Commodification of Women Characters in Indian and Greek Mythology with Special Reference Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni and Amanda Elyot

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Abstract:

The papers attempt to explore the feminine themes in Greek and Indian mythological works. This paper looks at how Indian and Greek mythological texts deal with female existence. The authors have compared and contrasted the feminine and masculine gods in Greek and Indian literature. It is clear that female and male gods are deified and treated differently. In Greek literature, the characteristics of each god are shown to be those of destruction and construction. Additionally, the negative characteristics were given to the feminine gods, while the virtues of construction were given to the masculine gods. The paper likewise ponders on the treatment of ladylike and manly divine beings in Indian fanciful texts like the Puranas and the old legends of India like the Ramayana and

Mahabharata. The commodification of female existence in Indian folklore is also the subject of this paper, which draws particular attention to the works of Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni and Amanda Elyot.

Key Words: Commodification, Feminine psyche, Masculine veneration

The women in mythology, whether they are Greek or Indian, the patriarchal figures in their lives and the situations they are put in shape the women in mythology into who they are. The

stark contrast in how women are portrayed in Greek and Indian mythology will be captured in this chapter. Additionally, it will discuss the universal congruence of the portrayal and perception of "feminine." Feminism has a long history of research into the representations of women in mythology. Retelling the stories of mythical characters is one way to bring the people who were beaten down to the centre and give the mythical structure a new perspective. However, the study of myths from the East and West has revealed that both cultures view and treat women in the same way.

Greek mythology is largely written by men. Female deities are depicted as the offspring of male deities and as those who support male survival. In Greek mythology, women are depicted as calculating and envious beings who plot against other gods and humans. Women are depicted as acting out of jealousy, in contrast to Zeus, who fears the power of humans, who drives the actions of other gods and Zeus himself. Due to Hera's actions, a number of Zeus' sons who he fathered over mortal women become insane, kill, or become orphans.

Wild and Malicious Women:

Heracles, named after Hera in the hope that she would embrace the son of Zeus, is the greatest and most well-liked of the sons. Hera, the goddess of the home, was furious when Heracles, the child who suckled her, caused her uncontrollable pain. Because he had consumed Hera's milk, Heracles had grown strong and could not be killed by Hera. As a result, Greek myth says that Hera makes a vow to ruin Heracles' life. But Hercules ends his life by taking his own life after living a difficult and adventurous life as a result of Hera's interventions. Zeus then decides that this mortal son was the best, and as a result, he grants him a place on "Olympus." Echo is cursed by Hera, and Hephaestus is expelled from "Olympus" because of his deformity. Hera also makes Heracles insane. Because Zeus has a child with each of them, she attacks Io, transforms Callisto into a bear, and exacts punishment from Semele. She also blinds Tiresias because she is dissatisfied with the response regarding which gender gets more pleasure from sex. As a result, Hera's resentment and enmity are described in a number of different ways.

Zeus, the strongest Olympian, defeats Cronus and protects his siblings from "Typhon" and the "Giants" sent by Gaia, their mother. Zeus rises to the position of "King of the Olympians" and "ruler of the sky" after admonishing everyone not to question his authority. He gets married to Hera, his sister. However, Zeus is also with numerous other women: He

was questioned or stopped by no one—not even his own wife, Hera—titans, nymphs, or mortals. Hera is shown to be so helpless, as was mentioned earlier, that she is envious of the women and nymphs Zeus is after. However, she is goddess of family she is demonstrated to be awful towards humans. This could be because rage was moved elsewhere. She was driven to release her anger on those who were less fortunate and powerful than her because she could not punish Zeus, her husband and brother who was the "patriarch supreme" and ruler of the universe. Amanda Elyot in Olympus ascribes the demonstration of Hera, of excusing Hephaestus from 'Olympus', as the dismissal of blemish or then again tumult. He argues that beauty is frequently associated with "order" and ugliness with "chaos" in Greek mythology. As a result, Hephaestus's ugly appearance is interpreted as chaos and as a threat to the cosmic order.

While Hera, an Olympian and goddess of family, is exhibited as envious, Aphrodite is displayed as glad and wild. The goddess of love is Aphrodite, who was created in the sea from Uranus's spilled blood. She made people fall in love with each other regardless of age, gender, or any other social construct, and she was in love with Ares. She was dangerous to the other gods because she was hard to resist and could get them to do what she wanted by wearing a girdle around her waist. As a result, Zeus got her married to Hephaestus in an effort to tame her. However, she refused to be tamed and made matters worse by choosing Ares over Hephaestus. There are numerous accounts of how Aphrodite's wild, sensual nature led to men's deaths. Ares killed Adonis because of Aphrodite's love for him. Persephone also refused to part with Adonis when he died, but Aphrodite promised that if Adonis wasn't returned, there would be no spring. As a result, Zeus said that Adonis would spend half of the year with Persephone and Aphrodite. Because Psyche was so beautiful, people worshipped her instead of Aphrodite, and Aphrodite is blamed for getting jealous. Polyphonte was cursed by Aphrodite for joining Artemis. Phaedra fell in love with Hippolytus, her stepson, because he wanted to serve Artemis, which she cursed; Because they had enraged her, she had cursed the "women of Lemnos" to make their bodies stink; In order for Paris, the prince of Troy, to declare her the most beautiful woman, she had proposed to Helen and asked him to marry her. According to myth, the tragic "Trojan War" occurred as a result of this final incident, which caused him to incur her and Athena's ire.

Because she expresses her sexual desires openly, Aphrodite is regarded as wild and all of the other gods attempt to control her. She is punished for her beauty, her greatest quality, but she is proud of it. She is compelled to limit herself to one man, to be modest not normal

for Zeus who is free to lay with as a large number ladies as he prefers. None can address or tame him since he is the man.

Indian mythology also has stories about women who are either unchaste or open about their sexual feelings. These women are punished by chaste men and driven away. One such character, Shurpanaka, Ravana's sister, has her nose slit because she expresses her sexual desires openly.

In Indian mythology, there is no goddess who is openly sexual, and the only one who is Chinnamastika, a tantric goddess. She is the goddess without a head who sits on top of her husband and drinks her own blood.

"In both the sexual and violent acts, her nakedness and lack of modesty indicate the impersonal nature of sex and violence, whose sole purpose is to sustain life. According to Hindu mythology, all female goddesses represent "Prakriti" (Pattanaik, "Indian Mythology," p. 40). In addition, "Prakriti" is attempting to demonstrate to "Purusha" (mankind) that life can be sustained through the consumption of another life through the act of drinking her own blood.

Tantra is the art of making "Rasa," or the juice of life, move in one direction. Tantra is alchemy. However, the Indian Vedic goddesses are models of purity. Saraswati, Lakshmi, and Durga are the three Goddesses in Hindu mythology who represent material things. They each represent power, wealth, and knowledge. The spiritually represented male gods Brahma, Vishnu, and Shiva are active forms. However, since they are subjected to actions, the female forms remain passive. It is essential to keep in mind that Hinduism does not imply a lack of values; rather, it represents things that undergo constant change or change over time. It can also be referred to as "Cognitive" because it includes mental operations.

In Hinduism, there is a sect known as "Shaktism" that practices devotion to the goddesses Lakshmi, Saraswati, or Gauri (the domesticated form of Durga). Kali and Durga are the autonomous types of the Goddess who are outside the circle of culture as a result of their wild nature. Because they embody the elements that are required and accepted by culture, Lakshmi, Saraswati, and Gauri are forms of the Goddess that are considered acceptable. While Alakshmi is the goddess of misfortune, Lakshmi is the goddess of prosperity. She is outside the cultural norm because she is unwelcome and unneeded in a thriving society.

When it comes to comprehending the representation of women, the descriptions of these goddesses' appearances are extremely significant. Lakshmi is loved in pretty much every family. She is wearing a red sari that clearly represents fertility and stands on a Lotus flower. She exudes grace and poise, and she never fails to smile. She is holding a gold-filled pot. This stands for prosperity and wealth. On either side of the Goddess are elephants, which represent strength. The Goddess of knowledge is Saraswati, the wife of Brahma. She embodies inspiration and knowledge. Her spiritual and transcendental nature is reflected in her white sari. She carries a book; She is associated with education and the arts through the lute and pen. Because she is the response to Brahma's inquiry, "Who am I?" She is both the product and the bride. Shakti is also known as Gauri, and Parvati is Gauri's lover. She is the goddess who has been domesticated and is radiant and maternal in nature. She regulates Shiva's behavior while making him a householder and turning him into a hermit.

Shakti fights with Shiva when he is attracted to other women, and she also shows him the "mirror," which is a symbol of materialistic creation. The spiritual hermit is able to recognize and differentiate himself from the material world as a result of this. She is therefore seated on Shiva's lap and holding a mirror up to his face.

In Hindu mythology, Saraswati and Lakshmi represent Muses and Graces. In Greek mythology, Muses and Graces are daughters of Zeus and include several Titan, Olympian, and mortal women and nymphs. He and Eurynome devised three graces to spread joy throughout the world.

Together with Mnemosyne, he created the nine Muses, which influenced artists to compose plays, music, and paintings. Greeks believe that Zeus is responsible for good times and creativity.

Sexuality and Women:

The Eastern and Western paradigms have opposing views on sexuality.Despite the fact that women are thought to be necessary for reproduction, sexuality and its expression are treated differently. Sexuality is viewed as a result of sin in Western culture, particularly Christianity. Eve and women in general are attributed to "Man's" fall or human suffering. Both in Christian what's more, Greek folklore Eve and Pandora are faulted for making languishing humanity. The curiosity that both women possessed is what unites them.

Even though God had forbidden it, Eve is blamed for eating the fruit from the tree of knowledge. The first woman is Pandora, who Zeus ordered Hephaestus to create. She was given a box by Zeus, and he told her not to open it until he told her to. However, out of curiosity, Pandora opens it, releasing all of humanity's negative emotions of enviousness, greed, and rage. However, in the end, the only thing that propels humanity is hope.

However, in Hindu mythology, curiosity and women are treated differently. Even though Brahma created the first woman, Shatarupa, after men, the Prajapatis, the female embodies the material truth that aids the spiritual being in achieving its highest form. Brahma only introduces new species of animals to the planet by means of the female or the Shatarupa with the changing form. Brahma and his sons, the Prajapatis, are moved to emotion by Shatarupa.

Therefore, women are not held accountable for human suffering in Hindu mythology. The course of a man's life is determined by his actions. There are female deities in Greek mythology, such as Athena and Artemis, who make a lifelong vow to be virgins; however, there are no such deities in Hindu mythology.

There is no way for a woman to remain "celibate" for the rest of her life because every god is linked to sexuality or fertility. Women are not expected to be chaste or in a committed relationship. The story of Sita, who is praised for remaining chaste even in the most difficult circumstances, is the focus of the epic Ramayana. Despite the fact that their stories are similar, many scholars draw parallels between Sita and Helen of Troy.

However, it is essential to note that Sita is kidnapped by Ravan while Helen elopes with Paris. Even after being kidnapped by Ravan, Sita continues to be devoted and chaste, earning her the greatest respect from fans of Hindu mythology.

While faithful wives are prevalent in Hindu mythology, unfaithful wives are prevalent in Greek myth. Sita is regarded as the epitome of wifely devotion because, in addition to remaining chaste toward her husband, she also demonstrates her chastity each time Ram puts her to the test. To demonstrate her chastity, she walks through the Charitra & Sanjana 2020 90 fire unharmed, but she ultimately dies by diving into the earth.

Indian mythology has a number of stories that help to keep women in the home and promote female chastity. Kunti slept with the gods in order to have children with Pandu, who was destined to live as an anchorite, and Sita followed her husband into the forest, giving up

the luxuries of the palace. He killed them with an arrow after mistaking them for deer lovers and earning the curse of Kindama rishi, the male deer couple. Gandhari put on a blindfold because Draupadi married the brothers of her blind husband. Arjuna had won a contest and brought Draupadi home, where they exclaimed excitedly to their mother Kuniti to see what trophy they had brought. Kunti answers without looking that it be split between the siblings. Mother's statement being the law, they do as such.

Chastity was more than just being sexually obedient to one's husband; it also meant listening to one's mother or father, even if that meant sleeping with another man to have children. A curse from Kindama prevented Pandu, the son of Vyasa (Vichiravirya) and Ambalika, from getting married. Consequently, he requested his wives Kunti and Madri to seek godly children, which they did. In the "Swayamvara," Draupadi, the Princess of Drupad, chose Arjuna as her husband. However, she had to marry the other four brothers of Arjuna and have children with them because Arjuna had to follow his mother Kunti's instructions. Draupadi was defeated when her husband Yudishtira used her as a pawn in a dice game. The Bhagavata Purana' accounts the account of Harishchandra who offered his child and spouse to pay Maharshi Vishwamitra 1,000 gold coins.

Women and Folklore:

With time, Hinduism's folklore gained popularity. Folklore gave rise to a new tradition based on Tantric philosophy, while mainstream tradition held to the traditional stories of Gods and Goddesses.

The folk tradition of Hinduism emphasized harnessing the resources of nature, whereas classical Hinduism emphasized gaining divine favor and liberation. All of reality, according to this earthbound philosophy, was thought to be the divine power known as "Shakti." Folk deities became well-known household names because commoners were more drawn to earth-bound deities who safeguarded their land and family. Between 400 B.C.E. and 300 A.D., the "Theistic school of Shaktism," which worshiped the "Goddess" or "Devi" in various forms, emerged to accommodate the tantric philosophy. The narratives clearly show a shift away from the male-dominated Vedic myths and toward more accommodating myths that are dominated by women. These myths depict various Goddess forms with significant roles.

Matriarchy dominates the story of the birth of three gods, which is considered to be the earliest account of the creation of ancient Indian tribes. It is believed that the three Gods

Brahma, Vishnu, and Shiva emerged from the three eggs that Goddess Adi Shakti laid in a lotus. The Goddesses were seduced by these three male Gods, who then asked them to fall in love with her.

She looked with her fiery third eye and turned Vishnu and Brahma into ashes because they refused. But if she gave him her third eye, Shiva agreed to fall in love with her. After that, Shiva used this eye to burn her to ashes and raise the two Gods to life. However, the three Gods were unable to live without wives, so they gathered around the ashes and created the Goddesses Saraswati, Lakshmi, and Gauri from the ash. It's possible that Shiva's burning of Adi Shakti is a metaphor for the dominance of patriarchal Vedic culture over matriarchal cultures in the past. When the male Gods were unable to defeat a demon in an age when matriarchal culture ruled, the Goddess steps in to assist them. An account of Kali's tongue can be found in the Kalika Purana. Because each drop of Raktabija's blood turned into another Raktabija, the gods faced an army of him every time they attempted to kill him. They sought the assistance of the Goddess, Kali, who entered the battlefield naked and spread her tongue across the earth, unsure of what to do next. This prevented Raktabija's blood from reaching the ground.

Gauri, the radiant goddess of the field, is the opposite of Kali, the Goddess's manifestation—the dark goddess of the forest. Kali is naked, thirsty, and defies all cultural norms. She is wild and crude type of the goddess.

According to the author, "Kali represents nature, the darkest recesses of the unconsciousness that have the power to overwhelm culture when discipline gives way to desire and the social fabric collapses." 128), Pattanaik, "Myth=Mithya." Durga, the Goddess in invincible form, is the other Goddess. She is simultaneously a warrior and a bride. She possesses both the fierceness of Kali and the radiance of Gauri. She represents Adi Maya Shakti, the goddess. She takes part in the war while also establishing the family.

Because men have control over their reproductive organs, only men can ignite "tapa" and achieve "siddhi," according to Tantric philosophy. However, unlike men, women, plants, and animals shed their seeds unconsciously. Mahadevi, the goddess, can be seen stepping on people's heads. She carries a serpent in her hand, a symbol of the earth's fertility and occult wisdom. She likewise wears a festoon of human heads particularly mustachioed male heads which portrayal the self-image. The ego tries to control the outside world because it wants to be validated.

However, the world is the Goddess, an infinite and ephemeral being who strives to lead people toward the formless, inner divine within. Mahadevi supports a person's journey toward self-discovery. However, the Goddess violently ends the ego whenever the ego attempts to control the Goddess' fertility in order to achieve self-actualization.

Conclusion:

The comparison of Hindu and Greek myths' female gods demonstrates that the female is regarded as inferior to the male and restricted to the household. Within the confines of the cultural norms, sexuality is to be controlled and expressed. But female deities and women in general are given more weight in Indian mythology. There are Goddesses who only possess the characteristics of a householder, but there are also wild female Goddesses. They are revered by thousands of believers and followers, despite the fact that they are thought to be outside the "manava" (human) code of civilization.

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