

## Uniqueness And Idiosyncrasy Of Devi In Githa Hariharan's Novel *The Thousand Faces Of Night*

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### Abstract

Githa Hariharan is among the most notable Indian Writers of great intent. Her first novel, "The Thousand Faces of Night" articulates the concepts of the issues facing women. It is experimentation and experimentation yields results. Women's psychological perceptions via the mythological tales it provides us with a clear image of women, how they adhere to the guidelines of customs, Githa Hariharan's work is "The Thousand Faces of Night" first novel, which was written in 1992, was "The Common Wealth" awardees author's prize in 1993. It is intimately related to the narratives of many folktales, myths, and legends of India. In this novel *The Thousand Faces of Night*, describe how Indian women search for their identity, independence, and desires. We are unable to determine whether Devi, the novel's main protagonist, was inspired by the mythological subplots. It demonstrates Devi's discontent in a planned she feels dragged by marriage and is compelled to see another man. But in the end, her quest for identity brings her to her mother's side.

**Keywords:** Human Relationships, Isolation, The pursuit of Independence, Ambiguity, Injustice, and Mythology from India.

The primary protagonist Devi's internal battle is depicted in "The Thousand Faces of Night" who receives a scholarship of study for a master's degree in America. It also shows how she feels about her partner Gopal and her spouse Mahesh. She rejects her boy buddy Dan's proposal in America by assimilating into American society. Dan is a Black American. She enjoys following Indian custom and customs. Menon quotes, "'womanhood' especially 'Indian womanhood' is represented as perfect mix of 'tradition and modernity'" (Menon, 2005, 212- 213). She remembers mythological tales told to her by her grandmother when she was little. In a similar manner the tales could have an impact on Devi's choice to cut ties with Dan. She demonstrates here as good and traditional Indian girl by turning down a proposal from a Black American. She returns to Madras, India, driven by her longing for her motherland. As Hariharan put it, But Amma's letters brought with them an unspoken message of loneliness, poignant in its quite dignity... But the image of her alone by the sea teased me like a magnet...she might need me, my hesitant, self-doubting, presence, was intoxicating. (TFN 16)

Devi fulfils her mother's desire and goes back to India to accompany her mom. She may not have seen her mother's strong emotions till her father passed away. They even started talking about love even though they had never touched. Once she passes away, they approach each other in conversation. They regress to the events of her father's death day at that very time the resign themselves to their loneliness. Mother and daughter put up with each other's hardships. In the words of Hariharan's "we were intensely conscious of each other; we were pulled together by a tender protectiveness that encircled our necks with its fine threads. Drawn together, my father's memory receding for the moment, we became a one-called unit:" (13). Here, in terms of Devi's sensitive mind and tendency towards love are evident. She returns to Madras via the choice of her mother. She weds Mahesh, a regional manager for a Global corporation that produces toothpaste and detergents. In some way, Mahesh's conversation with Devi during their first conclave helps us understand his temperament. He is really opened straightforward, kind, and truthful. Devi by herself says this in her own words, quoting Hariharan, "I liked the Mahesh's frankness, his willingness to be fair, even if he did seem to be an unbending pillar of propriety and good sense. He is honest..." (22). Mahesh tells her it's not appropriate for us to play about like lovers. We have to be aware of the status of things between us going forward. It suggests Mahesh's serious and grown-up personality. This demonstrates his openness about their future together; she reiterates that Devi must live alone without him due to his frequent absences from official work trips. He lectures her about being alone. Devi though, does aware of his question. Despite understanding that Mahesh is interested in a woman at someone who can be the perfect mommy and wife at home. According to Hariharan, "I thought he admits to wanting a woman at home who will be a wife and a mother." (22) But she quits her marriage to pursue her freedom and individuality because she feels estranged from him. She leaves her husband's home and spends some time with Gopal, her lover. Yet, the unhappiness with accompanied by him, and she returns to her motherland to be with her mother Sita. Does a lady have to through her husband's relatives into suffering by abandoning him to pursue their own identity?

Devi, who read *The Thousand Faces of Night* as a child, hears numerous sub stories in folklore from her geriatric grandmother, an elderly, illustrates widow. All of the tales of her grandmother tells morally rich stories at bedtime instead of just routine ones. In the words of Hariharan, "A comparison had to be made, a illustration discovered, and a moral drawn out" (27). Her grandmother used to have an appraised picture of Gandhari's life which she gave up to save her blind husband. Gandhari must accept her fate in the absence of knowledge about her future spouse. Having an ocular spouse, Gandhari notices her husband's white eyes when they get closer, the pupils. Gandhari, expressionless and glazed, rips off a

section of her gown and fastens it to her eyes without uttering a word. Devi wishes to hear from her grandma that Gandhari is not a stubborn, arrogant woman, but rather quickly concede her fate. According to Hariharan, Devi's grandma wants her grand-daughter to live a life true to a real lady by following the moral principles and choices made by the women in her novels. She makes the point that a woman must, at all costs, accept her fate through her stories. She must make sacrifices in order to support her spouse and family. Hariharan once said, "Listen; listen and you will learn what it is to be a real woman" (28). "She embraced her destiny - a blind husband - with a self - sacrifice worthy of her royal blood" (TFN 29). Sita, Devi's mother, is also an inspiration to her Devi's daughter. Sita fulfilled her responsibilities as a good mother and daughter - in - law. She had also handled her share of the blame for her husband's accomplishments in the workplace. She enchants everyone in the house with her veena's lovely sound. Sita's husband compliments her on her exceptional veena skill. In the words of Hariharan, "your father's eyes shone with pride as they settled on that head bent over the veena, lost in concentration" (TFN 30). Sita's father - in - law eventually ran into trouble finding a something he needs for his daily prayers. The floor had been swept, and there were flowers.

With his he summons Sita in a voice full of shaking rage. Every day after finishing her house hold chores, Sita practices the veena. However, she was unable to hear her father - in - law's voice over the euphoric sound of the veena. Sita's father - in - law chastises her for ignoring his call. The following instant, Sita removed the cords from the wooden foundation. Then, before her father - in - law she declared emphatically that she is a decent wife and a daughter - in - law's. Sita never touched the veena again after that; she demonstrates her goodness as a daughter - in - law. In Hariharan's words, "We never saw her touch the veena again. She became a dutiful daughter-in-law the neighbours praised, and our household never heard that heart - rending music again" (TFN 30). She behaved like a responsible daughter-in-law, and she received praise from everyone. Her family never again heard her try playing the veena.

Hariharan wrote once more, "She became a dutiful daughter-in-law the neighbours praised, and our household never heard that heart - rending music again" (30). One of the items Devi's mother brought to her mother-in-law's home was veena from dowry. Her parents took her to a reputable veena teacher, and she has a great ability for the instrument. The family members cry every time she does a lovely veena performance. Sita also desires that her daughter be deserving of her mother - in - law's home. Thus, she instills in her daughter the values of being a nice daughter - in - law at all times. While Hariharan put it, "I heard most often from her as I was growing up: order, reason, and progress" (TFN 26, 1992).

Devi doesn't have to perform any house - keeping duties at her father-in-law's home. Mostly, she spends the time hearing Baba's and the maidservant Mayamma's stories. Devi father-in-law Baba, is also narrates tales about Hindu tradition and dharma. How women fulfilled their responsibility as role models for the upcoming cohort. He constantly instructs her on how to be a housewife. According to Hariharan, "The house wife should always be joyous, adept at domestic work, neat in her domestic wares, and restrained in expenses. Controlled in mind" (TFN 70, 71). When Baba must leave to Devi, her daughter, asks him to stay with her.

She wants him to be at her side while she is alone. However, Baba clarifies for her that a woman must please her husband and desire his company, not her dad, not her father-in-law. According to Hariharan, "But a wife needs her husband, not her father-in-law, or her father" (68). In addition, Baba states that a woman must follow the road of devotion and serve her husband to the end of her days in order to enter heaven, even if she is childless. Baba also says that a wife has to live after her husband passes away. Lacking a sexual life and ought to exercise self-control via his sermons, he conveys an air of great wisdom. According to Hariharan, "by serving her husband, she is honoured in the heavens" (TFN 55). Devi enters into an arranged marriage with Mahesh in order to please her mother. Mahesh possesses a lavish home in Bangalore with ample wealth. He provides for all of her materials requirements. Mahesh seems to be ignoring her, in her opinion. She spends days by herself at home when husband is away on official work trips. She believes that forced marriage has turned into a torment. Hariharan's word,

I am still novice in the subtle means to torture. I thought the knife would plunge in, slit, tear, rip across, my neck, and let the blood gush, the games it plays with me. The heart I have prepared so well for its demands remains untouched, unsought for. (54)

Prior to wedding Mahesh inquires as to whether or not she is able to handle being alone without him. However, after that Devi give that some thought. Devi feels that she misses him a lot now that they are married. Her desire to work has grown. She needed to comprehend Mahesh because he is a businessman and must travel often for professional businessman. However, Mahesh sees his wife's loneliness and advises her to take action at Mayamma was in need of Devi at home, where she was holding work, so he suggested that she go Tara's house is used for painting lessons. Hariharan once said, "If you need to get out of the house, why not join Tara's painting classes?" (56). Devi, though, is always a self-free spirit. She soon got married happiness has an end. She believes that she would never be able to enjoy married life the way she had hoped. She became distant from her immediate surroundings in her daily routine.

Mahesh use her uneducated grandmother as an example, who is happier than Devi. What Mahesh is hoping to imply that a person can never be content while working? A woman's home can provide her with happiness and fulfillment retaining works. As Hariharan put it, "Your grandmother was barely literate. Wasn't she a happier woman than you are? What is it you want?" (74). Mahesh always runs to Devi after he gets back from a lengthy work trip and asks her excitedly whether she's pregnant. Despite having heard many myths, it's possible that she was unable to appreciate the importance of marriage and she never lives up to the myths of the perfect wife. Mahesh is able to comprehend her isolation and writes

about her loneliness and depressive thoughts to her mother. Mahesh really does prove himself as a responsible husband, insofar as Devi is unable to comprehend Mahesh's needs as a husband. According to Hariharan, "Mahesh writes that you are tired, depressed. Would you like me to take a holiday in Madras?" (86). Women who are unable to have children are looked down upon in Indian society long duration. Giving birth is regarded as having a spot in paradise, and the child is regarded as a gift from almighty. Devi's mother emphasizes in a letter the value of the kids as well. She adds that a woman's the true meaning of contentment resides in motherhood, and she shares her feelings when Devi smiled for the first time. Hariharan said,

My dear Devi, Amma wrote, women have sought the deep content that comes with motherhood. When I held you helpless in my protecting arms, when you first smiled at my face bent over yours, when you lisped that precious word of Amma, what vistas of joy opened up before me! (TFN 86, 1992)

The mother-in-law's home bothered Mayamma, the maid servants in Mahesh's household. She has long since been unable to conceive. Years will pass before she gets a son. Her life has been occupied with monthly fasts, whispered apologies to her anxious mother, and entreaties to the gods the mother-in-law. Her mother-in-law has caused her a great deal of pain. As Hariharan put it, "She tore my new saris and gave me yesterday's rice to eat. What is the use of feeding a barren woman?" (112). Mayamma's mother-in-law refers to her as an infertile witch, yanking up her sari angrily and dousing her impotence in a fiery red spice that has just been pounded. She feels a terrible first stick to her insides, causing her things to tighten together.

As Hariharan put it, "freshly-ground spices in to my barrenness. I burned, my thighs clamped together as I felt the devouring fire cline to my entrails" (TFN 113, 1992). Doesn't let her eat at least; she always accuses her rotting womb of the problem "Stop thinking of food, daughter-in-law, think of your womb. Think of your empty, rotting womb and pray" (TFN 114). Mayamma has endured physical abuse at the hands of her inebriated spouse. Nevertheless, she never gives up and eventually became pregnant. Nevertheless, she never placed the blame on her husband or mother-in-law. Her tales are more moral lessons than mythology. Devi regards her as a role model. Devi is still good more listener than adherent.

When Devi is unable to conceive, her want for independence intensifies. Devi hears the tales of Amba and Kritya, who defy custom and their husbands, as well as the tales of Gandhari, Sati Parvathi, and Snake Woman, who were devoted to their husbands. The stories lack of acting nothing has an impact on Devi; even though she may hear many legends that contain moral lessons, she never attempts to emulate the idealized heroines in those tales. When her spouse is away on extended official tours, she feels lonely, lacks physical attraction, and insomnia. She became more and more aloof and drawn to Gopal. Gopal's life is music, and he can readily calculate Devi's emotions. Both of them spend time in the garden conversing while Gopal sings to her. He slowly captures her interest and begins to touch her. She never turned down his advances towards her. Her thoughts of Gopal kept her from getting a good night's sleep. Once Hariharan said, "I ache for that drug, that blissful numbness. Waiting for him...", "... I must learn to love" (TFN 78). "I will walk on, seeking a goddess..." (95). She is distracted from her husband's focus by Gopal's music. She believes her spouse has ignored her, so she wants enjoyable company with others. She finally wants to go away with Gopal since he makes her happy with his music. Within Hariharan said,

I write elaborate scenarios in my mind for last act – humiliating Mahesh, saying all the things we have left unsaid. I do something bloody, final, a mark of protestworthy of the heroines I grew up with. (TFN 95, 1992)

Devi does not wish to live a life of sacrifice as an Indian conventional woman, as evidenced by her elopement. She desires identity and independence. She leaves Dan when she arrives in America, rejecting the superior and immoral American culture. However, as a mother currently she defies her traditional Brahmin family's customs by divorcing her spouse Mahesh for absurd reasons. She feels so alienated that, like Ammu in "The god of Small Things," she drags herself into a relationship with another guy. How they are drawn to different sexes, as Maya in "Second Thoughts," discussing their attraction to different sexes. Devi eventually comes to the conclusion that Gopal and Mahesh are the same after discovering Gopal's other side. She encounters the determination that Gopal is not superior to her spouse Mahesh. Hariharan said, "I have made very few choices... But I was too well - prepared, and not prepared at all America, Jacaranda Road, Mahesh, Gopal. I have run away from all my trial..." (137).

Devi was aware that going on an affair with Gopal amounted to adultery. Hariharan said, "...a common little adulteress" (95). Devi believes that she would be quite pleased with Gopal, In Hariharan's words, "I will soar high on the crest of Gopal's wave of ragas..." (95) For several months whenever Gopal goes on a musical tour, she has to relocate to a different city. She joins the audience prior to the Gopal. She sees no difference in her life with her spouse and her life with her love. She claims that her happiness with Gopal is short-lived. According to Hariharan, "...a kite that had snapped free of its string", "...the images his music evoked in her were no longer so uplifting, or even neutral" (TFN 129, 1992). She starts to feel distant from Gopal once more and is unable to be happy with him. She took whisky because her husband had previously forbidden her from playing cards with his buddies. Now that she takes whisky, she is unable to calm her blazing heart, she is unable to put up with Gopal's actions, and now she must wait months for Gopal because of his concert tours. She feels alone in her heart one more. Within the Hariharan's word, "In her isolated corner, an outsider forever on the fringes of a less ambivalent identity" (TFN 135, 1992). She is unable to distinguish the day difference between her lover, Gopal, and her husband Mahesh. Ultimately, she concludes that, to use Hariharan's word, "I was always greedy for good fortune.

Foolish girl... But as I hung on to it with all my strength, it dragged me down into the muddy, violet swamp” (TFN 112, 1992). Her mother supports her in her disappointments and reached out to her with optimism. Devi considers herself fortunate to have a mother such as Sita. She acknowledges that all she did was listen to the stories, but she never let them enter her thoughts.

According to Hariharan, Devi considers herself to be Goddess Durga, saying, I lived a secret life of my own: I became a woman warrior, a heroine. I was Devi... I rode a tiger, and cutoff evil, magical demons’ heads” (TFN 41, 1992). However, she is unable to realize this vision, and ultimately, she destroys her marriage customs, by going on an elopement with Gopal. Shelacks genuine perspicuity. Doniger claims that,

The women of Mahabharata are extremely prominent, feisty and individualistic, in part of a result of changes that were taking place in the social structure at the time of the recession of text. (Doniger, 292)

Growing up, she was exposed to numerous mythological tales, which eventually shaped her life into a narrative. She left Dan because she felt she couldn’t fit in with American culture. She left her husband because she could not bear to be alone without him. She simply quits her beau since she can’t stand the emptiness from him. Her wrongdoing is now over. Meena draws the conclusion that,

American viewers have spent more than three decades watching male heroes and their adventures, muddies visions of boyhood, adolescence replete with illusions women as witches, bitches, mothers and imps. (Meena, 131)

To be with her mother is a drag. According to Hariharan, “But I was too well – prepared, and not prepared at all America, Jarcanda Road, Mahesh, Gopal. I have run away from all my trails, my tail between my legs... Or my mother’s lonely hand stretched out towards me” (TFN 137).

Devi is never satisfied in any relationship or with anything. She feels as though leaving her husband will mark the start of a new chapter in her life. However, she feels as life she has nothing left to gain when she leaves Gopal this time. Hariharan’s said, “She had felt bold and care free when she left Mahesh’ house, a little like a heroine. But she felt like a fugitive now, though she was, for the first time, no longer on the run” (TFN 138, 1992). A few months later, Gopal is still dozing off on the bed when she throws her coloured sari and peacock’s neck at the mirror, darkening the space and obstructing all light. That implies that she wishes to forget the people she spent those previous days with. She desires to move forward and spends time with her mother. She wants to forget the past that torments her and never want to see her history again, which is why she is covering the mirror with sari. According to Hariharan, “She covered the mirror with the silk to that the room suddenly became darker... Devi left the silk sari behind, the sari which was the colour of the peacock’s neck...” (138).

According to Kakkar and Katharine note that,

Hinduism where coming back to mother is regarded as death and rebirth, Hinduism does not hold out the consolation of St. Paul’ promise that at the moment of death we come close to the God and that then ‘shall we know even as we are now’. Instead, it seeks to mitigate the universal dread of death by viewing it as interval between lives, not as an end to the often painful, sometimes happy, but always engrossing and, above all, familiar life in the world. (Kakkar S, Katherine K, 2007, 132-133)

Devi notices the garden is overgrown and wild as she gets back to her house. That displays the heart of her mother, how she is in frustration for Devi’s destiny. In addition to being a successful wife and mother, Sita gives up everything and her wants for her husband and his family. As a result of her daughter’s ignorance, she now has to deal with another issue from society. Devi is now thinking about the contact with her mother and wants to begin a new life with her. According to Hariharan, “She rehearsed in her mind the words, the unflinching look she had to meet Sita with to offer her love. To stay and fight, to make sense of it all, she would have to start from the very beginning” (TFN 139).

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