

# Portal of Myth in Gita Harahan's Novel "Thousand Faces of Night"

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## Abstract

The contemporary Indian women novelists have enriched Indian English language literature. A study of mythical elements in Githa Hariharans novel *Thousands Faces of Night* explores Indian mythology and reinterprets it from the woman perspective to find a universal remedy for gender relations. India is an ancient country with rich cultural values. The woman India is praised but at the same time she has been oppressed. The conventional role of women as portrayed by many male and female writers of the past. The expectations of the society has been changed and women have representing themselves as real woman beings with equal opportunities, feelings, the fabled myth and legends are reinterpreted. The survival strategies of women of different generations and various social classes are presented.

The women in the mythology were considered to be very beautiful and the beauty of them is natural in the novel of Githa Hariharan "*The thousand faces of night*" the writer has tried to compare a protagonist characters with the gods and goddesses. This paper aims at exploring the portrayal of myth in Githa Hariharan's novel "*The thousand faces of night*".

## Keywords

Survival Strategies, Feminism, Identity Crisis, Patriarchy

## Introduction

Contemporary Indian women writers in their acclaimed text questions. The prominent old patriarchal dominance and also shows the sign of survival to the same in the writing of these women authors. We hear what was never said or was said from a man's prospective, women in India seldom treat on par with men. Even in the twentieth century, she has been living hard life under the impact of male dominant world. "*The thousand faces of night*" is the portrayal of different facts of different women, although collectively showcased in three categories. It depicts the status of women of the Indian society and articulates the problem of women with the help of Indian mythology including the scenario for women as mentioned in the puranas. I will throw light on the concept like what makes a dutiful daughter, wife, and mother, and almost importantly, a good Indian woman. Devi one of the characters returns to Madras with an American degree only to be vain as she gets bound by the old social norms and thinking about and demanding enforced duties. In her case, she had a suitable but hollow marriage, an unsuitable lover who offers a brief escape. But the women of the ancient times come back to claim

Devi though myths and stories, they take her to virtual reality world showing her what it is to be a women and endure, break free and move on Sita, an ideal daughter-in-law and mother, when arranges a marriage for her daughter comes to the terms with an old dream of her own Mayamma known well how to survive as the old family retainer.

*The thousand faces of night* is a common story of woman whose marriage didn't offer any happiness and the woman's quest for identity. The theme of re-visiting of myths is used as an anchor in dramatizing the suffering and misfortunes in lives of three women. Who struggles for self-identity. All the stories that Devi, the protagonist was fed by her mentors helped her in emotional and intellectual development. Githa Hariharan has drawn these stories from the Indian mythology to view them from female perspective. The novels shows, how women are forced to play mail-dominance. Subordinate roles through the lives of Devi the main protagonist, Sita and Mayamma who present a picture of multi-faced Indian women. The novel also shows the relationships of female characters where they are influenced by each other's happenings, Devi has good relationship with her grandmother where she is attached to her with her story. Then later in her life comes Myamma and her stories were similar to her grandmother's mythological stories but were rather real and very discouraging. Her grandmother's stories were encouraging and gives power whereas the stories of Myamma we can experiences of Myamma in real life is full of pathos and disasters. Then we have a character in the story which is Devi's mother-in-law. Her mother-in-law has not been shown in the story in the current phase but her tales were narrated by Myamma which shows her greatness. One day Parvati Amma has decided to leave her family in the middle of her duration of life time for the search of god and lead a life of saint who wonders in the search of holiness and god.

The plot of the novel, capture women of different generations at social classes. The story revolves around three main characters Devi, who is not able to accept the challenges of an arranged marriage. She felt obsessed in her daily life and finally takes a bold decision to get out of her marriage. She decides to break of all the laws which have been prevalent in those days where living a marriage is considered as a burden in the life of the woman. She is the protagonist of this novel and thinks herself like a heroin in her life where she is fully educated with a foreign post-graduation degree which is considered very highly in the society, has the knowledge of all the tales her grandmother has told and has the potential and power to take the decision on her own. The next character is Sita an Ideal daughter-in-law, wife, mother and an ideal woman who tries to bridge the gap between tradition and modernity. The last is Myamma the family retainer in Devi's husband's house, who learnt how to survive as the old family retainer, bending to the demands, Devi is not convinced by Myammas pleading, that a marriage can be succeeded only if the woman agrees to endure endlessly without a murmur. But incessantly Devi hunted through myth and memory of the women of the ancient times showing her the way either to stay or endure or to break free and move on.

Githa Hariharan has also shown the bounding of females with male, out of which some are in positive extent and some are in negative extent. Devi's bonding with her father-in-law who was a very good retired professor in Sanskrit. He also told stories to Devi or we can he also shared his knowledge and experience with Devi and in all his stories a boundary has been derived from each and every women in the society. According to him women are limited in their family and their chores of work in their homes. They are mainly meant to be a follower rather than a leader. They have to blindly accept the instructions of in-laws house and behave as an ideal house wife. Each and every story of all these persons has influenced Devi and devi was a silent listener to all the stories from the childhood. But their came a point of time where Devi interpreted all the knowledge she gathered took the decision to quit her family and take independent actions whenever a women suffers, there is man behind the case of suffering patriarchal pattern is a definition of having a male member who is the head of family controlling the female members and children. It's about the leadership of man who own the responsibility to lead the family in the right direction but the word patriarchy has been treated negatively by the male members of the society. It's now-a-days regarded as the mail imposing of male ego on the female members of the family and forcing them to follow traditions and customs forcefully. This kind of leadership has positive as well as negative effects on the family if the leader is not a wise person. The mail members have taken for granted their gender recognition to rule the opposite gender sensing them a weak and incompetent. In the story Gita Hariharan all the women has suffered due to this patriarchal pattern of the society only. The patriarchal society has formed its roots in each and every place of universe. Majority of the things are controlled by men. Although provisions are made for women in different kind of political and social arena, the ground level implementation is limited to the metro city only. The villages of today in India still subject to patriarchal culture. Women are only considered to remain back of men and obey their instructions and obey their instructions and serve them for their pleasure. Homely duties and bearing children is considered as the foremost duty of a woman and the woman unable to fulfil the two duties are not considered favourably by the society. The women characters of the society "*the thousand faces of night*" had to undergo similar fate when they tried to revolt and come out of the patriarchal system of the society. This is how the system of men and women runs in the society.

Playing the role of care taker for others, women hardly give importance to her own dreams. She finds contentment in the happiness of others, but the feeling of conflict is hidden underneath her artificial simile that usually lies on her lips in order to maintain peace and harmony. In sharp contrast to the passive and sub-massive traditional women, the women of the twenty first century find her-self at a midpoint where there is no escape from an impossible complex proposition. These kinds of problem give away to other innumerable problems in her life. She knows no option to get away from such an incomprehensible conflict which becomes the major cause of her secret anxiety.