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MYTHICAL HEROES AS MORAL AND ARCHETYPAL FIGURES: A STUDY OF ANITA NAIR'S, 'WORLD MYTHS AND LEGENDS'

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Abstract:

Anita Nair an Indian English language writer, conveys her "Morals and love for animals" in World myths and legends. Sequel to Anita Nair's work, I would like to establish mythical heroes as moral and archetypal figures. Man is a social animal -- this oft-quoted line is applicable when human beings have morals and nobility. As the child grows, he carries these morals with him, so much so that he becomes a useful citizen, to extend his services for the sake of the country. When children and youth are forgetting their morals and duties, Anita Nair draws the attention of children and youth by introducing morals with the help of mythical and archetypal figures in her book World myths and legends. Here we can identify the author as a social reformist.

KEY WORDS:

Myths, Archetypal, Morals, Legends, Children, Heroes, Figures, Mythology, God

BACKGROUND OF STUDY:

Northrope Frye has been the most influential of those critics who have argued that archetypal patterns underlie the modes, plots and genres of literary works. In his major work, *The Anatomy of Criticism* he states "I mean by an archetype a symbol which connects one poem with another and there by helps to unify and integrate our literary experience" (NF, TAC, 99). In Hindu mythology, we can easily identify that, we have avatars in Hindu mythology for e.g. the avatars of Rama and Krishna, these two avatars sequenced one after another. Some people believe that Rama incarnated as Krishna in Dwapara Yuga and his brother Lakshman became lord Balaram. By reading these myths in sequence we can acquire moral values simultaneously, it develops our literary experience "In literature, as in painting, the traditional emphasis in both practice and theory has been on representation or lifelikeness. When, for instance, we pick up a novel of Dickens, our immediate impulse, a habit fostered in us by all the criticism we know, is to compare it with life, whether as lived by us or by Dickens's contemporaries. Then we meet such characters as Heep or Quilp, and, as neither we nor the Victorians have ever known anything much like these curious monsters, the method promptly breaks down. Some readers will complain that Dickens has relapsed into mere caricature (as though caricature were easy); others, more sensibly, simply give up the criterion of likeliness and enjoy the creation for its own sake". (K.M. Newton: *Twentieth-Century Literary Theory*. P.99). We can find this type of caricature figures in the plays of Shakespeare for e.g. In *Midsummer Night's Dream* there are a number of mischievous figures like Puck (also known as Robin Good fellow) who is Oberon's jester a mischievous fairy, he delights in playing pranks on mortals? Oberon is a king of fairies. Titania is the queen of the fairies. This fairy tales and fairies also come under archetypes because of their mischievous powers. The mischievous figures bring comical atmosphere in serious plays. That means the mythical or Archetypal figures convey morals simultaneously in a lighter vein.

"It follows that the mythical mode the stories about Gods in which characters have the greatest possible power of action is the most abstract and conventionalized of all the literature modes. Just as the corresponding modes in other arts-religious Byzantine painting for e.g. Show the highest degree of stylization in there structure, Hence the structural principles of literature are as closely related to mythology

Title:MYTHICAL HEROES AS MORAL AND ARCHETYPAL FIGURES: A STUDY OF ANITA NAIR'S, 'WORLD MYTHS AND LEGENDS' Source:Review of Research [2249-894X] ASWINI PASUPULETI yr:2013 vol:2 iss:11

and comparative religion as those of painting are to geometry".(K.M. Newton: Twentieth-Century Literary Theory.P:10). Archetypal figures are something different from human beings because of their additional powers. Students and children are very interested to know about all these figures because they are fond of fantasy and images. Those who have these additional powers we call them Gods or Mythical figures. In every man, there is God, the person who is out of egos and immorality and the person who treats other person as a God is a real God. "The world of mythical imagery is usually represented by the conception of Heaven or paradise in religion and it is apocalyptic in the sense of that word already explained a world of total metaphor in everything is potentially identical with everything else as though it were all inside a single infinite body"(K.M. Newton: Twentieth-Century Literary Theory.P100). Archetypal world may be an abstract but it conveys concrete ideas. These mythical stories always represent Heaven and Hell, which are not felt by any one till date, but these two are our characters, Heaven represents Good and moral qualities, Hell represents vice qualities. The way we are living in this world represents Heaven and Hell. I believe that we have number of mythical heroes and legends, their characters and actions are very help full to know what are the do's and don'ts for e.g. In Samson Agonistes, Samson lost his identity because he was deceived by Delilah. In the story the moral is too much of adoration is unhealthy, that not only made Samson physically blind but also psychologically too.

INTRODUCTION:

"We have, then, three organizations of myths and archetypal symbols in literature. First, there is indisposed myth general concerned with Gods are Demons, and which takes the form of two contrasting words of total metaphorical identification, one desirable and the other undesirable. These two forms of metaphorical organization we call the apocalyptic and the Demonic respectively. Second, we have the general tendency we have called the romantic, the tendency to suggest implicit mythical patterns in a world more closely associate with human experience. Third, we have the tendency of realism to through the emphasis of content and representation rather than on shape of the story. At a little distance back, the design comes into clearer view, and we study rather the content represent this is the best distance for realistic Dutch pictures for e.g. where we are in a sense reading the picture"(K.M. Newton Twentieth-Century Literary Theory.P102). Myth is a combination of good and bad. Good symbolizes God, and bad symbolizes Demon. In these types of mythical stories, we find two types of imaginary world. This world is unreal but it gives real ideas, we can understand mythical heroes' character by observing their actions or deeds in that world. That means atmosphere resemblances their nature for e.g. (The image of Hell is black and fire and the image of Heaven is white and snow). By reading, we cannot visualize the background of that mythical world; it is only possible through pictures and films because visual aids are catchier than audio for e.g. Socio fantasy movies and images.

THE PRESENT STUDY:

Now a detailed analysis of selected four mythical stories, from Nair's book is very helpful to convey different moral values to society. Moral is a quality or a special feature we often acquire it, by reading stories of heroes and by following advices of inspirational figures. Nair's work "Worlds myths and legends" convey these morals not only to child reader but to younger generations too.

SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS:

A) THE NOBLE DOG:

In "The Noble Dog" (A Jataka tale from India), there is one noble dog. Who became chief to stray dogs, for its nobility and went about his duties righteously. One day the harness used for the royal chariots left in the palace courtyards. That night it rained making the leather soft chewy. The king's pack of hounds found it and tore it up finally they swallowed it. King became anger for missing of harness and he believed that it is all the mistake of stray dogs. Later chief dog proved who done the mistake by feeding them with grass and buttermilk. Royal pack hounds unable to digest that and began vomiting pieces of leather: "The king was impressed by the chief dog's wisdom. I salute you," he said" let me have the honor of sharing a meal with you". "The chief Dog replied "Thank you noble king" but first grant me the promise that the live of all living creatures in this kingdom will be spared hence forth" (P: 89). Here we want to note down one point, the king is also kind and noble because after knowing the truth, king offered a meal with dog. The dog's nobility and its love and care towards animals, as an animal dog understands the other animal's sufferings and problems, but human beings are lacking this quality because they are running towards temporary goals with full of egos, pride and prejudice and finally which leads them to immorality. King agreed and spread the lesson of ahimsa or non-violence wherever he went. From this lesson, we have to learn that never look down anybody by seeing his or her positions. That is what king did in this story; here king looked down stray dogs and think wrongly about these dogs. Moreover, one more think we want to

learn from this story. It is no matter whatever position we are in, if we have nobility and morality. "It is said that the chief dog was an incarnation of Buddha and the king incarnation of Ananda, his chief disciple". (P: 89). Here I quote that Buddha even incarnated, as dog he did not forget the blossoms of his past life. That means once this moral and nobility injected in our veins we cannot forget them forever and ever.

B) THE STORY OF DHRUVA:

In The story of Dhruva (An Indian Myth) The king of Uttanapada, who had two wives Suruchi and Suniti. Suruchi was beautiful, Suniti was a quiet woman and not so beautiful Suruchi was king's favourite queen. Suruchi gave birth to Uttama and Suniti named her son Dhruva. Suruchi feared that in future king might change his mind and give Dhruva the throne. Suruchi troubles Dhruva a lot and make his life miserable. Every night he cried to his mother. One-day Dhruva heard Suruchi's wish secretly and finally, he decided to leave palace and went to a hermitage. He performed various austerities but he did not desire for anything. Indra was worried a lot with his penance and finally approached Vishnu and he offered him so many things but Dhruva rejected all his offerings. Vishnu smiled "You are an amazing man and a man every one ought to know about and look up to. Henceforth you shall be the pole star. You shall be the brightest and most constant star in the sky that shall guide people on the earth no matter where they are Dhruva was happy with that and to this day, he shines brightly in the night sky. He can be seen every night, a symbol of a man who asked nothing and succeeded only through his own hard work". (P 28) In this story, we can find Dhruva as a noble character. In addition, he bared all the problems with patience for sake of his stepmother, and to console her mother he moved from the palace. He moved away from these temporary relationships to permanent eternity by becoming hermit. He was sacrificed penance without any will and wish. Even God feared a lot with his behavior because Dhruva was very firm and stick to his permanent eternity. To get this permanent eternity Dhruva sacrifices his luxurious kingly life like Buddha. Lord Vishnu wonders and makes him a constant star. Here we want to note down one point, why Vishnu makes him constant star. The glittering star never fed up. Star is luminous the word luminous is meant by visible even in dark. As a star Dhruva guides people who are in dark, here dark that related to human beings physical and mental problems. Dhruva was happy because he was not a simple luminous star but he was a star that brightening human being lives too. He was showed as a symbol of a man, who asked for nothing that means he was conveying to human beings there is nothing in temporary world except hard work to get permanent eternity which makes man free from these earthly bonds and relations.

C) TALKING BROUGHT ME HERE:

In Talking Brought Me Here (A Nigerian legend). This is a story of Nigerian hunter. Who went for hunting but he did not find anything but suddenly he saw a skull. It lay beneath a tree all by itself. "The hunter so surprised that began talking aloud "what could have brought just a skull here?" he said. (P: 160). "To his utter amazement the skull spoke up and replied, "Talking brought me here" (P: 160). He was so excited and rushed towards king to tell these all things. King wondered, sends his guards, and secretly ordered his guards to kill the hunter if he beguile. Finally, skull did not reply to him and guards killed hunter and walked away. "Now the skull asked what brought you here? "The dead hunter's head replied Talking brought me here". (P: 161). In this story, the moral is "speak less and work more". We know the quoted line very well, but we do not apply that, which leads man's life to death. If tongue is in control no doubt everything is in our control. We can find Nigerian hunter innocence and king's cruelty. Here particularly readers can come through cruel Nigerian law. In past, Nigerian people dominated by tribal heads, then after dominated by white men. Africa was colonized country, they faced many problems with colonial people they troubled them mentally and physically. Nigerian hunter with his empty (innocent) brain, finds skull which is no use, that brings impend doom to his life and finally it leads him to his death.

D) HORUS, THE DUTIFUL SON:

In Horus, the Dutiful son (An Egyptian legend) the Gods of Egypt lined on earth along with man. Osiris was one of the Gods. He was God of water and vegetation. After seeing Osiris popularity his brother became jealous. Finally, he captured Osiris and drowned him. The people of Egypt searched for him; no one knew where he was. Three days later, they find dead body. People, his wife Isis and throughout the world knew what happened to him. Isis his wife wept for loss of his husband and tore her hair out in grief. After that by spell of magic, she gave birth to son, who combined the best of her and Osiris's powers. She secretly raised her son and the little boy grew up in marshes, his friends are frogs and birds. Years passed away Horus became a strong young man and could wield weapons as well as a brave warrior. Isis told her son, the past entire story, which happened to them. He became furious and marched towards Egypt and declared to battle with Seth. The battlefield was filled with full of bloodshed. Seth was defeated and humbly restored Horus eyes, but Horus threw it a side and replaced it with the divine serpent which the emblem of royalty. Horus

praised by all the pharaohs of Egypt and later became descendants of Horus.

After reading this story, we can observe that most of the mythical figures born with magical powers for e.g. in this story the Horus born to Isis by spell of magic, who has born to Isis with the combination of Osiris powers and the best of Isis. Like this in Hindu and other mythologies, we can also find this type of magical spell for e.g. Karna born to Kunti with the magical powers of Sun God. Hanuma was born to Angel Angana, Lord Shiva who sends wind to Angana's womb and create a divine spirit with his spell of magic. Jesus is also born to Virgin Mary with this spell of magic. A few critics believe that Jesus is reincarnation of Horus. If we observe their origin, we can easily find that, for e.g. Jesus who born to virgin and his mother secretly raised him. We can find this in Horus life, he also born to Isis by the spell of magic and his mother secretly raised him in marshes. In this story Horus adversary name is Seth, Jesus adversary name is Satan. Jesus crucified by Jews and his blood purified the entire world. Like that in this story Horus blood at the time of battle purified Egyptian lands because in his blood there is powers of his father, who is god of water and vegetation. Horus with this great power declared the war with Seth. His blood at the time of battle not only awoke the unfertilized lands but also awake his inner strength to defeat Seth. Mythical Hero blood not creates by love of two human beings, but by God for sake of human beings purification and for world peace. That is the reason we call them mythical heroes and pioneers of human beings. They are heavenly gifts to teach morals for human beings. Bhishma, Karna, Rama etc other mythological heroes like Jesus also convey morals to this earthly being. Bhishma who is son of Shantanu and Ganga, he remained as lifelong celibacy for sake of his father Shantanu's love towards Satyawati. Karna was a great warrior and known for his generosity. He knew that Kunti Devi was his mother, but he didn't reveal that secret because, she gave birth to him when she was virgin and she was queen of great kingdom Hastinapura. Karna abused by Pandavas because lack of his proper identity, even though he remained as a stoic and hid all the secrets with himself. At the time of Kurukshetra war Kunti asked Karna not to kill Pandavas, by taking her oath into consideration he leaved them, but after this war Karna completely leaved this world, his generosity, great heroic qualities, friendship, and his firmness towards oath teach morals to younger and up coming generations. Rama knows for his monogamy and obedience. Jesus knows for his peace, love and sacrifice. Like this in this story Horus battle with his enemy Seth, who killed his father, without caring his life, he defeated Seth courageously and boldly. Even he lost his eyes in this battle after defeating by Horus Seth humbly restored his eyes but he rejected his offer and removed them. Here reader can understand his enrage upon Seth. After that, he replaced his eyes with divine serpent, which became the emblem of royalty. In myths, readers can find mostly this type of organs replacement for e.g. elephant head replaced Lord Ganesh head, which is the emblem of knowledge, mythical heroes, physical structure is, half-human and half animal. From Indian mythology Hanuman with monkey head and human body, Lord Ganesh with elephant head and human body. From Greek mythology centaurs - Half man and half horse; Chimera - A fire-breathing female monster with lion's head; a goat's body and a serpent's tail; Satyr - with human upper bodies the tails of horses, pug noses and the ears of donkey. Sphinx: A creature with the body of a lion and the head of a woman. Set: Set is a seven-headed serpent God of chaos. These all are archetypal figures in literature.

CONCLUSION:

These mythical heroes or figures bring additional glamour to textbook and it creates interest to average readers and children. After observing heroic qualities of mythical figures children try to imitate and try to be live like them. In the book, readers can find Anita Nair's special interest towards animals by describing them in each story and along with that, she conveys moral values and nobility to readers particularly to child readers. Undoubtedly, by telling mythical stories and showing images we can render and flourish splendidly the hearts of young readers and society too.

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