Narrative Alchemy: Exploring Mythical Fusion in Indian Cultural Transformation

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Abstract:

This research investigates the complex relationship between myth and fiction in the Indian cultural context, exploring how these two dynamic elements intersect to influence and reshape the cultural narrative. By extensively examining various forms of literature, film, and art, this research delves into the intricate relationship between myth and fiction, shedding light on its significant influence on the shared psyche. The present study explores the intricate realm of Indian mythology and its intersection with contemporary fiction, highlighting its role as a catalyst for cultural transformation. Through a meticulous exploration of the intricate interplay between myth and fiction, this research endeavour illuminates the profound impact of storytelling within the cultural framework of India.

Keywords: Myth, Fiction, Cultural Transformation, Indian Culture, Narrative Alchemy

Lead In:

In the present researcher paper, researcher has tried to critique the literary works of mythological writers from Indian English Fiction Writing firmament. Writer wise critical analysis is presented as follows:

Ashok Banker –

Ashok Banker is the most prolific writer among these authors; at fifty-two years of age, he has written more than fifty works, most of which are adapted from Indian epics and folktales. He got his start in journalism but swiftly shifted gears to crime fiction before penning his much-lauded mythical stories. *Gods of War (2009), Armies of Hanuman (2005), Bridge of Rama (2005), Demons of Chitrakoot (2003), Siege of Mithila (2003), Prince of Ayodhya (2003), and King of Ayodhya (2006)* are within this category.

Rama and Lakshman are students at the beginning of Siege of Mithila, which takes up one of his previous works and concludes with their marriage. It is depicted that the two brothers are pupils of Guru Vishwamitra at the Sidha Ashram. Banker adapts the story's details according to how people interpret them based on previously published works and stage performances. In the first chapter, the Adi-Shakti uses a telepathic message to awaken Rama, and she then guides him to the nearby Bhayanak Van. What takes place there is left out of the book. The leader of the Vajra Kshatriyas, Bejoo, quickly delivers the word that both brothers are wanted in Ayodhya. After knowing through his psychic skills that the Aryavarta kingdom is about to be invaded by the ruler of Asuras, Ravana, the Guru rallies a huge group of Brahmin acolytes and Vajra

Kshatriya troops. Manthara is already a spy for Ravana in Ayodhya. Using evil magic rites, Queen Kaikeyi turns a servant girl into a replica of herself and then orders her to murder King Dasaratha. Contrarily, a fallen soldier from Bejoo's regiment named Bheria is granted life by Ravana. Next, this "twice-lifer" is compelled to travel to Ayodhya to claim Dasaratha's corpse. He then instructs his sons, Bharat and Shtrughan, to divide the Ayodhya army into two groups, rendering Ayodhya vulnerable and paving the way for Ravana to capture it. Guru Vasishtha takes charge by thwarting Ravana's plans, even if Bheria achieves his objective.

Banker has chosen to dress Sita in contemporary colors. In her quest to ensure Mithila's safety, she and her female bodyguard Nakhudi disguise themselves as soldiers and roam the Dandak-Van and Bhayanak-Van forests. She is far from a timid princess, though. But she is saved from the bandits by none other than Rama! They were attacked by them! The sage had consciously veered off course to touch Mithila because he anticipated that Ravana would target her first. No copy of the legendary epic Ramayana includes the attack on Mithila because, like so many other parts, it is entirely imaginary.

Rama rescues Ahalya when she is on the road; her husband had already condemned her to turn into a stone. At Mithila, Ravana enters in disguise and destroys the Swayamvar, which is a girl's marriage by choice in an open court. He has the opportunity to claim Sita and finish the remaining Swayamvar criteria. Upon Janak's continued resistance, Ravana seizes him by the neck. In a desperate bid for her father's life, Sita begs to be married to Ravana. In the end, though, Rama is victorious and gets Sita thanks to the intervention of the two brothers. Ravana makes a threatening threat to rape the nation and its princess Sita before he disappears, threatening to take Mithila at night. Both brothers are spearheading the effort to defend Mithila from the oncoming Rakshas hordes, aided by the Brahmastra that their Guru has provided. It is more of a mantra than a weapon; all they have to do is read it to expel the hordes. There is a hopeful ending to Part 2 of Banker's Ramayana. Imagining a cosmos consumed by magic and sorcery is a common reaction to reading this book. Even at Sita Swayamvar, in King Janak's court, Ravana used a mantra to make himself seem like one of the courtiers.

Also, he could manifest before his devotees (such as Manthara) who worshipped him as gods by offering sacrifices and singing mantras. Ravana possesses the ability to both hurt and heal those who follow him. For the purpose of tricking Dasaratha's sons, Bharat and Shtrughan, he may even inhabit Dasaratha's body! In order to achieve his goals, Banker uses magic extensively and manipulates the storyline. Like the famous

"vish-kanyas" of the Middle Ages, Manthara turns a servant girl into a clone of Kaikeyi and orders her to poison Dasaratha. To the contrary, she "unveiled two massive, serpentine fangs" as she buried the Maharaja's face between her breasts! Following that, "Kaikeyi raised her head and fell on Dasaratha with the ferocity of a predator in heat, giving one last, bone-chilling hiss." She gently sealed her lips around Dasaratha's neck. A female Dracula, indeed! The story goes that Manthara is a powerful magician who ensnared Queen Sumitra in her secret jail, where the chanting of mantras fills the air. Plus, by disguising herself as Shakti, the goddess, Sumitra manages to fool the daiimaa.

Banker employs exaggeration to enliven the story when he speaks of a 7.5 lac-strong Ayodhya army under the command of the 7000-year-old Guru Vasishta. The five-thousand-year-old seer, Guru Vishwamitra, moves so quickly that others following him go far behind. He slows down when someone points this out to him so that others can keep up with him. The gurus are comparable to gods because of their immense power. In Banker's depiction of the current situation, the wise men lead the government. Guru Vasishta outlines the strategy to defeat the invading Asuran army. He may say to King Janak, "I decree that this very night your great and virtuous city shall be given the fruit of its immense spiritual labours," since he is conscious of his authority. You will bravely and honourably repel this oncoming Asura horde and protect Mithila. The whole army of Asuras may vanish into thin air thanks to the Guru's mantra-power, or what Banker calls "Brahmin power." It scarcely gives the army or the monarch any room to manoeuvre. The sequence in which Rama descends Vasuki's pit to resurrect Ahalya is a masterpiece for fans of suspense films, with terrifying Vetaals (phantoms) battling the two brothers and even Sita, who dispatches four or five of them! Banker's skill in depicting Amazon is shown by his thrillers, which he wrote before transitioning to epics.

This realm of myth and magic is designed to coexist with some aspects of contemporary human existence, including modern terminology. Violence unites the two, and the method gives the characters a surprising depth of colour. Since Rama and Lakshman are humans rather than gods, their meeting follows the traditional "boy meets girl" format. While Sita is looking for Rama:

> Lakshman came up beside him. He spoke softly in Rama's right ear, 'Looks like someone's still sore as a mule at being outed, brother. Watch out for her back-kick!'

> Rama dug his elbow into Lakshman's ribs.

It's not simply the contemporary vernacular; it also forces many contemporary illnesses and lifestyle deviations onto the mythological era. Thus, the saints found a diabetes treatment, and the serving girl of Manthara proposes a lesbian-style pact to her mistress. As the former servant girl turns into a Kaikeyi, she walks about in her underwear, "brushing against the guards", but the guards would simply assume that the queen had taken more "soma than she could hold." Disguised as soldiers, Sita and Nakhudi are said to be itinerant Kshatriyas, ready to toil for any master in exchange for financial gain. That being said, there are mercenaries here as well. Vinayaka's brother Kartikeya, who represents the Kshatriyas, enjoys consuming marijuana and experiencing "ganja dreams". How the tale of Lord Vinayaka is woven into the novel will probably mislead readers into thinking that Banker's hallucinations created the confusion.

At a minimum, the author may have tried to research the significance and definition of common terms. He utters "Om Hari Swaha" into the mouths of the younger Sidh Ashram pupils, treating it as if it were the Sanskrit counterpart of the final "Amen" of prayer. When Guru Vasishta concludes his discourse, he is forced to utter this same word, to which the audience also replies, "Swaha"! This situation often ends with iti, which means "the end." Banker refers to the pupils as "Brahmacharya" rather than "Brahmachari." People call seers "Mahadev"! One of his creations is an allusion to the Vasishth Puran; informed academics contest the existence of this kind of literature. However, there is the Yoga Vasishta. Likewise, the 400-year-old incantation "Jai Mata Di" seems out of place when juxtaposed with the narrative of legendary times. The author mistakenly believes that "Indra-prastha" is the residence of the deity Indra, placing it in Swarga Lok!

One representation is of the city of Mithila, a virtual utopia under the spiritualist ruler Janak's leadership. The city has few defences but many gambling establishments, bikini-clad women, polygamy, polyandry, etc.! Interestingly, Sita's veil was taken off in the bush by Guru Vasishta via the use of "sorcery." Sita also wanted to "run away from these gaping, gawking people and scream out loud". She warns them appropriately, saying, "And the rest of you, go to the next pub or dancing club if you want fun! This isn't a free performance for your entertainment.

When they first meet in the bush before the Swayamvar, Lakshman says to Sita, "I hear Mithila virgins have fine figures too!" You have a talent for capturing a man's interest. "All night, I'll be dreaming about nude women prancing down the Raj Marg!". It's also implied that Sita is a picky girl when it comes to her match: "This was not the first swayamvara performed for Rajkumari." She has a reputation for turning down hundreds of admirers. This might be the meaning of Banker's statement in the novel's introduction that he

intends to tell the Rama story "respectfully yet realistically" (xxii). To appeal to the Western reader, he has added titillation and made significant liberties with the tale as it is widely accepted.

Banker treats the popular Ramayana in a way that goes beyond mere rereading to paint a new picture of a time, its culture, and its values. However, the underlying idealizing goal has not been spared harm. The following lines make it clear that the story shifts from the conflict between the forces of dharma and its enemies—a value-reading of the myth by pious Hindus—to a materialistic struggle between two races for supremacy: "A direct assault on Lanka was beyond the contemplation of any mortal army." Nevertheless, the Aryan countries had little chance of exploring and securely colonizing the subcontinent if Lanka was under the control of the demon ruler.

Amish Tripathi –

The Immortals of Meluha, The Secret of the Nagas, and The Oath of the Vayuputras are the books that make up Amish Tripathi's Shiva Trilogy. This trilogy, written by another Indian author, has sold around two million copies. The sale, which generated more than Rs 500 million, has propelled the Shiva Trilogy to the position of fastest-selling book series in India's history. His current endeavor is adapting the Ramayana into a series of books. Although Tripathi's writing lacks literary elegance and is quite plain, it seems Ashok Banker influenced him. Regarding the subject matter, he lacks regard for authenticity and instead mashes things together in a postmodern mélange fashion. "The most awkward of all possible ways—myth, history, and fiction—combine with potentially dangerous consequences" (Gurevitch).

Within the pages of this book, Shiva is identified as one of the three ancient gods—Brahma, Vishnu, and Mahesh—that the Indian people have long honoured. As the messiah, Shiva possesses a blue throat, engages in serpent play, and puffs on an earthen pipe, as described in the scriptures. Here he is shown as the head of the Guna people, who live in Tibet near the foot of Mount Kailash. Instead of riding a bull named Nandi, the leader of the Suryavanshi clan invites Shiva and his tribe, the Gunas, to reside in Meluha (Kashmir), the most prosperous and powerful country in the cosmos. When Shiva arrives to aid the Suryavanshi tribe of Meluha in their victory against the degraded Chandravanshi clan of Ayodhya, they celebrate him as a savior. The Chandravanshi were worshippers of Lord Ram, but they had abandoned his egalitarian ideals. In a terrifying assault on the Suryavanshis, they have joined forces with the Nagas.

The sophisticated Meluhan society lived close to Hariyupa (or Harappa), and its scientists created Somras, also known as "the drink of the gods." Taking the Somras at certain intervals not only delays death significantly but also permits us to experience a lifetime of mental and physical youth. Motivated by envy, the Chandravanshis never stop coming up with plans to stop the Somras' production by changing the Saraswati River's flow, which provides the water needed for the Somras' output. The Nagas, a martial race with physical abnormalities, are also aligned with the Chandravanshis!

But Tripathi is in favour of humanizing god. Shiva, therefore, curses a lot and is unable to give up smoking marijuana despite warnings. He is rendered "presentable" for the Suryavanshi king's arrival: He had smoothed and oiled his hair. Lines of designer clothing, alluring necklaces, earrings, and other jewellery adorned his toned body. Years of dead skin and deterioration have been removed from his lovely face using unique Ayurvedic herbs.

Shiva sees Sati, the daughter of King Daksha, here while she is receiving dancing instruction from an instructor. Shiva impresses her so much with his dance that the instructor decides to step aside. Does it bring any Hindi film to mind? However, Sati is a "karma," which means she is believed to have sinned in a past life. Shiva is against this idea. According to the book, Lord Ram formalized the "vikarma" system, which is implemented arbitrarily today and based on one's conduct. It is a parody of the evil caste system that exists in India.

Shiva, played by Tripathi, is a naive and self-assured figure. He does not know Lord Ram nor comprehend the significance of the holy term "Aum" or "Om." At times, such as when Shiva has to learn the meaning of Aum, Nandi also serves as his mentor. "My Lord, Aum is the holiest word in our religion," Nandi declares. It is regarded as a primordial sound found in nature. The universe's song was so sacred that most people refused to desecrate it by recording it in writing for millennia.

"The Shiva Trilogy was formed around the philosophical issue of "What is Evil?" Tripathi claims, in an attempt to convey a philosophical viewpoint that is ultimately fruitless. (In German). Although the book does draw on famous Foucauldian theory—which posits that social outcasts are not evil but rather special— the author does not delve deeply enough into the topics at hand. There is no shame in corrupting mythology. The reign of Lord Ram took occurred 1250 years before to the events depicted in this book, in 1850 BC. Rama and Krishna are considered to be incarnations of Vishnu alone, hence according to conventional

mythology, they cannot be placed before Shiva. This is due to the fact that the trinity of Brahman, Vishnu, and Shiva is the primordial divine pantheon that rules the universe. How, therefore, could Shiva love Rama so much? In India, it is common to see photographs showing Rama preparing to assault Ravana's kingdom while worshipping Shivalingum.

One common explanation for Shiva's appellation, "Neelkanth," is that he became one with the ocean's poison during the Deva-Asur War after drinking itself to death. Here, though, Tripathi says that the messaih's blue throat—the result of ingesting somras—is what really gave him that physical trait, just like a litmus test in a classroom! Tripathi will not spare history either. The brilliant intellect of philosopher Mohan came up with the concept that the Indus Valley Civilization's capital city, Mohan jo Daro, should be named after him.

Marxist paradise and Plato's Republic are among the ideas that Tripathi muddles. Meluha views children as a form of governmental property. In "Maika" the state encourages youngsters to play with the idea of removing caste barriers. Before kids turn sixteen, students have to complete a few exams. Adoptive parents who identify as Brahmin would have no trouble finding a child to adopt. With the passage of time, the number of Brahmins rose. Where, therefore, was the elimination of caste? Legend has it that Rudra abandoned the Vayuputras and Lord Vishnu abandoned the Vasudev caste. Those who are still on the fence about reading the next book should probably wait till it's out in the wild because this one is just a teaser.

Tripathi confuses everything that comes his way. Take the topic of untouchability that he came upon in the morning newspaper as an example. In that instance, we learn of communities of "vikarma" individuals who, because to their sins in previous lives, are doomed to an eternity of misery and anguish. The diagnosis of an incurable sickness or the delivery of a stillborn child are considered to be instances of "vikarma" for the individual. Inflexible in his opposition to this system is Shiva. Terrorist attacks play a significant role in the storyline once again. A parallel to the Chandravanshis may be drawn between the Pakistani terrorists and them. A historical event in India in which Hemu's army was defeated by Babur's artillery is recalled by the elephants' circling and crushing of their army. Similar to the mayhem on Indian highways, Swadeep, the capital of Chandravanshi, has more potholes than roads. These days, encroachment is the norm: "Illegal immigrants had just set up tents on public land, turning some open grounds into enormous slums." Fabric tents set up by the homeless had encroached into the already cramped roads, making matters worse. There was constant tension between the well-off homeowners and the poor, landless slum dwellers. The emperor

has given his approval to all incursions built prior to 1910 BC.

Therefore, Tripathi has assembled all the elements to form a conventional Bollywood story. Film plots aren't complete without alluring female leads. So, Anandmayi, who is curvaceous, has asked for fifty liters of milk for her spa treatment! (366). The hero's companion Bhadra and Krittika tie the knot since he has a right to his recompense (286). Both young and old in Ayodhya are seen dating anyone their hearts want, which surpasses even the most docile European civilizations.

Devdutt Patanaik –

But Devdutt Pattanaik offers a novel take on epics, in contrast to the hectic mélange that authors like Banker and Tripathi have developed in their works. He is a management consultant who supports his management theories using mythological quotations. His attitude to the ancient epics is that of a modest researcher and seeker, which sets his work apart. It is shown by his contribution to the Sita book's preface. "The Eternal Truth is hidden within countless myths; who can see everything? Varuna has a thousand eyes; Indra has a hundred; and I have only two" (Pattanaik xv).

Upon reading Pattanaik's Jaya, one is impressed by the author's inventiveness in searching for the work's hidden significance and applicability to the present day. He used this approach with The Leadership Sutra, which quickly gained popularity among management students. Out of the many Mahabharata tales available in India and other countries, the author of Jaya has chosen a few and created an accurate rendition that he finds appealing. Every episode concludes with his remarks in the box, illuminating any doubts in the story. For instance, we use the passage "Bhima and the Nagas" (Pattanaik 73), which describes Duryodhana's jealousy of the Pandavas in their early years. They would fight over things like throne succession. Even though the Pandavas were entitled under the original bloodline's law, Duryodhana resisted them. They were also afraid since they had little influence in the court and their mother was a widow. Duryodhana, on the other hand, was weary of Bhima's bullying.

Consequently, one day, Duryodhana sent poisoned candies to Bhima, and when he passed out, the Kaurava brothers tossed him into the river. However, as luck would have it, the nagas who lived in the river rescued him. After that, they brought him before their ruler Vasuki, who acknowledged Bhima's ancestry as a Naga. In addition, he offered Bhima a potion that would shield him from poison in the future.

Pattanaik has remarked on several of the story's flaws, and at least three of the five boxed remarks need mentioning here. The first argument emphasises the moot point: "Which son—the oldest or the fittest—should be king? Does a kid come from the original lineage, or is there someone else with the necessary skills? Throughout the epic, Vyasa muses on this idea. (Pattanaik 74). The third point is based on a Tamil folktale that claims that, while the Pandavas were delighted to see Bhima again, he insisted on continuing with the feast despite their belief that he was dead and that it was part of his death rites. He combined the chopped veggies with the coconut milk. Tamil Nadu still makes this dish, known as "aviyal." The purpose of telling this story is to illustrate how common people now identify with mythological stories.

The fifth point states that Bhima married a Naga girl while living among the Nagas and that the offspring of that marriage is known as Barbareek in Rajasthani folklore and Bilalsen in Oriya folklore. This emphasizes even more how widespread and deep-rooted mythological stories are across India. The important thing to consider about these passages is how quickly people's lifestyles, customs, eating habits, and other aspects of their lives are changing due to globalization, or "westernisation." If writers like Pattanaik don't retell these stories modernly, future generations will feel increasingly disconnected from their original cultures.

In Pattaniak's Sita, the Ramayana is retold from Sita's point of view. Additionally, he uses many tables to provide various Ramayana facts and numbers. For example, the name of Sita's mother varies between the many Ramayana translations. A reviewer remarks, "Ramayan is still the story of the legendary hero Ram; there are no antagonistic thoughts in Sita's mind against her husband who disowned her because of a petty washerman," drawing a comparison between Devdutt Pattanaik's and Amish Tripathi approaches. The narrative differs from Amish's Shiva Trilogy in that it doesn't include a lot of invented layers (Jha).

Others - Some authors who take their writing seriously also want to provide an alternative perspective not included in the original work. Leading author Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni, renowned for her beautiful language, retells the Mahabharata from Draupadi's perspective in her book The Palace of Illusions. The plot is original, at least as it is popularly recognized in India, but this work takes a distinct viewpoint—a feminist one that appeals to a large audience. Here, the emphasis is on Draupadi's relationships with Krishna and Karna. Following suit, Anand Neelakantan tried rewriting the Ramayana in his Asura from Ravana's perspective. Because of this book's success, Neelakantan decided to rewrite the Mahabharata. The first volume, Ajaya, tells the story from the Kauravas' perspective. Kavita Kane's Karna's Wife is based on a

different interpretation of the Mahabharata.

Conclusion

The investigation into the Myth-Fiction Interface within the Indian context unveils a captivating tapestry of cultural transformation. By comprehensively examining various forms of literature, film, and art, it becomes apparent that the intersection of myth and fiction carries substantial ramifications for forming the collective consciousness. The intricate interplay between archaic mythological motifs and modern narratives is a potent conduit for cultural evolution.

The research emphasizes the persistent significance of myth within the dynamic realm of Indian culture, demonstrating its seamless integration with fiction to produce a narrative alchemy that resonates with diverse audiences across multiple generations. The synthesis not only safeguards the cultural heritage ingrained within mythology but also propels it towards the future, accommodating the requirements and sensitivities of modern society.

Moreover, the transformative potential of storytelling is prominently showcased, highlighting the ability of narratives to transcend temporal limitations and serve as channels for communal experiences. As individuals actively interact with these narratives through literature, film, or art, they partake in a dynamic process of cultural evolution, thereby making valuable contributions to the ongoing discourse between tradition and modernity.

The Myth-Fiction Interface is a crucial factor in shaping the identity of Indian culture, serving as a fertile ground for creative expression and collective reflection. As we traverse this interface, it becomes apparent that the amalgamation of myth and fiction serves as a vehicle for storytelling and as a catalyst in shaping the essence of our cultural tapestry. It ensures that the profoundness of tradition remains an indispensable component within the perpetually evolving narrative of India.

In line with what Harold Bloom calls "misreading," the fourth sort of myth-fictionalization, young poets frequently employ this strategy to discredit the "father-figure" of established poets, whose generosity they exploit for their own financial benefit despite their inherent incomparability. sections 71–98. Some Western authors have even gone so far as to assert their entitlement to sit next to a renowned author from the past, regardless of whether that writer is alive or not, and this raises questions about their dedication in this

context.

Myths and legends have recently been the target of scholarly efforts to decipher concealed or exaggerated historical narratives. Beowulf, the first epic poem written in English, is the subject of much historical speculation. Like his nephew Beowulf, the remarkable life story of the northern chieftain Chochilaicus (d. 520 A.D.) has fascinated historians. Chochilaicus drew parallels between himself and the epic's ruler Hygelac. (Renewal 17) Similarly, social scientist Arnold Toynbee describes Homer's Iliad as "a unique blend of history and fiction." See Dhar 39. Historical records, according to modern Western thinkers, are not completely accurate but rather interconnected and open to several interpretations. Yes, historians do pick and choose which sources to use and do so in accordance with their own ideological framework. Allusions to fantastic creatures in Greek, Egyptian, and Indian mythology may really represent depictions of real-life beings observed by aliens at that era, according to modern scientific consensus. Occasionally, artwork made by extraterrestrials has also been found. Images taken by the National Aeronautics and Space Administration of the Rama Setu, often called Adam's Bridge, which links Sri Lanka with the southern tip of India in the Gulf of Mannar, provide credence to the Rama mythology.

Think about how the ancient Indians felt about the past as well. Because it was more concerned with the profound and everlasting questions of existence and the cosmos than with transient ones, the Indian mind hated documenting historical facts in the same way that Westerners did. But they did meticulously document the outcomes of their spiritual realm inquiries, as the Upanishads show. Each aspect of human existence—personal, social, political, and cultural—has its own set of rules, and the Ramayana and Mahabharata laid them out. For Barucha, the Mahabharata is "not just a magnificent story poem; it is our itihasa, the essential source of knowledge for our literature, dance, painting, sculpture, theology, statecraft, sociology, ecology - in summary, our history in all its complexity and detail" (quoted in Dhar 230). Enlightened ancient Indian scholars viewed the stories as parables for the common man and his limited knowledge, while the Vedas and Upanishads were regarded as enlightenment writings due to their logical and maxim-based prose.

Every myth contains some element of exaggeration. Their lengthy history of existence explains this. Exaggeration may not have successfully communicated the original message in the case of thousands of years, even in a simple experiment performed in a short communication chain, when wide changes from the original message are visible. Various metaphorical readings of the Ramayana have been proposed. The stories are seen differently by the modern spiritual leaders. For instance, Jaggi Vasudeva finds that the Shiva

Purana provides a narrative explanation of contemporary scientific discoveries in his reading of the sacred text.

The postmodern project of deconstructing hierarchies is admirable because it highlights the disadvantaged, but by promoting the retelling, re-mixing, and subsequent disparaging re-presentation of the myth, aren't we essentially creating the opposite of the original secular/religious or, more precisely, faithless/faithful binary? Anyone who thinks rationally or intuitively in the post-truth era should have the same deconstructive freedom, right? One further contradiction that needs resolving arises from Harold Bloom's concept of present/past. In this regard, it could be instructive to recall the following quote from the famous essay "Tradition and Individual Talent" by T.S. Eliot: "Someone said: "The deceased authors are far from us because we know so much more than they did." Indeed, they are the things of which we are aware.

Beyond these concerns, anthropologists have much more to consider. Writers need to monetize cultural works instead of texts in order to support themselves, and myth-based novels might attract readers who are oblivious to their cultural links, like those in the West. But we can't turn a blind eye to the change in perspective that this devaluation of symbols and principles will inevitably bring about in terms of the cultural discourse that forms the subject — the youth of the next generation, for whom Rama and Krishna may stand in for nothing more than comic book heroes like Batman and Superman, rather than the principles of an entire race. Is it not a waste of time to try to give Ram and other mythical figures the traits of a "pure imaginary," as has been done with the idea of nation? If we do this, we risk robbing society of something vital to its continued existence. Are we positive that symbols and ideals are necessary in a society where principles are consistently dismantled across all domains? Considering the following is essential: "Whole communities are known to submit to the prevalent or dominant culture in the absence of smirti, the life-giving memory of what generations have cherished and passed on" (Paranjape 123).

The problem originates from the careless importation of Western norms into an indigenous (in this instance, Indian) creation. The "production" of a "text" may be reduced to its barest essentials by applying Marx's theory of discourse to it. There is little influence from power dynamics on the Ramayana's tale since its creator, Valmiki, was not driven to perpetuate his dominance. Real ascetics were people who had cut themselves apart from society and sought enlightenment rather than material prosperity. They were explorers of the spiritual realm. Indian mythology is rife with stories of good and evil at odds with one another, but ultimately, kindness wins out. Indian poetics, which states that literature (sahitya) must support

dharma (the morality of thought and behavior at the individual and social levels) and promote the welfare of all, is the only framework that can be used to evaluate their argument. We leave the ephemeral parts of Indian mythology to the next generation and hold on to the eternal parts.

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