

## CHAPTER II

### MYTH, HISTORY AND IDENTITY AS PROJECTED IN CONTEMPORARY INDIAN FICTIONS IN ENGLISH

Contemporary literary writings in India largely concerns the reconstruction of myth, history and legend. This history might be of the recent past that is inclusive of mundane affairs of domestic life. Many postcolonial Indian writers in English as well as in regional languages like R. K. Narayan, Raja Rao, Salman Rushdie, Shashi Tharoor, Amitav Ghosh, Anita Desai, Shashi Deshpande, Githa Hariharan, Kavita Kane, Umesh Kotru and Ashutosh Zutshi (English) and Mahasweeta Devi (Bengali), Indira Goswami and Chandra Prasad Saikia (Assamese), use the technique of revisionary writing in their fictional works. They revisit the ancient myths, tales, legend and the personal histories, memories and memoirs of their characters with different objectives. Some of them aim to create a link between the past and present, rethink of the past or recontextualise/reinterpret it while the others use the old materials as meaning, metaphors, symbols and context. Often myth is looked as tradition and “ideological statement” (Satchidanandan ix). Postcolonial feminist writings have a special concern with “Writing as Re-visioning” (Rich 35) to reinterpret the past and to make ‘self-discovery’ or to bring women into the consciousness. To feminists, myth is an ideology and moral tradition.

A trace of the origin of the myth shows how myth is an outcome of an irrational and ignorant mind. Meletinsky, one of the analysts of myth, views that myth is the consequences of primitive ignorance or consciousness of life, nature and world. It is the product of the first human imagination, fantasy; an effort to interpret the incomprehensibility of life and nature and of the attempt to explain and justify human existence on the earth. It is the example of the inquisitive mind of the past to know the origin of the different universal elements. At this particular point, myth becomes invalid. It cannot represent the complete worldly reality. On the other hand, its production has been dominated by phallogocentrism. This is why feminist revisionist writing questions this tradition and asks for its deconstruction. Forward of *The*

*Poetics of Myth* reads “metaphorical link is observed between mythical signifier and social signified” (Meletinsky xi).

Subaltern historiography finds fault with elitist historiography because modern Indian history is written from elitist perspectives. Conventional history is from a masculine point of view. It means gender-biased tradition regulates the production of history. It has been a purely masculine domain for ages because it has not given any space for woman’s account of life, action and martyrdom. It does not speak much about woman, does not allow her to speak in it. So, it only represents the masculine experiences of the world. It is silent about the half of the population of the world. It is merely about male thought and action, their heroism and adventure. No history of the world gives any detailed account of female life, her thought and action, adventure and heroism and martyrdom. It is not that women did not participate in the process of human struggles. The woman has been always a significant part of producing a history of life. Gerda Lerner, an Australian American feminist historian, alleges in her *The Creation of Patriarchy*,

Like men, women are and always have been actors and agents in history. Since women are half and sometimes more than half of humankind, they always have shared the world and its work equally with men. Women are and have been central, not marginal, to the making of society and to the building of civilization. Women have also shared with men in preserving collective memory, which shapes the past into cultural tradition, provides the link between generations, and connects past and future. This oral tradition was kept alive in poem and myth, which both men and women created and preserved in folklore, art, and ritual (Lerner 4).

An interlink is observed between history and myth. The scholars argue that myth is the history that has attained a character of timelessness or universalism in course of time. This status is attained through the perpetual process of cultural translation, revision, recast and reinterpretation. Myth is the history of the primitive age of primitive literature which evolves with an unconscious attempt to give an account of a life or a world view and it is replaced by modern history and literature. Ancient myths, tales and legendary stories are defined to be the prototype of literature created by the primitives whom we often term as

savage, rustic, ignorant or illiterate. They create oral literature to hold their worldview or make point of view and to tell about inexpressibility. William G. Doty in his introductory note to *Myth: A Handbook*, defines, “Myth is regarded variously across a wide spectrum of opinions spanning several centuries” (Doty 1). Myths apparently derive their universal significance from the way in which they try to reconstruct an original event or explain some fact about human nature and its worldly or cosmic contents. J. M. Levi provides an ethnographic view on the difference between the two as he observes, “Both the social science and the humanities inherited from nineteenth-century evolutionism curious wisdom: namely, that “history” is the product and possession of literate societies, while “myth” is the records of the past among the illiterate societies, especially among the non-western and so-called “primitive” societies” (Levi 605-619). If one sees the role and link of these two genres of narrative, myth is more closed and influential to present, but history has a remoter sense of presence. Thus, sometimes it shows the tendency to transgress its recentness. The myth seems to be more universal and significant than history. History is real and fixed but the myth has lost connection with reality and it is flexible space for open meaning. Myth grows and changes with times. K. Satchidanandan says, “Myth is a place of open meaning. Its gap between event and meaning invites open interpretation. In short, there are ways and ways of looking at the myth and its relationship with literature” (Satchidanandan xii).

Being a part of critical discourses, literature is making an attempt at finding a link with myth and history and how they are related to each other. What the scholars usually have argued is that myth is the history that has attained a character of timelessness or universalism through the process of repeated retelling and reinterpretation. Myth has lost its pastness as it is treated always present when history belongs to the past. Myth and history have been two great contextual sources of modern literature. There is a perpetual link among the three as myth precedes history and literature. Myth is the history of primitive age or primitive literature which evolves with an unconscious attempt to give an account of their civilization or a world view and it was replaced by modern history and literature. Myth and history are the two significant narratives of the past experiences of humanity which always form a basis of determining the present life of man, of a nation or community. Shaschidananda observes “Myth becomes powerful when it is seen in a historical frame as it is done by O. V. Vijayan in his *Saga of Dharmapuri*”

(Shaschidananda<sup>1</sup> xiv). Euhemerus puts forward an argument that mythical protagonists were nothing more than historical figures who had become imbued with a divine aura. Myth apparently attains its universal significance as it reconstructs an original event or explains some fact about human nature and its worldly or cosmic contents.

Contemporary Indian Literature employs ancient myth and history for recontextualisation and reinterpretation; they are sometimes used as technique, metaphor or sign to signify the modern situation of life. Postcolonial Indian fiction in English marks a major shift in its spirit, theme and technique after independence. It changes its focus from nationalism, caste and communalism to individualism and interpersonal relation. It concerns with diverse issues relating to class, caste and gender. Post-independence Indian English fiction examines the relationship between individual and society. After independence India starts relooking into the past for discovery of self; this self may be individual and national. It is not only concerned with the external world but also with the inner world. Psychological exploration becomes a new thematic dimension. Basically, woman novelists start engaging themselves to explore female lived experiences; social predicaments and their struggles. A new aspiration of the nation and the individual grow simultaneously. For self-discovery, Indian cultural practitioners revisit the past- myths, *Puranas*, history and legend. This revisit has two different objectives. First, it is an attempt to reconnect the present generation with the ancient Indian civilization and to reinterpret Indian civilization to the west, and thereby rectifies the colonial misinterpretation. In other words, it is a revalidation of the Indian value system. Secondly, divulging into the past stands as interrogation and self-examination in order to define the present. Raja Rao, R. K. Narayan and Shashi

Tharoor revisit Indian culture and tradition and reinterpret through their works. However, revisiting Indian past can be traced in colonial India too because modernizing starts with the two contrary processes. India starts accepting and adapting western values and, at the same time, she starts relooking into her past. Some Indian scholars rejuvenate Indian classical studies- Sanskrit, Parsi and Urdu literature. MK Naik says, “Actually writers in independent India, whether in English or in the regional languages has, far from dwindling into a ‘recorder’ or ‘embellisher’, has provided ample evidence of increased creative vigour and capacity for experimentation” (Naik 200). Raja Rao’s *The Serpent and The Rope* is a good interpretation of Indian/Eastern philosophy of life, The Indian concept of love, family and children which encounter with the western philosophy, the concept of love, family and children. Shashi Tharoor’s *The Great Indian Novel* is modern Indian Mahabharata re-narrated in the form of prose fiction to suit for the present generation. Some of the Indian woman writers in English as well as in other Indian languages have also taken up this revisiting scheme of writing. The western idea of writing as revisioning is adorned by the writers. Their aim is to revision and reinterprets the past. Indian freedom movement and its independence lead women’s self discovery. It is the beginning of female liberation in India. Indira Nityanandam says in her introduction to her book *Three Great Indian Novelists*, “Freedom for Indian women meant not merely from the British rule and its concomitant tyranny but simultaneously a release from century’s male domination and male ordained social and cultural norms” (Nityanandam 10-11). Indian women writers engage themselves with, first, exploring of self-image in classical literature and modern Indian literature both by male and female and, second, reproject real image of women in literature.

Contemporary Indian literature provides liberal space to the re-entry of myth and history. Literature sometimes becomes an intermingling domain for the past and present. It relooks the past from the present perspective. It reuses the materials of antiquities for different purposes. They are not only revisited, revised and reinterpreted, but also used by writers as allegory, metaphor, image and symbol. Sometimes they serve as a socio-cultural context of literature. A blend of myth and history is observed in contemporary Indian English fiction. Indian English Literature is deeply rooted in Indian mythology. Most of the Indian writers writing in English almost in all genres employ Indian myths in diverse ways-as genre, language, narrative mode, metaphor, meaning and interpreter. Literature in the postcolonial era has become a mode of re-visioning the past. Postcolonial Indian fiction writers in English revisit and retell Indian myths and histories in order to oppose the colonial cultural production and colonial literary canon. Its main objective is to adhere to resistance through rewriting with an appropriation and reclaim the repressed identity of India. A revisioning writing about the ancient Indian myths and legends has been a significant strategy of postcolonial agenda to write back to the west. It would work as a critique of colonial appropriation of others' experiences. Postcolonial revisionists revisit both the colonial and pre-colonial texts. The main objective of this rewriting project is to invalidate the imperial ideology of the civilizing mission of the natives. So, it is an effort to show the west the rich heritage and ancient civilisation of the native lands and thus, it breaks the west's superiority complex. On the other hand, it helps in reconstructing the national heritage of native land. As Shashidar observes it, "Myth in literature has always

performed this function of strengthening the notion of a nation, or an unproblematic and unbroken entity, continuing into a future” (Shashidhar 5).

Looking back at the background of postcolonial writing obviously shows that many postcolonial fictionists concern with the re-employment of the mythopoeic technique of writing. Ancient Indian writers besides imagination of reality, they mythified the real experiences of life and world. The *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata* are nothing but products of mythification and recurrent imagination. Though India did not have the tradition of writing the modern history, history was presented in the form of myth. History was narrated in different forms as *kathas* or *Puranas*: myths and tales. These two epics are usually called *itihas* in Indian narratology. This is why many Indian scholars and historians disagree with Alberuni’s discredited opinion that India did not have historical sense, Hindus were so ignorant about historiography and it was the contribution of Sultanate regime in India to bring historical sense to them and it was British who established the modern historiography in India. To Indian historians, historical sense can be observed in ancient mythologies and *Puranas*. Indian mythological figures like *Rama*, *Ravana*, *Bharata*, *Veeshma*, *Krishnan*, *Yudishtira*, *Dhuryudhana*, and et al are often argued to be looked as legendary heroes or Indian ancestors as Amish Tripathi does in his fiction. These epics have adequate physical evidence of relics and monumental toponyms. Even the myth of *Shiva* is considered as a legend. As a result, the gap between myth and reality, mortal and immortal is very minimal in the Indian cultural context as it is often seen as blended into a unitary whole. It has been developed as a strong narrative technique. Postcolonial Indian Literature in English by using a mythopoeic narrative technique challenges the western concept of universalism in literature. The western concept of the universal literary canvas is deliberately ignored in postcolonial literature. Moreover, the colonialist idea of the master narrative is subverted by the enriched nationalist narratives. Ancient mythopoeics as a literary canon has been revisited in postcolonial Indian literature. Beginning from the first generation of Indian writers in English to the contemporary writers; Raja Rao to Vikram Seth, all of them use the *mythopoeic* technique in their narratives. In postcolonial discourses, Indian myth and history are unearthed and reinterpreted to deconstruct colonial perspective or western myth of cultural superiority,

and destroys the idea of master narrative to bring a change of the image of the natives and reclaim and reconstruct the lost identity of the nation. Kiran <sup>7</sup>Budkuley's article "Mahabharata Myth in Contemporary Writing: Challenging Ideology" published in *Myth in Contemporary Indian Literature* (Satchidanandan 16-29) posits the same argument. Raja Rao's *Kanthapura* is an instance of using mythification technique in Indian writing in English. It means Rao is revisiting ancient Indian literary technique in his writing. He has, as he acknowledges in the preface to *Kanthapura*, used Indian *sthala-Purana* narrative technique. It is a mythification of modern Indian history of Freedom Movement, Gandhism or Gandhianism. A *mythopoeic* spirit is observed in his narrative as it is full of myths and tales. The novel is all about a village called "Kanthapura" well protected from all the evils by the village goddess *Kenamma*, set in the British colonial context in India, idealizing Gandhi's life and philosophy. *Kanthapura* has turned human reality into mythical status. Modern Indian history has been fictionalized and viewed from mythical perspective as the impact of distant Gandhi is imagined as of a mythical figure, godlike character, a saviour of all victimized Indians during colonial regime. It has reversed the perspective of western imperialism. The novel has allegorised the battle between colonised and colonisers as the war between good and evil, humans and asuras. Gandhi has been idealized as *Rama* and the British has been metaphorically presented as *Ravana*. This is how in the novel the idealist view of western imperialism as civilizing mission has been deliberately attacked and defined as a mission of heralding world wide social disaster that has enduring effects on the earth. His *The Serpent and the Rope* is a revisionist work concerning with conflict between the western and eastern philosophy of life.

To write back to the west about the great ancient civilization of India and to destroy the myth on her, Shashi Tharoor rewrites the Indian lengthy epic, *Mahabharata*, the longest epic in the world. It is an example of Indian ancient grand narrative. He has given it a modern fictional form to make it suitable for the new generations. Undoubtedly *The Great Indian Novel* is modern *Mahabharata* in fictional form. Author's target might be to fascinate western audience. It is a noble venture of retelling the story of great Indian ancestry and Indian descendants. It has occupied a larger place in the mind of the contemporary readers and got a novel significance in the modern world. In the novel the whole myths of *Mahabharata*



are re-narrated in the fictional narrative mode using the complete mythical narrative techniques as Dvaipayana (Ved Vyas) telling the stories before an audience, Lord Ganesha, the wise god of India and it has got blended with the colonial history of the nation as we find here direct/indirect references to the modern historical figures: Winston Churchill, Mahatma Gandhi, Nirad C. Chaudhury and many other Indian political figures in the real history of the world. British authority in the guise of British Resident (Regent) in India is put as authoritative tension over the secret family design of that great Indian family ancestries (Kaurava and Pandava) in order to perpetuate it for the sake of the kingdom. A collective authority of native forces is designed to save the sub-continent from the foreign occupation as Doctrine of Lapse, a camouflaged law, was purportedly devised by Lord Dalhousie for the imperial purpose in India as it was strong imperial strategy of consolidation and extending colonial power. If the symbolic implication of the novel is analysed in the present context Gandhi can be held as Ganga Dutta (Veeshma), Nehru as Pandava and Ambedkar as Vidura and on the other hand Md. Ali Jinnah as Dhritarashtra who jointly designed socio-political strategies of modern Indian nation (undivided); division of two families into Kaurava and Pandava is equivalent to division of nation into Hindustan and Pakistan and *Kshurukshetra* war can be looked as India Pakistan war. Here metaphorically imperial authority, British government, plays the role of *Sukunimama*, the main plotter or designer of *Kurukshetra* war. *The Great Indian Novel* is a recast work of fiction which has extended the original text to the modern context. It has included modern Indian political history. The entire *Mahabharata* is seen in a new aura.

The novel is the juxtaposition of the two worlds, ancient India and colonial India as *Dvaipayana* is narrating two different stories alternately before the Lord Ganesha and it is presenting an encounter between the Western and Eastern cultural traditions how the west looked the latter with ridiculous eyes and contempt and underestimated it, and thus, created a sense of colonial subjugation in the mind of colonised. To the colonizers, Indian languages seemed to be very funny as they have different specific words for different things, odd accent, Indians do not know the self dignity, know not how to maintain own heritage and histories, and they possess eccentric habits. This process of colonial othering, British cultural mindset is virtually subverted in the text.

A postcolonial motive behind the narrative of *The Great Indian Novel* is obvious as it highlights the rich Indian classical traditions giving a new significance and self appraisal. Indian myths are transformed into great modern literature for the use of new generation and their civilization. Ancient Indian past has been a basis to see the present. Thus, it is based on the reconstruction of the past heritage and histories for their reinterpretation and re-analysis and thus, to reclaim the lost identity of the nation. This complete project of art and articulation is based on the perpetuation of Indian *mythopoetic* tradition where mythological trails are catapulted, revised and recast. This revisionist fiction incorporates new materials and reinterprets the old materials from a different perspective. So, it emerges from textual transcendence. Mythology has been used here to hold a world view of the colonial social order and conditioning and it also tries to interpret the postcolonial situation of dilemma, hybridity and identity crisis. Thus, this work of metafiction recontextualises the whole epic of *Mahabharata*.

Revisionary writing also serves the ethical and moral purposes of writing. Many writers go back to the past for their ethical bend of mind. They have taken up revisiting project of writing to establish moral significance in their writing. Unlike Rao, R. K. Narayan's *The Man-Eater of Malgudi* shows ethical reason of using myth in his writings. It is often referred to 'Bhasmasura-Mahini' legend to interpret the belief "however powerful maybe a man/ god he has a certain weakness which brings his ends". Vasu, the villain character in the novel, is a taxidermist who starts havoc at Malgudi village and finally his powerful hand becomes the cause of his own death. Santhunu-Ganga legend in *The Painter of Signs*, Buddha legend is used in *A Tiger for Malgudi*. P. Aruna Devi observes, "R. K. Narayan has profusely made use of Hindu mythologies in many of his novels, the legend of *Santhunu* and *Ganga* in his *The Painter of Signs*, the story of Buddha's enlightenment in *A Tiger of Malgudi* etc."(Devi 213). Though Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* is a political allegory, its ethical significance cannot be ignored. It has presented a strong cultural ethics. A person's psychic link to his culture and national ancestry cannot be snapped completely. It creates a sense of loss and alienation in the mind of dislocated people. In theoretical sense, it is defined as diasporic anxiety. This is a haunting experience of Rushdie himself which he has reflected in his both fictional and non-fictional writings. His spirit revisits his Indian memoirs, reminiscences and memory. Thus, through his artistic imagination, he retrieves his link with his

past nation and culture. Similarly, Raja Rao's *The Serpent and the Rope* is about one's root and philosophy of life; eastern concept of love, marriage and home. The novel tells the story of Ramaswamy, a young Hindu, who goes to France for his research work in History, meets Madeleine, a lecturer in History and marries her but he realizes the irreparable gap between the western and eastern concept of love, marriage and home when he meets Savithri, a Cambridge-educated young Indian. Ramaswamy, an alienated man has reborn in his culture through his beloved, Savithri. He has realized Indian idealist love between lover and beloved, husband and wife is much more than physical fulfillment. This is a philosophical novel by Rao. Girish Karnad, one of the contemporary Indian playwrights, uses myth as a technique of his writing. To him, myth becomes thematic technique. He revisits ancient Indian myths and tales like *Hayavadana*, *Nagamandala* and *Yayati* in his plays to describe the situation of modern life.

An aspect of the postcolonial narrative is to explore the effects of western colonialism on native people, culture, language, history and environment. It aims to exhibit to the west the colonial disaster. Postcolonial writings endeavour to tell the west about the hazardous colonial project of power extension and its painful legacy. There are some writers in India who are exploring colonial experiences of the natives, their relationship with colonisers, and how their relationships among themselves was affected by colonialism. Of course, sometimes writers revisit the past to reconstruct the social history of a people. Amitav Ghosh, the writer of historical fiction, often revisits the history of the colonial disaster in South East Asia. Ghosh uses common people's perspective to look at history and he gives his narrative voice to the margin. His fictions are concerned with common people's history of day to day predicaments which is always different in perspective to the established official history but it contains more facts and reality. Ghosh's history has more emotion and sentiment of the people for the creation of that history than the official history and it does not have any boundary as it is universal in nature. He explores history through his characters and visualizes it on the prism of the characters' experiences. In his fiction personal history creates a link with public history. It is observed in his major novels *An Antique Land*, *The Shadow Lines*, *Sea of Poppies* and *The Hungry Tide*. Ghosh said in an interview with Chitra Sankaran at Singapore that history is not actually the subject of his fiction. It is simply used as a context or setting of his narratives that make a trace of human predicaments which are the vehicles of carrying to the history of a particular

place. As a socio-anthropologist Ghosh explores sociological problems and tells about social predicaments. This is the history of the people. People's history is the history of the nation. This idea can be observed in his own words,

History itself is ..... in a novel.....not very interesting, except in as much as it forms the background of an individual's predicaments. So, for example, the character of Arjun is one that was very compelling to this day because of the peculiar circumstance he finds himself in, the way in which he's formed, the way in which his history is enmeshed with the history of the families around him....all of these make him what he is, really (Sankaran 1).

Most of his novels are, overtly and covertly, concerned with historical issues. Basically, he is excavating the human predicaments and sufferings meted out by the colonial mechanism or colonial orders. His writings investigate colonial conditioning and postcolonial dilemma or diasporic situation. Ghosh also critically examines the eastern concept of nation, nationalism and identity; nation, border and identity. These are looked in contrast to the West. His objective of revisiting mundane history of the common people is to expose the lingering effects of colonialism through his exploration of human predicaments during the imperial regime and after. *The Shadow Lines*, a narrative based on the history of communal riots in Dhaka and Calcutta, two places of same heritage divided by a political partition and a conflict rooted in colonial strategic Division of Bengal (1905) is about a shattered Hindu family divided by cruel partition. It is concerned with imagined reality and the real fact. Symbolically the family stands for two nations looking each other from inverted perspectives and thereby creating their own realities. What off-scene reality is always left in this cross-border communal violence is that there are Hindus sacrificing their life at protecting Muslims in India and Muslims sacrificing their life for the protection of Hindus in Bangladesh. It never gets recorded in history. The novel tells the bare truth of horrible effects of colonial cartography on natives and thereby rejecting the western imperialist ideology of cartography and imperial claim of the civilising mission. His *An Antique Land* is revisiting the medieval history of the business relation between India and Middle East countries. It explores the life of a poor slave, Bomma and his master, Abraham Ben Yiju who moved from Mangalore to Cairo, Egypt etc. Ben Yiju, a Jewish

merchant from Tunisia and his Indian slave Bomma used to live in Mangalore, India. Besides, *An Antique Land* is an exploration of life, culture and perspective of two antique lands, India and Egypt. Sumitra D' Chetry in his journal article observes,

In *An Antique Land* is the narrator's research of the times of Abraham Ben Yiju hinged on a providential discovery of a crucial historical document. It was the quest of the identity of this slave that led Ghosh to Egypt and eventually to the writing of *In An Antique Land*. The novel skilfully presents the enormous similarity of beliefs and of myths and legends, of the cultural approach of the two antique lands till foreign imperialism erected barriers destroying the unity of the respective countries (Chetry 178).

*The Glass Palace* (2000), Ghosh's one of significant historical novels is concerned with the historical background of World War II which was, in Ghosh's opinion, a colonizers' war and its consequences on South Asian countries, especially in India, Malaya and Myanmar. It depicts the socio-economic condition of these nations as a result of the modernism. Even though South Asian nations had no direct involvement in the great World War II but their soldiers and land were used for the purpose and how their normal stream of common life was distracted. Sufferings and predicament of South Asians during the great war was not less than Europeans which has been shown in the novel. Here the human predicaments lead to penetrating the history of the war.

Ghosh's Ibis trilogy: *Sea of Poppies* (2008), *River of Smoke* (2011) and *Flood of Fire* (2014); they are mainly tracing the changing lives and predicaments of a group of roaming people like migratory birds e.g. soldiers under east India Company, indentured Indian labourers, convicts, business men and traders who are exiled in different parts of the world, Canton (China), Mauritius. *Sea of Poppies*, is all about Deeti and Kalua transformed themselves to indentured labourers in order to escape from social conviction of impurity as one untouchable and a high Brahmin woman love each other and escaped, finally reached to Ibis and reached to Mauritius; *River of Smoke* Bahram Modi, opium trader, some

convicts, Neel Ratan, Bengali Zamindar, Ah Fatt, convict from Canton who escaped and got on Ibis. *Flood of Fire* is concerned with main character Zachery Reid, a mysterious worker on 'budgerow' (an Indian river boat), bankrupted Neel Rattan Halder working under East India Company. This trilogy is a complete reconstruction of fictional history telling predicaments and eventual sufferings of opium workers, traders and soldiers leading to the First Opium War of 1839-42 and how it affected the common people of Bihar and Bengal. Thus, through his trilogy, Ghosh has given his views on empire, opium trade and Opium War.

Amish Tripathi has revisioned the *puranic* myth of Shiva. He has looked at this myth with his fresh eyes. He has adopted subversionary writing technique. It may be called demystification technique for he has demythified myth of *Shiva*. His trilogy is the deconstruction of myths. Hence his writing may be recuperation of history from myth. He looks myth with his fresh eyes and finds historical reality in it. In his treatment of myths and history, Amish is quite different to his contemporary writers like Tharoor and Rushdie as he has subverted *mythopoesis* in his narratives. Rather, he has developed a historical outlook over the ancient myths for he sees historicity in them. He is historicizing the myth of *Shiva* in his *Shiva* trilogy- *The Immortal of Meluha*, *The Oath of Nagas* and *The Oath of Vayuputras* as he revisions *puranic* myth, *Shiva*, supreme God of *Shaivism*. This trilogy narrates *Shiva* myth with the different perspective and makes readers see with their fresh eyes. Tripathi's narrative looks at Him a powerful legendary hero of Tibetan Tribes who comes over the kingdom of Meluhas on invitation. He serves victimised humans, provides service to humanity and thus, attained the status of God. He has shown an orientation of looking at how the ancient human beings turn to Gods with their great service and dedication to the humanity, how mortals transform into immortals. He has brought back the past to reconstruct it and show the historicity of *Shiva* myth. He has explored here Indian mythopoeic tradition, concept of universe and its categories (God, gods, men and demon), how immortals and mortals move in a chain by transforming from one to other. Here one point has to be made to change the western notion of Indian religion. The west thinks Hindu is a prophet less religion. It is not exactly true. There is a similarity between attainment of Sainthood in the west through one's service to humanity and immortalisation of mortals through one's protective service to humanity. Lord *Krishna* was a powerful

hero who destroyed evils and devils and saved His own people, Lord *Shiva* was a stout warrior who showed great heroism in the battle. In fact, it was a tradition in primitive society to warship their great leaders, heroes and heroines as gods and goddesses.

Myth reappears in Rushdie's fictional world as a political allegory. It works as a metaphor of the modern political history of India. Myth is helping the author's fantasy and dream. He has fantasized the India's political phenomenon of a nation's birth and its fascinating new enigmatic generations who possess new hope and aspiration. New generations have new aspirations and challenges in their life. In other words, Rushdie's fictional vision shows the conflict of a newly born nation between old and new generation, ancient and modernity, conservatism and liberalism, myth and reality. Rushdie's great work of fiction *Midnight's Children* is delving into the dept of family ancestry and national heritage. It is a trace of one's cultural and spiritual root which is an autobiographical novel telling the author's real situation. As an expatriate writer Rushdie often encounters with cultural and artistic dislocation, lack of socio-cultural stake, a spirit of dilemma. Rushdie's own identity crisis is reflected in the novel. He is revisiting India, his imaginary homeland, through his fictional imagination as he confesses it in his non-fictional essay "Imaginary Homeland". On the other hand, *Midnight's Children* is a search for genealogy of a nation. Tracing of individual history leads to discover public history in the text. It seems to be a rediscovery of Indian self and relocating oneself to the nation and ancestry. His magic realism enables him to use mythical materials to re-narrate the political history of modern India. Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* is a fusion of myth and reality, god and man, mortal and immortal, history and fantasy, reason and unreason. Indian mythical figures have been used in the novel for their symbolic or metaphorical significance. Saleem Sinai's deformed body, half-man and the half-animal figure shows the enigmatic identity of the nation. Here *mythopoetic* narrative technique has been employed to explore the colonial and postcolonial history of modern India in order to excavate the real truth of a nation through an exploration of the individual struggle for identity which also becomes the reasons of public or national identity. It is a political allegory giving a symbolic representation of the emergence of India as a new fragmented nation with split spirit and identity; fortune and misfortune of diversity. It involves crucial search for family heritage, lineage and identity in post-independence period. Myth has shown rhetorical

significance here. Moreover, it is used as a metaphor to look at the present history and its situation and turns the narrative process into a *mythopoesis*. What is inferred in *Midnight's Children* is that mythopoeic narrative technique has been reused to re-explore the modern Indian history which unfolds an ambiguity of India as a newly grown-up the nation. It always masks its reality. Consequently, it has appeared as a mysterious nation in the eyes of the world community. Myth and magic help him explore the modern Indian political history beginning from Indian independence to emergency (1915-1978) at contextualizing his search for his own enigmatic genealogy and heritage in India. Symbolically the title of the novel stands for India in her nascent state, how this nation comes into existence, grows and confronts several misfortunes and struggles. Rushdie's myth shows dynamism as it always moves from real to illusion. It is the very nature of postcolonial pluralistic identity. To Rushdie identity turns from real to myth and vice versa. His wonderful magic realist art *Midnight's Children* finally becomes his own genealogy as he confessed himself. It is all about his own crisis of ancestry, nationality and nostalgic memory of his past homeland, its landscape, friends and music which haunt his mind. Shashi Tharoor's *The Great Indian Novel* is also retelling the saga of Indian struggle for independence wrapping it into a mythical frame story of *Mahabharata*.

In addition to the above discussed Indian English novelists in the postcolonial era, there are a group of female fictionists in India who are using a re-visioning technique of writing to revisit past. Most of the Indian feminist writers are revisionists. Usually, they are reactionary and subversive in nature. Writing as revisioning has become a feminist literary canon to revisit the past, explore female marginality in a gendered society, the image of women and thereby it helps to see the past from different critical direction. Feminist writers are struggling to retrospect their past and rewrite about it. Classical Indian literature has presented prejudiced and idealised images of women. Women have been always been presented as meek, wise, sacrificing, victimised and self-annihilating. These revisionary writers want to deconstruct the traditional image of women projected in myth, history and classical literature. They want to reconstruct their real images in literature and make their points of view, and to express their self and choice. It is already said that they are enthusiastic to create alternative female literary tradition and promote *écriture feminine*, assertive and subversive literature. *Ecriture feminine* challenges



androgynous texts and develops different literary canon. It can be argued that revisionary feminist writing transcends the phallogentric tradition of writing. Revisionary feminist writers make persistent struggle to write back to the masculine literary tradition. In this context a noteworthy point is that in this feminist revisionary writing androgynous tradition or a gender-neutral writing is problematised as it questions the authenticity of its presentation. Writers under this scheme revisit, revise and reinterpret past: myth, history and ancient texts. It is obvious that a feminist text focuses on reconstruction of female self and it opposes masculinity in literature and re-examines female marginality and female-female bond. Indian woman writers are also conscious about the ideological difference between the west and the east. India has diverse category of women facing diverse problems. Hence the north American concept of universal feminism and its theory is not always applicable in the east. As C. T. Mohanty points out that third world feminist writing is to resist the first world feminist colonial discourses on women of third world countries. Mohanty argues that the western feminists see the universal images of third world women and their theory does not recognise variegated experiences of Indian women who encounter various problems relating to their race, caste, class, gender and religion. To Mohanty one more challenge of third world feminist writers is to distort the hierarchical relationship between the western and eastern schools of feminism. It is obvious that Indian woman writers must write about diverse experiences of different categories of Indian females and thereby oppose the universal idea of western feminism about Indian women.

Moreover, Indian woman writers are exploring the social predicaments of women, their traumatic life, the female struggle for her choice and dignity. These writers throw light on the various roles assigned by patriarchy and values attributed to women. Their works focus on the conflict between tradition and modernity. They analyse the anxiety of patriarchal socialisation in traditional society how women in India are ethically left with mere options of their choice: womanhood, wifehood, marriage, husband, motherhood, sisterhood and widowhood. Actually feminist literary texts re-examine the difference between constructed meaning and real meaning, constructed image and real image of women. In such gynotext real image of woman is traced. Among such writers, Githa Hariharan's name is worth mentioning. She is one of the contemporary Indian woman English novelists who writes with a strong

feminist undertone. She is one of the well known revisionary novelists in Indian English literature. In some of her fictional works she uses revisionary writing technique skilfully. Her fiction shows fusion of past and present, myth and reality, self and other. Hariharan revisits, recast and re-interpret Indian myths and scriptures. She re-reads Puranas, mythical tales and *kathas* with fresh eyes. She is an efficient revisionist who renarrates tales of Ganga, Amba, Ambika, Ambalika, Gandhari and Sita from women's points of view. In one of her novel she has revisioned and recast Arabian legendary tale. In addition to it her novels also revisit personal life and thereby makes an effort to define life and get its different meaning in living a life. Her revisionary works re-explore and reinterpret ancient stories. Her chief aim of renarration of past is to question it, argue about it and to foreground for re-analysis, new meaning and inspiration. Indeed her revisionary fictional works which can be termed as metatexts produce a dialogism. Since her main objective is women's emancipation, her texts take readers beyond the normal situation and provide a scope to see human relation and power from different angles. Her revisionary writings search for an alternative interpretation of ancient tales, myths and history. Thus, her revisionary works challenge misogynist text, cultural texts and social texts. These texts are brought back and questioned and squashed for extracting new meaning from them.

Hariharan's *The Thousand Faces of Night (TFN)* is retelling Indian myths and tales. It reinterprets many myths of *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata* from female points of view. Most of the mythical female figures are renarrated in the novel. They are actually rereading of mythical texts. They are re-read for different meanings. In this text, these mythical figures are read not for their conventional values as the ideal mother, ideal wife, modesty or chastity but for their rebellious spirit, silent protest and their exile state in search of liberty and choice. Rebellious struggles of mythical women- *Sita*, *Ganga*, *Amba*, *Gandhari* and *Draupadi* are recounted in the novel. They are not read here according to the way they are conventionally read. These mythical figures are read here as rebels. *Ganga* deserts her husband, *Shantunu* as *Sita* leaves *Rama* at the end in search of own choice. *Amba* is a strong avenger who fights in the guise of a man and kills *Bheesma* in *Kurukshetra war*. *Gandhari* observes a silent protest in her entire life by tying her eyes not to see the world again.

As it is already said that revisionary feminist scholarship re-analyses cultural texts and traces new meanings. It writes back to masculine canonical texts. In fact, many cultural texts are demanded to be rewritten to suit the new gender orientations and new perspectives of life. Even the *Bible* is claimed to be rewritten now. These texts need to be reinterpreted from a feminist perspective. Traditionally created images and meanings of woman are challenged in these feminine texts. This is why feminist writers revisit, recast, revision and reinterpret conventional narratives from female points of view. For example, *One Thousand and One Night (OTON)* is a canonical text of misogyny and woman untrustworthiness which have been persistently challenged in Hariharan's metafictional text, *When Dreams Travel (WDT)*. In some of her novels, Hariharan is raising fundamental questions against the epic tradition of India and Arab that has been suppressing women's creativity, participation and identity. She is a very unique figure among contemporary Indian woman writers for she is concerned with many challenging issues, rarely found in other woman writers, like revisiting and recasting myth, history and cultural text of patriarchy. Her writing articulates a female voice with great subtlety. In a questionnaire she argues that tradition and history must be brought back and questioned, re-examined and reinterpreted. Life and its values have to be relooked with new enlightened eyes to create better humanity, better human society with reciprocal relationship between the two sexes. Indian woman writers in English like Anita Desai, Shashi Deshpande, Manju Kapur write fiction by throwing an insight into the domestic predicaments for gender discrimination, sexual violence, domination, irreciprocal relationship between husband and wife, man and woman, boy and girl. Desai usually explores the personal history of young women with rebellious spirit who carry silent struggle against marginalisation to get liberation, choice of life and social dignity. Example of such figures in her fictions can be observed in the characterisation of Uma in *Fasting, Feasting*, Maya in *Cry, the Peacock* and Manisha in *Voices in the City*. Hariharan's protagonists Devi in *TFN*, an American educated young woman revisits her grandmother's tales and stories and find different meanings in them and tries to combat the battle of the real society. Dunyazad in *WDT*, younger sister of Shahrzada and compliant at story telling session, re-imagines their past life in the royal court and thereby endeavours to recreate the history of their talent, struggle, heroism and martyrdom. Meena in *In Time of Seize* is very challenging figure, who acts as the valour captain in the battle of the mightiest and leftist, Historical Manch and Historians. They are all confident young women, self defining, assertive and

rebellious figures. These characters revisit the past, question it and re-analyse it. They all subvert the traditional norms of Indian society and go with their own choice.

*Fugitive History* is a revisit of family history, past memory and experiences. A bulging trunk box kept under the bed appears as the metaphor of the history which contains family album and sketch book by a dead artist, Asad, Mala's husband who paints the image of almost all the family members and near and dear ones, all relatives which recount all the events and stories of their lives. When Mala finds herself alone at her empty house after the marriage of her son and daughter and after the death of her husband opens his long time untouched trunk bulged with old albums, diaries and sketch book and thus, she dissolves to the past, recalls and finds all her close people. She can no longer detach from them in her loneliness and alienation.

Moreover, Hariharan's fiction articulates the female predicaments in patriarchy and protests against the traditional value system; stereotypical attitude, patriarchal authority and her works demonstrate subversion of all kinds of traditional values and old order of things. In her writing she is basically revisiting myths and history, tradition and heritage and thus, she focuses on "rediscovery" (Showalter<sup>14</sup> xv) of female life, her self and sexuality. In her two most fascinating novels, *The Thousand Faces of Night* and *When Dreams Travel* she is retelling the ancient myths and fables, legend and stories of Arab and India which have been accepted by traditional society without any question. But now they are subjects to be interrogated and apprehended, posited at a vulnerable position. Her writing has been a strong dialogue between the past and present, myth and reality. Hariharan's fictions encounter Indian mythologies; they revisit many Indian popular myths- Sita, Amba, Dayamayanti, Ganga, Gandhari etc. Hence, in her early works of fiction Hariharan uses myth and history as fields of feminist warfare, for debate and renegotiation. As Chitra Sankaran states,

*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).

Shashi Deshpande's fictions too depict such history of women in protest who tries to break the strong patriarchal tradition. *That Long Silence* is expression of her rejection of conventional images of Indian mythical women—*Sita*, *Savitri* and *Draupadi*. It is about female alienation and recovery from a confined trap of patriarchy. Jaya, the protagonist in the novel, silently rebels against conventional system and finally bursts out to express her volcanic mind. As Kusum Gulia, a research scholar, says in her journal article, "At length she resolves to break that long silence by putting down on paper all that she had suppressed in her seventeen years' silence- that long silence which had reduced her self to fragments" (Gulia 423-424). Deshpande has created many strong female protagonists in her fictions. For example, Sarita in *Dark Hold No Terror*, Indu in *Roots and Shadows*, and Jaya in *That Long Silence* struggle against the social norms of patriarchy and they move away from them. Manju Kapur's award-winning fiction *Difficult Daughters* is a reconstruction of family history. The protagonist, Ida being the modern generation retrospects her mother's past life and diagnoses the diseases in the body of traditional social mechanism for learning to live a new life. All these woman writers, all in all, are struggling against the outdated patriarchal system which always handcuffs women with domesticity. Contextual background of these writers' fictional world is basically about the middle class or upper middle-class families in India. Anita Nair's later novels are concerned with gender issues, female struggle for self and choice, domestic sexual violence and hierarchical man-woman relationship in India. Her major novels *Ladies Coupe* and *Mistress* are concerned with revolts in patriarchy for women's emancipation. The first one is an interesting feminist fiction by Nair which tells different stories of six ladies of different categories and backgrounds incidentally met together in a ladies compartment (ladies coupe) of Kanyakumari bound train. Akhila, the protagonist, a clerk at the tax office, perturbed by the mundane duties of her house and profession finally determines to go and search for a new life. She books a ticket and starts her journey where she meets another five women who have the same experiences of confinement and subjugation, lack of dignity and choice. In the coupe they share their poignant stories. Akhila is a forty five-year-old spinster who retrospects her past life and finally comes to her realisation

that she has wasted her life respecting traditional norms of society. Now she sets out for a new world. In *Mistress Nair* has raised the crucial issue of marital rape of women in India. This is an unseen issue but very true to all patriarchal society. Radha feels that her morbid marriage has no meaning for she is merely used by her husband physically. Her love is not realized by him. So, she is disappointed with her husband, Shyam and develops extra marital affairs with Chris. Meenakshi and Anjana are the two living women characters in *The Better Man* who are victims of traditional society but later able to escape from their social conditioning. Nair explores life of Indian educated/ intelligent and earning women who are still suffering from indecisiveness for the strong hold of patriarchy. K. Mathuramani and G. Kumari rightly observe,

Anita Nair portrayed some of her protagonist as economically independent women but still they don't have control over their own life, even major decisions of their life have been taken by others, she has brought this concept in light that women in modern India may be educated and financially independent women but still the rope of their life is in the hands of others (Mathuramani & Kumari 01).

Nayantara Sahgal is another noteworthy revisionist Indian woman writer. She is a novelist, essayist and chronicler. Her experiences of aristocratic family circle have influenced her writings. Unlike Hariharan Sahgal is concerned with modern Indian history. All her novels have a political backdrop. Indeed, her novels reconstruct recent history of India. Her works can be considered as restatement of India's recent past covering colonial and postcolonial era. She revisits the Gandhian movement of non-violence and British Raj in Indian subcontinent. Her works are the best articulation of Indo-British relationship. She has re-examined conflict between coloniser and colonised through her works. Her early works explore the idea of self-alienation of Indian aristocrats and bureaucrats who received western culture and education. After departure of British they felt alienated in their own land. They adopted western-style and spirit in such a manner that it becomes impossible to survive in their own land after the departure of British. She is another revisionist Indian women novelist in English. Of course she is

concerned with modern Indian history where as Hariharan revisits ancient Indian myth, Arabian legend and history.

There are illustrious revisionist Indian novelists in English. This list includes Kavita Kane, Umesh Kotru and Ashutosh Zutshi. Like Hariharan they recast Indian epic tales of marginalised characters and situation. Kavita Kane from Pune, a journalist writes fiction who has retold the suppressed stories of Urmila, Sita's sister in the *Ramayana*, Urvi, Karna's wife and *Menaka*, an apsara in the *Mahabharata*. Umesh Kotru and Ashutosh Zutshi have jointly written a revisionist novel *Karna: the Unsung Hero of the Mahabharata*. Karna's pathetic story, born as a *surya putra* but brought up and identified as *suta putra*, lower caste son and treated as an outcaste for the mystery of his birth, is renarrated here. All these stories of marginalised mythical characters are revisited and recast from different points of view. In *Karna's Wife: The Outcaste Queen* Kane too has retold the painful story of Karna through his wife's perspective who is the lone compliant and supporter of her husband. It also tells the painful life of Karna's wife, Urvi and her struggle against humiliation and underestimation by society. Urvi, as a wife of a *suta putra* hero, always encounters difficulties; she is rejected by the family members, relatives; she is given secondary status by society even though she is princess of *Katriya* and wife of a valourous hero. Kane even reimagines a repressed story of a mythical figure, *Surpanaka*, *Ravan's* sister in *Lanka's Princess* who is known as bone of contention between Rama and Ravana, their bloody war and cause of family's annihilation. In *Ramayana* no detail life is described about *Surpanaka* (Meenakshi). In this revisioned text author has explored the marginalised background concerning life of *Surpanaka*, much accused character in the original text, recast her complete story and makes reader to see with different eyes. She is shown much rejected, bullied, tortured and outcast child in the family for her ugliness and wild nature. Her mother, *Kaikesi* does not want a daughter as she has the ambition of snatching lost kingdom of her father from *Kuber*. Mother calls *Meenakshi* monster or witch with claws. Tormented by such hatred and negligence turns her to a rebel and wild. She takes revenge on her family. She avenges against *Rama* too for rejecting her offer of love and insult of slicing off her nose. *Menaka's Choice* is another remarkable revisionist work by Kavita Kane where she is revisiting *Menaka*, a proud and fearless *apsara* in *indralok*, paradise and her firm choice. She is an intelligent and steadfast lady who

dares to break the norms of *indralok*. An apsara, according to the law of *indralok*, has to remain whole life spinster; she can make love, enjoy love but cannot marry and have child. *Indralok* does not sign any rights to possess anything and anyone. But *Menaka* has desire for husband and children. She is shrewd enough to convince arrogant Indra, ruler of *indralok* to fulfill her ambition. The novel gets its metaphorical significance. *Menaka* can be looked as representative of modern women who break the norms of patriarchy to enjoy their freedom and choice of life.

Regional literature has adopted revisionist technique of writing. Some novelists in provincial languages also use this technique of revisiting Indian mythology. They are postcolonial feminist writers in regional languages who write to resist and reclaim the discarded stories and dispossessed characters in Indian mythologies and *puranas*. Mahasweta Devi, a famous Bengali social activist and a novelist in Bengali, has retold *Mahabharata* in her novels *Kurukshetranantar*, *Panchakanya* and *Drupaudi* from women's perspective. In her retelling, Sweata has shifted her focus from heroes and heroines to unnoticed wives of those husbands who are forced to fight in the great war of *Kurukshetra*. These widows caught in grim struggle of caste, class and poverty determine to continue their life with new marriage and carry on the humanity as continuous rivers. They know life never stops. *Kurukshetranantar* compels readers to read with different points of view. To her *Kurukshetra war*, instead of a *dharmayudda*, is a gigantic sacrificial fire where thousands of tribal kings, princes, heroes and heroines were called and sacrificed. In Assamese literature Chandra Prasad Saikia retrospects Karna's warriorship and his poignant story in his Assamese fiction *Maharathi*. It explores the background of Karna's painful life, his anxiety of marginalisation as *suta putra* and struggle for his social dignity. Indira Goswami (Mamoni Raisom Goswami), a renowned Assamese writer, teacher, scholar and chronicler has renarrated story of a Bodo legendary heroine, Thengphakhri in her historic novel *Thengphakri Tehsildar Tamar Tarawal* (2009). This Assamese novel is translated by Aruni Kashyab into English, *The Bronze Sword of Thengphakhri Tehsildar* (2013). Arguably it is said that Thengphakhri is the first woman text collector (tehsildar) under British India who fights against East India Company to protect the marginalised people and women. This brave tribal lady dies in the battle. Story of this same folk hero is retold by a well known Bodo novelist, Bidyasagar Narzary. His Sahitya Akademi Award (2008) winning Bodo novel



*Birgosrini Thungri* (2007) revisits life of a valorous woman in British India, Birgwshri who fights at Door War (1864) and dies in the battle. Krishna Dulal Baruah has translated it into English, *The Sword of Birgosri* (2012).

Rushdie and Tharoor, both of them are using Indian myths in the same line as they want to see contemporary Indian history in mythical framework creating an allegory or fantasy or symbol, while other Indian novelists like Amish Tripathi, Githa Hariharan, Amitav Ghosh, et al are using myths and history to revisit the past and extend their imaginary vision. They are reused for reimagination of life. They have re-explored the *mythopoeic* tradition of the ancient India. They envision the old materials. Unlike Rushdie and Tharoor, Tripathi historicises Indian mythologies and *Puranic* tradition. Ghosh has his own way of handling history. To him social predicaments, individual/community struggle, communal violence which are primarily concerned with common masses exhibit more real/factual and more significant history than the established official history. To them fiction has become a domain of historical imagination and they also believe history thrives as myths, legends, tales, anecdotes and stories. For Rushdie' *Midnight's Children* is a package of autobiography, history and myth which is denoted by a unique symbol, 'mixed pickle'. In Rushdie boundary between history and myth, history and fantasy are broken. Among these contemporary Indian novelists male writers are concerned with postcolonial politics of writing whereas Githa Hariharan, Shashi Deshpande, Manju Kapur, Kavita Kane, Anita Nair and other woman writers engage themselves with feminist politics of writing. Indian feminist writing makes scrutiny of ancient classical literature and interrogates female participation and their representation. Indian feminists argue that Indian classical literature misrepresents women by showing them weak, fragile and dependent characters and thus, offers a marginalized position to them. Indu Swami rightly states, "In Indian classical literature, a woman is always shown in relationship to man; the husband-wife relationship is given more importance than daughter-father, sister-brother, daughter-mother relationship" (Swami 3).

From above discussion it has been observed that writing as revisionary is a process of rewriting, revisiting and re-interpreting the old texts, context and characters. It operates the body of a text and reshapes it. In most cases metafictional mode of narrative has been used. It may also be compression and expansion of a text. Since it is a counter narrative sometimes it attacks the old text; it questions the adequacy of classical text as a narrative of life and world. An aura of revisionist writing is noticed in Indian literature in regional languages as well as in English. Many Indian postcolonial writers have adopted this scheme of writing to revisit their past: literary ancestry, myth, history and civilisation, thereby oppose the western perspective and reclaimed their distorted national identity. Postcolonial literature in India is marked with plenty of counter narratives and revisionist writers. On the other hand, Indian woman writers, whether they are feminists or not, have successfully used this method of rewriting and renarrating the past in their works.

**Endnote:**

1. K. Satchidanandan is a pioneer of modern poetry and criticism in Malayalam. He has lectured and read papers in many European countries and USA. He is the editor of a significant book *Myth in Contemporary Indian Literature* (2003) published by Sahitya Akademi.
2. E. M. Meletisky- author of *The Poetics of Myth*, was a Russian scholar famous for his seminal studies of folklore, literature, philology and the history and theory of narrative; he was one of the major figures of Russian Academia in those fields. He was Director of the Institute for Advanced Studies in the Humanities at Russian State University for the Humanities for several years until his death.

3. William Doty- a scholar of religious studies, author of several books like *A Handbook of Myth, Mythography: The Study of Myths and Rituals* (2000) and *The Oxford Companion to World Mythology*.
4. Mythpoeic: adj., concerning or relating to myth making, mythopoetic; mythopoesis (n) is a process or ideology of creating a myth.
5. Northrop Frye was a Canadian literary critic and theorist who was one of the most influential figures of 20<sup>th</sup> century. He was professor at Toronto.
6. Kiran J. Budkuley is Professor at Goa University, Goa, India.
7. Ganga Dutta- actual name of Bheesma, son of Shantunu and Ganga in *Mahabharata* who took oath not to touch woman. As a result, he remained life-long unmarried.
8. Md. Ali Jinnah- leader of Muslim League and the first Prime minister of Pakistan.
9. Dhritarashtra- blind prince of Hastinapur, husband of Gandhari in *Mahabharata* and the father of the Kaurapas.
10. Karukhetra war- a famous war in Indian epic *Mahabharata* which is called Dharmayudda
11. Daipayana – Ved Vyas, narrator and writer of *Mahabharata*.
12. Githa Hariharan (born 1954 in Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu, India) is one of the most eminent Delhi based writer and editor. Till now she has published five novels and two short story collections.
13. Elaine Showalter-she is an American writer, Professor of English at Princeton University. She is the writer of a feminist classic, *A Literature of Their Own: British Woman Writers to Doris Lessing* (2009) and she edited many books.

14. *Arabian Nights* or *One Thousand and One Nights* is frame tale of the one thousand and one tales collected from the Middle East and India.
15. Chitra Sankaran is an Associate Professor of the department of English Language and Literature, National University of Singapore. She had an invaluable interview on “Diasporic Predicaments: An Interview with Amitav Ghosh” (Sankaran)
16. Phallogentrism: male-centric idea, patriarchal ideology.
17. *Indralok*: paradise, heaven, land of gods and goddesses ruled by Indra devota, king of gods and goddesses.

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