

Emerging Creative Trends in *The White Tiger* and *The Immortals of Meluha*

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In the terms of creativity, the word 'novel' means new, and whatever is new, it has to be understood as a medium for asserting one's freedom. Aravind Adiga's *The White Tiger* and Amish Tripathi's *The Immortals of Meluha* show the growth and development of the novel and the changing perspectives with regard to new creative trends and techniques and we can identify and analyze the thematic and stylistic features which are integral to an understanding of various trends as it develops in the novels. These two novels are selected which seem to be path-breakers, which established their own routes and which can rightly be called as trailblazers. Adiga and Tripathi are born in India, write about India but have settled abroad which is a limiting factor and decides the scope of the present research area.

Various New creative trends such as globalization, colonialism, postcolonialism, ecological study, entrepreneurship, diaspora, myth and historical approaches are the subject matter of supreme importance as most of the writers have dealt with these themes in one way or the other. Many talented novelists have contributed to the growth of the Indian English novel as well as the resurgence of these themes itself. M.K. Naik justifies their contribution by saying:

Perhaps the best argument in support of the view that Indian writing in English is a body of works worth serious critical consideration is the fact that the best in it has been taken seriously and subjected to minute appraisal by critics in both India and abroad ...The steady interest it has aroused, in recent years, in English speaking countries shows that it has merits other than those of sheer novelty and exoticism (Naik 3).

Aravind Adiga's epistolary novel, *The White Tiger* gives detailed account of the new creative trends like black humour, search for identity, alienation, rootlessness and attitude of big bellies, discourse of entrepreneurship, race, subaltern and panoptic view. Emergence of Socialists in India alarm that the voice of the underclass cannot be ignored for long. The research endeavors to analyze the nature of underclass, its identity and causes of its emergence, ways of its subjection, articulation and reaction against it. The analysis is made on epistolary mode of the novel.

On the other hand, Amish Tripathi's *The Immortals of Meluha* (2010). The major creative trends in this work are ecological perspectives, mythology, blending of history and science or science and religion, geographical arena of ancient India, utilization of the modern day slang and jargon. The mythological aspect of the story is highlighted in a big way. Characterization is very relatable and the characters seem a bit two dimensional. Tripathi has succeeded in establishing socio-cultural and geographical unity, along with historical and religious facts. All the main characters work for the welfare of all. The novel is interesting to read. The historical facts, social elements, concept of duality as Suryavanshis and Chandravanshis, philosophies and mythical

elements are used in modern forms.

Aravind Adiga wants to “change of the heart from rich and poor alike. No self-respecting Indian novelist has wanted to imitate him” (Times of India 3). The childhood of Balram goes with hitting the piece of coal unknowingly. The portrait of Mahatma Gandhi was watching the every chunk of coal burning childhood of Balram. He got another name with new profession “the coal breaker.” In his remark, the children in India are weak, fragile look like “the guilty conscience of the government.”

One boy asked at the tea shop, “What is the creature that comes along only once in a generation?” “The coal braker” (Adiga 37). Feeling of alienation aroused in him. Each and every incident makes Balram excited. The protagonist, Balram is the original thinker and listener. He listened carefully and turned himself to a new profession of Driving, a chauffeur. He did not get much education and wanted to learn facts of life. He had lost his childhood days. With humanitarian view, he is dreaming to open a language school where he wants to teach not about Gandhi and God:

After three and four years in real estate, I think I might sell everything, take the money, and start a new school – an English language school- for poor children in Bangalore. A school where you will not be allowed to corrupt everyone’s head with prayers and stories about God or Gandhi - noting but facts of life for these kids. A school full of White Tigers, unleashed on Bangalore! (Adiga 319).

The protagonist, Balram in *The White Tiger*, visualizes a perfect picture where everything fits neatly: his master and beautiful mistress are like the most prominent Hindu god, Ram and his wife, Sita. Balram is still a servant but he is a servant-god. This is the way of the world for him. Balram uses religious narratives to create a vision of the world that justifies his position. He gives himself a narrative about why he has to submit, why he is the one driving them around while they enjoy a nice talk. He does not talk about economic differences, because in his opinion wealth reflects on one’s position in the plan of creation. At that point of the narrative, the reader is aware that Balram has killed Ashok, but is bewildered as to why Ashok is assigned the role of the single most powerful figure in Hindu mythology. Why Balram is assigned the role of his faithful servant.

Myth is the significant trend of contemporary novels in India. Mythology tells something that is deeply embedded in the psyche of the people who have created it. Myths about servant gods and sidekick of Gods enhance the caste system. Hind Hatham observes in his work “Discourse of Entrepreneurship in *The White Tiger*”:

They do not pre-exist the caste system: they shape an a posteriori system that allows the caste system to reproduce itself throughout thousands of years. The caste system changes, and castes transform, but the original idea is a meme that manifests itself in different ways: one of them is Balram’s vision of himself as a sidekick (god), and as a servant to an omnipotent figure (Hatham 24).

During Balram’s narrative, his view of himself changes. He no longer assumes himself as a servant of God and comes to link himself independent, omnipotent figure. “... lord Buddha oscillates between two states. Lord Buddha is a man and a God”.

Balram sees how people are kept in the cave /coop/ panopticon. Instead of returning

to warn his fellows and to share his enlightenment with them, Balram blows the cave up. He then counters the Platonic allegory which he does not know. His actions contradict the prophecy about the returning philosopher with appropriated enlightenment allegory. Balram's awakening does not make him responsible for waking up the rest.

The novel is in the form of epistolary mode which is a series of letters written over a period of seven nights in which the protagonist Balram narrates his rags to riches story to the Chinese Premier Wen Jiabo who is to visit Bangalore. This novel is an epistolary because the novel is structured as a series of letters written to the Chinese Premier by a former car driver from Laxamangarh, Bihar. There arises a question that why the Chinese Premier? "Because" the narrator Balram Halwai, based in the city of Bangalore acknowledges:

"The future of the world lies with the yellow man and the brown man now that our erstwhile master, the White skinned man has wasted himself through buggery, mobile phone usage and drug abuse" (Adiga 233).

India of Light with access to education, health care, electricity, running water, hope, justice, transportation facilities is emerging entrepreneurial power in the world surpassing China. India's rapid advancement in the field of yoga and meditation, hotel and tourism industry, science and technology, space, real estate, expansion of cities and mall culture is contrasted with discourse of entrepreneurship, mythology, subaltern identity, caste etc.

Amish's use of myth forms the trend of his novels, especially *The Immortals of Meluha*. Myths are the integral part of his novels. One can presume that in a myth some of the main characters are Gods, some are super humans. Ram is an active Supreme Power, God, although he is not an active character, but many times his presence and power is reminded to the reader in the very beginning of the novel. It is told by Nandi that the Chandravanshis Empire was created and formed by Lord Ram.

At many places there is discussion on the rules laid by Lord Ram, and also the way people are following him ardently for example, during the discussion between Daksha and Shiva on Somras. Daksha is telling Shiva, that Somras was invented by Lord Brahma and was given to everyone but to a particular group known as Saptarishis or the Brahmins. But now it is given to all four castes according to the rules made by Lord Ram. In this context, Tripathi writes in his novel, "Yes, my lord. And the revolution was known as Lord Ram. The greatest emperor that ever lived. Jai Shri Ram. His ideas and leadership transformed the society of the Meluhans" (51). Hans Blumenberg, German philosopher, too proposed that: "The function of myth is to help human being cope with the index or ability of given reality, a need that is not outmoded by scientific advances and rationality" (qtd. In *The Critertion* 288).

Myth even when approached for the scientific point of view possesses some scientific truth woven into a tale. For example, when we look into some of the myths and customs that our Indian culture follow for many generations, we could find the hidden life treasure in it. For that a few traditionally followed myths and customs are given with its hidden scientific explanation. There are several ways to go through which myth can

be explored through customs. One of them is joining both palms together to greet.

Myths were created not for the scientific explanation or satisfaction of the people but to guide the people who were devoid of moral, religious, scientific and practical wisdom. Myth fulfilled and fulfills its indispensable duty of guiding, expressing, enhancing people's beliefs to have harmony with nature, and society. It safeguards and enforces morality and carries the practical wisdom for the guidance of people. Myths are, as a few European intellectual and scientists proclaim, neither story nor just rhetoric but a highly pragmatic chanter of faith and moral wisdom to be believed, preserved and followed by its own people to live in harmony and keep their identity.

Pantheism, is nothing but the belief that the universe is in some sense divine and should be worshipped and reverend. It identifies the universe with God but denies any personality or transcendence of such a god. Captain Nandi asks about the group of attackers of Shiva and their distinguishing features. Shiva replies that there is a strange symbol on the leather bracelet which he has noticed while fighting with them. Nandi eagerly asks to Shiva: What symbol, my Lord? (Tripathi 56). Shiva sketches the ancient symbol which some people used for the word, Aum. But Shiva is unaware about the uniqueness of the word Aum, so he asks clarification for the word Aum to Nandi:

My Lord, 'Aum' is the holiest word in our religion. It is considered to be the primeval sound of nature. The hymn of the universe. It was so holy that for many millennia, most people would not insult it by putting it down in written form.' 'Then how did this symbol come about?' 'It was devised by Lord Bharat, a great ruler who had conquered practically all of India many thousands of years ago. (Tripathi 56)

There are multiple of themes and trends widely used by the author but the stylistic study of this novel is remarkable. The term stylistic has been applied to critical procedure which undertake to replace what is claimed to be the subjectivity and impressionism of standard analysis of the style of literary analysis with an 'objective' or scientific analysis of the style of literary texts. The modern day slang and jargon was utilized throughout the novel. The author describes many situations and often the characters mouth dialogues and terms as if they were living in the modern era instead of four millennia ago as per the settings of novel. This was a point, which has been criticized by many readers as well as many critics and is a thoroughly valid one. This is the one major flaw of an otherwise very good debut. Many might feel that the story seems very formulaic by epic fantasy standards in spite of the Indian settings and that might something to keep in mind while reading this debut. The characters appear a bit two-dimensional and are also a bit predictable.

The characters are using the word "INDIA" more than once and repeating that Shiva is the savior of India. Just remember the story with detailed maps and all mentioning that the story is taking place in BC 1900. These characters' using the name of India in their conversations is worthless. The chief scientist named Brihaspathi is using the word "oxygen" when mentioning the contents of respiratory air. But oxygen was named by Antione Lavoisier in 1777.

The modern slang and terminology used are not used in a religious context. They are simply mouthed by the characters and donot make sense entirely as science has not advanced to that degree in the world as showcased in the book. It is a thing that can

bother. The book is replete with the fundamental errors due lack of research into the social and human conditions into the era which the book claims to be set in. Author tries to use Sanskrit or Hindi words to give a bit of credence to his plot, but Tripathi displays a severe lack of understanding of meaning of those words. For example the translation of "Har Har Mahadev" as "Each One of Us is Mahadev"!! On another occasion it's hilarious to find the use of word "Varjish-Griha" for GYM.

The word "varjish" is of Arabic origin and is never encountered in any of pre-Islamic works in Indian literature. Author has succeeded in writing a fantasy "Chandrakanta" like thing, but he falls far below the level of stalwarts like Dan Brown who support their plots with authentic research and insight. It seems that it is not a novel but a formula much like Man Mohan Desai's films. Amish has done a good job by mingling history, mythology and punched a little bit of romance in it.

In nutshell, this research paper finds in both novels the trends like myth, panopticon view, epistolary writing, usage of modern slangs and jargons, pantheism, search for identity and alienation. Both the writers Ghosh and Tripathi first of all attempt a rejection of conventional historiography and secondly present largely a re-reading and a re-examination of myth. It is significant to know how these writers treat myth with imagination in their fiction.

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