

Myth of Introspection

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Abstract

The study of myths has recently attracted a series attention of scholars belonging to several disciplines like Anthropology and Psychology. Of late, it has profoundly influenced the field of literary criticism by providing new norms for evaluating the works of literature and helping the critics to acquire fresh insights into the mystery of the creative process. Myth explains the complex behavior of individuals in a society which is difficult to do so by any other explanation. Myths reoccur again and again as a sort of metaphorical expression in the course of human life; they have a complex and significant symbolism. Hence modern writers use myths to express modern complexities. Many contemporary artists confirm the necessity of using myths in their creative works. Many critics have spoken on myth of introspection. The myth of introspection is akin to the concept of 'Vanaprasthashrama' of Hindus: which insists old men to handover the responsibility of running a home or kingdom to their heirs, and retire to forest, to think of the other world, and meditate of God. Many philosophers who influenced our life have stressed the importance of lonely life or to live alone in introspection. Introspection from bondage of mundane life and politics is very necessary for human health.

Key words: Myth, Mind, Vanaprasthashrama introspection , Society,

The study of myths has recently attracted a series attention of scholars belonging to several disciplines like Anthropology and Psychology. Of late, it has profoundly influenced the

field of literary criticism by providing new norms for evaluating the works of literature and helping the critics to acquire fresh insights into the mystery of the creative process. There is no doubt that myths were created out of the ancient people's belief in the invisible world and their attempt to locate and to name the powers belonging to it. The greatness of man in those days depended upon his ability to transcend the invisible world and reach out to the invisible one. According to M.H.Abrams "In classical Greek, 'Mythos' signified any story or plot, whether true or invented. In its central modern significance, however a Myth is a story in a mythology – a system of hereditary story which are once believed to be true by a particular cultural group and which explains why the world is as it is and things happen as they do, to provide a rationale for social customs and observances and to establish sanctions for the rules by which people conduct their lives".

Myth, legend and history all the three are modes of knowledge, each different from the other, but closely connected with one another, in the sense, they are concrete modes governed by abstract principles. Among these three, myth and legend sometimes get confused. Myth is used for legend and vice-versa. These three are very ancient modes, but the most ancient amongst them is the myth, it seems, legend and history must have followed in due course as reasons dawned upon mankind and started to separate the elements of one and integral body of knowledge. It is obvious that legend should come between myth and history because it is connected with the former and anticipates the latter. The myth embodies knowledge that undifferentiated whole and general. W.B.Yeats in his Explorations gives a vivid picture of that world which gave births to myths and legends "Mankind as a whole had a like dream once; everybody and nobody built up the dream bit by bit, and the ancient story tellers are there to make us remember what mankind would have been like, had not fear and the failing will and the laws of nature tripped up its heels".

Men in every society respect woman because she is the mother of mankind. Since she bears the progeny of her husband in her womb; man is reborn from woman. Hence, they should respect woman as much they respect their mother. Respecting woman is universal virtue. Primitive societies never had a systematic religion; but they had some religious consciousness, doctrine: myths are an unsystematic complex of stories.

There are three major categories of myths:

- Cosmic Myths,
- Myths of Gods as a Family
- Myths of Heroes.

Cosmic myths are concerned with the world. They explain the origin of the world, universal catastrophes such as fire or flood and the afterlife. Nearly all mythologies have stories about creation, known as cosmogony, meaning “birth of the world.” Creation stories include how human beings first came into existence and how death and suffering entered human experience.

A myth is a confluence of natural world, cultural history and diverse unknown thoughts. It is a store house of cultural heritage of a social group. Myths reoccur again and again as a sort of metaphorical expression in the course of human life; they have a complex and significant symbolism. Hence modern writers use myths to express modern complexities. Many contemporary artists confirm the necessity of using myths in their creative works. These artists bring the plight of modern man and that of his counterpart in the myths on the same plane, and there by, join the past and present. Each poet tries to identify himself with the society in which he is living. Myths are basic identities of a society. Hence writers, even in their fictions, use myths of their society.

E.M.W.Tilliards thought that historical myths had helped to constitute National characters of England. The myth of introspection, which was identified in 17th century, is still relevant.

A modern man are bored of restless work and of tension, stress anxiety and is tired of monotony. To get rid of this tiredness, he must get away from crowded noisy city and spend few days alone among the vegetation, river valleys and mountains and should meditate of God in this natural environment: philosophically, he must meditate of death amidst lively natures.

The classic example of the same process is D.H.Lawrence , whose life from one side could be called a series of unsuccessful attempts to find the right place to retire to for the exercise of the particular forms religion he came to profess. His most ambitious book, the *plumed serpent* .is indeed the story of a woman , who after various struggles , is supposed to succeed in the attempt. The story may not convince us, but there is no doubt about its theme and about the parallel it provides.

According to Robert Frost's Wish, the tired life in the busy monotony of modernity should resort to nature, in order to get rid of this boredom, and indulge again in routine daily life with new hopes and aspirations.

The myth of introspection is akin to the concept of 'Vanaprasthashrama' of Hindus: which insists old men to handover the responsibility of running a home or kingdom to their heirs, and retire to forest, to think of the other world, and meditate of God. Vanaprastha at once gives the natural life among nature and wisdom amongst wise scenes.

Love towards nature is a concept propounded by many ancient philosophical heritages. Many philosophers who influenced our life have stressed the importance of lonely life or to live alone in introspection. A retreat from bondage of mundane life and politics is very necessary for human health. Epicuriens, stoics, Horace, Vergil, lukrishes chapwaks (Indian Atheist group), profounder Indian Meemamsa's have found a new way of life; still propounded that 'to be in loneliness is a universal desire'. Returning to rural life and to live naturally among nature is considered as an uncivilized way be modern people, still all the philosophers have found a way to realize god in the pagan way of life.

Pantheists see godliness in nature, in their devotion to natural, in their devotion to natural elements; have universalized this cult into a religion. So pantheism is called Nature Worship Religion. Myth of introspection is based on this religion. Loneliness among the crowd is also possible.

According to Dr. B.Y.Patil. "Saint Basaveshwara has shown that looking at the 'Ishta linga' on the palms of right hand and worshipping it at the personal privacy is akin to the religious loneliness on introspection."

During Renaissance and Restoration period in England, many poets have produced their literature on the rest at a natural resort. According to their belief Nature is the only true way left for man to attain god. To enter into the lush green nature is a way of devotion.

Resorting to a introspection is a universal phenomenon and has become the themes for many modern literary works and this can be seen in the plays of Henric Ibsen and T.S.Eliot. These two

writers have been considered as the major writers of the English literature and immensely contributed to the field of drama .In connection with the study of myth of introspection; these two writers' plays have two levels of meaning. They mythicise the modern life and modernize a myth.

Our modern expectations for realistic theatre are largely due to the innovations of the Henrik Ibsen who is the “Father of Modern Drama”. Ibsen’s plays pioneered realistic dialogue and characters with psychological depth on the stage, and gave birth to the modern movement in drama. Ibsen is also heralded as the greatest Norwegian author of all time, and he is considered the most frequently performed dramatist in the world after Shakespeare. Ibsen’s depth of character, naturalistic dialogue and use of subtext changed the way modern drama and his social themes still have relevance. Many critics postulated that Ibsen enclosed disguised material from Norse and Saga myth in his plays.

All the plays of T.S Eliot (1888-1965) were written in verse and we find Eliot reintroducing verse in to modern drama, blending the needs of poetry with those of live drama. ‘In poetry and drama’ Eliot gave his views on the use of prose and verse in a play. Verse justifies itself as the medium of expression. Eliot believed that to be successful on the modern stage, the verse-dramatist must get away from Shakespeare, he went to Greek dramatists for his inspiration and for his themes, and in this way he sought to rejuvenate the English drama. All his plays have some Greek myth as their basis. It is Greek myth which provides the poetic under-pattern of his plays, thus imparts to them an added complexity and richness of texture. Further, Eliot believed that in the modern age in order to organize his disparate, heterogeneous material, the modern dramatist must use the mythical technique which implies a constant manipulation of parallelism and a contrast between the past and the present. The past thus serve as a criticism of the present and the theme of the play would acquire a universal appeal and significance. It was a self-adopted method for Eliot to start from the known and the familiar and work his way into the unfamiliar and the unknown. Eliot realized that the modern man, in the daily hustle-bustle of existence, is unknowingly gasping for breath, looking for an escape from the quagmire of daily life, which is devoid of all meaning.

Conclusion: Modern man is bored of restless work and tension, stress, anxiety and is tired of monotony. To get rid of this tiredness, he must get away from this crowded world and spend few days alone. He likes to think about the past and learn from the past. Thus myth of introspection helps to bring the past to the present and relieving in the past at present. This helps to rejuvenate his mind and body.

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