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## Chapter I

### Introduction

At least since the seventies of the last century, our literatures seem to have entered a phase of revisionist myth-making where myths are revised and reinterpreted from original perspectives (Satchidanandan, *Myth in Contemporary Indian Literature* xiii).

Revisioning has been a significant trend in contemporary cultural production. Githa Hariharan largely uses this technique of revisionary writing in her fictional works. Her novels are not only revisiting of the ancient myths, tales, and legend but the personal histories, anecdotes, memories and memoirs of her characters. Indeed, "Writing as Re-visioning" (Adrienne Rich) has been an important praxis in postcolonial feminist writings. It is retrospective and subversive in its approach. It can be deduced as a revisiting or rethinking of the past. This act of writing is not only engaged with the task of re-reading texts of the past but recontextualising texts. This new method of revisionary writing aims to rediscover and reclaim the past, and to reconstruct the history of writing. It is a consequence of the present self-consciousness and revolutionary approach that is practised in postcolonial writing. As postcolonial text defies master narrative or universality of western literature that is challenged by revisiting native narrative technique and literary style, revisionary feminist text defies phallogentric narrative or universality of the masculine literary canon and challenges it by innovative narrative technique and new literary canon. In fact, revisionary writing helps rediscovery of the experiences of marginalised people and it provides a scope to redefine their repressed self. It relooks the past with fresh eyes and

from different points of view. It is an act of revisiting past text, texture and context. Thus, revisionists retell the past from a different perspective to get different meanings. This writing gives a new challenge and a promise to female writers new psychic geography to be explored. It would challenge the idea that how even today writing and naming is a masculine prerogative. It strongly protests writing as a sole empire of man where women are violently being deprived of and alienated. Adrienne Rich, an American poet and feminist theorist, has formulated this feminist philosophy of writing in her famous theoretical essay, "When We Dead Awaken: Writing as Re-visioning". She has conceptualised this idea "Writing as Revisioning, the act of looking back with fresh eyes, of entering an old text from a new critical direction" (Rich 35). She wants to reinvestigate the monopoly business of writing at the hand of man and to re-narrate the female experiences of the world and to rectify self-debasing image of a woman and to defy derogatory meaning in myth, history and literature. To her, this retrospective writing is an act of reclamation. It gets its urgency in the politics of writing for survival. It is a textual reaction to the tradition. This new scheme of writing philosophy revolts against the phallogocentric tradition of writing and defining, writing and naming predominantly designed by man to give his own opinion of the world by denying it to women. In this masculinised process of writing and defining, man attains the power to define his own self and woman's self, to see the world with his own perspective. Writing as revisioning has become a strong opponent to the vigorous tradition of masculinity in producing discourses and knowledge. Having opposed this phallogocentric tradition, "Writing as re-visioning" is a retrospective process of relooking, revisiting, recasting and reinterpreting the old texts and thus, it endeavours to reverse the traditional perspective of life and world. Adrienne Rich demands, "We need to know the writing of the past, and know it differently than we have ever known it, not to pass on tradition but to break its hold over us" (Rich 35). Most of the feminist literary writers follow this method of writing to promote the self-reflexive female literary subculture and identify themselves with it.

This feminist literary tradition enables a woman to reanalyse her own situation in the world and redefine her self and can make free themselves from the perversion of female body and sexuality. In this new process of writing her self will liberate from the bondage of masculine text, she would come out of the narrow confinement where she was kept under overwhelmed brainwashing. In short, while '*écriture féminine*' is rediscovery to female 'self', 'feminine literature' to 'female literary self'. Thus, writing as re-visioning has become a self rectifying and self-defining act of writing.

Feminist writers have proclaimed a separate literary subculture to represent female subcultural experiences of the world. Elaine Showalter calls it a female literary tradition. It involves a new mechanism of female writing. A continuous effort is seen in feminist writing to formulate a new literary canon, to create a new feminine language and thus, it subverts the unquestioned goodness of phallogocentric texts. It is a recurrent concept in most of the feminist theoretical writings. As Helene Cixous brings the idea of "*écriture féminine*" in her thought-provoking essay, "The Laugh of The Medusa" and makes it a perpetual afflatus for producing feminist text. This essay seems to be a theoretical explanation of the feminist ideology of writing. It has established a new literary tradition of women's writing. To her, it is a kind of 'new insurgent writing' (Cixous) to liberate writing from the masculine regime and provide it new sovereignty. It aims to reclaim the conquered world of the female body, an inexplicable and unrepresentable continent in masculine discourses. It would provide women to speak, find her history and meaning. Indeed, '*écriture féminine*' is all about writing about women, bringing women into writing and text. It suggests turning the female body and self into text, to write about female sexuality and to create female-sexed text. The female body has been the main cause of marginalisation and misogyny. So, women must speak about the positive qualities of

the female body, women must write with their body and sexuality, and write in white ink, milk; this dark empire must be re-explored and bare truth about her body must be exposed to the world. To Cixous '*écriture féminine*' is utmost necessary to bring women into writing, bring her into her senses, and it also plays a significant role at establishing a universal female-female bond across the world; the need of a global sisterhood. Female literature becomes a medium for integrating herself with other women across the world. It is a way of re-establishing the lost relationship of a woman with her own beings. Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar make a statement in their "The Madwoman in the Attic" that revisionary writing is required to maintain "the secret sisterhood of their literary subculture" (Gilbert and Gubar 1924). In the essay, Cixous states that '*écriture féminine*' cannot be defined. But it does not mean that it does not exist. Thus, feminist writing is characterised by vehement challenges against phallogocentrism and subversion of its adhering tradition.

Another aspect of feminist revisionary writing is to disestablish the self-annihilating image of women usually found in ancient gender-biased texts and discourses and thereby create new images of self constructive females. Moreover, it aims to change the societal perspective of looking at women. It is basically re-exploration of the real self of women that needs to be recognized. As Showalter views in her *A Literature of Their Own* that female literary subculture has become a process of discovery of text and self. Helene Cixous's *écriture féminine*- automatic writing looks for reflecting female bodies or putting female body/ sexuality into text. To her *écriture féminine* is a kind of illogical/ loose or automatic writing to protest logical/ systematic writing of man. It is worth knowing that revisionary writing engages itself with revisioning text, language, love and relationship. Likewise, C. T. Mahanty covertly suggests revisionist writing of third world feminism to resist the first world feminist colonial discourses on women of third

world countries. Mohanty, a transnational feminist theorist, tries to transcend the homogeneity of western feminism by reflecting the heterogeneous experiences of third world women. On the other hand, Gerda Lerner has developed revisionary historiography in her *The Creation of Patriarchy* and here she tries to reconstruct the past. She argues that revisioning of ancient history is utmost necessary to distort certain myths on women and to establish a different history for women whose account of life was neglected in the phallogentric historiography.

Feminist subversionary writing treats the tradition of masculinised writing as hegemonic, complicit and biased, and hence, it questions the conventional epistemology. Women were forcefully kept away from writing and articulation for ages; they were wrongly conceptualized in classical discourses and thereby debarred them from the epistemological process. Field of writing and defining had been primarily masculine domain. The intellectual world had never accepted women. It means half of the world population with different experiences had not been given any chance for intellectual pursuit. They were simply alienated from the intellectual world. Thus, masculine discourses start defining female as inferior and weaker sex and considered them not good for any form of art. They have been left in dark and narrow space. Having lost integrity with the larger society, they could not share their experience with society, could not make their points of view and thus, they could not represent themselves in any human discourse. And thus, female self had left undiscovered and unexplained. It was accepted that the intellectual process is a purely masculine affair. Thus, writing has been essentially a phallogentric tradition and masculine empire. Thereby women were kept away from the production of knowledge and culture. As Helene Cixous rightly argues, "Nearly the entire history of writing is confounded with the history of reason, of which it is at once the effect, the support, and one of the privileged alibis. It has one with the phallogentric tradition"

(Cixous 1946). Hence feminists find ground to criticize traditional history as incomplete, bias and alienating because it has nothing to speak about half of the population of the world, i.e. women. Myths are completely phallogocentric discourses which are produced for propagating patriarchal values and norms. There is no real meaning of women in history and myth. Thus, both of them talk only about man's adventure, chivalry and martyrdom.

Undoubtedly there is much ground at Feminists' criticism of myth, legend and history as androcentric and complicit discourses. They are compounded with prejudiced ideas and thoughts which simply propagate masculine ways of life, values, norms and ethics. Myths are created by men about the world, life and destiny which influence everyday life of the people even today. Numerous myths about woman, her body and sex have been created not by a woman but a man. Social sense of gender results in hierarchical polarities. Basing on this gender sense traditionally we have been experiencing severe coloniality within the family and society. Since the beginning of human civilization, a polarisation starts in human society. Gender dichotomy has been a continuous process. Hierarchical human relationship is always observed in a gendered society. After the emergence of the concept of family and private property a section of the population becomes dominant, superior, planner and maker of human destiny. Another section starts to be confined, subordinated, marginalised and oppressed. Process of gendering and othering begins in the early part of human civilisation. Unequal power distribution or reciprocal relationship is noticed at this stage. This human dichotomy influences the whole process of creation of myth, history and knowledge. This is how phallogocentrism gets its way to regulate society and the entire world. It is used in social as well as an ideological structure. Man is dreamer, planner and actor of life; a woman is allotted to play the limited role as an audience, mere spectator and receiver, and finally, she is made merely a follower of his

footstep. She does not have an active role to play in life. In this social order, a woman is simply subjected to man. Thus, she has been alienated and othered in society throughout the generations. Consequently, mythical ideas of woman baffle her to realize her real self and her position in society. Often, she is defined as a lack of her 'self' or she is attributed to 'distorted self' or 'corrupt form'. Prevailing myths on a woman are responsible for the tradition of the derogatory and debasing definition of woman. The woman is defined as mere sex, the weaker sex, dirt, inferior being, dependent, untrustworthy etc. She is believed to be dangerous, unpredictable and incomprehensible. Mythologically women are defined as half-human and half-deity. Society acknowledges her incomplete identity with a deformed body. It means it has denied her to enjoy her distinct individual status, a being of flesh and blood. The myth of female deformed body that causes fragmented identity of the woman is being challenged in revisionary writing.

Traditional literary history is accused of playing a partial role in studying life and works of authors. It is found to be exclusively male discourse. It has not given the focus on life and works of female authors. Though there were many women writers whose life and works were not studied seriously, never given proper acknowledgement in the masculine literary history. Women writers were simply ignored because society never accepted women in the intellectual field. The writing was considered a purely masculine act. There was a famous and popular Greek woman poet who was known as Sappho is hardly known to the masculinised world. Lady Murasaki, a Japanese female poet and novelist of 11<sup>th</sup> century who authored *The Lady at Waiting*<sup>[1]</sup> left undiscovered for many years. The feminist scholarship recognizes her as the first writer of modern fiction as a literary genre. Because Great Britain experiences novel writing only in the 18th century. Nineteenth-century Britain witnesses numerous female novelists which can



be considered 'age of the female novelists'. But neither literary historians nor critics of that time had given any importance to women writers and their works. In India, during Vedic age, there were many women seers and poets like Gargi, Ghosha, Godha, Vishwvara, Apala, Maitreyi, Arundhati and Lilavati. These women's names virtually have never come in the list of writers in India. It is seen that literary history is indifferent at showing female literary tradition, their struggle and anxiety as writers. Thus, female literary heritage never gets registered in male-dominated literary history. So, in her, *A Literature of Their Own* Elaine Showalter proclaims the need of alternative literary history, female literary tradition, and female literary sub-culture, and female literary sub-genre. It is an alternative to the mainstream literary tradition dominated by male authors. Female literary tradition has its justifications because females have different subcultural experiences in their life. It may also be justified from another point of their unique biological and marginalized experiences. Female literary history would explore the life and works of female writers of different ages. It may construct a strong female literary heritage.

Githa Hariharan's name is closely associated with revisiting and re-writing the past. She revisits myth, history, ancient tales and legends. Her fictional world is concerned with re-narrating and relooking the past with fresh eyes. It is reinterpretation about myth, tale, history and legend with feminist perspectives. In her fiction myth and history are revisioned, recast and reinterpreted to reinstate female self and identity. Many myths of the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata* are revisited through her fiction for reconstruction and recontextualisation. In other words, her fiction rereads myths to decode new meaning and to challenge the conventional perspective of reading for masculine values. Hariharan's feminist revisionary writing also aims to reconstruct those mythical female figures that are overshadowed or usually kept under marginalized focus at traditional reading. It tries to mutate the conventional image

of women in classical literature and create a new image in modern literature. Marginalized female figures are made main protagonists or narrators to present them as the symbols of oppressed voices. Indeed, contemporary writers use these old materials for different purposes. Myth is used as a metaphor, symbol, interpreter and technique or sometimes as fantasy. Its use can be looked at two ways: one is to find a historical link with the past and the other is for ideological reasoning. Myth is often invoked at different situations to identify with the past situation or to get particular intended meaning out of it. As K. Satchidanandan says in his "Introduction" to seminal work of anthology *Myth in Contemporary Indian Literature* (2003), "Mythological references in literature establish our psychological origin or structure of our collective unconsciousness: we all know how a single reference to a character or situation in an episode of the *Ramayana* or *Mahabharata* suddenly illuminates a whole personal or social context and unleashes a flood of associations in the readers or listeners" (Satchidanandanx). Hariharan also concerns with revisiting recent past of personal or socio-political history to trace the self and its marginalized state.

Myth has got a new significance in contemporary Indian literary writings. Postcolonial Indian writings use myth and history largely. A new relation has been developed between myth and literature. K. Satchidanandan's *Myth in Contemporary Indian Literature* has been a landmark in the critical study of this relationship as it highlights numerous ways of using myths in literature. It includes research articles on the diverse use of myth in contemporary Indian literature. Writers use and reuse myths for different purposes and implications. Mythical characters and situations are brought back in literature to articulate or interpret the new social, political and mental condition and one of the most fundamental objectives of using myth is to

articulate the present social predicaments and to create strong symbols of oppressions. As Satchidanandan says,

At least since the seventies of the last century, our literatures seem to have entered a phase of revisionist myth-making where myths are revisioned and reinterpreted from original perspectives. The feminist, tribal and Dalit discourses have been particularly productive in retellings: marginalized or oppressed characters like Sambooka of the Ramayana slain by Rama for doing penance, a right denies to Sudras, or Ekalavya of the Mahabharata disempowered by Brahmin Drona who asked for Ekalavya's thumb as his teacher's fees as the disciple, an *avarana*, had secretly learnt what he was not authorized to learn, have appeared in tribal and Dalit literatures as symbols of oppressions (Satchidanandan xiii).

In many subversive writing myths are revisited and reinterpreted. Marginalized characters of ancient literature like Sita, Mandodari, Urmila, Soorpanaka, Sambooka and his wife are portrayed by Sara Joseph as victims in her short story series. Kavita Kane revisions life of Urvi, Urmila, and Menaka, and Umesh Kotru and Ashutosh Zutshi recontextualise Karna's marginalized background of life in the *Mahabharata*.

Revisionary literature sometimes discovers historicity in myth. A historical link is traced to create dialectic through dual processes of movement from the past to the present or from present to the past. It is obviously known to us that myth is not history, rather a belief or false ideas. Still, the myth might help us connect with the development of certain ideas, worldviews, values and collective unconsciousness. It has the power to transcend. *Rama*, *Krishna* and *Shiva* are often associated with some specific places and time. Rehistoricising myth is observed in Indian literature. For example, Amish Tripathi historicises the myth of Shiva in his trilogy- *The*

*Immortals of Meluha, The secret of the Nagas and The Oath of the Vayuputras*. This narrative involves itself with what Sreemati Mukherjee calls, “Myth as historical revisionism” (Mukherjee, 140). There is a human tendency to identify their present situation with myth. So, it is historically evoked at many times in the real situation of life. Satchidanandan observes that sometimes myth is read as a source of history, religion, morality and expression of psychological origin. According to the functionalist theoretical argument, myth operates “as ritual, speculation or wish fulfilment and even as primitive science” (Satchidanandan x). Mythical figures from the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata* are often invoked in daily discussion and religious or moral talk.

Moreover, her fiction re-narrates classical text and context. Her fiction is the result of her reinvestigation of a gender perspective and gender bias tradition in the past narratives. Her first award-winning novel *The Thousand Faces of Night (TFN)* revisits Indian ancient myths, fables and legends; they are reinterpreted to challenge the existing perspective of reading and to determine a new meaning. The text even questions prevailing proverbs associated with some common beliefs. *When Dreams Travel (WDT)* is a rewriting about the Arabian popular legendary tale *Arabian Nights or One Thousand and One Nights*. It is a metafictional text as it makes a fiction on fiction. It is a recreating a new world out of the off scene of frame tale of *OTON*. Rahul Chaturvedi says, “*When Dreams Travel* is also a fiction on fiction, a representation of representation. Hariharan has reworked on the medieval legend of the Shahryar and Shahrzad and has presented it in a metafictional mode” (Chaturvedi 161). Chitra Sankaran says, “*When Dreams Travel*, which is Hariharan’s recasting of the famous *One Thousand and One Nights* or *Arabian Nights Entertainment*, as it came to be known and celebrated in the West, via the first French translation by Antoine Galland, deconstructs and in the process re-examines some

deeply embedded misogynist ideologies in cherished patriarchal texts” (Sankaran 66). To her revisioning, this particular text seems to be an ethical act of retrieving or repossession. This text is an example of how some texts move from the east to west and they enter in the western literature. *WDT* reclaims that lost text and it gets a new shape of fictional form. Thus, this particular text is reconstructed in many ways- structure, characterization and perspective. As Sankaran rightly says, “It is no longer an Arabian Entertainment but a narrative with the ethical commitment to centre women’s concerns and to unravel the patterns of misogyny and classism that mar the original tale” (Sankaran 67). The supremacy of masculinity in the original text is inverted by female supremacy as male characters are figured out as ornaments here. The narrative questions the authority of power. In this recast text feminist ethics of writing i.e. “eliminating the subordinate status of women” is used in her narrative. At revisiting this Arabian myth Hariharan has feminist ethics “to understand, criticize and rectify the unequal distribution of power” (Sankaran 71). It also draws attention to the perception of gender operation within usual moral beliefs and practices. “We can find in it everything whatever we want to say is essential about the way humans try to interpret their place on earth” (Satchidanandan xi).

Early Indian fiction in English either by man or female is accused of presenting women merely as symbols and caricatures. In the middle, some female writers come forward who write about woman’s individual struggle and her inner world. But they too present women’s stereotypical image as weak, fragile and most of the time victims of oppression and marginalization. Present radical feminist writers present self-determining and challenging female characters in their writings. New female figures in art and literature are strong enough to fight against the oppressive counterpart, apt to understand their self and intelligent enough to judge their situation. They carry strong challenge against hegemonic mechanism and try to

escape from such a situation and find some alternative of existing social relationships. Hierarchical and hegemonic patriarchy constrains women to think for lesbianism or homosexual society and transgress the existing order of life. Anita Desai's early few novels also represent such victimized and submissive women. But her later novels are concerned with bold and self-determining female characters. Manju Kapur, Shashi Deshpande, Arundhati Roy, Jhumpa Lahiri, Bharati Mukherjee, Githa Hariharan and Anita Nair are the third generation of Indian English women novelists who create serious and strong female characters in their writings. They represent the different image of women.

Since myths, fables and history have a deep impact on present ways of life and generally they are invoked in everyday discussions they need to be revisited and reinterpreted. New meaning should be discovered from these old traditions. Sita and Savitri have become dominant figures in classical literature and other strong figures like Ganga, Amba, Gandhari and Draupadi are overlapped by the illuminating image of *Sita-Savitri*. In scriptures and myths, women are portrayed as idealized figures- Goddesses or sub-human creators; they are never depicted as complete individuals. Rebellious women like Ganga, Amba and Kretya are never highlighted. Rather, they are always subsided or kept off the scene. This classical literature is to be reread; myths and tales are to be reinterpreted and new meaning should be derived. Hariharan's argument is that the past should be brought back, debated, questioned and reanalyzed. It would help to understand the reality of life and tradition. Thus, it will help the present generation to transgress from the present situation. Concept of an idealized woman in Indian classical literature must be challenged. Some positive inspirations should be drawn from the past. Indian *Vedic* age is well-known gender equality. That age produces many great female mystic poets and seers who contributed valuable hymns in *Vedas*. Gargi, Ghosha, Godha, Vishwavara, Apala,

Maitreyi Arundhati and Lilavati were famous seers in *Vedic* age. Indu Swami says, “According to *Saruvakramanika*, there were more than twenty women seers or *brahamvadinis* who composed the hymns of the *Rig Veda*, although there are no records of their works” (Swami 5).

It is already said that some Indian feminist writers either in English or other languages revision and re-narrate Indian myths, fables, tales and legends. Many Indian concepts related to religion have suppressed Indian women. Chastity, ideal womanhood and *pativrata* all these concepts are found embedded in the psychology of women. This is the culturally imposed subjectivity which is shaped contextually and we call it Indianness. This value is pervaded throughout India. It has to be questioned. Indu says, “*Pativrata* is romanticized through legend, folklore and folksong, and reaffirmed through ceremonies of different kinds” (Swami 19). This is how politics of identity involves with this act of revisioning the past; ancient literary works, myth, *kathas*, *puranas* and history. Hence, the main objective of the feminist ideology of writing is to re-explore lived experiences of the female, to express themselves and reinstate their lost identity and dignity. It also helps to redefine female subjectivity, self and sexuality. Thus, this act of rewriting is a politics of representing, redefining and reinterpreting life and world.

This research work is a study of ‘myth’, ‘history’, ‘ideology’ and ‘identity politics’ with reference to Githa Hariharan’s major revisionist works. It closely observes the issues in the light of the texts involved in the project and explore marginalized background and suppressed meanings and voice of the text. Hence, it will explore the aspect of subalternity and otherness in revisited myths, tales and history.

This research work has collected data and other related information from primary and secondary sources through library works and internet browsing. It also involves the questionnaire method to find some personal information from the author.

The thesis is designed and argued under the theoretical framework of deconstruction, feminism, post-colonialism, revisionism, subaltern theory and new historicism. In other words, a body of theoretical methods have been applied to the critical interpretation and analysis of Hariharan's select works.

The hypothesis of my research work is Hariharan's revisionist writing reconstructs and recontextualises myth and history to reinstate female self and identity.

The thesis comprises of six chapters. Chapter I is concerned with the introduction of the research area, literary reviews, aims and objectives, methodology, and further it provides chapter wise summary of the whole thesis. It engages itself with explaining the concept of "writing as Revisioning" (Rich 35). The chapter elucidates the concept of revisionary writing in the light of theoretical ideas put forwarded by Adrienne Rich, Helene Cixous, Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar and Elaine Showalter. This chapter has defined the objectives of revisionist writing. "Writing as revisioning" concerns with revisiting, rewriting, recasting and re-interpreting the old texts, context and characters.



Chapter II examines the usage of myth and history in contemporary Indian literature. It is basically a background chapter which gives an account of the major works of Indian novelists in English and other Indian languages. It shows how the contemporary Indian literature rebuilds the relation of Indian people with their classical tradition that was distorted and distracted during colonialism. This connection was distracted by European cultural assimilation or westernization of Indians. Indian postcolonial writing is a trace of a nation's cultural lineage and ancestry. Many nationalist writers used myths and histories in their artistic works to arouse the sense of nationalist spirit for anti-colonial movement. Contemporary writers from the margin make effort to revision and reinterpret myths and histories with their own perspectives.

Chapter III is about the biographical account of the writer. It explores how Githa Hariharan evolves as an artist and how her living life and activism contribute to her writing. It is basically concerned with her life, philosophy, activism and writing. It deals with a genealogical trace of the artist. It also makes a comparative analysis of the artists. Chapter IV deals with Githa Hariharan's revisionary writing; how she has revisioned, recast, recontextualised and reinterpreted myths and histories in her fiction. She revisits myths and tales from the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata* and reinterpreted them from feminist perspectives. Her reinterpretation subverts the traditional hermeneutics of myths and histories. The overshadowed and marginalized female figures are recollected by her characters to identify themselves. Myths are retold to present contemporary social and personal predicaments. Conditions of some female characters are found to be similar to mythical figures like Ganga, Amba, Gandhari, Draupadi, Sita, Kretya and et al. These figures are presented as strong symbols of marginalized voices for demanding social, political and moral justice to women. The history of personal life is revisited in her novels to trace the lost self that determines identity. The whole marginalized background of

the misogynist text *Arabian Nights* or *One Thousand and One Nights* is recontextualised in her novel *When Dreams Travel* (2008).

Chapter V is concerned with the general concept and definitions of identity. The chapter discusses the problem and prospects of identity politics in the lights of the theoretical ideas put forwarded by Charles Taylor, Judith Butler, Moya Lloyd, Toril Moi, Linda Alcoff, Susan Hekman and Michel Foucault. It talks about the identity crisis of feminism and beyond identity politics. It gives a vivid account of the multiplicity of identity and two fundamental bases of claiming feminist identity: essentialism and non-essentialism or postmodernist view of identity. It explains the terms like subjectivity, sexuality, body and sex. As a revisionist, Hariharan reconstructs myths and histories, lived experiences and repressed background of the text in order to reinstate female self and identity.

Chapter VI is a conclusion which is subtitled as “A Subaltern Reading in Contemporary Perspective”. It makes a conclusive statement on the thesis by highlighting the issues of revisionist writing and subalternity. Moreover, it is an intertextual reading of some contemporary Indian novelists in English and other languages. Hariharan’s revisit of myth and history reconstructs and recontextualises suppressed conditions and thereby presents unheard voices and consciousnesses. The study shows that her revisionary writing has two aims: one is to reflect the contemporary social and personal predicament and create a historical link with the past. It aims to show the common experiences of marginalized women throughout generation and lift it as a basis for their political and social identity. With this strong artistic objective myth, tale and history are revisited, reconstructed and recontextualised. This is why Hariharan has made an effort to trace the state of subalternity, marginality and situation of voicelessness in

those texts. She has also raised the idea of intellectual subalternity in India and new subaltern. This chapter, in the light of Githa Hariharan's few novels, discusses how in this new world order multinational plans and policies of a nation exclude its people from the system or debar from access. Moreover, it also throws light on how the other categories like caste, class and religion work in the same line of marginalization and exploitation in the society.

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[\[1\]](#) An incomplete autobiographical fiction is written by Lady Murasaki.

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