

Manifestation of Myth in Amish Tripathi's

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Abstract: Amish Tripathi has become an unassailable fictionist in Indian Writing in English. The basis of his modern story telling is rooted in the mythological tradition. He has the skill of Reverse Engineering and Re-inventing the traditional childhood myths. In Amish Tripathi's Ram-Scion of Ikshvaku Ram's ideal kingdom which includes fighting for justice, treating all as equal, protecting the weak and most of all the dharma is above all is depicted in a mythical platform. This present paper entitled: Manifestation of myth in Amish Tripathi's Ram – Scion of Ikshvaku focuses on how Amish has utilised the mythical elements to craft an epic story of a tortured and ostracized mythical hero Ram. The universal appeal of myths is the application and effective usage of elements that are typical or common across most myths. The manifestation of myths includes the elements which help to develop and communicate the theme of a myth.

Keywords: Ideal Kingdom, Manifestation, Myth, Ostracize, Reverse Engineering, Tradition.

1. Introduction

Amish Tripathi, India's first Literary Pop Star, has become a trend setter in Indian Writing in English. He has taken pains to mix his enormous research of the ancient Indic Texts with history, mythology, ethical theory and of course technology and management science to blend modernity with myth in a simple and powerful way. The idea of fate and its overwhelming power are the central themes in many myths. Neither Gods nor human beings seem able to escape fate, despite many attempts to do so. Common themes in myths include the struggle between the forces of good and evil, the aspiration of a hero or the origin of some aspect of the natural world. This holds very true to Amish Tripathi's novels too. P.Lal, Indian critic, points out the immense cultural significance of myth:

What should an Indian writer in English, or a creative writer in any language, be writing about if not love and hate, and war and pride, and peace? And will he find the complexities of the feelings and activities if not in the myth - world? The Gods and the Goddesses are not out there, separated permanently from us; nor or the anti-Gods or Rakshashas. They populate the Earth: to know them is really to know ourselves. It is not the myth that has failed us so much as we have failed the myth. (17, 18)

Although the usage of myths in Amish's novels is often considered to be accounts of events that have not happened, many historians consider that myths can also be accounts of actual events that have become highly imbued with symbolic meaning, or that have been transformed, shifted in time or place, or even reversed. One way of conceptualizing this process is to view myths as lying at the far end of a continuum

ranging from a dispassionate account to legendary occurrence to mythical status. Here, it is necessary to specify the term manifestation in the present context. A manifestation is something that is put into our physical reality through thoughts, feelings and beliefs. This means that whatever we focus on is what we are bringing into our reality.

2. Manifestation of Myth

Devdutt Pattanaik, a celebrated mythologist, terms mythology as an inevitable part of society. He presented his views in an interview with Namya Sinha published under the title 'No Society can exist without myth' that:

No society can exist without myth; Humans cannot function without myths because myth creates nations of right and wrong, good and bad, heaven and hell, rights and duties. Marriages, monogamy, peace, salvation, non-violence are all concepts based on myth; they don't exist in nature. All religions, all nations, all tribes, all ideologies, all ways of life are based on myth . . . only a world without humans is a world without myths.

Amish Tripathi's Ram - Scion of Ikshvaku is the manifestation of Puranic myths of:

1. The possibility of triumph of good over evil.
2. Moral order establishes itself and
3. Everything on earth is pre-ordained.

The author has taken incalculable efforts to reproduce a mythical novel but not deviating from the characteristics of a classical myth. The symbols, themes, patterns, the plot and the characterization are extraordinary to exhibit the manifestation of myth. The clever ploy of myth is explicit. The interconnections are thoroughly mythical and of extraordinary imagination. The following discloses the manifestation of myth in his novel vividly.

A. The archetypal approach

One of the characteristics of a myth is unpredictable in nature. There are few limited set of recurrent actions. The mighty Raavan's tactical Karachapa war, Ram's birth on exact midday, prevailing tension between the two Maharishis, Vashishta's mysterious meeting with a hooded Naga, the handling of the gimmick of Vishwamitra tactfully by Ram by sending the Asuras to Pariha to live with the Devas, politically fabricated swayamwar, using the Daivi astra are a few noteworthy mentions.

B. Foundation of a mythical story

The multifaceted aspect of myth decides the future of Ram very early. Ram's birth was in an inauspicious time which was

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believed by Dashrath a disaster for his empire, Sapt Sindhu. A Lankan trader Raavan's strategic war defeated him. Kaikeyi rescued Dashrath from the battle field and obtained an opportunity to possess two boons and she used them at the perfect time. Raavan became a monopoly. The Sapt Sindhu people descended into poverty, despondency and corruption. They longed for a stereotypical mythical hero to lead them from the front. These all happened in a flash of time. This is the basis of the epic story.

C. Powerful contrasts among characters

The unique and powerful characterization is the key of a myth which has been a strong feature in Amish's Ram - Scion of Ikshvaku. The contrast among the characters is not only thrilling but also entertaining. The characterization of strong-willed and cool headed Ram, the aggressive natured Lakshman, Manthara's scheming and revengeful intentions, Radhika's innocence, a tactful and political ability of Sita, strongly intended two Maharishis, mighty and strong desired Raavan, the enmity among the Vayuputras and the Malayaputras assembles the novel into a classical myth.

D. Mystical qualities

Scattering the supernatural elements everywhere, the author has made the readers hungrier to know more about the mystical elements used. The story revolves around obtaining the title, the next VISHNU. The confliction between the Vayuputras and the Malayaputras and the concept of the Ekam (one God) turn the story thoroughly mystical.

E. Focus on heroic/villainous individuals

Amish Tripathi has taken sincere efforts to exhibit the individuality of the hero and the other characters. Ram was so rigid about enforcing the law which brought him too many enemies. Roshni, Manthara's daughter had been brutally gang-raped and was killed in a gruesome manner. The law giver, Ram punished all except Dhenuka who was underage. It was an acid test to Ram to abide by the law yet Manthara avenged Roshni's death illegally to Ram's chagrin.

Even Sita, in the previous night of the Swayamwar, coaxed Ram to practice the Pinaka (the legendary bow of Lord Rudra) but Ram denied. Thus the protagonist Ram remains Ram ever. At the same time the other characters too maintain their tempo.

Amish Tripathi, about the story's background once said: I agree how he treated Sita was unfair but was one aspect of his personality 'The perfect follower of rules'. And that is something I think modern Indians need to learn. Ram tried very hard to establish the 'Rama Rajya' (The Kingdom of Rama) in the middle of corrupt Indian society.

This could be the reason of existence of Lord Ram in both Valmiki's The Ramayana and Amish's Ram - Scion of Ikshvaku. Throughout the novel Ram was as Ram, a typical mythical hero.

Extreme conflict, no compromise or cooperation between camps. The extreme confliction among the characters enunciates the theme of the story very clearly. The conversation among the growling Dashrath, a trader and ruler of Lanka Kubaer and menacing and upstart Raavan led to the war of

Karachapa. It decided the destiny of almost all the characters of the novel.

Sita's, technically fabricated political Swayamwar was the key place in where the astute Vishwamitra purposefully hurt Raavan's ego. Forcing Ram, the law lover, to use the Asuraastra against the furious Raavan's army and planning an exile for his sin brings out the shrewdness of the author.

F. Hero's quests

The protagonist Ram's ideal kingdom includes fighting for justice, treating all as equal, protecting the weak and most of all the dharma is above all, is depicted in a mythical platform. According to Ram, nobility must have greater responsibility, it wasn't a birthright. Nothing was more than dharma. There was a conversation between Ram and Sita about the rigid, unfair birth based caste system, Somras and the land of pure land 'Meluha'. Ram's greatness did not lie so much in being able to remake the world but he exemplified himself.

He treats his wife well. He is calm and clear headed. He leads well. He is a good warrior. But most importantly, it is clear that he has a heart of gold", said the first Malayaputra soldier, a full of praise, "I think Guru Vashishta probably chose well." (RAM 332)

In the book review by Urmi Chanda-Vaz, she wrote "The book is full of such fruits of Amish's imagination, but it is for the reader to find them and judge them. The author has played his best stroke - one that he knows works with his junta."

Even though Amish Tripathi has narrated in a totally different and fresh manner, many characteristics of mythology such as politics, leadership, love, characters, supernatural helpers, settings, objects, plots remained the same as Valmiki's The Ramayana. Certainly the happenings and the context of the novel stir up the great Indian cultural values and morality among the readers.

3. Conclusion

The innate faculty of myth is indigenous and common to all men. It will not only be the portion of all peoples, but will be of each individual in every age, in every race, whatever may be their respective conditions. The manifestation of myth in Amish Tripathi's Ram-Scion of Ikshvaku furnishes information that not only practical but also delightful; they elicit emotion-sympathy, tears and laughter - for characters and events remote from our common place experience but close to the heart of things and near. They are significant and enchanting to us in atmosphere of imagination that embraces several continents, inspires the dead with life, bestows colour and breath upon the creatures of a dream, and wraps young and old in the wonder of hearing a new thing. As the stream of history rolls on, it fills men's souls with deeper and wider understanding of life. Old conceptions are pondered upon, explored, tested, sometimes accepted, sometimes rejected with a new and profounder content and thus enlarged they are applied to the old ideals of Godhead.

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