

Reaffirming Mythology Rediscovering Roots –A Comparative Study of Myth and Tradition in Ashwin Sanghi Chanakya's Chant and Ashok Banker's Gods of War

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ARTICLE DETAILS

Article History

Published Online: 20 January 2019

Keywords

Chanakya's chant, Gods of War, tradition, myth, etc

ABSTRACT

The final couple of years saw an unprecedented boom in Indian English Fiction. Ashwin Sanghi and Ashok Banker are actually a few very popular precursors who reintroduced Indian mythology and history to the contemporary Indian audience. While these authors revisited Indian mythology and tweaked the famous stories from the Mahabharata and the Ramayana to appease the modern rationales and their many ideologies and perspectives. Within this paper we show the yester years as faithfully as he actually could while only spicing up the events to separate the historical monotone.

1. Introduction

Indian mythology has always been a favorite design for freelance writers in India. Be it pre-Independence and post, early past and mythology has constantly been moulded to match the taste of the reading nation. It regained the favor of its particularly during the colonial times when the familiarity with the misconceptions and legends came across as a crucial tool to mobilize the masses against the foreign rulers. Ever since then retellings have been a part of the Indian literary canon the most prominent of probably the earliest revisionist works being that of Raja Rao in which we experience a fusion of Puranic myths and Sthala Puranas (localised legends). and myths). Nevertheless, it's vital that you note here that even as the nation struggled under the yoke of colonialism, a pretty Hindu picture of India was being propagated. A nation which had been secular without understanding the significance of the phrase had become pro Hindu over the course of the struggle. A really apparent reason to this's we started accepting ourselves as the British saw us - a Hindu state. For them, any and every Indian was a Hindu, that's, it was the nationality of the individuals living in the sub continent rather than a religion which was followed by the vast majority of the population. Slowly the thought of "being Hindu" became the centre of every thought. The largely secular existence was threatened. An additional impetus to the Hindu impression was provided by the growth of revisionist works that set about to appear in the literary scene even after independence. The tales attributed to mythology, nonetheless, has no perfectly unanimous record and are generally learnt through the compilation of religious preaching and oral narratives. Hinduism, a commonly practiced philosophy in India, contributes to a significant selection mythological tales with an assortment of conjunctures within the Indian mind. Mythologist Devdutt Pattanaik, in *Myth=Mithya Decoding Hindu Mythology*, analyzes the benefits of such Hindu myths in Indian lives and products the untruthfulness of misconceptions as "truth being seen through a frame of reference" Local retellings of Indian mythology continued to prevail in vernacular literature. Shivaji Savant's *Mritunjay* (1974) - a Marathi retelling from the perspective of Karnan and other marginalized characters, M. T Vasudevan Nair's *Randamoozham* (1984) another retelling of Mahabharata from the perspective of Bhīma are actually a number of initial

examples of the revisionist works that happened in the post independence years. The benefit of these works could be due to the point that they had been translated into numerous different regional languages such as Hindi and English and are actually carried on to be read even today.

2. Ashwin Sanghi Chanakya's Chant

Aswin Sanghi's *Chanakya's Chant* (2010) the activities begin with the ringtone of mobiles and cell phone, while Pandit Gangasagar Mishra, one of the key character in his death bed longing to pick up the news of Chandini as Prime Minister. Though there aren't any period markers, time markers, in the 2nd plot of contemporary narrative of "present day" one could calculate and picture that the contemporary historical narrative starts from Gangasagar's birth year 1929. Though the second narrative represents the events of current day, the temporality of the narrative isn't comprised of a single year, a month, or maybe one day, though the narrative is actually distributed over a century. The narrative line in this section is actually non-linear. The narrative fictional time is actually multilinear. The time of narration is actually 2010. The beginning and end of the novel emphasis on the temporality of high tech, software culture of Indian political history Then the narrative moves to recent past of Gangasagar's life through flashback technique. Gangasagar has been referred to as a pupil shortly after which he's joining with Agarwalji in the company of his. He learns from Agarwalji his fabrication and cunningness of accounts from Minium. The time marker, which provides link to actual time past events is actually World War II. Every action, place, as well as temporality discussed in the current day narrative technique may be paralleled to the events, temporality, place, actions, and time - space of Chanakya. It's as although Chanakya's time is actually relived in the 20 first century. The historical characters and plots, their longing and betrayal which occurred in the early past appear to take place today. In this particular line Katinka Ridderbos says, "In a cyclic universe, each event which lies in the past of the current moment also lies in the future" (two). The political action, corruption, fighting for strength and all dirties of politics of Chanakya's period repeat the previous incidents in the present affairs as the story develops. History repeats itself in the present as it's in the past. The objective of this chapter isn't to render exactly how Ashwin

Sanghi offers one to one correspondence of sequence of incidents in the novel but rather to present sense of time which is actually sensed while reading the historical narrative of Chanakya's time. The historical narrative of Chanakya's time is actually referred to "About 2300 years ago" in each chapter which itself reminds readers to be prepared to shift oneself to the early past. Some other than that, there's no time marker or maybe years, ages of characters are actually provided in the narrative. The temporality of Chandragupta Maurya's empire is actually hinted when Mohanlal and Gangasagar go to Patna. Mohanlal points out from the aircraft, "Pataliputra was the capital of Chandragupta Maurya's massive empire two thousand three hundred years before. Tough to imagine, provided the pathetic status of Patna, eh?" (CC twenty eight) The temporality and location of Patna is actually described worst as compared to the descriptions of Mauryan Empire, which may or perhaps may not be genuine, though history tells about the greatness of Mauryan Empire. Taking the historical narrative in its face value the existing state of Patna has lost its towering and majestic character that once ruled the world. Additionally, it reveals the very poor maintenance by the supporters till date. When Gangasagar and Mohanlal bale out from the aircraft, Gangasagar curses everyone saying, "I am going to die surrounded by two thousand three hundred old bones. Even in case they learn the body of mine afterwards they will know I am just another relic of an early civilization" (CC twenty nine). Whether Gangasagar had said it unknowingly or knowingly he was planning to be another relic by finding the granite stone of Chanakya. The previous time has engulfed him by Chanakya's brain, chant, and time which is actually gonna be acquired by him a bit later on in the exact same spot in the future time of his. He discovers the inscription that is recited by him a handful of times. This historical chant by the kingmaker forms a driving force in fulfilling the wish of Suvasini, the lover of Chanakya in the existing context by Chandinigupta as modern Suvasini. Translating the chant Gangasagar's teacher says, "It's the final recognition of female power".

3. Ashok Banker's God of War

Ashok Banker's Gods of War is actually an anti war novel that often borrows thematic elements from Philip Pullman's science fantasy His Dark Materials trilogy. The novel follows 5 people from 5 different parallel universes "only a tiny proportion of an immediate apart in the ringaround-the-sun parallax continuity" (Banker, 2009a, p. 50). These 5 people are as different as cheese and chalk, but travel together with Ganesha to the conclusion of time and space to combat the ultimate evil. Santosh is actually a ten-year-old from a Mumbai slum, Salim is actually a socialist trader from Birmingham, Ruth is actually a ship welder from New Jersey, and Yoshi and Akechi are actually Japanese twins. These 5 people resist assimilation by the Oort, a hyper intelligent, pandimensional entity which is actually harvesting worlds across the space time continuum. Oort can't compute exactly how these people resisted assimilation, as well as deals with this particular challenge by quarantining their respective worlds outside the known boundaries of the multiversity. These 5 are actually brought together by Ganesha, one of the most worshipped gods in the Hindu pantheon, in an attempt to combat the forces of darkness. The team travels with Ganesha to Lokaloka, the area

between worlds, and sees countless beings from across space time gathering to experience a cataclysmic event, a sight which amazes, terrifies, and shocks the travellers. Before they are able to come to terms with what's taking place around them, Ganesha is actually assassinated. They run for the lives of theirs and suddenly come across the New York Police Department (N2YPD), which polices the whole development, and the novel finishes before these 5 join an all out war for the presence of truth as we understand it. Gods of War, with its subject matter and style of narration, manages to instill a "sense of wonder" in the audience of its, which could be why the content also resists serious commentary from the perspective of the viewer. Based on Istvan Csicsery-Ronay,

People expect it to offer a rigorous experience of being converted from the routine to the imaginary worlds and suggestions that exceed the usual and the usual. They expect to feel as in case they're seeing phenomena beyond normal limits of perception and thought that folks haven't been able to experience before, or perhaps maybe even to imagine. (2008, p.146)

This may explain how and why Banker brings religion into SF; the responses elicited by phenomena which exceed the typical limits of perception among the characters and audience alike is clearly a mark of wonder. The way Banker describes gods, journeys to other worlds, the physicality of theirs, as well as inhabitants is actually intended to evoke not only wonder, a feeling of not merely colliding individuals, worlds, mythologies, and perspectives, but also ruptures in reality itself.

4. Myth and Tradition in Ashwin Sanghi Chanakya's Chant and Ashok Banker's Gods of War

Shashi Tharoor, at the book launch of the Chanakya's Chant in New Delhi, stated that the latest spate of publications of such novels is actually refreshing as they're in a "voice dipped into the lived reality of our country's myths and experiences, legends and history which truly matters to India." The very fact that myths and legends are actually equated to "lived" history becomes problematic. In such an equation the "past" gets to be a breeding ground for new ideologies and concepts hence becoming a device in the hands of political parties. Political parties in India have been milking this untapped asset from as early as the late 1980's. Jonathan Fox calls this tapping into ancient roots 'primordialism', that's, using the religious and culturally embedded issues in identity organizations as a way to attain energy. Religious identity becomes applicable in politics today since it was related yesterday. (Fox,30). The utilization of the Bharati fantasy has worked in favour of political parties since it's these texts which cater to the 'metropolitan Hindutva' (Manisha Basu). The 'metropolitan Hindutva' strives to be a pan India phenomena by employing the English language to champion a Sanskrit culture. The understanding amongst the youth or maybe the reading public in general about the functions of politics, the promotion of the novel in the digital platforms, particularly through the latest phenomena of releasing a book trailer played a pivotal role in the good results of Chanakya's Chant in particular. The different strategies of familiarization within and without the narrative commissioned by authors as Sanghi, Neelakantan and Tripathi makes revisiting history and mythology an exhilarating experience as the people are actually hooked to the sexy plot. As a consequence of the

familiarization which is actually produced a link type is actually created between the new Indian middle class that's the main customer of this narrative and the Golden (Hindu) Age. The people start identifying with past and so much so they see themselves as its protectors while still being a channel of modernity. Because of the substantial focus on the Hindu epic the thought of 'Indianess' comes across mostly as being Hindu. This sensation of belongingness is what that will get exploited. It's actually a déjà vu that the Right Wing party came into power once again in 2014 after the publication of Hindu myth and legend based novels just as it came into power in 2004 after the airing of the tele-series of Ramanand Sagar. Though it could be argued they didn't play an overtly significant role in the development of the new government, the fact can't be negated that they might have aided in the reaffirmation of the ardent Hindutva politics which was being propagated.

Banker's argument does make sense in these times when genres are more and more being fused. I, nonetheless, see this text as SF as a result of its novum - extra terrestrial intervention from outer space, which, in this situation, appears to be a thing on the lines of sentient nano technology (the Oort cloud). The novum of Gods of War features nanotech esque bugs - reminiscent of Scott Derrickson's *The Day the Earth Stood Still* (2008) - that cover this planet in a heavy blanket of dark clouds and type in every human being, rendering him or maybe her incapable of specific thought. The entire public goes immobile in a trance - humming. Additionally, this affects not only the environment of ours though everybody on all Earths across multiple planes and dimensions (except for a select few); all people gather together at particular specified locations, as in case under remote control. To be able to fight this sudden disruption of daily life, Ganesha comes to Earth and recruits 5 civilians from around the world to gain the "War of the Worlds", the supreme fight between the forces of light and also the scourge of darkness - that rages on throughout alternate realities and multiple dimensions. The critique of machtpolitik in the present world order also discovers a strong reference in the book with the N2YPD. The figure of the U.S. as a worldwide

policeman is actually manifested in how the N2YPD polices not simply the entire city, or maybe the globe, but most of creation itself. N2YPD serves as Banker's satirical take on American foreign policy, as well as illustrates just how he's not comfortable with the interventionist strategy used by the US. Nevertheless, the N2YPD isn't completely American - however, there are actually marked differences between this business and also U.S. which are apparent in the way these police officers think. It's this anti war, syncretic message radiating from the text which makes Gods of War a strong reaction to the times in which it was written. The novel emerges as a crucial dystopia, particularly in its efforts to caution a la a parable in case humanity remains on the present path of its, then earth's future is actually in peril. As Banker mentions numerous times, he's not so secure with superpowers imposing the will of theirs on others and proliferating violence in the title of the war against terror. He's together important of using terrorism as a tool of political change and also emphasizes humanism (at the cost of organized religion) as a resolution to the sociopolitical ramifications of a unipolar world. Gods of War exhorts folks to unite and try to get similarities in variations rather compared to vice versa.

5. Conclusion

Although there's a need to have a strong national identity, we should be cautious not to be ensnared by the religious factions which threaten to mar the strength of ours by creating communal rifts. The past and its representations are actually essential in the discourse of Hindu nationalists, for the future they envision is actually grounded in the story of fight or glory in the past as well as the political abuse of the past is actually essential to the identity of theirs. It's these representations which manifest themselves in the novels that we come across today, as well as Chanakya's Chant becomes simply an instance of the same. The familiarization which will help these novels to change from fantasy fiction to historical fiction shouldn't be mistaken to produce a historical identity.

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