, Ranajit. *Subaltern Studies II Writing on South Asian History and Society*. New Delhi: University Press, 1983. 1.
- Hariharan, Githa. *In Time of Siege*. New Delhi: Penguin Books, 2003.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *The Art of Dying*. New Delhi: Penguin Books, 1993.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *The Thousand Faces of Night*. New Delhi: Penguin Books, 1992.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *When Dreams Travel*. New Delhi: Penguin Books, 2008.
- Kundu, Mohit K. Ray & Rama. *Studies in Women Writers in English*. New Delhi: Atlantic, 2005.
- Levi, J. M. "Myth and History Reconsidered: Archaeological Implication of Tzotzil-Maya Mythology." *American Antiquity* (1988): 605-619. English.
- Majumdar, Saikat. "Mapping the Post-colonial Situation in Anita Desai's Fasting, Feasting." Shukla, Sheobhushan & Shukla, Anu. *Aspects of Contemporary Post/Colonial Literature*. New Delhi: Sarup & Sons, 2005. 93.
- Meletinsky, Eleazar M. *The Poetics of Myth*. New York & London: Routledge, 2000. English.
- Naik, M. K. *A History of Indian English Literature*. Kolkata: Sahitya Academi, 1982. English.
- Prasad, G. J. V. "Twickling Tara: The Angst of the Family." Multani, Angelie. *Mahesh Dattani's Plays Critical Perspectives*. New Delhi: Pencraft International, 2007. 134.
- Rajimwale, Dr. Sharad. "Kamal Das- Need for Reassessment." Bhatnagar, Monmohan K. *Feminist English Literature*. New Delhi: Atlantic, 2003. 4.
- Rao, K. N. Joshi & B. Shyamalal. *Studies in Indo-English Literature*. Bareilly: Prakash Book Depot, 2000.
- Rao, Raja. *Kanthapura*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1989. English.
- Sankaran, Chitra. "Narrative to Survive: Ethics and Aesthetics in Githa Hariharan' When Dreams Travel." *Asiatic Vol. 2 No. 2* December 2008: 66.
- Satchidanandan, ed. K. *Myth in Contemporary Indian Literature*. New Delhi: Sahitya Academi, 2003. English.
- Sinha, B. R. Agarwal & M. P. *Major Trends in The Post-Independence Indian English Fiction*. New Delhi: Atlantic, 2003.
- Sona, Indu. "The Women Question: Perspectives and Challenges." Sona, ed. Indu. *The Women Question in the Contemporary Writings in English*. New Delhi: Sarup Book Publisher Pvt. Ltd., 2010. 1-21. English.
- Spivak, Gayatri Chakrabarty. "Feminism and Critical Theory." Wood, David Lodge & Nigel. *Modern Criticism and Theory: A Reader*. New Delhi: Person India, 2013. 496. English.
- Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty. "A Critique of Postcolonial Reason (Can The Subaltern Speak?)." Leitch, Vincent B. & et al. *The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism* (ed). London: W.W. Norton and Company, 2010. 2115. English.
- Tandon, Neeru. *Anita Desai and Her Fictional World*. New Delhi: Atlantic, 2008.
- Wolf, Naomi. *The Beauty Myth*. London: Vintage Book, 1990. English.