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THE USE OF MYTH IN GITA HARIHARAN'S *THE THOUSAND FACES OF NIGHT*

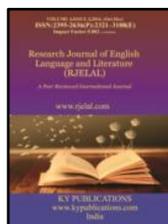
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ABSTRACT

Mythologies of different cultures speak about the hero's journey both inwardly and outwardly which lead to spiritual growth. Numerous mythological stories depict the journey of self, both inwardly and outwardly. Myths preserve that journey of ultimate destiny of every individual which reveals timeless truth. The hero departs from this world and goes through the wilderness of unconscious and returns to the society of being strong and self-aware in spirit. This research paper describes the set of concepts known as "The Hero's Journey" drawn from the depth of psychology of Carl G.Jung and mythic studies of Joseph Campbell. It tries to relate those ideas to contemporary story telling which evolve from our innermost selves and our most distant past. Joseph Campbell described the hero's journey as monomyth in his book *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* (1949). Hero's journey is a hand book of life which gives instructions in the art of being human. It is not an invention but an observation. It recognizes a set of principles that govern the conduct of life and the world of storytelling. This research paper deals about how monomyth, most widely known as the underlying plot structure incorporated into Gita Hariharan's *The Thousand Faces of Night*.

Key words: Monomyth, Archetype, Departure, Initiation, Return

Life will always be a mystery, society will always be "evil, sorrowful and inequitable" (Campbell, *Myths* 104), and the energy of the universe will always flow through our hearts, minds and bodies while we are alive. Consequently, for us to live peacefully on earth, each of us must be born anew by taking the hero's journey, and as Joseph Campbell has shown, this has been the case throughout time as evidenced metaphorically and symbolically by all myths, religions and folk tales. We must depart, wander through the wilderness of our unconscious, and return to society self-aware and strong in spirit. The process can be called maturation, salvation, or quest.

In *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, Campbell discovers "astonishingly little variation in the morphology of the adventure" (36), explicating just how fundamentally similar life is for all of us, regardless of gender, race, creed, or station. In this research paper the hero's journey is modernized and secularized by showing how little difference there is between great king's journey and common man like Devi, the protagonist in Gita Hari Haran's *The Thousand Faces of Night* journey. As Campbell states, everyone should make the quest, for no one need be selected by a Supreme Being or anyone else, and each will benefit both society and themselves by doing so. Taking the journey today, more than sixty years since Campbell's book was published, is more challenging because of the tremendous influence of

science and technology, which has given a false sense of security regarding the nature of humanity. The many essential dualities of life, such as good and evil or love and hate, endure; thus, humans have the free will to create peace, destruction, or some combination of the two. The choice rests entirely on whether humans sufficiently hold innate selfishness in check in the service of humanity, thereby preserving the planet for future generations.

Gita Hariharan's *The Thousand Faces of Night* is a debut novel which interweaves the fabled myths and legends of India with a young woman's search for self, exploring such universal themes as freedom, independence and desire. It is a story Devi and explores the quest of Devi to find her true self identity. Though Devi is an ordinary young woman, she listens the call of her unconscious and liberates herself from the shackles of false ideal womanhood. By employing the Campbell's monomyth as overall plot structure, Hariharan rescues her characters in the novel from suffering, sacrifice, injustice, and disappointment. Finally Devi becomes unbroken, undefeated and strong. The novel narrates more than thousand facets of women in India who still have no better existence than night. In this novel Hariharan traces the battle of Devi in her relationship with men and society, problems and inner tensions that a woman had to face in her life. Githa Hariharan explores the experiences of women who entrapped in male power structures. Self-realization and self-knowledge help these women to either attain liberation or reconciliation. Devi's own story is complimented by the stories of four other important women: her grandmother, her mother, her mother-in-law and her servant. All these women, each in her own way, have been both a victim and a survivor. Their lives have been scarred by suffering, sacrifice, injustice, and disappointment and yet they are undefeated, unbroken and strong. These women walked on the tight rope and struggled for balance. They represent three generations, and more than thousand facets of women in India who still have no better existence than night.

Devi is introduced in the ORDINARY WORLD, as she is doing her MS in the US. By the relationship and proposal of marriage with Dan she

receives the CALL TO ADVENTURE to enter next stage of life. But she is RELUCTANT to take the further step that both of them are culturally different or REFUSE THE CALL. After returning India Devi is encouraged by a MENTOR her mother Sita to CROSS THE FIRST THRESHOLD with the ritual of marriage with Mahesh and enter the Special World where her identity as ideal wife and ideal daughter-in-law. There she encounters TESTS, ALLIES, AND ENEMIES. Mahesh's cold behavior and indifferent attitude TEST her patience to uphold their relationship and she finds ALLIES in the form of Baba, her servant Mayamma and her mother-in-law Parvathamma. She APPROACHES THE INMOST CAVE, crossing a second threshold when she loses her father-in-law. She comes out of Baba's idea of the ideal womanhood. When Mahesh blames her childlessness, she is utterly dejected and she endures the ORDEAL. She decides to get rid of meaningless marriage; she gets freedom as REWARD and is pursued on THE ROAD BACK to her Ordinary World. She crosses the third threshold when she ends relationship with Gopal; she experiences a RESURRECTION. She is transformed by this experience. She RETURNS WITH freedom as THE ELIXIR, a boon to benefit the thousand facets of women.

Campbell defines the monomyth as that single "consciously controlled" pattern most widely exhibited in the world's folk tales, myths, and religious fables (255 – 56). Its morphology is, in broad outline, that of the quest. The hero is called to an adventure, crosses the threshold to an unknown world to endure tests and trials, and usually returns with a boon that benefits his fellows (36 – 38). Although agreeing with Carl Jung that "the changes rung on the simple scale of the monomyth defy description" (246), Campbell's analysis fills in this outline with an anatomy of the archetypal hero and descriptions of those specific incidents likely to occur at each stage of his adventure. The product of a virgin or special birth (297 – 314), the hero may have been exiled or orphaned, may be seeking his father, and may triumph over pretenders as the true son (318 – 34). His mother may be assumed into heaven or crowned a queen (119 – 20). He possesses exceptional gifts, and the world he

inhabits suffers symbolic deficiencies (37). He does not fear death, and he is destined to make the world spiritually significant and humankind comprehensible to itself (388). If a warrior, he will change the status quo (334 – 41). If a lover, his triumph may be symbolized by a woman and accomplishing the impossible task may lead him to the bridal bed (342 – 45). If a tyrant or ruler, his search for the father will lead to the invisible unknown from which he will return as a lawgiver (345 – 49). If a world-redeemer, he will learn that he and the father are one (349 – 54). If a saint or mystic, he will transcend life and myth to enter an inexpressible realm beyond forms (354 – 55). The adventure's "separation" or "departure stage" entails up to five incidents: receiving a "Call to Adventure" in the guise of a blunder that reveals an unknown world or the appearance of a herald character from that world; refusing the call; receiving supernatural aid; crossing a magical threshold that leads to a sphere of rebirth; and being swallowed in "The Belly of the Whale," a descent into the unknown symbolizing death and resurrection that may involve an underground journey symbolic of a descent into hell (36). The "initiation stage" includes up to six incidents: numerous tests endured in "The Road of Trials," including the hero's assimilation of his opposite, shadow, or unsuspected self; meeting, and perhaps marrying, a mother-goddess, who may take the form of the "good mother," the "bad mother," or "The Lady of the House of Sleep"; encountering a temptress; atonement with the father; apotheosis; and acquiring a boon (36, 110 – 11). The "return stage" also contains up to six incidents: refusing to return; magical flight from the unknown world; rescue from outside the unknown world; re-crossing the threshold; attaining the power to cross the threshold freely; and the hero's realization that he is the vehicle of the cosmic cycle of change (37).

The stages of the Hero's Journey can be traced in all kinds of stories, not just those that feature "heroic" physical action and adventure. The protagonist of every story is the hero of a journey, even if the path leads only into his own mind or into the realm of relationships. The way stations of the Hero's Journey emerge naturally even when the

writer is unaware of them, but some knowledge of this most ancient guide to storytelling is useful in identifying problems and telling better stories. Christopher Volger condensed these seventeen stages into twelve stages in his book *The Writer's Journey*. Here in observing the heroic journey Christopher Volger's condensed model of 12 stages of heroic journey is followed illustrating each by utilizing the experiences of protagonist of the novel, Gita Hariharan's *The Thousand Faces of Night*.

The Ordinary World of most heroes is a static but unstable condition. The seeds of change and growth are planted, and it takes only a little new energy to germinate them. Githa Hariharan's debut novel, *The Thousand Faces of Night* articulates the protagonist of the novel, Devi's quest for a self-identity. Coming from South Indian Brahmin family, Devi goes to the U.S. on a scholarship to do her master's. She does not pursue a career after her post-graduation from USA. By the relationship and proposal of marriage with her black American friend Dan she receives the **call to adventure** to enter next stage of life. But she refuses his offer of marriage due to her ambivalence to American culture. She cannot take the plunge and cannot cut herself off from her ancient moorings. She is also aware that her enjoyment with Dan is "... necessarily dependent on her inability to conceive of a life with him." (Hariharan, 6) So when marriage is suggested by him, she pretends to be shocked, to selfishly spare herself of guilt. She is highly insensitive in treating him as a fantasy object and plaything.

Although the Hero may be eager to accept the quest, at this stage she will have fears that need overcoming. Second thoughts or even deep personal doubts as to whether or not she is up to the challenge. When this happens, the Hero will **refuse the call** and as a result may suffer somehow. Her reluctance is, however, due to the fact that Dan and she are very different in terms of their beliefs, culture and traditions. At one point, when Devi goes to meet Dan's family, she decides to shed her inhibitions, her burden of Indianness. But she is unable to do so. In forming a bond of friendship both make efforts to bridge these differences; but she also knows that these differences would always prevent them from union. She confesses that her

education and stay in America have instilled a sense of liberation in her. Devi turns to men either for security or to affirm her value. The tug of the mother country and of her widowed mother drags her back into the stifling and stultifying world of the upper-class Tamil Brahmin Community in Madras. Unable to adjust with ambivalent American experience she returns to live with her mother. She reasons out for her return to India thus:

Amma's letters brought with them an unspoken message of loneliness, poignant in its quiet dignity ... But the image of her alone by the sea teased me like a magnet ... That she might need me, my hesitant, self-doubting presence, was intoxicating (Hariharan 16).

Devi regards her mother very highly and also out of her true and keen love for her, she comes back to India. The special bond between Devi and her mother, and the mother's dreams of a bright future for her daughter is something common in the Indian family system.

At this crucial turning point where the Hero desperately needs guidance he meets a **mentor** figure who gives him something she needs. In this novel Devi's mentor is her widowed mother. Sita leads Devi to the altar of marriage. She agrees to a negotiated marriage like a good Indian girl. Devi's broad-mindedness, education and experiences challenge so many blind beliefs, but she sheds her desires to fulfill her mother's desire and to uphold the family honour. Devi's grandmother (though she is not alive) and her father-in-law Baba stories from mythology play an important role in Devi's quest. Her servant Mayamma and her mother-in-law Parvathamma help Devi in the adventure of Devi through their experiences in their life.

The Hero is now ready to act upon his call to adventure and truly begin her quest, whether it is physical, spiritual or emotional. She may go willingly or he may be pushed, but either way he finally **crosses the threshold** between the world he is familiar with and that which she is not. Devi enters unknown world by getting marriage with Mahesh. Mahesh, even before their marriage, openly tells Devi about his nature of work, his tours and informs her that his father and maidservant will be there and

he will be lonely sometimes. Devi too thinks from that vantage point and decides that she could cope with this problem. In fact she admires Mahesh's and admits is honesty and saying he needs a women who will be a wife and mother. Devi crosses the first threshold with the ritual of marriage with Mahesh and enter the Special World where her identity as ideal wife and ideal daughter-in-law.

Now comes the most challenging phase of the hero's journey, **initiation**, which involves dealing with the dark side of life to find self-awareness and achieve peace of mind. The first stage is the road of trials, which means wrestling with one's demons. This phase of the journey challenges the adventurer's deepest held beliefs and most cherished notions of life. Once across the First Threshold, the hero naturally encounters new challenges and **Tests, makes Allies and Enemies**, and begins to learn the rules of the Special World. In her new world Devi tries to fit herself in the role of a wife and daughter-in law just as her mother did years ago. When she entered her in-laws house another significant story told her by her grandma deals with a beautiful girl who married a snake etched in her memory as a story throughout her life. A childless couple prays to God for a child and in return a snake is born to them .When the snake grew up, the parents planned a marriage. He walked to the distant lands in search of a bride. When the host learns that he is in search of a girl for his venom tongued son who is in the shape of a snake, he readily offered his gorgeous daughter. The girl on seeing the snake as her husband, she wholeheartedly accepted her lot, saying "A girl is given only once in Marriage" (Hariharan, 33). One night the serpent came into her room and spent a night with her. Next morning when she woke up, surprisingly she found a handsome young man on her bed. The story delineates the Hindu concept of rebirth. She has some expectations from her husband, Mahesh to support and understand her on emotional grounds but her expectations are never realized. She is impressed by his frankness when he talks about his expectation of marriage. But very soon she realizes that there were no heroines in his life, only wives and mothers. It hit her that if Dan is too un-Indian, Mahesh is too Indian. Her life in fact

is ripe for disillusionment when she walks into an arranged marriage, at once alien and familiar. She has all along thrived on illusions of womanhood. Nothing is happened like in a young beautiful girl's story. Her husband didn't change as in the story.

Devi's husband, Mahesh, goes in long-tours for weeks together on business. More than his absence, it is his coldness that leaves Devi "utterly dejected". Mahesh has everything a young lady can dream of an executive job, a palatial house in Bangalore and enormous riches. She is provided with everything but she finds that something is lacking in her life. His cold and indifferent attitude irks her. Devi feels cheated and slighted. Devoid of the much needed emotional sustenance which, earlier, she used to draw from her mother, she feels that marriage is a torture and it hangs like a knife above her neck:

I am still a novice in the more subtle means of torture. I thought the knife would plunge in, slit, tear, rip across my neck, and let the blood gush, ...The games it plays with me are ignominious ... The heart I have prepared so well for its demands remains untouched, unsought for. (Hariharan 54)

After marrying Mahesh, Devi meets her father-in-law, Baba and the caretaker-cum-cook in that home, Mayamma. The emotional and mental incompatibility with Mahesh brings her close to Baba. Her relationship with Baba becomes stronger. He was a Sanskrit professor, an intellectual man. He narrates some stories about womanhood, and the wifely vows and duties in a household. Devi compares his stories with that of her granny. She avers: "her stories are a prelude to my womanhood an initiation into its subterranean possibilities" (Hariharan, 51). While analysing Baba's stories Devi says: "Always have for their centre-point an exacting touchstone for a woman, a wife". (Hariharan, 51) According to Mahesh, marriage is a necessity, a social obligation that has to be fulfilled and it is the wife's duty to keep her husband happy by fulfilling his desires of the flesh. At a crucial moment of introspection, Devi, reflects on her life as wife:

This then is marriage, the end of ends, two or three brief encounters a month when bodies stutter together in a lazy,

inarticulate lust. Two weeks a month when the shadowy stranger who casually strips me of my name, snaps his fingers and demands a smiling handmaiden. And the rest? It is waiting, all over again, for life to begin, or to end and begin again. My education has left me unprepared for the vast, yawning middle chapters of my womanhood. (Hariharan, 54)

At this point Devi's grandmother's stories from Indian mythology make her strong. She remembers the story Amba from Mahabharata. Prince Bheesma goes to a swayamvara of three beautiful princesses. Amba, Ambika and Ambalika. Amba the eldest chose King Salwa and garlanded him. But suddenly Bheeshma kidnapped all the three princesses and took them to his step-mother. When they came to know that Amba had already married, they let her go to King Salwa. Unfortunately Salwa refused to accept her and insulted her. When the hero enters that fearful place he will cross the second major threshold. Heroes often pause at the gate to prepare, plan, and outwit the villain's guards. This the phase of the Approach. Approach covers all the preparations for **entering the Inmost Cave** and confronting death or supreme danger. Devi has nothing to do at home. She spends her time wandering in the house, talking to Baba, listening to the stories of Mayamma, the servant maid, trying her hand at painting and being the perfect hostess. She says in a total boredom that assails her; "I spend hours every afternoon, opening dusty rooms and cockroach ridden cupboards." (Hariharan, 59) After Baba's departure for New York to visit his daughter, Devi is alone in the house with Mayamma and Baba's orphaned books. Very soon, he dies in New York and Devi is engulfed by an awesome loneliness and a wave of uselessness. She feels more alone after Baba's death than when her father died in Africa while she was in the U.S. Devi sees that the power of choice of her mother-in-law is very different from that of her mother, Sita. Parvati's spiritual choice is, in a sense, negation of motherhood. She asserts herself by shuffling aside her familial role. Her son, Mahesh, sees nothing but rejection and treachery in her peculiar quest. A mother seeking space for herself outside home is so

unimaginable and treacherous a deed for him that his mother becomes a taboo topic for him. Surprisingly negation of motherhood is followed by negation of wifeness as Devi also rejects the role assigned to her and shirks from her responsibilities.

The Ordeal in myths signifies the death of the ego. The hero is now fully part of the cosmos, dead to the old, limited vision of things and reborn into a new consciousness of connections. The old boundaries of the Self have been transcended or annihilated. Being a romantic individual, is married to a very matter-of-fact type of young man, Mahesh, which is amply demonstrated by this statement, when his wife had asked a question, "Why did you marry me?" (Hariharan, 54), his reply was, "Whatever people get married for ... Thank God, we Indians are not obsessed with love. (Hariharan, 54-55) She is defenseless against Mahesh's supreme confidence and superciliousness. Mahesh seems to be insensitive to the possibility of Devi possessing individuality and a personality that needs to express itself in a role away from that of a wife. When Devi wants to apply for the post of a research assistant, he discourages her. "What can you do?" Mahesh asked, like a ruthless interviewer stripping away the inessential ... "You need at least one more degree for that, he said. And what will you do when the baby comes?" (Hariharan, 64-65).

Mahesh's self-complacency receives a blow when the after fatherhood eludes him. To him, Devi does not seem to crave for motherhood. When he awaits news of her pregnancy, her repeated nonchalant response is, "no news". She remains "... all bones and flat stomach." (Hariharan, 86) The fact that he is fine and she is the one to consult a gynecologist does not help his ego. A woman without child becomes utterly powerless and can be used to tilt the scales of power. It helps Devi to restore her self-esteem.

Devi, however, is least perturbed by her inability to conceive. Once the novelty of the marriage wanes, she becomes restless. Mahesh's insensitive attitude makes her realize the trap she is in. When he tries to establish his unquestionable authority over her, she repels. She even derives satisfaction in not being able to carry children for Mahesh. She considers it a powerful weapon to be

hurled against him. Childlessness, she feels, is the price she has to pay as penance for her marriage with Mahesh. Devi finds a route for rebellion when Mahesh says, "I want you to have my baby." (Hariharan, 74) The rejection of his sperm is the unconscious but important step to the assertion of herself. He may possess her body but cannot direct and control the functions of it. Her failure to become a mother becomes a crucial factor in her development as an individual.

In some ways, the **return** to society, the final phase of the hero's journey, is just as difficult if not more so than deciding to start the search, for society does not often embrace those who return and are now self-aware and comfortable with who they are. The hero now takes possession of the treasure she has come seeking, her Reward. It might be a special weapon like a magic sword, or a token like the Grail or some elixir which can heal the wounded land. Sometimes the "sword" is knowledge and experience that leads to greater understanding and reconciliation with hostile forces. A hero may be granted a new insight or understanding of a mystery as her **Reward**. She may see through a deception. Seizing the Sword can be a moment of clarity. This moment of clarity comes in the life of Devi when self realization dawns on her and Mahesh; the chauvinist is mainly responsible for her sorrow. She liberates herself from the pressures of feminine role-play to attain a state of free and creative individuality.

The Road Back may be a brief moment or an elaborate sequence of events. Almost every story needs a moment to acknowledge the hero's resolve to finish, and provide her with necessary motivation to return home with the elixir despite the temptations of the Special World and the trials that remain ahead. After coming out of Mahesh's life she is attracted towards Gopal, a Hindusthani classical singer and an occasional visitor to her neighbourhood. Gopal's music tempts and seduces her when she is becoming desperate due to her husband's neglect. Devi's penance takes multiple forms of response from self-pity to revenge and from self-inflicted suffering to a strong sense of injustice. She feels suffocated in the atmosphere and plans definite means of escape. She has her own inhibitions about open action. The realization of her

helplessness to take drastic action makes her prone to taking quick revenge. "I write elaborate scenarios in my mind for the last act – humiliating Mahesh, saying all the things we have left unsaid. I do something bloody, final, a mark of protest worthy of the heroines I grew up with." (Hariharan, 95)

The act of walking out on Mahesh provides substance to her life. Condemning her husband to a lonely life without wife or child and trampling on the marital vows, Devi elopes with Gopal. Her decision to walk out on Mahesh and elope with Gopal can be viewed as her unwillingness to live like Mayamma or Sita, who are the victims of domestic violence in one form or the other. She does not want to end up as a self-sacrificial wife.

In **Resurrection** phase the hero is transformed by these moments of death-and-rebirth, and is able to return to ordinary life reborn as a new being. Devi realizes that Gopal is a beautiful despot, who cannot see beyond either the passion of a raga or the various masks of her discrete lives. She comes to know that she would not be happy with him. It is an act of penance, of protest against Mahesh and against her own self. Gopal is a flirt with aspirations for an aristocratic way of life. She realizes that the euphoria is fading fast, and understands that she occupies only a peripheral status in his life and that their inner selves are not united. Initially, Devi's relationship with Gopal, is warm and affectionate, and to some extent he succeeds in giving Devi what Mahesh has not. But the moment he lifts his mask, Devi discerns that Gopal is no better than Mahesh. She reflects, "I have made very few choices ... But I was too well-prepared, and not prepared at all. America, Jacaranda Road, Mahesh, Gopal. I have run away from all my trials ..." (Hariharan, 137) Life with Gopal does not afford her the space she craves for. She also gets disillusioned with him and moves once again. She returns to her mother in search of a more steadfast relationship, with an offer of love. Her decision to live with Gopal is hers alone and she sneaks out as "... a common little adulteress." (Hariharan, 95) She hopes "I will soar high on the crest of Gopal's wave of ragas..." (Hariharan, 95) But very soon life with Gopal begins to seem like that "...

a kite that had snapped free of its string." (Hariharan, 129)

Devi finds her life with Gopal like that of a kite. As months went by "... the images his music evoked in her were no longer so uplifting, or even neutral." (Hariharan, 129) She observes a winking glance from an accompanist attempting to label her. She finds this displeasing and unwanted. She locates herself, "In her isolated corner, an outsider forever on the fringes of a less ambivalent identity..." (Hariharan, 135) Devi does not find much difference between Mahesh and Gopal. Both of them take their jobs to their hearts and so her presence or absence would make no difference to either of them. Devi finally realizes that, "I was always greedy for good fortune. Foolish girl. I dived into the water ... I found that perfect hyacinth. But as I hung on to it with all my strength, it dragged me down into muddy, violet swamp." (Hariharan, 112)

The hero Returns to the Ordinary World, but the journey is meaningless unless she brings back some **Elixir**, treasure, or lesson from the Special World. Sometimes the elixir is treasure won on the quest, but it may be love, freedom, wisdom, or the knowledge that the Special World exists and can be survived. When her expectations about Gopal become awry, she shows even greater determination in leaving Gopal also. Gopal's self-centeredness forces Devi to make what seems a final choice, to return to her mother to start life anew. The world that she wants to experience is like the rain blessed garden "... lush in spite of its sand choked roots (Hariharan 139) "a life in all its multi-faceted myriad coloured possibilities. She has to experience the happiness that can come from oneself ... for whatever is dependent on others is misery." (Hariharan 68) When she hears the faint sounds of veena, she feels as if her mother welcomes her into her house. Now Devi knows that the battle has begun once again and that she should be true to herself. Hariharan expresses the significance of marriage relationship through her characters in the novel that it is unbreakable when it is neither mere habit nor convenience. It should not be based on biological or sexual need. When marriage relationship is based on love which is unconditional the identities are fused, there is a

hope for peaceful life. Love is fresh, , creative, new, not mere gratification, not mere habit. It is unconditional. When marriage becomes a permanent source of pleasure, a habit without understanding, without love, and a man or a woman is forced to live in that state; both of them live in isolation pursuing their own interests. Then the relation deteriorates and joy of life is gone out of them. Such a relationship is not a relationship at all: it is a mutually self-enclosing process of psychological, biological and economic necessity, and the obvious result is conflict, misery, nagging, possessive fear, jealousy, and so on. Such relationship produces ugly civilization.

Devi identifies herself with Durga, the goddess who is the destroyer of evil. She says, "I lived a secret life of my own; I became a woman warrior, a heroine. I was Devi. I rode a tiger, and cut off evil, magical demon's heads. (Hariharan, 41) In Hindu mythology, Devi, which simply means the 'Goddess', the spouse of Siva, unites both the personalities – the ferocious and the sublime. Whether beneficent or cruel, she alone has an independent personality of her own. As Sakti, she is regarded as the motivating energy of the universe without which even Siva is powerless to act. By giving the image of Devi, Hariharan reflects the essence of relationship between wife and husband as in Ardhanarishwara- balance of male and female energies, which is the basis of all Creation. Every Man is in the process, of experiencing Shiva through Shakti. Every Woman is in the process, of experiencing Shakti through Shiva. A Man is a Man, because he does not know what it is to be a Woman. A Woman is a Woman, because she does not know what it is to be a Man. That's why everyone needs a Consort//Partner/Spouse, to aid us in experiencing the essence of our innate being. So we get to experience our deepest selves, through the mind, body and soul of another person. But when one transcends all the opposites, a Man experiences the Woman in Him, and a Woman experiences the man in Her. Both are the parts of undivided matrix. They merge themselves in the androgynous Ardhanarishwara, and only then one's spiritual journey is truly complete.

But when this process fails, wives are degraded in the society Hariharan finds evaluation of the ferocious and awe-inspiring image of Kritya from Hindu mythology. Devi says : "I read about a Kritya, a ferocious woman who haunts and destroys the house in which women are insulted ... Each age has its Kritya ... each household shelters a Kritya." (Hariharan, 69-70) Thus the outworn order has to be destroyed giving place to a new one.

The Thousand Faces of Night is one of the most beautiful novels and powerful tale that was awarded the Commonwealth Prize for the best first novel, among other reasons, not because it merely borrows the monomyth's superficial plot structure, but because it likewise incorporates the monomyth's theme of transcendence. It develops this theme by fantastically elaborating the central death-and-rebirth motif that reinforces this theme in the monomyth itself while similarly replicating the monomyth's fractal pattern-within-pattern internal structure—which is also the structure of that matrix of thought, proceeding through transcendence, that leads to enlightenment and that the monomyth symbolizes—in its own internal structures of disguises-within-disguises, agendas-within-agendas, and reasons-within-reasons.

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