



## **Manipulation of Myth in Making Woman: A Feministic Insight into Githa Hariharan's *The Thousand Faces of Night***

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### **Abstract**

Myth plays a very significant role in every society and therefore, has always been the source of subject and strategy in literature. In contemporary Indian literary canvas myths are revisited to highlight sacred beliefs of the Hindus, to background the contemporary reality or to provide a better understanding of the Indian social structure and system as they highlight every experience and emotion of man. Githa Hariharan's *The Thousand Faces of Night* is her debut novel which won 1993 Commonwealth Writers' Prize for the best first book. The plot of the novel revolves round Devi and her experiences of reality as opposed to the world of fantasy and 'illusion', a world of make-belief where she lives from her childhood. Her grandmother was the endless fountain of folk and fairy tales and tales from Indian mythology. Hariharan has tried to offer us a fresh and feministic insight into the same old mythical stories which have so long been used as the hegemonic stratagem of subjugating women by making them accept and internalize the process of suppression unquestionably.

**Key Words:** *myth, subjugation, female, woman, manipulation.*

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**Introduction:** Derived from the Greek word 'mythos' (Britannica 24: 715) which has a multiplicity of meaning like saying, story, fiction etc., myths are the hypothetical realities, accepted by a specific ethnic group of people with shared culture and social system. Myths are presented in the form of stories about god or other superhuman characters, serving as a yardstick of morality and standard of conduct. This often implies valuable multi-layered meanings with both superfluous and subterranean possibilities which need to be decoded by the readers or the listeners themselves. This can be one of the many definitions of myth. To cite other definitions, *The Routledge Dictionary of Literary Terms*, defines myth as:

Stories of unascertainable origin or authorship accompanying or helping to explain religious beliefs. Often (though not necessarily) their subject is the exploits of a God or hero, which may be of a fabulous or superhuman nature, and which may have instituted a change in the working of the universe or in the condition of social life (146).

Again, in his book *Myth*, Laurence Coupe has referred to Don Cupitt's *The World to Come* where Cupitt has provided a definition of myth according to which:

Myth is typically a traditional sacred story of anonymous authorship and archetypal or universal significance...it tells of the deeds of superhuman being such as gods, demigods, heroes, spirits or ghosts...although their powers are more than human and often the story is

not naturalistic but has the fractured, disorderly logic of dreams...we can add that myth-making is evidently a primal and universal function of human mind as it seeks a more-or-less unified vision of the cosmic order, the social order, and the meaning of the individual's life...the individual finds meaning in his life by making of his life a story set within a large social and cosmic story (5, 6).

Myth has universal appeal and in every society it plays a very significant role. In other words, it can be said that myth is the repository of rich cultural heritage and is the foundation of every society. The study of myth is quite significant to perceive the picture of a particular society and its culture. In India "a myth is essentially told or narrated, a process that is designated in Sanskrit by such words as *purna* (ancient story) and *akhyana* (illustrative)" (Britannica, 20: 545).

India, with its rainbow of culture has a myriad of myths which mirror its society and culture and "express and explore the people's self-image" (Britannica 24: 715). Since the time immemorial, these myths have been passed on from one generation to the next as both oral and written tradition of storytelling. Hindu myths are found collectively encapsulated in epics (*Ramayana* and *Mahabharata*) and *puranas* (*Shiva Purana*, *Vishnu Purana*, *Brahma Purana*, and *Skanda Purana* and such others) "which came to function as encyclopaedia of knowledge and provided models for all human existence" (Britannica 24: 721).

Since the early days of creative writing, myth has often attracted the attention of creative writers. As Kiran Budkuley says in her essay *Mahabharata Myths in Contemporary Writing: Challenging Ideology*:

Myth have always fascinated the creative mind of writers and challenged their critical faculty. This preoccupation with myth – whether to create a new one or to reconstruct the old – can be gauged by understanding the relation between the authorial intent behind myths and their functionality as cultural document within a continually 'shifting' societal reality (16).

So whatever the intention is, myth has always been the source of subject and strategy in literature. From Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey* to Eliot's *The Wasteland*, from Dante's *Divine Comedy* to James Joyce's *Ulysses*, from Shakespeare's *Venus and Adonis* to Eugene O'Neill's *Mourning Becomes Electra*, myth has always provided myriad of frameworks so as to fit the literary themes.

In Indian literature, *Mahabharata* and *Ramayana* are important sources of myths. As Kiran Budkuley has mentioned from Jaidev's *Ideology Versus Ideology* that, these myths "still occupy our collective unconsciousness and affect us through their ideology" (19). In contemporary Indian literary canvas myths are revisited to highlight sacred beliefs of the Hindus, to background the contemporary reality or to provide a better understanding of the Indian social structure and system as they highlight every experience and emotion of man. Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's *Palace of Illusions* revisits *Mahabharata* from Draupadi's perspective. Karnad's plays like *Hayavadana* and *The Fire and the Rain* underscore the sacred beliefs of the Hindus. Apart from all these myths can also be studied from a feminist perspective.

Having a feministic approach to the study of the Hindu mythology, it is found that women have always found their place in the periphery since the Vedic or the Puranic age. In the *Skanda Purana*, as referred by Sadashiv A. Dange in the *Encyclopaedia of Puranic Beliefs and Practices*, "The human male is said to be the sixth god (*pancabhutasamopetah sa sastha paramesvara*)" (Dange 3: 974). Regarding women, on the other hand, in the same *Purana* it is written, "A daughter is said to

be a source of grief (*Kanya sada dukha kari*)” (Dange 5: 1595). Even the female deities are always overshadowed by the male counterpart in the Vedic pantheon and thereby are identified only in relation to some male deity – parvati, the wife of Shiva, Lakshmi, the consort of Vishnu, and Saraswati, the spouse of Brahma. Vedic period “do not show a belief in the existence of an independent powerful goddess” (Sharma 20). The conception of the existence of independent Mother Goddess is pre-Vedic and thereby has pre-Aryan origin when the society was mainly matriarchal. “The many figures of goddesses discovered in the archaeological finds of Harappa and Mohan-jo-daro suggest that the popular deities of the pantheon were predominantly feminine” (Sharma 21).

The Hindu society is mainly based on the Vedic culture of the Aryans and thus is primarily patriarchal. Aryans have a rigid hierarchical social structure based on gender and skin colour. Since then, as Beauvoir has said in *The Second Sex*, women have always been seen as the “other” (26). In *The Second Sex* she says, “The duality between Self and Other can be found in the most primitive societies, in the most ancient mythologies” (26). A female child is taught to be a woman following the guidelines that are there for woman. *Manu-smriti* is taken to be the first Hindu *dharma sastra* (religious scripture). Apart from dealing with various subjects like definition of dharma, initiation and Vedic study, cosmogony, *Manu-smriti* deals with set of laws for women and wives. R. P. Sharma, in his *Woman in Hindu Literature*, refers to *Manu-smriti* quoting the duty of a wife in the following words:

“Though destitute of virtue or seeking pleasure (elsewhere), devoid of good qualities, (yet) a husband must be worshipped as a god by a faithful wife. No sacrifice, no vows, no fast must be performed by women apart from their husbands, if a wife obeys her husband, she will for that (reason alone) be exalted to heaven” (128).

Even today the society expects such archetypal women in their households.

*Manu-smriti*, which dates from the 1<sup>st</sup> century BC in its present form, reinforces the patriarchal order. So one can have a vague vision of the time since when women have been pushed into the periphery and are justified in the name of religion and dharma. Women are made to internalize their subjugation and thus the generation and culture moves on.

Woman writers like Anita Desai, Arundhati Roy, Shashi Deshpande, Githa Hariharan and some others are project the contemporary life of women in the Hindu society. In their works, they are portraying chiefly the two generations of woman—the submissive and docile “angel in the house” who are the haulier of the patriarchal order and the radical new woman who questions the contemporary social system where the females are always seen as wooden marionette in the hands of the male; thus, rejecting to be the archetypal woman.

Githa Hariharan is one amid such Indian literary doyens whose debut novel has been honoured with literary award. *The Thousand Faces of Night* is the debut novel of Githa Hariharan which won 1993 Commonwealth Writers’ Prize for the best first book. The plot of the novel revolves round Devi and her experiences of reality as opposed to the world of fantasy and ‘illusion’, a world of make-belief where she lives from her childhood. Her grandmother was the endless fountain of folk and fairy tales and tales from Indian mythology. The stories always came to her as an answer to her questions on sordidness and complexities of real life. Devi was to America for her graduation and got into a relationship with Dan, her black friend, “an experiment for young woman eager for experience” (Hariharan 6). But she could not fit herself into the framework of the American society and she breaks up her relationship with Dan and comes back India. As soon as she gets back to

India, her mother begins to invite prospective bridegrooms for her. Within three months she meets six prospective bridegrooms who need a homely wife and she is married off to Mahesh.

Devi's marriage proves to be a failure. Her husband, who has been a businessman, remains totally a stranger to her. However, she manages to maintain a good relationship with her father-in-law, Baba, regularly gives her lessons on how to become a good wife, 'an angel in the house' by quoting from *Manusmriti*. But the Sanskrit quotations of Baba are beyond her intelligibility. She thinks: "... this then is marriage, the end of ends, two or three brief encounters a month when bodies stutter together in lazy, inarticulate lust. Two weeks a month when the shadowy stranger who casually strips me of my name, snaps his finger and demands a smiling handmaid" (Hariharan 54). Mahesh wants a child but there is some problem in conceiving and both undergo fertility tests and the readers come to know that Mahesh has no problem in him but the test result of Devi remains unknown. Her loneliness brings her close to Gopal, a classical singer by profession and a frequent visitor of her neighbour. Finally, she elopes with Gopal leaving behind her life of a wife. But the infatuation does not last long and she leaves him too and goes back to her mother.

Apart from Devi's story, Hariharan's novel provides the slices of the lives of several other women characters, like – Sita, Mayamma, Uma, and Gauri. These stories do not come alone. Each story, except Mayamma's, is linked with a particular myth and the grandmother is the medium to connect the myth and the contemporary life. Sita's story of sacrificing her *veena* (stringed musical instrument) has been linked with the myth of Gandhari; Uma's fate has been correlated with that of Amba; Gauri's experience has been yoked with the story of a girl who married a snake, from *Panchatantra*.

**Analysis:** Githa Hariharan has portrayed a panorama of contemporary life in the novel *The Thousand Faces of Night* by interlacing myth and imagination. She juxtaposes the condition of women in the contemporary Indian social situation and in the Indian mythological milieu. Projecting Devi as the protagonist, Hariharan has presented three generations of women and interlocking the real stories with the mythical one, she has universalized the issue of subjugation and commodification of women. The idea of commodification of women is well reflected in the expression like "Devi had again been packed and dispatched, this time to a more permanent destination" (Hariharan 107). Women have been used as commodity, as object, that exists just to serve men.

Simultaneously, it seems that Hariharan has tried to offer us a fresh and feministic insight into the same old mythical stories which have so long been used as the hegemonic stratagem of subjugating women by making them accept and internalize the process of suppression unquestionably.

The story of Devi's childhood, her experiences of the past, and the stories that her grandmother used to link with the real life situations comes to us as the recollection of the past by Devi herself. She remembers how her grandmother simplifies the complex contemporary reality by citing examples from Indian mythology. From the novel it can be assumed that Hariharan wants to show that the myths are not just the grandmother's stories. These have some other purpose to serve. The novel shows us how women are made to accept their subjugation unconsciously by means of storytelling and not mere storytelling but by complementing it with morals that prepares a female child to be a future woman. The myth passes on from one generation to the next and thus the patriarchy remains unchallenged.

In the novel, *The Thousand Faces of Night*, the traditional understanding of myth has been exposed as the monopoly of the male. They manipulate myth to make a female a woman. In the contemporary period people believe that discrimination on gender basis is a matter of past and that women are equal to men. But, in reality, it has turned out to be a part of Indian culture which has become difficult to get rid of. It has developed into a part of our collective unconsciousness as the psychic sediment that is piled up in the process of repeated practices over many generations. In the novel, characters like Devi's grandmother, Sita (Devi's mother) and Mayamma (Devi's maid) represent the "patriarchal women who has internalized the norms and values of patriarchy" (Toyson 85). The stories that Devi used to get from her grandmother were the "prelude to" (Hariharan 51) her "womanhood an initiation into its subterranean possibilities" (Hariharan 51).

Devi finds a photograph of her mother with a *veena*, she enquires her grandmother regarding it as she never saw her mother playing a *veena*. The grandmother thereby narrates the incident which leads Sita to pull apart the strings of the *veena* to be a 'wife and daughter-in-law'. The grandmother says that one morning while busy with her *veena*, Sita could not respond to her father-in-law's call and he got angry and said, "Put that *veena* away. Are you a wife, a daughter-in-law?" (Hariharan 30). At this her reaction has been narrated in the following way: "Sita hung her head over the *veena* for a minute that seemed to stretch for ages, enveloping us in an unbearable silence. Then she reached for the strings of her precious *veena* and pulled them out of the wooden base. They came apart with a discordant twang of protest" (Hariharan 30).

Devi's grandmother brings an analogy between real Sita and the mythical Gandhari and says that like Gandhari, Sita too is the idol of self-sacrifice and she goes on narrating the myth of Gandhari. Gandhari, the beautiful princess of Gandhar, got married to the Prince whose palace was "twice as big, twice as magnificent as her parent's palace" (Hariharan 28). But she was oblivious of the fact that her husband was blind. When she walked into his room she was traumatized to find the "white eyes" (Hariharan 29) of her husband that were useless. "In her pride, her anger" (Hariharan 29), she tore a piece of cloth from her skirt and blindfolded herself. The grandmother complements the story by providing a moral in the following words: "Gandhari was not just another wilful, proud woman. She embraced her destiny—a blind husband—with a self-sacrifice worthy of her royal blood" (Hariharan 29). The myth of this kind involuntarily inculcates the quality of self-sacrifice in women. The myths colonize their mind and they instinctively persist internalizing their subjugation as a process of cultural transmission and form the collective unconsciousness in women. This collective unconsciousness in Devi impeded her from taking any step against Mahesh. She divulges her failure in the following words: "My petty fears, and that accursed desire to please which I learnt too well in girlhood, blur the bold strokes, black and white, of revenge" (Hariharan 95).

Devi's grandmother simplifies the intricate contemporary conditions with anecdotes from Indian mythology. She expounds a story to her every time she enquires on the repugnant experiences of womanhood she saw unfolding around her. She views, "My grandmother's stories were no bedtime stories. She chose each for a particular occasion, a story in reply to each of my childish questions" (Hariharan 27). When Devi comes to know about Uma's fate she is already fourteen or fifteen. She learns that both her husband and the father-in-law turned out to be drunkard and "drank till she was stupefied with fear" (Hariharan 35). Poor Uma spends her maidenhood in her paternal home in an unfavourable environment with "an indifferent father and hostile stepmother" (Hariharan 35). The circumstances grow worst when "her drunken father-in-law kisses her roughly on the lips" (Hariharan 35). Uma leaves her husband's place forever and comes to live with the grandmother.

Devi is distressed when she comes to know about Uma's story of real life. But then the grandmother was there to reconcile Devi as well as herself by citing another mythical story from *Mahabharata*—the myth of Amba. The grandmother comforts Devi, "Ah, Devi why weep over Uma? A high-born prince, or even a goddess, has been the victim of disaster" (Hariharan 36). A woman is always vulnerable even if she is god. She narrates Devi the myth of Amba, a pitiable tale of three sisters—Amba, Ambika and Ambalika, who had been abducted by Bheeshma during their *swayamvara* to offer them to his half-brother Vichitravirya who by himself was incapable of achieving one. The most unfortunate among the three sisters was Ambika who selected Salwa before her abduction and when she told it to Bheeshma, he allowed her to go back to him. But Salwa refused to accept her and Bheeshma, even though she begged him to accept her, did not accept her as his wife as he was bound with his oath of remaining a celibate throughout his life. She decided to avenge herself and was reborn as Drupad's daughter who was raised as a son and in the war of Kurukshetra, he rode to the battleground "with garland of Amba round his neck, he rode the plain of Kurukshetra to taste the heady sweetness of the beloved's blood in battle." (Hariharan 39)

The myth brings to light the fact that women have always been seen as commodity. If not required, they are simply shooed away as they did to Amba. But the society accepts the injustice as her destiny and eulogizes Bheeshma's audacity of abducting three brides from their *swayamvara* (an assembly for the selection of a husband by a girl of marriageable age). But the patriarchal society is blind to the fact that the demonstration of his gallantry had shattered the life of one among the three sisters. Her existence had been diminished into a discarded or defective piece of commodity and she had to plead to accept her as if she was a perpetrator: "'Take me for your wife, Bheeshma,' she wept" (Hariharan 38).

After her marriage, Devi walks into her husband's place where she comes in contact with her father-in-law, Baba, who is a retired Sanskrit professor. As her grandmother prepares her for her womanhood from her very childhood with the stories from Indian mythologies and folktales, Baba, on the other hand, begins to teach her the lessons on the duties of a wife citing various stories of "Brahmin saints from glorious past" (Hariharan 55) and quotes from *Manusmriti*. Baba says:

The path a woman must walk to reach heaven is a clear, well-lit one. The woman has no independent sacrifice to perform, no vow, no fasting; by serving her husband, she is honoured in the heavens. On the death of her husband, the chaste wife, established in continence, reaches heaven, even if childless, like students who have practised self-control (Hariharan 55).

Baba narrates a story of Muthuswamy Dikshitar, who was a seventeenth century composer of Carnatic music. The story reveals that he was a bigamist. He enters into the second marriage just because his first wife was dark. The fact that she was a "good woman" (Hariharan 51) was not enough to gain her husband's love and loyalty. The issue alludes to *Kamasutra*, where it is written, as referred by R.P. Sharma in his *Woman in Hindu Literature*, "The *Kamasutra* recommends that a man can remarry in his wife's lifetime for the following reasons: the folly or ill-temper of the wife, her husband's dislike to her, the want of offspring, the continual birth of daughters and the incontinence of the husband" (Sharma 101).

Baba, then, relates an account of Narayana Tirtha, going to visit the house of his father-in-law. But to go there he had to cross a stream; and while crossing, "a sudden current swept him into deep, turbulent waters" (Hariharan 66). Out of fear he immediately accepts *sannyas* (ascetic). The current subsides and he reaches the shore alive. But he was in a predicament of "how could a *sannyasi* go to

his father-in-law's house? How could he look on his wife's sweet face again, only to call her sister?" (Hariharan 66). But as, according to Baba, all great men had ideal wives, Narayana Tirtha's wife too seeing the luminous halo around the head of her husband, goes back to her parents with an air of selfless devotion. Here too, the story demonstrates the idea of an ideal wife. A feminist interpretation of it shows that the husband was ready to leave his wife (by being *sannyasi*) for the sake of his life. On the contrary, Baba goes on to say that a virtuous wife always dies before her husband. It is apparent from the story and the statement that the worth of woman's life is lesser than the man's. "Woman thus emerged as the inessential who never returned to the essential, as the absolute other, without reciprocity. All the creation myths express this conviction that is precious to the male..." (Beauvoir 194). *The Thousand Faces of Night* apparently reflects the fact that throughout their life, women are taught to be subservient and docile. Imparting lessons with suitably selected anecdotes starts from their very childhood. They are taught not to transgress the margin laid by the patriarchal society.

When Baba goes to New Work, Devi tries to spend her time by reading Baba's "orphaned books" (Hariharan 69) and then she discovers a page that Baba did not narrate to her. It was the myth of Kritiya, "a ferocious woman who haunts and destroys the house in which women are insulted. She burns with anger, she spits fire. She sets the world ablaze like Kali shouting in hunger" (Hariharan 69, 70). It seems that Baba just narrates the stories of what Coventry Patmore said in his poem "angel in the house" (poemhunter). He selects each story with a purpose – the purpose of training women to be dutiful and not rebel. Just like Baba has excluded Kritiya's story from "Baba's stories" (Hariharan 51), he and his son Mahesh (both the icons of aristocratic patriarch) are always silent about Parvatiamma, Devi's mother-in-law.

The mythical stories, folktales and the accounts of the saints that Devi comes in contact with have taught her to be submissive, self-sacrificing and passive. In a word it was preparing her to be "the angle in the house." Although all the stories are different – both temporally and spatially – yet they are thematically similar in their projection of subjugation of women and deification of men. The men are never criticized even for their misdeeds. When Devi questions her grandmother why did Dhritarashtra agree to marry Gandhari if he was a noble person, then she answers, "All husbands are noble Devi" (Hariharan 29). A follower of such ideology, the grandmother could not keep Gauri back at work when she returned from her husband's place. Gauri was Devi's grandmother's maid before she got married to a husband who "was an animal" (Hariharan 32) as told by Gauri herself. The rumour rose that Gauri had developed an affair with her young brother-in-law and one night eloped with him. But Gauri never confessed any such things and for that matter its authentic it is in question. When she came back to Devi's grandmother to ask if she could get back her old job, she was simply repudiated, although with a ten rupees note.

The grandmother narrated another story to Devi on the night on which the grandmother refused to take Gauri at work. But, this time she did not relate her story with any myth. That day she told her a story from *Panchatantra* – the story of the girl who married a snake. According to the story a woman gives birth to a snake and when the snake grows up the mother wants her son (the snake) to get married. After several futile searches, the father could manage a girl who was given by her father to be the snake's wife and she comes with her father-in-law. The neighbours saw the beautiful girl and tried to dissuade her from marrying a snake. But she replies, "A girl is given only once in marriage" (Hariharan 33) and gets married to it. At night she finds that the snake slips out of its skin and becomes a handsome man. She waits for a chance and burnt the skin into ashes when the snake was out of its skin. Devi knew that the grandmother was narrating it keeping in mind the context of

Gauri but at that period of time Devi was unable to relate the story with Gauri's story: "I remember I spent days trying to unravel this message from my grandmother. Should Gauri, my happy, down-to-earth Gauri, have married a snake? And who was the snake in her story – her bestial husband or her freakish lover?" (Hariharan 34). Githa Hariharan provides ample scope to the readers to enter into a free world of interpretations. The grandmother did not narrate any story from *Mahabharata* to relate it with the story of Gauri. Probably the grandmother could not find any such story of woman infidelity in the Great Epic. So she had to take the story from *Panchatantra* which, although is not about infidelity but serves her purpose of imparting moral lesson. However, she changes the ending a bit to serve her purpose. In the original version, it is the father who destroys the snake skin to give a new and better life to the boy. But in grandmother's story the girl herself burns it down to imply that "a woman fights her battle alone" (Hariharan 36). Possibly, she wanted to mean that even if Gauri's husband was bestial, it was her responsibility to transform him for he was her husband. Therefore, she would not keep Gauri back at work lest Devi gets influenced by her conduct. However, she had sympathy for the unfortunate girl so that she gave her a ten rupees note and sent her back.

**Conclusion:** Githa Hariharan's *The Thousand Faces of Night* is her magnum opus where myth and contemporary reality interact to delve into the timeless issue of subjugation of woman. The novel is a networking of fact and fantasy, myth and reality, that calls attention to the female experience in a male dominated Indian society. Hariharan shows in her novel, how intricately the process of subjugation of woman is interwoven with the social life of the people and the women unconsciously go on accepting their position. The simple looking tradition of storytelling is at another level operates as the modus operandi of the domination of woman.

In *The Second Sex*, Simone de Beauvoir views, "One is not born, but rather becomes, woman" (Beauvoir 330). In her novel, Hariharan portrays the process of a female becoming woman. She shows how Mayamma becomes 'woman' through her penance, how Sita, by sacrificing her personal wishes and desires, becomes 'woman' in real sense. Devi, too, tries to become a 'woman': "I have mimed the lessons they taught me" (Hariharan 136), but then her greed "for a story of my own" (Hariharan 137) has been always there. She does not want to be the reflection of her mythical namesake by being violent as her "desire to please" (Hariharan 95) which she learnt in her childhood is still operating in her unconscious. She can discern the huge gap between the grandmother's stories and real life predicament. But then she has "to vindicate my beloved story teller" (Hariharan 31). Devi becomes a 'new woman' by liberating herself from the pressures of feminine role-play, to attain a state of free individual. Thus, she becomes the 'Devi' figure who is the only independent goddess in the Hindu pantheon.

Myths have always served as the touchstone of morality. They represent social expectations and play an important part in guiding the gender roles. The novel, *The Thousand Faces of Night*, brings the myth and contemporary life in the same plane and shows how myths are always understood through male perspective. The novel shows how the meanings of the myths have been shaped and formed to serve the purpose of subjugating women. The novel reflects that the power holders select and disseminate only those stories from the mythologies which serve their purpose of dominating the peripherals. It is not that the mythologies have no stories of rebellious women but then the stories of rebel are either forsaken (like that of Kritiya's story) or are presented from the perspective of the power holders if it can be done so (like the story of Gandhari). Even an educated woman like Devi is tend to be the victim of subjugation as she internalizes the lessons taught from their

*Manipulation of Myth in Making Woman: A Feministic Insight into Githa Hariharan's The ...* Papari Das  
childhood to accept their condition passively without any question: "Be careful Devi when you next ask a question" (Hariharan Prelude).

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