

# Myth, History and Realism in Githa Hartharan's Thousand Faces of Night and in Times of Siege: A Study

OPEN ACCESS

Volume: 6

Issue: 2

Month: October

Year: 2018

ISSN: 2321-788X

Received: 22.10.2018

Accepted: 27.10.2018

Published: 29.10.2018

Citation:

Manoharan, D., and K. Anbuselvi. "Myth, History and Realism in Githa Hartharan's Thousand Faces of Night and in Times of Siege: A Study". *Shanlax International Journal of Arts, Science and Humanities*, vol. 6, no. 2, 2018, pp. 79–84.

DOI:

<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.1473231>

**D.Manoharan**

*(Research Scholar), Associate Professor of English*

*Arulmigu Palaniandavar College of Arts and Culture, Palani, Tamil Nadu, India*

**Dr.K.Anbuselvi**

*(Research Supervisor), Principal*

*Arulmigu Palaniandavar College of Arts and Culture, Palani, Tamil Nadu, India*

## Abstract

Women writers in India were moving forward with their strong and sure strides, matching the pace of the world. They were recognized for their originality, versatility and the indigenous flavor of the soil that they brought to their work. Hariharan occupies the outstanding place in the world of Indian English fictions since 2002. Mythology in the Indian context is perhaps the most utilized and most admired for every generation and genre. History bears proof of ever fitness that Indians from every age, time and place and dynasty have expressed their ardent desire to be enriched and knowledgeable in myths, legends and folklore. Githa Hariharan has beautifully explored all those aspects in her novels *Thousand Faces of Night* and *In Times of Siege*.

**Keywords: Fiction, Indian Writings, Myth, Realism**

## Article Content

Women writers in India were pushing ahead with their solid and strong strides, coordinating the pace of the world. One could see them blasting out in full blossom, spreading their identities. They were honored for their creativity, flexibility, and the indigenous kind of the dirt that they conveyed to their work. The Indian women writers, as Shashi Deshpande, Arundhati Roy, Anita Desai, Kamala Das, and Shobha De held their very own encounters in the women scholars' universe of introductory dismissal, depression, familial bonds, social life and so forth. It was stunning to take note of that these writers and numerous more climbed the stepping stool of achievement in a moderate and agonizing way. These women writers gave abstract work in India an undeniable edge. They delicately depicted a world that had in it women wealthy in substance. Their women were a genuine fragile living creature and real heroes who made one glance at them with wonderment in connection to their environment, society, men, kids, families, mental make and themselves and us. They have dealt with, their contentions and issues against the base of contemporary India. At the same time, they have investigated the socio-social modes and importance that have given Indian women their picture and job towards themselves and the social communities. The changing settings have put these women authors in an unenviable position. Indian women scholars of the twentieth and twenty-first hundreds of years seem to raise the issues identified with women with a new point of view.

These women writers have given life through writing incredible distinctiveness. One of the imperative parts of these authors is that every one of them is very instructed, engaged with social issues, and besides, prepared to try different things with their works. Every one of these essayists goes behind the conventional topic of affection, conjugal disappointment, inappropriate behavior looked by women scholars in the general public or the affliction and difficulties they battled with or quietly gulped. In opposition to this Githa Hariharan has made utilization of an entirely unexpected weapon to uncover every one of these issues looked by women. In her works, one can unmistakably observe every one of these viewpoints however the method for introduction is entirely unexpected front our customary authors.

Hariharan possesses an exceptional place on the planet of Indian English fiction since 1992. She has produced five worth able novels and some short stories. Indian women writers have utilized subjects of affection, sex and marriage with certainty. Be that as it may, Hariharan explains these subjects in an alternate point of view with the assistance of fantasies, legends and history with the end goal to accomplish her methods. She tries to draw out the Indian culture too through her books.

Myth in Indian setting maybe the most used and most respected for each age and type. History bears confirmation to each reality that Indians from each age, time and place and tradition have communicated they're impassioned wanted to be advanced and learned in using the Indian myths, legends and fables. Regardless of having a place with the contemporary age or being set in past time, Indian myth and its umpteen segments have rested their lasting effect on Indian writing overall, which by their very own right; can be viewed as an abstract classification itself. Myth in the Indian setting is a sort of a comprehensive subject, to which everyone needs to be a piece of it. The conventional, standard and exceedingly regarded view purpose of the grandma styled craft of narrating has been advancing with time since time immemorial. Myths and their Himalayan turns excite, the abhorrent demonstration of a scalawag like Gorgon and a definitive triumph of good over malevolence by the

knight in sparkling protective layer, together with his safeguarded kingdom and his excellent princess, have everlastingly impacted Indian scholars, starting from the Vedic Age. On considering all these legendary topics in Indian writing are simply one more typical perspective, overseeing one's everyday life and energy for perusing.

Hariharan's *A Thousand Faces of Night* and *In Times of Siege* were released in English in England and the United States, She concentrates on a general section for the real Indian daily paper *The Telegraph*. She "I've used myths to help examine contemporary women lives - to suggest that they might help us to understand these lives, which on the surface seem rather placid and devoid of an event" (Web source). Each group public has some essential social examples which expect a mythic quality in their perpetual quality inside a specific culture. Writing is the most imperative zone of workmanship loaded up with the mythic substance. Northrop Frye has well drawn out the profound connection between myth and literature in his article "Legend, Fiction and Displacement":

Myth thus provides the main outlines and the circumference of a verbal universe which is later occupied by literature as well. Literature is more flexible than myth, and fills up the universe more completely: a poet or novelist may work in areas of human life remote from the shadowy gods and gigantic story-outlines of mythology. But in all cultures, mythology merges insensibly into, and with, literature. (165)

Frye proceeds to mention the noteworthy objective fact:

Because mythology and literature occupy the same verbal space, the framework or context of any work of literature can be found in mythology as well, when its literary tradition is understood. (168)

Frye secures the issue by seeing that "literature is reconstructed mythology, with its structural principles derived from those of myth" (169). Since fantasies themselves are story examples of man's creative response to society and the universe they perform, as Richard Chase in his book *Quest for Myth* watches, "the cathartic function of dramatizing the clashes and harmonies of life in a social and natural environment" (249). They are boom and

develop in a specific socio-cultural setting and thus when the setting changes, new legends are conceived and the old are reinterpreted and once in a while even altogether adjusted.

The myth fills in as the connection between the theoretical ideas of the scholar and the solid experience of the normal individual from the network. Hariharan has effectively drawn out this association that the legend has in the general public. She unpretentiously epitomized the impacts of the solid, undeniable trends that had realized expansive changes in women's lives in India. Hariharan insisted that the numerous disturbance of common society had made open doors and additional dangers, which at the same time empowered and compelled Indian ladies to face these problems. Indeed, even at lower levels of benefit, some feeling of individual rights permeated into their awareness with the goal that the generalization Indian ladies as an agreeable, thoughtless question of pity found no solid model. These generalizations existed just for some removed spectators and underlined the legislative issues of portrayal.

Through her works, Hariharan has made inexhaustible utilization of legendary stories and has made unpretentious associations between her characters and the legendary characters of the past. She has managed the quality of being a lady in India, principally in her works. To accomplish her point, she has made predictable reference to the tales of the past and acquires the vast majority of the characters of the Indian epic, the Mahabharata. Through her works, Hariharan unostentatiously interweaved the post current and women's activist points of view by worrying on the diverse systems women receive to advocate for themselves. She has inconspicuously exemplified the impacts of the solid, undeniable trends that have achieved broad changes in women's lives in India.

As Hariharan capably exhibits through her works, a tremendous weight of convention still keeps on hunkering down on us- however less a gooney bird's but rather more a wellspring of quietness and inward mature. Her first novel *The Thousand Faces of Night* presents three women whose unique but comparative stories cut crosswise over ages and cross barriers of position and class. The youthful, high society, western

instructed Devi, her mom Sita and the working class lady Mayamma need to fight with the equivalent prohibitive principles of male-centric society. These conditions lessen them to scarcely dynamic protests that are completely controlled by men in their lives. The paternalistic laws of Manu, the old Indian sage run like a string through the content. These laws are verbalized by Devi's dad-in-law. This male talk is subverted by the female talk of Devi's grandma. On the off chance that Manu talks about female subordination, the grandma's talk commends solid, insubordinate, furious women Draupadi and Amba from the Mahabharata, whose fair fury wreaks ruin and crushes whole existences of male-controlled lines. Through these distinctive stories, Hariharan has picturized the diverse perspectives in regards to the conduct and way of life of women in Indian social orders.

In Hariharan's *The Thousand Faces of Night*, her women Sita, Devi, and Mayamma are isolated by the bay of time and standing yet are connected by the common reductiveness of their sexual orientation. Sita forfeits her gigantic ability in playing veena for the obligations she owes to her family as a little girl in-law, spouse and mother. In her reckless resentment, she is the legendary Gandhari from *The Mahabharata*, who, in indignation at being offered to a visually impaired sovereign, had tied a bit of material over her own eyes. This horrendous discipline fuelled her annoyance as well as was an ever-present rebuke to the individuals who had wronged her. It was her grandma's accounts which gave a departure course to Devi from "the sticky dividers" of her mom's womb. Grandma's accounts instructed Devi to dream, to fly, to tear, to shred the stifling shroud of femaleness. The old lady's legends, tales, and dreams subvert scientific, realist male talk. On the off chance that history is male, at that point legend is female and originates before history. Hariharan utilizes a mix of western women's activist dreams of flying with stories from the Indian epic, *The Mahabharata*, to make the enchanted universe of the female tyke Devi. Nourished on stories on the wrathful Amba, made her very own enchanted pragmatist world in which she was a female who "rode a tiger, and cut off evil, magical demons' heads" (Hariharan. TFN 41). In her dreamland, Devi envisions herself as "an incarnation

of Durga, walking the earth to purge it out tat jow led, slim-tailed great” (Hariharan. T’FN 43). This is a women’s activist dream of destroying exploitative men - an Amazonian want to occupy self-governing spaces outside male-appointed nooks. Devi’s unspoiled world is smashed when her courageous woman is executed fighting with a man; the finish of the Amazonian dream is additionally proclaimed by Sita, who issues the proclamation, “ no more of these fantasies. The girl is almost a woman; she must stop dreaming now” (Hariharan, TFN N 45).

Devi’s defiant soul isn’t so effectively subdued. In a cunning move. Sita gives her a long rope releases her to the college in the U.S. in any case when the time is ready Devi is stepped back to India and offered to Mahesh. Marriage once, more devices Devi in artificial fenced in areas. Her grandma’s accounts of vindictive, glorious, solid women are presently supplanted by her dad in-law’s talk that is immovably designed on Manu’s laws. On the off chance that grandma’s accounts were “an initiation into the subterranean possibilities of womanhood, the father-in-law ‘s stories define the limits. His stories are for a woman w ho has already reached the goal that will determine the guise her virtue will wear” (Hariharan. TFN 51).

Hariharan is adroit at concentrating on the historical backdrop of medieval India, that is the historical backdrop of Vijaya Nagar domain and the city of Kalyana, which remained as an epitome of magnificence eight hundred years prior, as one of the primary strings of the novel, in Times of Siege. This novel is about a history specialist who is deceived by a gathering called the Ithihas Suraksha Manch. oneself proclaimed defenders of history for an exercise he has composed on the reformer artist Basava.

Ideologically, it very well may be a tie that ties us to the past, perpetually obliging our dreams of the sort of society we may have. History can be traditionalist: if individuals were partitioned along religious, rank, and class lines previously, so it should always be like that be. In working out her books hypothesis of history, Hariharan has a couple of snapshots of scholarly quirkiness. At a certain point, for example, she says: Each of us conveys inside ourselves a history, a reference book of pictures, a scene with its

unmistakable examples of mutilation. A lexicon that talks the dialects of a few pasts, that moves crosswise over fringes, forward and backward between various occasions. A few biographers date Basava’s demise or the assumption of death-as January 1168. Be that as it may, in Shivs mind, this conditional date crawls forward treacherously. Not to June 7, 1962, when his dad vanished, yet to its medieval partner, June 7, 1168. Like Shivs father, Basava vanished. He was assumed dead. His end would dependably be covered by strange conditions and theoretical stories of adoration or confidence or unrest. She uncovers the rich layers of Indian history and, in the meantime, uncovered the complexities of Murthy’s inward clash and individual life, uncovering that the past and the present are in every case more inseparably connected than we assume. This stiff, contemporary account unfurls the narrative of common lives attacked, of people attempting to understand contempt, numbness, love and devotion - in people, thoughts and the country. Sharp and grasping, and pervaded with a chilling feeling of threat, In Times of Siege holds up an uncompromising mirror to India today.

In the novel, Hariharan has implanted a few fantasies that ran parallel to one another to shape the inner voice of her characters. These accounts, taken from the Indian folklore, go about as the foundation of the novel. Hariharan’s story voice strikes a ground-breaking harmony in contemporary writing coming back to the multidimensional vibrations of voices unfurling inside a huge mythical-social time space. Her vision is additionally to make the Indian social qualities accessible to the worldwide gathering of people and furthermore the legendary strands intertwined in them. Most of a person’s character is because of the different impressions his/her brain has got amid youth. In India, from antiquated occasions, we had a rich oral custom. So youngsters appreciate these stories through guardians, grandparents or close relatives. Through these accounts the young lady tyke finds out about her characteristic characteristics like sensitivity, benevolence, forfeit, persistence, and self-control. Each individual additions information from: “widely difficult sources, from fairy tales and myths, jokes and witticisms, from folklore, that is from what we know of the manners and customs, sayings and songs of different people^ and from

poetic and colloquial usage of language” (Freud, A General Introduction to Psychoanalysis 166).

The account of *The Thousand Faces of Night* rotates around Sita and her solitary little girl Devi. The fundamental story of her life is composed by Devi herself, and into this edge various different stories are joined the legends of the legendary champions described to Devi by her grandma, accounts of spouses of holy people and different pativratas, the modest, dedicated and steadfast wives, related to Devi by her father-in-law; genuine encounters of real women either seen by Devi straightforwardly or described to her by her maid Mayamma. Devi is essentially a narrate tuning in to the more seasoned story tellers-her grandma or father-in-law or Mayamma. When she turns a storyteller herself, she modifies these accounts inside her very own biography and in doing as such, she discharges the overlooked women of the past into the composed record of history, along these lines paying a rich tribute to her coaches. Composing in this way turns into a demonstration of vindication of women’s self-sufficiency.

There are three female tutors throughout Devi’s life-her grandma, mother and later her servant. In the underlying period of her growing up, Devi goes under the impact of her grandma, who describes to her the stories of legendary champions making unpretentious associations between the significant and remarkable existences of the fanciful women and shameful accounts of genuine women around her. It is through the enlivened tutelage of her grandma that Devi’s masterful vision is first unlashd and her imaginative desires are delicately supported. Grandma is the main educator; she grants a mystery learning to her through an intentional retelling of the stories of the overlooked women of the past-Damayanti, Gandhari, Amba and Ganga. Because of the effect of modernization, the memory of these characters blurs from the general population who understand that these characters don’t stand declaration to the cutting edge way of life. Six decades back there was an inclination to name little girls of the families from the fantasies, given the conviction or trademark nature of the little girls as Sita remained at each home. Those legendary characters were wards which idea does not have criticalness as present-day women long for an opportunity for living or status.

Hariharan’s novel effectively compared and blended the lives of a remote returned young lady Devi, her masterfully slanted mother Sita, an old guardian Mayamma, to introduce an image of the multifaceted Indian lady. With the end goal to make her solitary little girl settle down in India Sita chooses to get back her from America. After returning to India, Devi understands that her mom will orchestrate her marriage through swayamvara. In Indian social set-up, marriage is the customary job doled out to the women. Devi isn’t set up for her marriage, however as it is the “destiny traditionally offered by society” (Beauvoir, *The Second Sex* 425), without offending her mother, she acknowledges the proposed. From her initial youth she had seen her mom Sita, who “weaves a cocoon, a secure womb,” (Hariharan, TFN 13) dependably there to ensure her, or rather, “she was always our anchor-rock, never wrong, never to be questioned” (Hariharan, TFN 16). Under these conditions, Devi gives her assent. Now Devi returns to “returning memories of my grandmother’s stories of predestined husbands and idyllic marriages” (Hariharan, TFN 16). Thus she reviews grandma’s account of Nala, the ruler of Nishads and Damayanti. A standout amongst the most prominent legends in Indian folklore.

Grandma depicted the festoon bearing Damayanti strolling in the midst of the lords, minutely:  
....her heart, loyal and steadfast, never wavered from the path leading to Nala, the King of Nishads. And her feet adorned with gold rings and henna were sure of their destination. The honeyed words of Nala’s courtier, the wild swan who had won her heart for him. Sang in her ear as she sought out her destiny. (Hariharan, TFN 20)

At that point, she insightfully finishes up the story by summing up the way that “a woman gets her heart’s desire by great cunning” (Hariharan, TFN 20). While portraying the narrative of Nala and Damayanti. Grandma shed light on the “regal dignity and solemnity of a swayamvara” ( Hariharan, TFN 18). The ‘self-decision’ service that will empower her to pick her better half. Devi’s idea of swayamvara and marriage turns out from her initial youth stories. By recounting the account of the valiance and assurance appeared by Damayanti to uphold Nala, grandma’s goal was to impart the characteristics, for

example, solid assurance and mettle in the brain of the young lady. In the novel *A Thousand Faces of Night*, Hariharan measures up to the life of human characters with that of the fantasies. The tales described by Grandmother are wealthy in culture and solid in qualities as the audience members take everything conceded for their future life. The imaginary life of Devi reached an end when she was hitched to Mahesh after her arrival from America. Mahesh had everything a young woman could wish for: an official occupation, a house in Bangalore and huge wealth. In any case, the chilly and unconcerned disposition of her better half was more than she could bear. She heard numerous accounts of provocation on account of spouses. However, she was not set up for such a sort of treatment from her better half.

In *Times of Siege* is an unmistakable, contemporary account that unfurls the story of conventional lives assaulted, of people attempting to comprehend disdain, obliviousness, love and faithfulness in people, thoughts and the country. It's a sharp and grasping and pervaded with a chilling feeling of danger, that holds up an uncompromising mirror to India today. The utilization of myth and history in writing has dependably been an issue of worry for writers. This is particularly valid with regards to Hariharan who has received the English dialect for her imaginative articulation. With the inclination to compose she needs her attempts to be a valid mirror and a result of her social moorings.

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