

**AN ANALYSIS OF WOMEN ARCHETYPES IN THE SELECT FICTION OF AMISH
TRIPATHI**

S. Vijaya Prabavathi

Research Scholar, (Ph.D), Reg . No: 19113154012007, S.T.Hindu College, Nagercoil, Affiliated
to M.S.University, Abishekapatti, Tirunelveli. Tamilnadu, India.

Email: vsingarajan@yahoo.com

Dr.V.S.Shiny

Assistant Professor, Department of English, S.T. Hindu College, Nagercoil. Affiliated to
M.S.University, Abishekapatti, Tirunelveli.Tamilnadu,India.

Abstract

Amish Tripathi, the contemporary Indian novelist in English, recreates the myth by mixing it with contemporary social issues and scientific facts. His works of arts are vividly known for expressing the rich and varied cultural heritage of India throughout the world. One can visualize his usage of archetypes and symbols in his fictions. This paper is an attempt to analyse the archetypes of the women protagonists in Amish Tripathi's *Shiva Trilogy* and *Ram Chandra Series*.

Key words: Anima, Animus, Masculinity, Feminine, Mother Archetype

Archetypes are the “elementary ideas” that have enormous impact on the individual as well as on society, forming ethical beliefs, moral ideas, and influencing the human relationship within a society (*The Power of Myth* 60). Carol S. Pearson in her book *The Hero Within Six Archetypes We Live By* defines, “The word ‘archetype’ can seem intimidating to some. Actually, archetypes are nothing more than the deep structures in the psyche and in social systems” (19). Based on these impacts on the individual mind and social systems, Gods and Goddesses are given too many archetypes related to their appearance and behaviour in Myth and society. Amish Tripathi has given human attributes to goddesses based on their mythical attributes. His Sati and Sita represent the archetypes of our collective unconsciousness at certain contexts and differ from their mythical archetypes at certain context. Tripathi has recreated the certain archetypes of Indian mythology suitable for the contemporary readers. He re-makes a new story based on the ancient, archetypal motifs of Shiva and Sakthi in *Shiva Trilogy* and Ram and Sita in *Ram Chandra Series*.

Tripathi recreates certain mythical figures as powerful female protagonists in his fictions. His portrayal of strong women is reflected in his creation of Sati and Sita. He has created his female protagonists, whose credence on their counterparts lead their life towards success in their endeavour. Joseph Campbell, an American writer in the comparative fields of mythology and religion in *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* gives a detailed description about the role a heroine in the life of a mythical hero:

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. . . .

The hero who can take her as she is, without undue commotion but with the kindness and assurance she requires, is potentially the king, the incarnate god of her created world. (106)

Women take the role of goddesses and guide the heroes in their adventures. Such goddesses created by Tripathi remain warriors who resolve the trials and tribulations faced by the heroes. In *Shiva Trilogy*, Sati leads Shiva on the right path with her wisdom. It is her wisdom that guides Shiva to understand that the Vasudev Pundits have not aligned with the Nagas and have not made any evil conspiracies. Shiva soon realizes that Sati's observations are correct and even Gopal, the Vasudev Pandit praises Sati in *The Secret of Nagas* as, "Your wife is wise, great Mahadev. It is rare to find such beauty and wisdom in one person" (256). Shiva seeks the counsel of Sati because her guidance has always led him in a righteous path. Shiva expresses it in *The Oath of the Vayuputras* as, "Because I know that as long as you're with me, you will always keep me centered on the right path" (209). Sati also convinces Shiva to release Parvateshwar, the Meluhan General who decides to fight against Neelkanth, from prison.

Sati can be considered as the anima, the female part of Shiva. Jung, the critic and psychoanalyst defines anima in *Man and his Symbols* as, "every man carries a woman within himself, called anima" (17). He also stresses that anima, the feminine part of a man's personality, plays a crucial role while he selects his life partner. The anima at this particular juncture makes a man act as if he is familiar of that woman and even he knows her for such a long time, forgetting the external world. Shiva too believes that Sati is his life partner as soon as he sees her. He travels to Meluha with a hope of marrying her. *The Immortals of Meluha* depicts his interest to travel to Meluha after seeing Sati as, "I think I'm going to like this country. For the first time in the journey, Shiva actually looks forward to reaching the capital city of the Meluhans. He smiled and started towards the rest house. *Have to get to Devagiri quickly*" (56). M.L. Von Franz, a follower of Jung in his article, "The process of Individuation" shares the psychological reason for love at first sight as, "It is the presence of the anima that causes a man to fall suddenly in love when he sees a woman for the first time and knows at once that this is 'she'" (191). Here, too the anima of Shiva plays a pivotal role in selecting his soul mate Sati, as his wife.

Sita in *Ram Chandra Series* also represents the goddess archetype and she is the replication of the anima of Ram, the feminine part within him. Ram is eager to marry Sita whom he respects and bows in front of her in reverence. Her warrior spirit and her strict adherence to rules attract Ram. Ram accepts Sita as his own goddess who can guide him. Ram also understands that Sage Vishwamithra is the Guru of Sita. But he does not suspect Sita even though Vishwamithra has once compelled Ram to fire Asurastra which has led him to suffer. After having got married for thirteen years, Sita expresses Ram that she is the disciple of Sage Vishwamithra and she is the Vishnu, the leader selected by the Malayaputras, "the tribe left behind by the previous *Vishnu, the propagator-of-Good*" (*War of Lanka* 10). Ram is not startled at this reply but assures her silently that he already knows it. In *Sita- Warrior of Mithila*, Ram expresses this to Sita as, "Some secrets are too big even for a marriage. I know the Malayaputras are. I know what your being Guru Vishwamithra's favourite disciple means" (331). Ram never suspects Sita; but he always trusts

her and treats her with due respect. He is even ready to follow her on her mission as a Vishnu. It is the anima of Shiva and Ram which has attracted the chivalry within Sati and Sita. Jung explains this in *Aspects of Feminine*:

Every man carries within him the eternal image of woman, not the image of this or that particular woman, but a definite feminine image. The image is fundamentally unconscious, an hereditary factor of primordial origin engraved in the living organic system of the man, an imprint or 'archetype' of all the ancestral experiences of the female, a deposit, as it were, of all the impressions ever made by woman--in short, an inherited system of psychic adaptation....Since this image is unconscious, it is always unconsciously protected upon the beloved. . . . called this image the 'anima'. (57)

Tripathi has reframed his female protagonists not only wise but also strong warriors who can even endure the pain and tortures inflicted on them. Carol S. Pearson in *The Hero Within Six Archetypes We Live By* shares the features of warrior spirit as, "Their ability to endure pain without flinching demonstrated the highest Warrior virtues- courage, fortitude, endurance" (101). The author creates strong women warriors who have immense confidence in their own potentiality than that of the heroes. Sati in *Shiva Trilogy* also has faith in her potentiality. She has high standards for herself and believes that she can achieve it. Sati gets a scar on her face in the battlefield of Devagiri. She swears to remove the scar through plastic surgery, only after gaining victory in the next battle. She expresses her caliber as a warrior in *The Oath of Vayuputras* as, "I expected more from myself as well" (339). Sati has great credence in herself and she maintains her self- respect to, "set very high standards for herself" (513).

Further, having faith in her own capability, Sati travels to Icchavar where the ligers attack the villagers. Her intention to protect the weak persuades her to protect the innocent villagers of Icchavar. Athithigva, the king of Kashi, is unwilling to venture Sati into the forest. But Sati expresses her determination in rescuing the villagers in *Secret of Nagas* as, "And I think I must go. Innocents are being killed. Lord Ram would not allow me to stay here. Either I leave Kashi alone, or with forty soldiers" (191). In Icchavar, Sati is ready to sacrifice her life to protect the village priest and his family. Jung in *Aspects of Feminine* has defined this warrior hood as the male personification and masculinity within woman as animus. His idea of "Masculinity means knowing what one wants and doing what is necessary to achieve it" (77). The animus or masculinity within Sati projects her as a warrior with determination. Her animus is aware of her warrior spirit and strives to achieve it along with her extreme endurance.

Jean Shinoda Bolen, a psychologist and critic in her *Goddesses in Every Woman* has divided the Olympian "Goddesses into three categories: Goddesses into three categories, namely "the virgin goddesses, the vulnerable goddesses, and the alchemical (or transformative) goddesses" (15). Bolen defines the virgin goddesses as warriors and protectors of heroes. Emotional attachments cannot divert them from their focus. The vulnerable goddesses represent the roles of wife, mother and daughter. The identities of these goddesses depend on their relationship with others. These goddesses express the women's need for affiliation and bonding. The Aphrodite women seek intensity in relationships, value creative changes and are open to change. The heroines

of Tripathi are embedded with certain features of these Goddesses. They are warriors, mothers and they also possess the archetypes of lovers, wives, wise woman and queen like the archetypes of Jung and Campbell. Sati and Sita have the archetypal features of warrior, Queen, ideal mother and also wise women.

Tripathi recreates Sita as warrior and her appearance in *Ram: Scion of Ikshvaku* is narrated as, “She looked like a warrior in the army of the Mother Goddess” (230). Ram first meets Sita while she defends a poor boy from a shop owner who intends to punish the boy for stealing a fruit. He also notices the courage and tactics of Sita when a man approaches to assault her when she is weaponless, “Sita slowly reached her scabbard, where her knife should have been. Her hand tensed. Ram watched with keen interest; no sudden movements; nor switch of nervous energy when she realized she carried no weapon (230). The scabbard of Sita is weaponless. Without any agitation, Sita takes a stick and handles the foe in front of her. Ram bows his head in reverence when he observes the martial skills of Sita:

She flicked the stick with her foot, catching it with her right hand in one fluid motion. She swung the stick expertly in her hand, twirling it around with some fearsome speed that it whipped up a loud, humming sound. . . . The mob leader pulled out a knife and swiftly moved forward. Sita swerved back as he swung the blade wildly. In the same movement, she steadied herself by going back one step and then down on one knee, swinging her stick with both her hands. The weapon hit the man behind his knee. Even before his knee buckled, she transferred his weight to her other foot and yanked his own legs as leverage as his feet went up in the air. (231)

John Stratton Hawley states in his “Prologue” of the book *Devi: The Goddesses of India* that every goddess in Hinduism is associated with Sakthi (power/energy) and earth as, “nurturing, maternal aspect” and also “uncontrollable, destructive power” (7). Sita and Sati possess the warrior energy within them.

Tripathi’s treatment of faith in women can also be understood through his portrayal of Vedavati. Tripathi has adapted the worship of Goddess in *Ram Chandra Series* through the concept of Kanyakumari. He has dealt with the faith of prophecy and healing power of the human Goddesses. In *Ram Chandra Series*, Tripathi points out at the practice of worshipping the divine virgin female child as Kanyakumari. *Raavan: Enemy of Aryavarta* illustrates the practice of worshipping Kanyakumari as follows:

In many parts of India, there was a tradition of venerating the *Kanyakumari*, literally the *Virgin Goddess*. It was believed that the Mother Goddess resided, temporarily, within the bodies of certain chosen young girls. These girls were worshipped as living Goddesses. People came to them for advice and prophecies . . . they counted even kings and queens among their followers . . . until they reached puberty, at which time, it was believed, the Goddess moved into the body of another pre-pubescent girl. (17)

Vedavati, who inspires Raavan, is a Kanyakumari from Vaidynath temple.

Raavan along with his maternal uncle Mareech, rescues his brother and mother Kaikesi when his father tries to kill his new born Naga brother, Kumbakarna. He rushes to meet

Kanyakumari at Vaidynath temple. But there he finds another Kanyakumari since the former Kanyakumari has attained puberty. Raavan is disappointed since nobody knows the name as well as the dwelling place of the former Kanyakumari and Raavan in *Raavan: Enemy of Aryavarta* expresses this loss as, “he was never going to see her again. She was gone from his life. Forever” (47). But Raavan does not lose his hope. He persuades his mother and uncle to go to a small town near Chilika, a lake with a trading port. He toils there in the beginning by doing heavy work as a dock labour; later indulges in other vicious means such as hiring a cutter for smuggling; gets the ship of Akambana and becomes a ruthless smuggler. Whenever he faces a problem, he thinks of Kanyakumari and resolves to be a better person. Joseph Campbell in *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* insists on the state of a hero being inspired by a woman as, “the child of destiny has to face a long period of obscurity. This is a time of extreme danger, impediment, or disgrace. He is thrown inward to his own depths or outward to the unknown; either way, what he touches is a darkness unexplored. And this is a zone of unsuspected presences, benign as well as malignant; an angel appears” (301).

Raavan is a fierce warrior, brilliant scholar, a divine artist but a ruthless business man. He never bothers about killing people and looting their wealth. Raavan’s animal instinct transforms him completely as a demon who strives to reach his goal at any cost. His shadow, the darker side turns him into a cruel demon as Carol S. Pearson narrates the attributes of shadow with bad intention, “The shadow-possessed Magician can be truly evil, using the power of charisma to seduce, manipulate, and destroy, rather than to elevate. Intent makes a great difference”(191). As a fierce murderer, Raavan massacres many people to become a successful trader and spends most of his time with wine and women. He loots and kills innocent people for his own welfare until he finds the pregnant Vedavati, the Kanyakumari in the village Todee as the wife of Prithvi.

The days with Vedavati transform Raavan from a horrifying cruel animal into a strong personality capable of maintaining extreme devotion and compassion. Tripathi further illustrates that Raavan recognizes Vedavati as a Goddess and follows her words. She creates a state of ecstasy and bliss in his conscious instructing him to accept the reality. In *Raavan: Enemy of Aryavarta*, the Goddess says, “all you have to do is to accept who you are. And you will find peace” (169). Vedavati preaches dharma to Raavan and she guides him to help the poor to get an ultimate bliss. She functions as the anima, the feminine part of Raavan. He expresses his belief in Vedavathi as, “The possibility to turn negative into positive always exists. But it takes a Goddess to inspire the change” (161). Kanyakumari too has faith in Raavan which brings out a positive transformation in him. The evil intended shadow of Raavan is controlled by anima, his feminine part as Jung in *Four Archetypes* views, “The one standing closest behind the shadow is the anima, who is endowed with considerable powers of fascination and possession. She often appears in rather too youthful form, and hides in her turn the powerful archetype of the wise old man (sage, magician, king, etc)” (177-78). Raavan tries to control the monstrous impulse within him after he comprehends the faith that Vedavathi has in him.

The cruel murder of Vedavati and her husband for money and throwing of their child into forest as the feast for wild animals shatter his faith in Dharma and also the faith that he has for his

motherland. He believes that his ambition in life is to bring the Sapt-Sindhu down. He tries to get solace through wine and women. Carol S. Pearson stresses that the shadow of a human, “under ideal circumstances this man would have been able to avoid the depth of suffering he experienced through his addiction. Many addicts tend to be perfectionists. Paradoxically, the harder they are on themselves, the more likely they are to become addicted. The alcoholic” (193). Though, he becomes addicted to alcohol and women, he is confident enough to accomplish his mission of destroying the Sapt Sindhu and getting his success.

The writer also focuses on familial issues that lead to societal issues. He points out the psychological impact that parents create in children. He expresses father daughter relationship and the hurdles between them in *Shiva Trilogy*. He also celebrates mother daughter relationship of Sunaina and Sita in his novel *Sita: Warrior of Mithila*. The mother daughter relationship between Sunaina and Sita was not dealt in Valmiki *Ramayana*. The novelist has created Sunaina as a archetypal mother and also a strong bond between the daughter and mother. Sita breaks the seal of his paternal uncle Kushadhvaj which is comparable to regicide and so Kushadhvaj conspires against Mithila. As a result of this, the expenditure of the basic commodities increases. Hence, everyone blames Sita for breaking the seal and Sunaina for adopting Sita as her daughter. The shadow of Sita expresses her hidden feelings of adoption and also her guilt of creating many problems against the welfare of Mithila. In *Sita: Warrior of Mithila*, the shadow of Sita reminds her as, “I have given her nothing but trouble. I have destroyed so much of what she spent her life building. Maa should forget me” (91). Sita remains in gurukul unwilling to go to Mithila since she thinks that her absence will lead to the prosperity of Mithila.

Sunaina, mother of Sita understands the untold, repressed sufferings of Sita and consoles her to move on. Sunaina teaches, ““There’s no escape from problems and challenges. They’re a part of life. Avoiding Mithila does not mean that your troubles will disappear. It only means that other challenges will appear”” (99). Sunaina instills faith and optimism to the shadow of Sita to be a warrior, to take care of Urmila, to restore the prosperity to Mithila, and also, ““Mithila is too small a place for one such as you, Sita. You are meant for greater things. You need a bigger stage. Perhaps, a stage as big as India or, may be history itself”” (101). Sita understands and accepts her responsibilities. Her mother’s words rule over her shadow and she learns to overcome the problems. Sita identifies herself with her mother. Jung explains this “*Identity with the Mother*” as

Everything which reminds her of motherhood, responsibility, personal relationships,... compels her to run away---to her mother, naturally, who lives to perfection everything that seems unattainable to her daughter. As a sort of superwoman (admired involuntarily by the daughter), the mother lives out for her beforehand all that the girl might have lived for herself. She is content to cling to her mother in selfless devotion. (134)

Sita is influenced by her mother’s wisdom and courage. The words of Sunaina remind the responsibilities of Sita and her mother’s wish to make her proud. The bond between Sunaina and Sita is strong in the fantasy of Tripathi.

The influence of Sunaina can be seen in Sita in her selection of life partner as Sati is influenced by her father in *Shiva Trilogy*. According to Jung, children either imitate or ignore the parents in selecting their partners. Jung confesses this idea in *Aspects of Feminism* as:

It is the strength of the bond to the parents that unconsciously influences the choice of husband or wife, either positively or negatively. Conscious love for either parent favours the choice of a like mate. While an unconscious tie (which need not by any means express itself consciously as love) makes the choice difficult and imposes characteristic modifications. (48)

While analyzing the concept of Jung on the psychological influence of parents in the selection of life partners in Sati and Sita, it is comprehended that these children are motivated unconsciously to compensate the weakness of their fathers and unfulfilled desire of their mothers. In *Ram Chandra Series*, Janak, the King of Mithila is never known for his courage and administration. He always spends time by reading scriptures and discussing with the Rishis and sages. Sita is not influenced by her father's wisdom but her mother Sunaina's pragmatism positively influences her. She wishes to be like her mother and searches a man who has the traits of her mother. When Sita marries Ram, she feels the presence of Sunaina besides her and also being united with her. The novel *Sita: Warrior of Mithila* presents this as, "She pictured her mother standing before her. Smiling. Nurturing. Warm. Maternal. Like Mother Nature herself. Sita was whole once again" (230).

Mother is the first influence to a male child whereas the father is the first attractive figure to the female. The influence may either be positive or negative. If the child is attracted positively he/she selects the like partner whereas negative influence leads to select opposite. This psychological influence is seen both in Sati of *Shiva Trilogy* and Sita in the *Ram Chandra Series*. The writer has created his imaginary character Sunaina, as an archetype of mother.

The Indian myths demonstrate the image of Goddesses as the powerful warriors and affectionate mothers. It is believed that Goddesses reveal their total energy when they are in wrath to punish the demons. Further, the Goddesses bless their devotees with excessive energy to triumph in the battlefield or in family life to handle the difficulties with stamina and faith. Tripathi has given this feminine power to his female protagonists. They are either warrior goddess or mother goddess but they maintain a strong persona without having any vengeance on others but they shower their divine grace.

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