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Tripathi's Sita: A Symbol of Feminist Revisionist Nationhood

Krishna Chatur Sow Mondal¹, Lavanya Sivapurapu¹*, Syeda Fatima Farheen², E. Madhavi³, Reena Salaria⁴

¹Department of English, Koneru Lakshmaiah Education Foundation, Green Fields, Vaddeswaram, Guntur, Andhra Pradesh, India. ²Department of English, Vardhaman College of Engineering, Hyderabad, Telangana, India. ³Department of English, CMR College of Engineering & Technology, Hyderabad, Telangana State, India. ⁴Department of Linguistics and Linguistics and Literature, School of Humanities and Arts, Cluster University of Jammu. Jammu Tawi, India. *Corresponding Author's Email: drlavanyasivapurapu@gmail.com

Abstract

Amish Tripathi's novel *Sita: Warrior of Mithila* (2017) is the second installment in the Rama Chandra Series, offering a reimagined portrayal of Lord Rama and other key figures from the Ramayana in a modernized context. Through its exploration of human nature, politics, and morality, the series captivates readers both in India and internationally. Tripathi's adept fusion of Indian mythology and history has garnered widespread acclaim, with his books consistently ranking as bestsellers. The title, *Sita: Warrior of Mithila*, aptly reflects the central character's portrayal as a formidable female warrior. While the narrative begins with Sita's demonstration of courage during her abduction, it evolves to delve deeper into her transformation into a warrior princess. Sita embodies a form of feminist nationalism, championing altruistic warrior ideals. Guided by her mother's wisdom, she emerges as a symbol of this novel feminist nationalism, challenging traditional gender roles within the political sphere. Through Sita's journey, the narrative dismantles gender-based political norms, offering a fresh perspective on nation-building and the role of women within it. In contrast to conventional mythology, the revisionist approach taken by Tripathi actively engages with the development of women's political identities, highlighting their significance in the broader context of nationhood. The research question for the current study is: How does Amish Tripathi's novel *Sita: Warrior of Mithila* depict the development of Sita's feminist ideology, challenge traditional portrayals of Sita in the Ramayana, and explore the connection between Sita's transformation and the concept of feminist nation-building?

Keywords: Feminist Nationalism, Political Identity, Revisionist Mythology, Warrior Princess.

Introduction

Myths, like ancient tapestries rich with timeless stories and universal themes, continue to captivate us. Yet, like any tapestry, they require periodic restoration, threads carefully rewoven to ensure their relevance for contemporary viewers, their stories continuing to resonate with the ever-changing colours of our times. Without this reinvention, myths may risk becoming stagnant and outdated relics, losing their ability to resonate with and inspire current generations. Plato pioneered the systematic study of myths, recognizing their significance beyond mere storytelling within society. His ground-breaking contributions laid the foundation for the emergence of the contemporary discipline of mythology studies. Dorothy Figueira remarks that myth operates as a narrative imbued with credibility and authority, its characters manipulated to evoke emotions that shape social structures or justify altered political contexts. By restructuring a myth, latent symbolic meanings can be activated to harness sentiments of belonging, thereby instigating political change (1). Mythology transcends mere collections of myths, embodying a unified and interconnected corpus of narratives. These myths are far from simple tales and serve as potent conduits delving into the profound emotions and sentiments of individuals, thus profoundly molding, and guiding the social and cultural fabric of entire communities. Myths have a profound ability to evoke empathy, inspire reflection, and instill values, making them instrumental tools for transmitting cultural knowledge, moral lessons, and collective identity. Myths, with their power to evoke emotions and resonate with cultures, become enduring channels for social change and the safeguarding of traditions.

Methodology

The present study adopts a qualitative approach to analyse Amish Tripathi's novel *Sita: Warrior of Mithila* (2017) through the lens of feminist revisionist mythology. The novel is the central focus of this investigation.

The analysis investigates three key aspects:

- To study the development of Sita's feminist ideology through her actions and challenges in Tripathi's novel, *Sita: Warrior of Mithila* (2017).
- To investigate the impact of Tripathi's revisionist approach on the traditional portrayal of Sita in the Ramayana.
- To understand the connection between Sita's transformation and the concept of feminist nation-building as presented in the novel.

Result and Discussion

Concept of Myth and importance of revisionist literature

The theoretical underpinnings of myth analysis were established by prominent Euro-American critics such as Carl Jung, Northrop Frye, and Sir James George Frazer. These scholars made significant contributions to the field, shaping our understanding of myths by delving into the psychological, structural, and cross-cultural aspects. Robert A. Segal offers an interpretation of the perspectives of both Frazer and Jung. Segal argues that, according to Frazer, the primary myths across various religions depict the cyclical pattern of vegetation's death and renewal, symbolized through the narrative of the deity associated with vegetation undergoing death and subsequent rebirth (2). Contrarily, Robert A. Segal elucidates Jung's perspective by highlighting the symbiotic relationship between myth and religion. According to Jung, religion and myth have historically complemented each other: religion has served as a custodian of myth, while myth has served to uphold religion. Jung emphasizes that the essence of religion lies not in mere belief or rituals but in profound experiential encounters. Myth, in this context, serves as the most effective conduit to apprehend the experience of the divine, which Jung equates with the unconscious (2). Mythologies around the globe share a striking theme: the cycle of death and rebirth embodied by a divine figure of vegetation. James Frazer, a noted scholar, argues that this recurring motif is central to diverse religious traditions. He delves into the idea of dying and resurrecting vegetation deities, highlighting their presence as a foundational element in countless myths across cultures. Frazer argued that this mythic theme mirrors humanity's universal fascination with the natural cycles, particularly the seasonal flourishing and fading of plants, and it has held a central position in the rituals and beliefs of countless cultures throughout history. His comparative approach to studying these myths and rituals aimed to uncover common threads in human thought and culture across different societies. In Jung's view, myth and religion intertwined, with religion preserving stories like bridges to the divine residing in our unconscious. While at present interpretations and even transformations into fiction reshape these ancient narratives, Indian culture, built upon mythic bedrock, offers fertile ground for revisionist approaches that resonate with modern sensibilities. Here, reimagining these myths become a way to reconnect with profound wisdom and meaning embedded within their timeless tales. Romila Thapar said myths act as a mirror reflecting a culture's self-image, revealing its underlying social beliefs and norms (3). Thapar delves into how Indian myths reflect a society's values, using modern retellings with female heroes to challenge traditional views and empower women.

Within this framework, revisionist literature and writings serve a crucial purpose by bringing contemporary issues to the forefront, all while myths continue to linger in the background. These revisionist works help shed light on modern concerns and challenges, often by re-examining, critiquing, or reimagining the traditional myths, offering fresh perspectives and relevance to current societal and cultural contexts. Indian writers are breathing new life into ancient myths through reinterpretation. This reinterpretation involves a dynamic process of revaluating and reimagining traditional myths and narratives to reflect contemporary perspectives, concerns, and gender dynamics. Amish Tripathi, Ashwin Sanghi, Devdutt Pattanaik, Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni, Kavita Kane, Koral Dasgupta are some important revisionist writers of the contemporary period.

About The Author

Millions across the globe have been enthralled by Amish Tripathi, the author who masterfully reinvents Indian mythology. His journey began with The Immortals of Meluha, sparking the

beloved Shiva Trilogy. This series transports readers to a fictionalized world where iconic deities like Shiva embark on thrilling adventures, captivating both newcomers and seasoned mythology enthusiasts. Tripathi's unique approach to blending mythology with elements of fantasy and historical fiction has resonated with readers in India and around the world. His books often delve into themes related to religion, spirituality, destiny, and human nature, while incorporating vivid storytelling and well-researched cultural and historical references.

In addition to the Shiva Trilogy, Amish Tripathi has penned multiple other prosperous series and standalone novels, affirming his stature as one of India's foremost and impactful contemporary writers. His works have contributed significantly to the genre of mythological fiction and have sparked discussions about the reinterpretation of ancient myths in modern literature. Through engaging interpretations of cultural history, Tripathi compels readers to question their understanding of traditional texts and embrace new perspectives. Stepping into the world of Amish Tripathi, the captivating "Ram Chandra Series" follows the footsteps of his acclaimed "Shiva Trilogy." After exploring Shiva's legend, Amish Tripathi dives into the Ramayana in his new series. He weaves a rich tapestry, blending myth, history, and philosophy to reimagine this timeless tale. Readers are entranced by his captivating storytelling, intricate plots, and profound themes, long after the final page. Delving into *Sita: Warrior of Mithila* (2017), this paper explores the novel's fresh take on the iconic character of Sita while delving into the theme of female agency. Unlike portrayals in traditional mythology, Amish Tripathi re-imagines Sita as a powerful warrior, challenging societal expectations and championing female empowerment. This resonates with modern readers, offering a feminist perspective on a timeless story. Tripathi ventures into the shadowy corners of the Ramayana tapestry, unearthing the Adbhut Ramayan and Gond Ramayani. In these veiled narratives, he unearths forgotten facets of Sita, reconstructing a multifaceted image of the revered heroine, far richer than the one we may know. In a conversation with Somi Das, Tripathi states that beyond the familiar Ramayana, lesser-known tales whisper untold stories. In the 'Adbhuta Ramayana,'

Sita embodies divine power, while the 'Gond Ramayana' paints her as a warrior queen (4). These vibrant narratives ignited my imagination, inspiring me to craft a Sita who transcends tradition. In his book, she is not just Rama's beloved wife, but a formidable warrior who stands by his side, sword in hand. Prepared to encounter, a heroine reborn, her courage etching a new chapter in the timeless Ramayana. Therefore, In his retelling of the Ramayana, Amish Tripathi portrays Sita as a strong and independent woman, capable of martial prowess. This challenges the more passive portrayal found in traditional versions, reflecting a contemporary emphasis on female empowerment.

In Amish Tripathi's *Sita: Warrior of Mithila*, the titular character is recast not only as a significant mythological figure but also as an icon for feminist and nationalist discourses. To achieve this, Tripathi utilizes several literary motifs, main ideas, and rhetorical devices. These elements work together to reframe Sita's traditional portrayal, imbuing her with attributes that resonate with contemporary ideologies about nationalism and feminism. These are woven into the narrative in manifold ways:

Main Ideas or Conceptual Framework

The concept of feminist nationalism in Amish Tripathi's *Sita: Warrior of Mithila* emerges through the portrayal of Sita as a figure who not only challenges traditional gender roles but also plays a pivotal role in the construction of a just and equitable society. Tripathi's depiction of Sita as a feminist nationalist icon is multifaceted and can be analyzed through various themes and character developments within the novel.

Empowerment and Agency

Unlike traditional narratives where Sita is often seen as docile and passive, Tripathi's Sita is proactive, physically powerful, and strategically minded. This portrayal imbues her with agency, often seen in her taking decisive actions that impact the storyline directly, which is crucial for feminist discourse. Sita is not merely a passive figure in the political landscape but actively engages in governance and decision-making. Her leadership qualities and strategic thinking challenge the notion that women should be confined to domestic roles, asserting their capability for leadership in nationalist discourse.

Leadership and Governance

Sita is depicted not just as a warrior but as a capable leader who participates actively in governance. This challenges the conventional domestic role often assigned to female characters in mythology and emphasizes the feminist idea that women should have equal opportunities in leadership roles. The novel's depiction of Sita's active participation in political and military endeavors enhances her agency, a key theme in feminist criticism. Judith Butler's theory of gender performativity suggests that gender identity is constructed through a series of acts that are socially enforced but can be subverted. Sita's portrayal as a strategist and fighter demonstrates such a subversion, offering a new model of female identity in a patriarchal society.

Ethical and Moral Integrity

Sita embodies the virtues of ethical leadership and moral integrity, aligning with the traditional values attributed to her but expressed in the public and political arena. This alignment of personal virtue with public action underpins the novel's nationalist discourse, proposing a model of governance based on righteousness and ethical conduct.

Redefining Strength and Femininity

Sita's combat skills and leadership qualities redefine feminine strength. She is both a fierce warrior and a wise advisor, challenging stereotypes of damsels in distress.

Gender Equality and Political Participation

The novel promotes the idea that women, like Sita, deserve equal rights and can actively contribute to the political sphere. This challenges traditional gender roles that exclude women from positions of power. Sita's actions are driven by a commitment to justice and equality, aligning with the values of feminist nationalism. She fights not only for her own rights but also for the rights of others, advocating for a society where all individuals, regardless of gender, caste, or background, can thrive. Sita advocates for the rights of women, challenging discriminatory practices and promoting gender equality. Her efforts to empower women within society align with the goals of feminist nationalism, which seeks to dismantle systems of oppression and ensure equal rights for all individuals.

Scope of the Study: An Interdisciplinary Approach

Tripathi's novel Sita: Warrior of Mithila: An Interdisciplinary Approach: Amish Tripathi's Sita: Warrior of Mithila takes an interdisciplinary approach to the Ramayana. It blends literary retelling with themes of political theory and feminist studies. The novel reimagines Sita as a strong leader, drawing on historical and mythological references to craft a fresh perspective on nation-building. This approach is further enriched by engaging with contemporary feminist retellings of the Ramayana, creating a dialogue that challenges traditional gender roles and stereotypes within the epic. By utilizing counter-narrative theory and intertextual references, Tripathi foregrounds marginalized voices and dismantles dominant narratives, particularly those that portray women as passive. This interdisciplinary approach allows Sita: Warrior of Mithila to offer a unique contribution to the ongoing conversation about women's empowerment within Indian mythology and culture.

To address the research question regarding the portrayal of Sita in Amish Tripathi's novel *Sita: Warrior of Mithila*, and its implications for feminist nation-building, it's essential to draw upon a range of interdisciplinary perspectives that include literary analysis, gender studies, cultural studies, and political theory. The depiction of Sita challenges traditional portrayals and underscores her development from a revered figure in Indian mythology to a symbol of feminist nationalism. Below, the current state of knowledge is explored through relevant theories and studies.

Literary Analysis
Revisionist Mythology

Scholars like Devdutt Pattanaik and Kavita Kane have explored how modern retellings of Hindu myths serve both as a reflection of contemporary societal values and as a medium for questioning traditional norms. Tripathi's Sita is portrayed not just as a devoted wife but as a strategic leader and warrior, which aligns with global trends in literature that seek to reinterpret female characters from ancient texts as more autonomous and powerful.

Narrative and Identity

Literary theorists argue that narrative forms contribute significantly to the construction of identity. Tripathi uses a narrative style that intertwines Sita's personal growth with her public role, reflecting Judith Butler's notion of performativity where identity is a practice, continuously enacted and re-enacted through narrative.

Gender Studies

Feminist Theory

The character of Sita in Tripathi's novel aligns with Simone de Beauvoir's assertion that one is not born but becomes a woman, suggesting that Sita's identity as a warrior is both chosen and cultivated, challenging essentialist notions of femininity.

Intersectionality

Kimberlé Crenshaw's theory of intersectionality can be applied to understand Sita's layered identity as a woman, warrior, and leader within the socio-political context of the mythological era reimagined in modern times.

Cultural Studies

Cultural Revisionism

Tripathi's work can be seen as part of a broader movement in South Asian literature that seeks to critique and revise cultural narratives to reflect contemporary values about gender and power. This includes challenging patriarchal structures and emphasizing female agency in historical and cultural contexts that traditionally marginalized them.

Myth and Nationalism

Benedict Anderson's concept of 'imagined communities' can be applied to understand how mythologies like the Ramayana contribute to nationalistic feelings. Tripathi's depiction of Sita as a feminist icon intersects with the construction of a modern Indian identity that valorizes strong female figures in its narrative of nation-building.

Political Theory

Feminist Political Theory

The novel's portrayal of Sita resonates with Carole Pateman's critiques of the traditional political public/private division, arguing for a revaluation of the role's women play in public life and leadership.

The Role of Women in Nation-Building

Studies in political science have increasingly focused on the role of women in governance and peacebuilding, suggesting that inclusion of women in these processes leads to more sustainable and inclusive outcomes. Tripathi's Sita exemplifies these theories by playing a central role in the governance and moral direction of her kingdom. Carole Pateman's critique of the traditional social contract, which often excludes women from political power, is useful in analyzing Sita's role. By placing Sita in a position of political authority and depicting her as a key figure in nation-building, Tripathi proposes a political model where women are not just included, but central to governance. This can be linked to current theories in feminist political theory that advocate for the inclusion of women in decision-making processes to achieve equitable governance.

In *Sita: Warrior of Mithila*, Amish Tripathi not only provides a fresh take on an ancient myth but also contributes to a deeper understanding of how reimagined narratives can influence perceptions of gender and leadership in contemporary society. The novel challenges traditional portrayals of Sita, promoting a form of feminist nationalism that underscores the potential of women as leaders in both mythological and real national contexts. This interdisciplinary analysis demonstrates how the novel intersects with broader debates about gender, culture, and politics, making it a significant subject for study in multiple fields.

Amish Tripathi's novel *Sita: Warrior of Mithila* (2017) serves as a captivating exploration of Indian feminism. In this work, Tripathi reimagines the character of Sita, portraying her as a formidable female warrior within a modernized context. This research utilizes a combination of critical frameworks, interpretative techniques, and textual analysis strategies to achieve its goals.

Critical Frameworks

Feminist Literary Theory

This framework will provide the foundation for analyzing how the novel challenges patriarchal structures and redefines Sita's agency. Concepts of female subjectivity, power dynamics, and the subversion of traditional gender roles will be central to your analysis. The essay analyzes the novel as a representative voice of Indian Feminism. It specifically focuses on the author's holistic and non-dualistic approach to

feminism. Amish Tripathi's novel reinterprets feminism through a distinctly Indian lens. Unlike Western feminist thought, it emphasizes a balance between masculine and feminine energies, drawing on the ancient Indian concept of *purusha-prakriti*.

Feminist Revisionism

Feminist revisionism is a critical approach used in literature, mythology, and other cultural areas. It involves re-examining and rewriting stories, characters, and historical narratives from a feminist perspective.

Challenging Gender Roles

It critiques traditional portrayals of women that often reinforce patriarchal structures. Feminist revisionists aim to empower women in narratives and highlight their agency.

Reinterpreting Myths and History

Revisionist works retell classic myths, fairy tales, or historical accounts, giving voice to women who were previously silenced or marginalized.

Deconstructing Power Dynamics

This approach analyzes the power structures that disadvantage women and explores how these structures are perpetuated in cultural narratives.

Diversity of Voices

Feminist revisionism is not monolithic and encompasses a wide range of feminist theories and perspectives. It can explore issues like race, class, and sexuality alongside gender. Sita's leadership style emphasizes inclusivity and the importance of listening to diverse perspectives. She values input from her advisors and subjects, regardless of their gender, caste, or social status, promoting a vision of nationalism that embraces all members of society.

Interpretive Techniques

This research investigates how Amish Tripathi's novel disrupts the dominant Hindu patriarchal narrative of the Ramayana, specifically the portrayal of Sita as a passive figure. Through his reappropriation and reconstruction of Sita's character, Tripathi challenges traditional gender roles and offers a novel perspective on nation-building. This paper examines key passages that depict Sita's development as a warrior princess. In other words, it follows textual analysis method. The effective application of close reading is mentioned below.

Unveiling Layers of Meaning

Close reading involves a deep examination of the text, focusing on specific elements like word choice, sentence structure, imagery, and figurative language. By dissecting these elements, you can uncover layers of meaning that contribute to the development of Sita's character and the overall themes of the novel.

Tracing Sita's Transformation

Through close reading, you can trace the development of Sita's feminist ideology. Analyzing her actions, dialogues, and internal monologues can reveal how her experiences, such as her abduction and training, shape her views on gender roles, power dynamics, and her place within the nation.

Challenging Traditional Portrayals

Close reading allows for a detailed comparison between Sita's portrayal in Tripathi's novel and the traditional portrayal in the Ramayana. By analyzing specific scenes and character interactions, you can highlight the subversion of traditional gender norms and the emergence of a more empowered Sita.

Nuances of Language and Imagery

Close reading pays close attention to the nuances of language and imagery used to describe Sita. For example, analyzing the metaphors and similes associated with her can reveal how the narrative constructs her identity and her evolving sense of self.

Textual Analytic Strategy

Selection of Textual Passages

The researcher chooses scenes that exemplify key moments in Sita's transformation. This involves her initial fight during the abduction, conversations with her mother about duty and warfare, and strategic contributions to battles. This extensive research witnesses the analysis of selected passages from the text. A close reading of the text will reveal how these themes are woven into the narrative structure and character development. Tripathi's use of language, plot development, and character interaction will be critical in understanding how Sita's portrayal challenges traditional narratives. Dialogues, monologues, and descriptions that highlight Sita's strategic thinking, combat skills, and political acumen will be particularly pertinent.

Chronological Analysis

This research, further, tries to trace the development of Sita's ideology throughout the novel. It also analyzes how her experiences and interactions with the patriarchal society shape her beliefs about gender roles, political participation, and the concept of a nation.

Thematic Analysis

This paper also sheds light in identifying recurring themes related to feminist ideals, nation-building, and the challenges Sita faces in a patriarchal society. It also analyzes how these themes connect to the overall message of the novel.

By employing this combination of critical frameworks, interpretative techniques, and a well-defined textual analytic strategy, this paper effectively addresses the research question and provides a nuanced analysis of *Sita: Warrior of Mithila*. It will contribute to the on-going discourse on gender, power, and the reinterpretation of mythology in a contemporary context. Analyzing *Sita: Warrior of Mithila* through these theoretical frameworks not only elucidates Tripathi's contributions to redefining a traditional myth but also highlights broader implications for gender and power dynamics in literature and society. This multidisciplinary approach allows for a comprehensive understanding of how literary reimagining can influence contemporary cultural and political discourses, especially concerning gender and nationalism.

Concept of Feminist Nationalism

A tapestry woven with feminist ideals and national aspirations, feminist nationalism seeks to uplift women's voices and contributions, dismantling the threads of patriarchy and reweaving national narratives into a fabric of equality. This empowerment fosters not just social justice but also national progress, with advocates arguing that a nation cannot truly advance without women standing shoulder-to-shoulder in shaping its destiny.

Furthermore, feminist nationalism promotes the idea that women's empowerment is intertwined with the struggle for national sovereignty and self-determination. It contends that a nation cannot achieve true independence and prosperity without ensuring the full participation and rights of its female citizens. Feminist nationalists' advocates often emphasize the need for gender-inclusive approaches to national liberation movements and state-building processes. They critique forms of nationalism that exclude or marginalize women and advocate for inclusive, intersectional frameworks that address the diverse experiences and needs of all citizens. Through the integration of feminist principles into nationalist discourse and activism, advocates of feminist nationalism strive to foster inclusive, equitable societies wherein women are recognized as equal contributors to the nation's progress and governance.

Feminist nationalism signifies the merging of two distinct concepts, each bearing its own unique significance. Robert Huddleston Wiebe, American Historian, remarks that Nationalism is a belief that people with shared ancestry and destiny deserve self-governance in their own territory. It can foster unity and pride, but also exclusivity and conflict. It's complex, shaped by history and context, with both positive (celebrating national identity) and negative (xenophobia) expressions. Understanding its nuances is key to navigating issues of cultural values, national sovereignty, and our interconnected world (5). At its core, nationalism thrives on building a strong, unified identity, often by constructing an "imagined community" rooted in shared heritage and superiority. This emphasis on exclusivity and hierarchies sits in stark contrast to the ideals of feminism, which champions equality and dismantles existing power structures that disadvantage marginalized groups based on gender, race, or other factors. The juxtaposition of "feminist" and "nationalism" might initially appear paradoxical, as feminism advocates for equality while nationalism often connotes notions of superiority or exclusivity. In consideration of the backdrop of the Indian National Struggle, Ranjoo S. Herr observes that male nationalists from Third World nations consistently prioritized feminist agendas as secondary, postponing their advancement until after the national struggle achieved success. Despite initial pledges of inclusivity and parity, feminist priorities were ultimately disregarded or side-lined as attention became solely fixated on attaining national liberation or autonomy. This prioritization of nationalist aims over gender equity underscores the deep-rooted patriarchal frameworks within these movements and the obstacles encountered by women in advocating for their rights amidst the

broader landscape of nationalist endeavours. Feminist critics claim nationalism's glorification of aggressive masculinity and traditional roles suffocates equality for women. These clashes with feminist goals, making the fight for national identity and development incomplete without integrating gender equality. Recognizing this, feminists urge a reimagining of nationalism to prioritize the equal dignity of all within the national narrative, ensuring progress and pride go hand-in-hand.

In this context, mythic fiction emerges as a prominent tool to reclaim the overlooked narratives of mythological women who remain absent from the annals of national history. Amish Tripathi's portrayal of a warrior Sita serves as a compelling embodiment of feminist nationalism, skilfully balancing physical prowess with emotional empathy in her governance of the kingdom. As a feminist figure, she neither dismisses nor shuns nationalism outright, but instead, actively engages in dialogue with the androcentric narratives that dominate nationalist discourse. Through this approach, mythic fiction becomes a means of challenging and reshaping traditional perceptions of gender roles within nationalist frameworks, ultimately contributing to a more inclusive and equitable representation across myth and national identity.

Feminist Nationalism in *Sita: Warrior of Mithila* (2017)

Sita: Warrior of Mithila- the cover speaks volumes, depicting a woman on the brink of action. Clad in simple attire—beads, anklets, and a dhoti—she defies expectations of a princess. Her athletic build, braided hair, and raised staff convey both agility and power. The deliberate absence of her face invites readers to project their own image of Sita: a fierce warrior, a noble princess, a devoted wife, or simply a complex woman. This enigmatic figure embodies the spirit of Dharma, a silent guardian whose true nature will ultimately be revealed.

Amish Tripathi's Sita transcends the image of a princess, instead embodying a warrior spirit forged in resilience. Her miraculous survival hints at this inner strength, which shines even brighter when she assumes the mantle of Mithila's Prime Minister at the tender age of sixteen, following her mother's passing. With unwavering determination, Sita embarks on a transformative journey for her kingdom. She tackles multiple challenges head-on,

from modernizing infrastructure and bolstering law and order to providing homes for the homeless and creating jobs for the unemployed. Her vision extends to strengthening agriculture and healthcare, ensuring self-sufficiency for Mithila. Sita's leadership is marked by pragmatism and inclusivity. She breaks down social barriers by demolishing slums and building proper housing, while simultaneously uplifting the underprivileged through progressive agricultural practices and self-reliance in essential resources. Furthermore, she challenges the rigid caste system, demonstrating her commitment to a just and equitable society. Tripathi's Sita is not merely a ruler; she is a powerful agent of change, driven by a warrior's spirit and a leader's heart. Although Sita advocates freedom, She understood that excess privilege is harmful. She upholds equilibrium between the masculine and feminine aspects (6). Wielding freedom's torch, Sita dances between lion's roar and dove's song, seeking a world where no privilege casts a shadow on equality, her feminist anthem in every step. To her, achieving a delicate balance between Purush (the masculine) and Prakriti (the feminine) is the essence of a fulfilling life philosophy. These traits exemplify those of a genuine warrior, who not only conquers territories but also captures the affection and loyalty of her people. Sita understands that stifling individuals harms the whole. She envisions a balanced society where diverse talents and perspectives flourish, creating a richer tapestry of collective experience. Recognizing the potential untapped when individuals are restricted, Sita advocates for a society that leverages the power of diverse inherent qualities for the benefit of all (6). Similar to an altruistic nationalist, she advocates for the establishment of a fair and just society. To comprehend her feminist perspective, one must delve into the underlying foundation of her character and values.

Sita's feminist stance underscores her belief in gender equality and empowerment. She recognizes that societal norms and structures often constrain women's agency and limit their opportunities for self-realization. By advocating the dismantling of such barriers and promoting the rights and autonomy of women, Sita embodies the spirit of feminism and strives towards a more inclusive and just society. To unlock the true depth of Sita's character and her feminist spirit, we must

go beyond her actions and explore the wellspring of her beliefs. She's not just a champion for societal balance and equality; she's an ardent advocate for individual liberation and self-determination. This multifaceted approach elevates her to a powerful and progressive force within the narrative.

Exploring the Maternal influence: A pillar of Sita's Warrior identity

Amish Tripathi's Sita is more than just a warrior queen. Woven into the tapestry of her strength is the profound influence of the mother-child bond. While her battlefield prowess and political savvy steal the spotlight, it's the invisible thread of motherhood that shapes her character. This connection not only reveals her nurturing side but also fuels her resilience and determination. By exploring this powerful bond, we unlock a secret layer of Sita's warrior persona – a strength born from love, compassion, and unwavering resolve.

The assumption that India was always matrilineal based on mother goddess worship isn't accurate. Matrilineality existed in pockets, but most regions were likely patrilineal. Mother goddesses don't guarantee matrilineality, and early civilizations lack clear evidence. It's more complex than a single explanation. The emergence of patriarchy in Indian culture is a multifaceted phenomenon influenced by various factors. Brahmanization and Sanskritization, which prioritize asceticism and renunciation of worldly life, potentially contributed to the marginalization of women and their portrayal primarily as devotees. However, it's important to avoid overly simplistic explanations. Historical evidence suggests diverse social structures existed throughout India, and attributing women's position solely to this religious process ignores other potential influences, such as economic, political, and social shifts. Additionally, characterizing women's original position as uniformly "strong" across all communities and periods risks historical inaccuracies. Instead, a nuanced understanding requires careful examination of specific contexts, acknowledging the diversity of experiences, and avoiding sweeping generalizations, writes Rashma in Malashri Lal and Namita Gokhale's edited book (7). This supports the matrilineal lineage of Sunaina, as portrayed by Amish Tripathi, indicating her influence over the subjects of her kingdom. Sunaina is portrayed not as a submissive wife to Janaka, but as a dominant matriarch who

significantly influences Sita. Sita draws her strength from her mother, embodying feminist empowerment in the novel by operating independently of patriarchal constraints. In Amish Tripathi's portrayal of Sunaina, Sita's mother, and King Janaka's wife in *Sita: Warrior of Mithila*, her matrilineal lineage and strong leadership qualities might suggest societal influences beyond a singular explanation like Brahmanization. However, it's essential to avoid assuming all historical women held equivalent power or interpreting fictional portrayals as direct reflections of historical realities. While Sunaina's influence over her subjects and independent spirit in the novel is noteworthy, attributing this solely to a matrilineal past risks oversimplification. Analysing diverse historical accounts and recognizing the complexities of social evolution offers a more nuanced picture than attributing feminist empowerment solely to an individual character or fictional lineage.

Nancy Chodorow, an American sociologist, argues that the mother-child relationship, especially between mothers and daughters, plays a crucial role in shaping our personalities and behaviours. While her essay mainly focuses on this dynamic, she recognizes the importance of the mother-son relationship, which has often been neglected in sociological and psychoanalytic studies. Her work primarily critiques the focus on the father-son relationship, particularly in Freud's Oedipal complex, and argues that the mother-son dynamic plays a crucial role in shaping masculinity. She argues that the way mothers interact with their sons differs from their interactions with daughters. Sons, like daughters, experience an initial close bond with the mother. Boys, according to Chodorow, are encouraged to detach from their mothers early and embrace the father as their symbol of masculinity. This creates a potential tension between closeness and separation in the mother-son relationship. She criticizes the assumption that socialization is primarily gender neutral. By highlighting the mother-son bond, Chodorow argues that socialization is inherently gendered, as mothers transmit societal expectations and norms based on their own experiences and cultural understandings. It's important to note that Chodorow's work has been debated and critiqued, particularly for its reliance on psychoanalytic theory and its potential lack of

empirical evidence. However, her emphasis on the mother-son relationship has undoubtedly helped to expand our understanding of how gender is constructed and perpetuated through family dynamics. Chodorow paints a picture of mothers and daughters as mirrors reflecting each other's gender, a shared reflection fostering a deeper bond compared to the mother-son connection. This intimate bond can lead the mother to view her daughter not as an independent individual but rather as a projection of her own self, a concept akin to "narcissistic extension." Daughters, in this framework, are perceived as vehicles for their mothers' fulfilment of personal desires and aspirations. This profound attachment shapes the daughter's psyche, fostering a desire to emulate her mother's behaviours and characteristics. She highlights the profound impact of the societal expectation of women as caregivers. She argues that this role shapes the development of both masculinity and femininity in individuals, and influences the relative power and status of men and women within society. By assuming primary responsibility for nurturing and raising children, women play a central role in shaping the personality characteristics and behaviours associated with traditional gender roles. This caregiving role not only influences the development of traits typically considered feminine, such as empathy and emotional sensitivity but also has a profound impact on the formation of masculine traits, including independence and assertiveness. Furthermore, the societal acknowledgment and appreciation of caregiving duties primarily undertaken by women can reinforce gender disparities and the unequal sharing of authority between genders. Consequently, comprehending the impact of women's widespread nurturing responsibilities is essential for tackling broader gender equality concerns and fostering fairer social interactions (8).

Nancy Chodorow's theory of gender socialization posits that mothers play a crucial role in shaping their children's gender identities, particularly through the mother-son relationship. This is because mothers are typically the primary caregivers for young children, and their interactions with their sons can influence how boys develop a sense of masculinity. While Sita's leadership in Mithila might not entirely align with

Chodorow's theory focused on mother-child relationships, it offers an interesting case study. Despite societal expectations, she rises to power, suggesting complexities in how women navigate leadership and redefine gender roles. Sita's mother, Sunaina, was herself a skilled ruler and strategist, and she actively instilled these qualities in her daughter. As a result, Sita grew up to be a strong and independent woman who was able to lead her kingdom with wisdom and compassion. Sita challenges the image of mothers as solely gentle caregivers. She embodies female strength and assertiveness, actively shaping her children's lives, defying traditional gender roles, and proving women can excel in any domain. Sita's message is about breaking down traditional gender limitations and showcasing women's capabilities in diverse roles, including motherhood and leadership. Therefore, the Ramayana provides a powerful example of how Chodorow's theory of gender socialization can be applied to real-world situations. Sita highlights the often overlooked yet crucial role mothers play in shaping their sons' sense of masculinity and identity. This challenges narrow views of the mother-son dynamic and emphasizes its significant impact. Shannon French expands upon the concept of the warrior-mother archetype and explains that the warrior-mother, when assuming the role of instigator in conflict, isn't driven by a desire to witness her children engage in brutality. She harbours a belief in their innate advantage, hoping they will claim their perceived birth right by surpassing rivals. This portrayal challenges conventional notions of motherhood by depicting mothers who actively engage in and advocate for conflict, viewing it as a means for their children to assert their strength and claim their rightful place in the world (9). While the "warrior-mother" archetype captures a facet of Sunaina's actions, reducing her solely to this label paints an incomplete picture. Her decision to protect her child and kingdom stemmed from a tapestry of responsibility, leadership, and likely grief, not just an innate instinct. Similarly, Sita's identification with her mother goes beyond a simplistic mirroring of strength and control. Their bond likely held love, admiration, and shared values, shaping Sita's self-esteem and confidence, not just mirroring dominance. Instead of relying on rigid archetypes, appreciating the complexities of Sunaina's

motivations, the multifaceted nature of motherhood, and the emotional richness of their dynamic offers a deeper understanding of these characters and their matriarchal legacy.

While traditional stories portray men as warriors and women as peacemakers, this text explores Sita's "masculine" traits through a different lens. Feminist theorists like Chodorow argue that nurture, not biology, shapes behaviour. They suggest women's maternal roles foster empathy, but societal expectations lead them to shoulder this responsibility more often than men. Applying this theory to Sita and Sunaina reveals a unique dynamic; Sita, adopted by Sunaina, lacks the biological mother-daughter bond, possibly impacting Sunaina's nurturing style. In contrast, Urmila, Sunaina's biological daughter, embodies more stereotypical femininity. Their contrasting upbringing shapes their personalities. Sita, raised without the typical maternal bond, develops athleticism and strength often associated with masculinity. Urmila, raised traditionally, reflects expectations of feminine beauty and passivity. Urmila was willing to follow marital laws and accepted to remain under the protector (husband), as Tripathi mentions in the book (6). This perspective suggests that Sita's masculine traits may not stem from genetics but from her unique upbringing and Sunaina's nurturing style. It challenges traditional gender roles and explores the impact of nurture on personality development. However, it's important to consider alternative interpretations and avoid oversimplifying complex characters. Sita's personality likely has multiple influences beyond just Sunaina's parenting.

Multiple reasons could explain why Sita lacked maternal warmth from Sunaina during her upbringing. Firstly, the seeds of Sunaina's own journey, nurtured by her individual experiences and beliefs, may have blossomed into specific parenting decisions that affected Sita's childhood. She may have internalized societal norms that prioritize biological ties and biological motherhood, leading her to treat Urmila, her biological daughter, differently from Sita, her adopted child. Moreover, societal norms and pressures concerning gender roles might have influenced Sunaina's perspectives on her children. Sunaina might have unconsciously adhered to traditional gender norms, expecting Sita to conform to certain feminine ideals despite her

non-biological relationship. According to Pamela Johnston Conover, mothers tend to be less supportive of militarism compared to other groups, suggesting motherhood shapes women's attitudes towards war (10). This theory highlights how motherhood can potentially shape attitudes towards conflict and aggression. In the context of Sita and Sunaina's relationship, Sunaina's lack of tenderness towards Sita could potentially be attributed to her own experiences and beliefs about motherhood, rather than a lack of maternal instinct. Sunaina may have struggled to fully embrace Sita as her own due to societal expectations and biases surrounding biological motherhood. The impact of motherhood on militaristic leanings shouldn't be generalized. Each woman's journey shapes her own perspective. Additionally, Conover's hypothesis provides a broad framework for understanding the relationship between motherhood and attitudes towards war, but it does not account for the complexities of individual relationships and experiences like those between Sita and Sunaina. The unique dynamic between Sunaina and her daughters, Sita and Urmila, highlights how different parenting approaches can influence personalities within a family. As an adopted child, Sita may have experienced Sunaina's nurturing differently than Urmila, Sunaina's biological daughter. These diverse approaches, coupled with overarching societal norms regarding parenting, may have influenced the emergence of contrasting characteristics in Sita and Urmila. While Urmila may display more traditionally feminine characteristics, Sita might demonstrate qualities like strength and assertiveness. It's important to remember that personalities are shaped by multiple factors, and this dynamic offers a lens to explore the potential impact of parenting styles on individual development, while avoiding simplistic judgments about mothers and their children.

The allure of Power: Deconstructing the Warrior Myth

Sita's warrior spirit throws open a window into the hidden androgyny within us all. This aligns with Carl Jung's idea of the collective unconscious, where the "anima" embodies the feminine within men and the "animus" embodies the masculine within women. In other words, Sita's journey reminds us that we all possess both masculine and feminine traits, regardless of our gender.

Essentially, everyone possesses both masculine and feminine traits, making us all fundamentally androgynous. In women, the "animus" manifests as intellect, assertiveness, and courage, while the "anima" in men encompasses emotions and intuition.

Ignoring the inner "masculine" side (animus) as a woman can be dangerous. It might lead to aggression, ruthlessness, and controlling behaviour. This happens when the animus is repressed or "overwhelmed" - it becomes too forceful and loud. But wait, don't be scared! Society and even our parents often discourage women from expressing their "masculine" qualities. That's a shame because according to Carl Jung, embracing this suppressed aspect can help you grow. The animus, when balanced and integrated, empowers women to think independently and reclaim parts of themselves that were hidden or controlled by others, writes Baratharajan in her article (11).

From Unconscious to Self-Actualization: Sita's Warrior Spirit

True self-discovery or individuation involves merging the conscious and unconscious aspects of ourselves. This process shapes who we are by bringing hidden parts of our personality to light. It starts with accepting ourselves and ends with reaching our full potential. In the present story we are analyzing, Sita's warrior strength represents her animus, a masculine aspect residing within her unconscious. The animus acts as a bridge, allowing her to integrate conscious intentions with the wellspring of her unconscious potential, culminating in a well-rounded and complete self.

The protagonist's journey as a warrior showcases different stages of "animus" development in Jungian psychology. This masculine aspect within her fuels both physical and spiritual growth. She demonstrates impressive strength, wise leadership, persuasive communication, and fights for justice across social classes. These achievements showcase her remarkable resilience. Analyzing Sita as a warrior goes beyond just female empowerment (feminist view). It also aligns with Jungian psychology and adds a relatable human touch to her mythical portrayal. By seeing her as a human experiencing the "animus", we better understand how her warrior spirit unfolds.

Motifs
The Warrior Princess

The motif of the warrior princess in the novel serves as a symbol of strength and resilience, challenging the traditional damsel in distress trope. This motif is crucial for portraying Sita as a feminist icon, emphasizing that women can be both nurturing and formidable defenders of their nations. Sita's training in martial arts and her strategic use of weapons become symbolic of her strength and agency. These motifs connect her to the cause of national defense.

Critique of Male Authority

Sita's defiance of male authority figures, including Ravana and even Rama at times, underscores her independence and agency. This critique of patriarchal power structures aligns with feminist ideals and contributes to the novel's feminist nationalist discourse.

Mentorship and Maternal Wisdom

The influence of Sita's mother and her mentors in shaping her path highlights the importance of education and wisdom in women's lives, promoting the idea that women's roles are not confined to the domestic sphere.

Dual Identity

Sita's dual identity as a beloved daughter and queen and a fearless warrior serves as a powerful motif that challenges the notion of singular identities for women, promoting a complex character who integrates multiple roles.

Mithila's Social Structure

The portrayal of Mithila as a society that allows women to be warriors and leaders serves as a utopian motif, contrasting with the patriarchal norms challenged by the narrative.

Rhetorical Devices
Symbolism

Sita's weapons and her prowess in warfare are not just literal elements but also serve as symbols of empowerment and resistance against injustice. Her role in battles symbolizes the struggle against traditional gender norms and the fight for justice and equality.

Dialogues and Monologues

Through Sita's dialogues and internal monologues, Tripathi provides insights into her thoughts and convictions. This technique gives voice to Sita's perspectives on justice, duty, and governance, allowing the character herself to articulate the novel's feminist and nationalist themes.

Parallelism

The narrative structure that parallels Sita's journey with other key characters (like Rama) in the series emphasizes the theme of equality. By showing Sita's story alongside, and equally important as, Rama's, Tripathi underscores her significance in the nationalist narrative as much as any male hero.

Subversion of Traditional Gender Roles

Tripathi contrasts Sita's portrayal with traditional narratives of the Ramayana. By placing Sita in traditionally masculine roles of leadership and combat, Tripathi not only challenges these established gender norms but also reshapes the reader's perception of her capabilities and role. This highlights the subversion of her character and emphasizes her transformation. By rejecting these norms, Sita embodies the principles of feminist nationalism, asserting women's right to autonomy and self-determination.

Foreshadowing and Predestination

The use of foreshadowing connects Sita's personal destiny with the larger fate of the nation, reinforcing the notion that her role is pivotal not just in a personal or familial context but in the broader nationalist discourse.

Through these literary strategies, *Sita: Warrior of Mithila* reframes Sita as a figure who embodies both feminist and nationalist ideals. This recasting is crucial for engaging with contemporary issues regarding gender and national identity, making Sita relevant not only as a mythological figure but also as a modern symbol of empowerment and ethical leadership. Through her actions and leadership, Sita challenges patriarchal norms, advocates for the rights of women, and promotes inclusivity within society. Tripathi's portrayal of Sita as a powerful and assertive figure resonates with contemporary feminist discourses, offering a compelling reinterpretation of a beloved mythological character within the context of nationalist discourse.

The theoretical justification for the goals and hypotheses of the study can be established through a textual analysis of pertinent literary works and arguments, as presented in the search results. Firstly, the concept of *purush-prakriti* harmony, rooted in ancient Indian philosophy, is a key concept that distinguishes Indian feminism from Western theories of feminism. This holistic and non-dualistic approach to feminism is evident in

Amish Tripathi's *Sita: Warrior of Mithila* (2017), which portrays Sita as a strong and capable leader who challenges traditional gender roles. Secondly, the novel presents Sita as a model of behaviour for Indian women, emphasizing her strength, courage, and wisdom. This portrayal of Sita as a feminist icon is a counter-narrative to traditional interpretations of the *Ramayana*, which often depict Sita as a passive and submissive character. Thirdly, Indian feminism can be viewed as a unity in duality, beyond the male-female binary. This perspective is evident in the way Sita is portrayed as both a devoted wife and a powerful leader, challenging the traditional gender roles and expectations of women in Indian society. Moreover, this paper also highlights the distinctive nature of Indian feminism, which challenges the Western "model of power" and emphasizes the varied socio-political and cultural conditions that shape women's experiences in India. Indian feminism has always contested gender formation in various ways, and the women's movement in India has a long and complex history that predates colonialism. Finally, the theory of counter narrative can be used to analyze Amish Tripathi's novel *Sita: Warrior of Mithila* and other modern interpretations of the *Ramayana.* This approach highlights the ways in which contemporary writers and artists are recasting traditional narratives and foregrounding the suppressed female voices in these writings. Therefore, the theoretical justification for the goals and hypotheses of the study can be established through a textual analysis of pertinent literary works and arguments. The concept of *purush-prakriti* harmony, the portrayal of *Sita* as a feminist icon, the view of Indian feminism as a unity in duality, and the use of counter narrative theory all provide theoretical grounding for the study of *Amish Tripathi's Sita: Warrior of Mithila* and its contribution to the interdisciplinary topic of feminist re-visioning.

Validity

Evaluating the validity and reliability of interpretation findings in literary analysis, especially when analyzing texts like Amish Tripathi's *Sita: Warrior of Mithila* using a framework of feminist literary theory, feminist revisionism, involves several crucial considerations. These considerations relate to the extent to which the interpretations align with

theoretical principles and how consistently these interpretations can be supported by the text.

Validity in the context of this literary analysis refers to how accurately the interpretations reflect the intentions of the text and its socio-cultural implications, aligned with established theories.

Theoretical Alignment

The application of feminist literary theory to Tripathi's depiction of Sita as a figure of empowerment ensures that interpretations are grounded in scholarly discourse about gender and literature. It provides a robust framework for analyzing how the text subverts traditional gender roles and promotes new forms of female identity. The validity of findings is further supported when these theories clearly elucidate the text's portrayal of Sita's agency and the subversion of conventional narrative roles.

Cultural and Historical Context

Using cultural revisionism, the analysis considers the text within the broader context of contemporary Indian society and its re-evaluation of historical and mythological narratives. This helps validate findings related to nationalist discourse and the reimagination of mythology, ensuring that interpretations are relevant to both modern and historical perspectives. By reimagining the characters and stories of the Ramayana, Tripathi participates in a cultural revisionism that reflects modern values. This aligns with the work of theorists like Homi K. Bhabha, who discusses how cultural production can challenge and renegotiate power structures within society. Tripathi's reinterpretation of Sita challenges the traditional, often patriarchal interpretations of her story, empowering her with a narrative that aligns with contemporary feminist ideologies.

Textual Evidence

The validity of interpretations also heavily relies on direct textual evidence from the novel. The robustness of the findings is supported by specific examples of dialogues, descriptions, and plot developments that illustrate the novel's feminist and nationalist themes.

Validity: Strength and Limitations
Strengths

- The chosen frameworks directly address the research question concerning feminist

ideology, traditional portrayals, and feminist nation-building.

- Utilizing feminist literary theory allows the researcher to effectively analyze the subversion of gender roles and the empowerment of Sita.

- Revisionist mythology theory helps assess how Tripathi potentially challenges traditional interpretations of the Ramayana and reclaims the narrative for a contemporary audience.

- Nationhood and identity studies provide a framework for analyzing how Sita's character disrupts traditional notions of nationhood and the role of women within it.

Limitations

- The chosen frameworks focus primarily on gender and power dynamics. It only revolves around the theme of "feminist nationalism."

- The validity of the researchers' interpretations depends heavily on the specific textual passages chosen for analysis. It only ensures a balanced selection that represents the full complexity of Sita's portrayal.

Reliability

Reliability in literary analysis refers to the consistency of interpretations across different contexts and the extent to which similar conclusions can be reached by other scholars using the same methodological framework.

- **Reproducibility of Analysis**: The reliability of this research is achieved when other scholars apply the same feminist and cultural revisionist frameworks to *Sita: Warrior of Mithila*, they should be able to arrive at similar conclusions regarding the portrayal of Sita as a feminist and nationalist icon. This reproducibility is crucial for establishing the reliability of the analysis, and this text, however, is open for interpretations across the globe.

- **Consistency with Other Works**: Comparing findings from Tripathi's text with analyses of other contemporary reinterpretations of mythology can also test reliability. Similar themes emerging across various works would support the reliability of the interpretations derived from Tripathi's novel. Volga's *The Liberation of Sita*, like Tripathis novel, is also a contemporary rendition.

Inter-rater Reliability

This involves the consistency of interpretation among different analysts working independently. Sharing the same framework (theoretical lenses of feminist and political theory) ideally leads to similar thematic interpretations, strengthening the reliability of the findings.

Reliability: Strength and Limitation

Strengths:

● The use of established theoretical frameworks provides a systematic approach to analyzing the text.

● Close reading, comparative analysis, and discourse analysis are well-defined interpretative techniques that can be replicated by other researchers.

● A clear and detailed textual analytic strategy outlining the selection of passages and the process of analysis enhances the reliability of such findings.

Limitations

• The current research is limited to the ideas that are in alignment with feminist literary criticism, revisionist mythology and nation building process.

• The current research is limited to Amish Tripathi's novel, *Sita: Warrior of Mithila* (2017). Although this research considers including alternative interpretations or potential counter-arguments to strengthen the overall reliability of the findings, the study is limited to one particular text.

The validity and reliability of interpretation findings in analyzing *Sita: Warrior of Mithila* (2017) are upheld through meticulous application of a multidisciplinary theoretical framework, consistent reference to textual evidence, and the potential for reproducibility of findings. The choice of feminist literary theory, cultural revisionism, and political theory as lenses ensures a deep, contextually grounded analysis that aligns well with both the text and the broader socio-political discourse. By maintaining rigorous standards of evidence and theoretical alignment, the analysis achieves a high degree of validity and reliability. By acknowledging the strengths and limitations of the chosen framework, this research attempts to provide a valuable and well-supported contribution to the analysis of the source text.

Conclusion

In Amish Tripathi's hands, Sita emerges as a defiant reimagining, shattering the traditional narrative that equates bravery solely with masculinity. He breathes life into a warrior princess, her valor transcending gender to illuminate a deeper truth: courage resides within all, regardless of societal labels. This fresh perspective challenges both historical and modern ideas about gender roles, sparking a necessary conversation. Tripathi re-imagines Sita as a formidable warrior, making her a powerful symbol of feminist empowerment within the text. This is significant, as it shows male authors engaging with feminist themes in traditionally androcentric mythic fiction. Even though Tripathi himself cannot directly experience womanhood, he actively dismantles stereotypical portrayals of women through this feminist reimagining of Sita. Encountering such strong female characters from the past provides a counter-narrative to the dominant patriarchal norms. These narratives have the power to inspire, particularly women, leading to greater self-acceptance and confidence. Modern Indian mythic fiction, like Amish Tripathi's work, throws down a gauntlet to Western stereotypes of meek Indian women. This movement leverages mythology to rewrite archetypes, offering empowering narratives for today's audience. Recognizing the patriarchal shadows often cast by ancient myths, Tripathi dismantles stereotypes through his reimagining. Using the "bildungsroman" structure, he spotlights the protagonist's growth, in this case, Sita's transformation from princess to warrior. The very title, *Sita: Warrior of Mithila*, is a declaration of intent, signifying her journey to formidable strength. This reimagining shatters the Western narrative of passivity, instead presenting Sita as a central figure whose power shatters perceptions of Indian women as weak and dependent.

By dismantling one-dimensional portrayals, feminist retellings offer multifaceted characters who reflect the richness and complexity of lived experiences. In this reinterpretation of Sita, she sheds the essentialist damsel in distress image and becomes a superhero-like warrior, wielding her skills in battle and commanding respect from her enemies. While remaining compassionate towards loved ones, she becomes a fierce defender of Mithila, showcasing a dynamic and nuanced

personality. Sita's character transcends traditional binaries. She embodies both masculine strength and feminine tenderness, reflecting the "Purush" and "Prakriti" within her, painting a portrait of a complete human being. This aligns with postmodern feminist ideals that dismantle fixed notions of gender. Sita's journey transcends mere resilience against victimization. She emerges as a revolutionary force, actively dismantling patriarchal structures and laying the foundation for a kingdom guided by compassion. The very title, "Sita: Warrior of Mithila," is a battle cry, announcing her transformation from princess to formidable leader. She embodies the spirit of radical feminism, reclaiming her agency and shattering preordained roles with unwavering strength. In this vein, mythic fiction becomes a vibrant canvas for feminist ideology, where Sita and others redefine femininity through action and self-determination, leaving behind restrictive tropes.

Abbreviation

This manuscript deliberately avoids abbreviations, preferring to present all terms and phrases in their full form for consistent clarity.

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Author Contributions

Krishna Chatur Sow Mondal conducted the research for the paper and wrote the manuscript. Dr. Lavanya Sivapurapu provided guidance and feedback on the research and writing process. Syeda Fatima Farheen has provided some secondary sources for this research. E. Madhavi has given valuable suggestions regarding the referencing and citation style for this research. Dr. Reena Salaria reviewed and edited the paper.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest regarding the study of this article.

Ethics Approval

This qualitative research study delves into a literary analysis of Amish Tripathi's novel *Sita:* *Warrior of Mithila* (2017) and has received approval from the Ethics Committee of Koneru Lakshmaiah Education Foundation. This research study abides by ethical guidelines applicable to analyzing literary works, without direct involvement of human or animal subjects. The analysis solely relies on publicly accessible literary materials, with no direct impact on individuals or animals. The study maintains proper citation and acknowledgment of authors' work to uphold intellectual property rights and academic integrity.

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