RESEARCH ARTICLE

SHIVA AND MONOMYTH: A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF MYTHICAL HERO'S JOURNEY AND ARCHETYPAL PATTERNS IN AMISH TRIPATHI'S *SHIVA TRILOGY*

Dr. SWETA CHANDRANATH JHA
Assistant Professor in English
Communication Skills Department
KSV University, Gandhinagar, Gujrat
Email: jhaswetac@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

Archetypal theories are essential for literary scholars to analyze or understand any literary work which is based on or influenced by mythology. This paper aims to analyze the archetypal patterns in portrayal of the hero Shiva from Amish Tripathi's *Shiva Trilogy*. Archetypes are recurring designs, themes, images or patterns in literature which determine form and purpose of the work by its cultural and psychological aspects. With the help of Archetypal patterns, myth scholar Joseph Campbell has presented the theory of 'Monomyth' to study and understand the journey of heroes in literary works influenced by mythology. The paper attempts to examine the mythical journey of the quest hero Shiva in the context of the theory of monomyth. The study attempts to prove that the framework of Campbell's theory of monomyth has not lost its significance as it is also applicable to analyze such modern literary work of the current period with some modifications. In this work of fantasy genre which is based on Hindu mythology the main theme is good versus evil. But the evil is unknown to the hero and he initiates his journey to identify the evil.

Keywords: Archetypes, Monomyth, Quest, Hero, Hindu Mythology

Introduction

Mythology has been an enriched source for writers since ages and the writers revive and revisit myths to augment their works. In the current period, J. K. Rowling, Madeline Miller, Claire Heywood and Rosie Hewlett are prominent writers who employed mythology in their renowned works. In Indian English writing also writers like Anand Neelkantan, Devdutt Pattanaik, Amish Tripathi and Ashok Banker have uniquely applied mythology to produce distinctive works. These modern writers reinterpret mythology to make it contemporary and to find merit and relevance of ancient myths in the current period. Amish Tripathi has tried to modernize Indian mythology by blending it with fantasy mode. He has tried to humanize Lord Shiva of Hindu mythology who is the supreme god of Hinduism. He has depicted Shiva as a common man from history who achieves godly status by his deeds. As he writes, "A man who rose to become godlike because of his karma. That is the premise of the Shiva Trilogy, which interprets the rich mythological heritage of ancient India, blending fiction with historical fact" (Tripathi, "Immortals of Meluha" 138-139).

As per Archetype and myth theories, archetypal patterns can be observed any time in any culture as it is part of our collective unconscious mind. The term archetypes, "denote the recurrent designs, patterns of action, character-types, themes and images which are identified in a wide variety of works of literature, as well as in myths, dreams and even in social rituals" (Abrams 12). In his theory of monomyth, Campbell highlights the same archetypal mythical patterns which appear in the different forms across different narratives. Campbell was strongly influenced by Thomas Mann, Heinrich Zimmer, Sigmund Freud and Carl Jung. In his renowned work *Hero with thousand Faces,* Joseph Campbell has presented the theory of Monomyth which is also known as the hero's journey. Campbell borrowed the term "Monomyth" from James Joyce's *Finnegans Wake.* The hero's journey is divided into main three stages (1) Departure, (2) Initiation and (3) Return which are further divided in seventeen sub stages. The paper attempts to analyze the hero Shiva's journey in *Shiva Trilogy* by applying the theory of monomyth.

(1) Departure: In this first phase of his journey, the hero leaves his normal or ordinary world and he is guided by some superior force or powerful mentor and begins his journey to the unknown world. This section is divided into the following five subsections.

i.   'The Call to Adventure': In this stage 'The Call to Adventure' or 'The Signs of the Vocation of the Hero', the hero, who is living an ordinary life in his normal world, receives a call to begin his journey to another world. According to Campbell, the hero is summoned by a herald or destiny that leads him to start his journey to an unknown world. Campbell describes the unknown world as: "This fateful region of both treasure and danger may be variously represented: as a distant land, a forest, a kingdom underground, beneath the waves, or above the sky, a secret island, lofty mountain top, or profound dream state; but it is always a place of strangely fluid and polymorphous beings, unimaginable torments, superhuman deeds, and impossible delight" (53). In the first novel of the trilogy, this stage takes place when Shiva gets a call to adventure by a herald named Nandi sent by the Meluhan king Daksha. King Daksha sends an invitation to Shiva because he needs help from Shiva in fight against their enemies called Chandravanshis. Shiva is living his life as a common man in Tibet, North India. Shiva, a chief of his tribe Guna, faces many challenges to protect his clan and land from their enemy tribe Prakritis. Shiva accepts the invitation by king Daksha for the sake of peace, protection and betterment of his clan and decides to go along with his clan in the unknown world of Meluha without knowing that new challenges and adventures are waiting for him and this journey to the unknown world will change his life completely.

ii.   'Refusal of the Call': In this stage, the hero refuses to accept the call of adventure because of different reasons like fear, sense of duty and responsibility, obligation, inadequacy and insecurity etc. The hero decides to remain in his ordinary world. But this stage does not take place in the trilogy as Shiva always accepts all the calls of adventures to provide help or protection to others. Shiva is introduced as a fearless warrior who fights bravely against Prakritis to protect his tribe and land. After entering into the other world of Meluha also he always accepts every challenge to help or protect others at different points of time. Shiva doesn't refuse the call to adventure but he always refuses to believe himself as 'Neelkanth' or 'Messiah'.

iii.   'Supernatural Aid': Appearance of supernatural aid in the life of a mythical hero is mandatory. As Campbell states, "For those who have not refused the call, the first encounter of the hero-journey is with a protective figure (often a little old crone or old man) who provides the adventurer with amulets against the dragon forces he is about to pass" (63). In the trilogy, Shiva gets supernatural aid in the form of Somras not by a crone but by Ayurvati. Drinking of Somras turns his throat blue which proves that Shiva is the only savior, defeater of the evil, 'Neelkanth' who can save Meluha as per the prophecy. Ayurvati, an excellent doctor, proves herself an utmost aid for Shiva by helping him in all his bigger or smaller adventures and saving the life of not only Shiva but lives of those who are loved most by Shiva. Apart from somras, Shiva gets supernatural aid in the form of Pashupatiastra with the help of Mithra. Mithra persuades Vayuputras to allow Shiva the

Pashupatiastra. The old priest and Vasudevas can also be considered as supernatural aid as they help Shiva in his internal battle as well as his battle against evil.

iv.   'The Crossing of the first Threshold': In this phase, the mythic hero crosses the first threshold when he actually leaves his ordinary world and enters into the world of adventure. When he enters into the other world of adventure, he is completely unaware about the darkness, danger and unknown that lies ahead. As Campbell remarks: "With the personifications of his destiny to guide and aid him, the hero goes forward in his adventure until he comes to the "threshold guardian" at the entrance to the zone of magnified power." (71). This phase takes place in a complex way in the trilogy; Firstly, when Shiva leaves his original dwelling place of Himalaya and enters into Meluha with his clan. Secondly, when Shiva begins his journey to protect Meluha from Chandrvanshis allied with Nagas. Shiva enters into the unknown world of Meluha as he wants to provide a more protective, peaceful and comfortable life to his clan. He initially finds that the utopian world of Meluha is magnificent and luxurious but then the harsh realities of that world are revealed before him. The actual 'Crossing of the First Threshold' for Shiva is his commencement of journey to defeat Chandravnshis and entering into Swadweep. This journey leads Shiva to the unknown world which is dangerous as well as mysterious. On every single step Shiva has to face new challenges.

v.   'The Belly of the Whale': In this phase, the hero falls into a real danger situation after crossing the first threshold. Now the unknown is revealed to him which proves fatal and puts him in a deathlike situation and it becomes the phase of metamorphosis for the hero. "The idea that the passage of the magical threshold is a transit into a sphere of rebirth is symbolized in the worldwide womb image of the belly of the whale. The hero, instead of conquering or conciliating the power of the threshold, is swallowed into the unknown, and would appear to have died" (Campbell, 83). When Shiva reaches Swadweep, he faces different kinds of challenges and undergoes a psychological transformation. After defeating Chandravnshis, he realizes the truth that Chnadrvanshis are not evil but they are just different from Meluhans. Moreover, they also have faith in the prophecy of Neelkanth who will save them. Then his heart sinks and he becomes extremely distraught. But in Ayodhya, he meets an old priest in the temple of Lord Rama who preaches him about karma, fate and choices in life which provides new insight for him and he undergoes a mental transformation.

(2) Initiation: In this second phase of journey, the hero takes initiation and accepts his responsibilities of fighting the battle against evils and winning the battles for betterment of society. Before winning the battle, he is put on trials and tests to get heroic qualities so he can emerge as a real mythic hero. The second stage is divided into the following six sub stages.

(i)   'The Road of Trials': In the heroic journey when the hero leaves his ordinary world and enters into the unknown world, he has to face many trials and hardships one by one. For him the next trial proves more difficult than the last one. It is necessary for the hero to go through all the trials that make him braver and mature with real life experiences and shapes him as a mythic hero. As Campbell states:

"ONCE having traversed the threshold, the hero moves in a dream landscape of curiously fluid, ambiguous forms, where he must survive a succession of trials. This is a favorite phase of the myth adventure. It has produced a world literature of miraculous tests and ordeals. The hero is covertly aided by the advice, amulets, and secret agents of the supernatural helper whom he met before his entrance into this region" (89). Shiva faces many trials at physical and psychological level after entering into the world of Meluha. He unceasingly fights battles in the outer world and within himself. Shiva is not ready to believe himself as Messiah or Neelkanth. Winning Sati's heart has also proved a challenge for him. He becomes extremely sad after losing Brihaspati in mount Mandar blast. After defeating Chandravanshis and knowing their faith in 'Prophecy about Neelkanth', he feels heartbroken. His journey to find the real evil and destroy it is full of hardships. His passage to Panchvati has been proved full of unknown tests and perils. The truth about Sati's

Son Ganesha and her sister Kali and how they were ill-treated by king Daksha moves him from inside. All these psychological trials make him stronger. In the physical world also Shiva fights against Chandravanshis, Nagas, Parshuram and his brutal army, and ultimately against the allied army of king Daksha and Bhrigu. He also faces difficulties to reach Vayuputras and to get Pashupatiastra. At the last, losing Sati and coming out from that grief proves for him the life transforming trail.

(ii)   'The Meeting with the Goddess': In this phase of the hero's journey, the hero meets a goddess-like figure who helps him by guiding and providing aids in his journey. Hero finds a bonding and unity with this female figure who can be a mysterious goddess or an ordinary woman with motherly affection. As Campbell points out: "Woman, in the picture language of mythology, represents the totality of what can be known. The hero is the one who comes to know. As he progresses in the slow initiation which is life, the form of the goddess undergoes for him a series of transfigurations: she can never be greater than himself, though she can always promise more than he is yet capable of comprehending. She lures, she guides, she bids him burst his fetters. And if he can match her import, the two, the knower and the known, will be released from every limitation" (106). This woman guides the hero and showers affection and motherly love on him. Here Shiva does not meet the actual goddess but his meeting with Sati symbolizes fulfillment of this stage. Sati is painted as an extremely brave and fierce warrior on one hand and she is depicted as the most calm, matured, kind and pure woman on the other hand. Sati lives the life of 'Vikarma' although she is a princess. Shiva loves her endlessly and devotes himself to her. In return, Sati also showers her boundless love and affection on Shiva. Sati inspires Shiva and supports him in ups and downs of his life. Her presence as a wife in the life of Shiva makes him a more composed and seasoned person. Sati saves the life of Shiva by taking the 'Agniban' on herself which was shot at Shiva. In Greek myths the goddess bestows hero with boons but here Sati bestows Shiva with the gift of 'life'. One more time Shiva's life is saved by Sati. Instead of Shiva, Sati goes to the Peace conference and dies after her battle with Swuth, the assassin from Egypt.

(iii)   'Woman as the Temptress': In this phase of the journey, the hero meets a temptation; generally, in the form of a female who distracts him from his path. It seems temporary relief for the hero who is facing one by one trials and tests on his path of heroic journey. This temptation can be a female figure or temptation of material and physical or pleasurable nature. But most of the time it proves the hero unworthy by disturbing him from his main objective of journey. In the trilogy, Shiva does not meet any woman who directly plays the role of temptress but it can be said that his meeting with Kali fulfills this stage indirectly. As Kali tempts Shiva to go to Panchvati and Shiva faces dangers and challenges while reaching to Panchvati, and he is diverted from his main objective.

(iv)   'Atonement with the Father': In this phase of his quest, the hero meets a father or father-like figure who has ultimate power of life and death. Hero has to reconcile his relationship with this father figure (if the relationship is ambiguous) to gain his blessings and protection, he has to get approval or to persuade father figure. This stage is fulfilled when Shiva meets Gopal, Vasudeva, and then Mithra. Gopal helps Shiva on each step and guides him when he faces internal duel. Gopal performs the role of advisor for Shiva and helps him to reach to the land of Vayuputras. Mithra who is a close friend of Manobhu, uncle of Shiva, helps Shiva to get granted Pashupatiastra from the Council of Vayuputras. After meeting Mithra, Shiva is connected with his past life and gets information about his parents and uncle. So it can be said that Gopal and Mithra both play the role of fatherly figure for Shiva and support him to win the battle against evil.

(v)   'Apotheosis': In this stage of the journey, the hero changes after having many trials and tests and facing a woman as the temptress and overcoming it. This is the stage of realization for the hero. After getting new knowledge and truth he is transformed completely. The hero has gained new experiences of life and he has developed new characteristics and has achieved new identity or the different identity after these many trials and ordeals. When Shiva comes to know about the truth

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of Chandrvanshi, real identity of Ganesh and Kali, the evilness of Somras, and his relationship with Manobhu and Mithra then he transforms completely. He says, "There is a god in every single one of us. And there is evil in every single one of us. The true battle between good and evil is fought within'' (Tripathi, Secret of the Nagas 1827-1828). It shows his mental transformation.

(vi)   'The Ultimate Boon': In this phase, the hero has accomplished the goal of his journey. He has gained victory over evil or has passed the trials successfully after facing difficult situations. And his final achievements or gains are his ultimate boon. In the first novel, his ultimate boon is getting Sati as wife after a challenging journey in the kingdom of Meluha. In the second novel, Shiva gets his ultimate boon in the form of Brihaspati alive after his difficult and arduous journey to Panchvati. In the third novel, Shiva's ultimate boon is grant of Pashupatiastra after his difficult passage to land of Vayuputras.

(3) Return: In this last phase of his journey, hero returns to his original world after achieving his goals and getting rewards. As Campbell notes, "WHEN the hero-quest has been accomplished, through penetration to the source, or through the grace of some male or female, human or animal, personification, the adventurer still must return with his life-transmuting trophy. The full round, the norm of the monomyth, requires that the hero shall now begin the labor of bringing the runes of wisdom, the Golden Fleece, or his sleeping princess, back into the kingdom of humanity, where the boon may redound to the renewing of the community, the nation, the planet, or the ten thousand worlds" (179). But the mythic hero has to face trials in his return journey too. His return journey is divided into the following subsections

i.   'Refusal of the Return': In this phase, the hero denies returning to his original place after achieving his ultimate boon and wants to stay at the place where he gains wisdom and enlightenment. In the trilogy, after knowing the truth about the conspiracy of Daksha and Bhrigu, Shiva refuses to return to Meluha from where he started his journey and he declares war against Meluha to destroy Somras manufacturing units.

ii.   'The Magic Flight': When the hero gets boon then sometimes he has to escape with it if the god has jealousy who is guarding it or if an evil or demon wants to get it. As Campbell states, "On the other hand, if the trophy has been attained against the opposition of its guardian, or if the hero's wish to return to the world has been resented by the gods or demons, then the last stage of the mythological round becomes a lively, often comical, pursuit. This flight may be complicated by marvels of magical obstruction and evasion" (182). It suggests that to save the boon from the enemy, the hero rushes to his return journey with a boon that also becomes adventurous. In the trilogy, Shiva rushes with Pashupatiastra before Vayuputras change their mind or Bhrigu makes any other conspiracy.

iii.   'Rescue from with-out': In this phase, the hero is rescued by a guide or other powerful force when he is injured or attacked by an enemy. In *The Immortal of Meluha*, Sati saves the life of Shiva by taking Agniban on herself. In *The Secret of Nagas,* Kali and her Nagas save Shiva from attack of Daivi astra laid by the army of king Daksha. In *The Oath of Vayuputras,* Shiva gets help from Vasudevas, Branga, Vaishali, Kashi in his war against king Daksha and his alliances.

iv.   'The Crossing of the Return Threshold': In this phase of journey, the hero returns into his ordinary world after achieving his objectives and preserves his boon to share with others, so he can enlighten them with the new knowledge that he has acquired and integrate the wisdom. Shiva successfully destroys the real evil 'Somras' by destroying its manufacturing unit 'Devagiri'. Shiva is successful in explaining to the world that excessive use of somras has turned it into evil instead of a blessing.

v.   'Master of the two worlds': This phase suggests that the hero has become capable enough to balance between the two worlds; materialistic world and spiritual world. The hero becomes skilled to bridge the gap between his inner and outer world. Moreover, the hero can enter in both worlds without facing threshold and trials. As Campbell states, "Freedom to pass back and forth across the world division, from the perspective of the apparitions of time to that of the causal deep and

back—not contaminating the principles of the one with those of the other, yet permitting the mind to know the one by virtue of the other—is the talent of the master" (212-213). Shiva gets a complete transformation after his life in Meluha. His meeting with Sati, Brihaspati, old priest in Ayodhya, Gopal and Other Vasudevas, Parshuram and Mithra makes him face and accept some eternal truths of life and makes him stronger mentally and spiritually. After knowing the truth about the evilness of Somras, he decides to make society free from it and to save and protect the society becomes the principal mission of his life. As Mithra tells him, "We don't become gods because we think we are gods... That is only a sign of ego. We become gods when we realize that a part of the universal divinity lives within us; when we understand our role in this great world and when we strive to fulfill that role. There is nobody striving harder than you, Lord Neelkanth. That makes you a God" (Tripathi, The Oath of the Vayuputras, 227). The death of Sati shatters him but at the same time he realizes his duty to destroy evil so he destroys Devgiri by Pashupatiastra. After that he knows that he can bring any changes in the materialistic world by defeating evil whenever it is required and his acceptance of the grim reality of Sati's death makes him master of the spiritual world.

vi. 'Freedom to Live': In this phase, the hero is free to live life freely because there is no fear of death. After defeating the evil, there is no fear of death and destruction in the world. Now the hero has saved the world from evil. So the hero abdicates his role and chooses to live a normal life as per his wish. After destroying somras manufacturing units and defeating his enemy, Shiva is assured that he has saved the world from the evil effect of somras. But death of his beloved Sati has incited ''Vairagya bhava'' into him. He detaches himself from all the materialistic pleasure and decides to live a simple life in his native Tibet.

Conclusion

Monomyth recurrently acts as a common template of a wide-ranging group of tales which are based on mythology. One more time the significance and universality of Campbell's monomyth is proven by the critical analysis of Shiva's journey in the trilogy. The trilogy displays various methods of monomyth and representation of archetypes. Monomyth strongly outlines the human consciousness through the challenges faced by the hero. Moreover, monomyth shows that everyone has potential to become a hero. It is also a journey of psychological transformation of the hero. So, it can be said that the trilogy fulfills all stages and the basic framework of the hero's journey or monomyth explained in Campbell's monumental work *The Hero with a Thousand Faces.* Furthermore, Campbell's theory of monomyth has not lost its charm and significance in the modern literary work.

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