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**Mythological Interpretation of Shivaji Sawant's Mrutyunjay: A Study**

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**ABSTRACT**

*Myth has been researched and examined. Periodically, critics and philosophers have attempted to define myth within the frameworks of politics, society, and culture. This study is done to explore for the mythological interpretation of the novel Mrutyunjay and to study for historical, cultural, and religious elements in the literature. Also to recognize myth and its literary applications, and to identify the novels' authenticity to study the realism and fantasy of the novel. They reveal historical and social reality that has been altered by its psychological value when it is closely examined. These legendary novels exemplify the connection between the literature and history, which they metaphorically reflect, when interpreted as tales or mystical stories. They are the channel for the literature's deeper tensions and anxieties, which are exposed through Ideological Psyche.*

**Keywords:** *Mythological Interpretation, Mrutyunjay, historical, modern society.*

**1.0 Introduction**

The symbolic significance of specific mythic patterns is emphasized by Northrop Frye. Eventually, the metaphorical poetic speech in which myth is conveyed gives rise to the storyline or narrative.

Mythology has always piqued the intense curiosity and intrigue of literature. Indian literature is no different. Numerous literary works have continued to be inspired by the Vedas, Puranas, and Upanishads. The writers of all times have retold Indian myths to fit the present context as a result of the prominence and popularity of Indian mythology. There is a growing trend in the twenty-first century to rewrite, re-create, retell, recall, introduce, and re-imagine myths from a modern perspective. This fusion of mythology and realism has emerged as a trend-setter in Indian English-language writing. The development of mythical books in the twenty-first century and their enormous popularity need investigation.

We need answers to questions like how myths have been resurrected in the modern day and why Indian mythology has grabbed authors and readers in the current period of technical growth. In the current period of globalization, the problem of "growth of mythic fiction" is theoretically explored by the current research project.

The use of myth in contemporary literature by authors like Shashi Deshpande, Shivaji Sawant, Shashi Tharoor, Girish Karnad, Salman Rushdie, and others is examined after a brief summary of how myth is used in the works of notable Indian English writers like R K Narayan, Mulk Raj Anand, Raja Rao, and many others look to myth in their search for fresh platforms for artistic expression. They make extensive use of myth. Myths function in their works in the context of contemporary India to develop its new paradigm in Indian literature written in English.

The study gives a historical outline of how myths have been employed as a crucial instrument in Indian English literature to reveal the aforementioned problems and difficulties. The study concludes by explaining the rationale for the research and providing a brief overview of its objectives and methodology. Myth does not only rule and mould each person's mind, but it also affects their entire culture. In his writings, Shivaji Sawant retold the traditional Indian myths that he had recreated. The way the author presents the narrative does not change the faith or belief, but it does provide an opportunity to read the Karna myths again from new angles.

The title "Mrityunjay" can be defined as Death as Mrityu and Win or victory: Jay or Jayam, Mrityunjay therefore alludes to a person who had triumphed in the death. In other words, such a person

never dies and continues to exist eternally. One of the fabled heroes of the renowned Hindu epic "Mahabharata" was Karna. It is a mythical book called *Mrityunjay*. In order to write the book *Mrityunjay*, Shivaji Sawant spent a period of time at Kurukshetra. Long-term meditation, thinking, and investigation produced an intriguing deathly tale, and Shivaji Sawant's name spread throughout Maharashtra.

Duryodhana provides an overview of Karna's friendship qualities. While Krishna portrays Karna as a brilliant warrior, Vrishali highlights the husband-related aspect of Karna's personality. We also see the Mahabharata War in this book as a result of the way Karna's narrative develops. Before our sight, the thrilling battles of Kurukshetra come to life. Every man who, although having several accomplishments and being the father of all in terms of prowess, has only experienced shame in life should find great inspiration in this book. The book also acts as a manual for the innumerable young men who persist in their heroic attempts to thwart fate when it occasionally strikes. Potentially the best archer, Karna overcame the embarrassment of being elevated simply because of his caste by working hard and excelling. He later rose to fame as a hero of the Dalit struggle in his culture. In the perceptions of the people, Karna—who had previously been portrayed as a villain—has been transformed into a heroic hero because to Shivaji Sawant's novel *Mrityunjay*.

The main character, Karna, is both spectacular and commonplace, supernatural, and he has never really been given the credit he deserves, neither in his existence nor in eternity. Although the Pandavas were able to appreciate his magnificence while still alive (since they won the war), the majority of the Kauravas were unable to do so because practically all of them died in the conflict. The portrayal of Karna as a common person in *Mrityunjaya*, despite the fact that he is indomitable and exceptional, is what makes it so beautiful. With such elegance, Shivaji Sawant recounts the indignity he endured throughout his life, the discontent in his heart, his unwillingness to participate the Pandava despite learning that they were his brothers and ostensibly turning down the opportunity to become the King of Hastinapura, his unwavering resolve, his enduring companionship with Duryodhana, and other events.

Karna's autobiography is named *Mrityunjaya*. In this book, Indian author Shivaji Sawant deeply

examines Karna's life. A brave warrior's chariot wheel is trapped in the brilliant rays of that magnificent sun. Karna is that fighter. The curse that Karna experienced when he was a student at Parashuram is shown on this cover. The autobiography of Karna, also known as *Suryaputra*, recounted in the book *Mrityunjay*. The name *Mrityunjaya* means "the victor over death." To Karna, this name is lovely. He was the sole courageous warrior who sacrificed even though he was near death. A generous warrior like him has never existed earlier and will never exist ever. When Rajmata Kunti in this book was vergin, the sage Durvas noticed her dedication and offered her the *Devahuti* chant. The power she summons when reciting the mantra will emerge a son who looks very much like him while functioning as a slave in human shape. She chanted a mantra as she observed the sun one day. After some days, Karna was born. He was placed in a box and thrown into the Ganges by Kunti and the maid Dhatri. Adhiratha, Dhritarashtra's charioteer at Hastinapur, received that box while cleaning horses. Later, Adhirath looked after Karna along with his wife Radha. Even after being born, he did not experience maternal love. He was forced to go through unending pains and agony. In order to spare the suffering of others like him, he wished to Krishna that Krishna perform his final rites in the virgin area. Even if many others throughout the world donated, he was able to give an exciting, lofty, selfless, and unmatched sacrifice by himself at the time of his death pretending as a Brahmin Lord Indra once requested Karna to offer him his armor. Karna immediately responded. Even knowing it would result in his doom!

Several great writers have been fascinated to the character of Karna from the epic *The Mahabharata* because it allows them to examine Karna from various perspectives. He has been mistreated since birth. Despite possessing merit, he is denied a warrior training along with the Kshatriya princess after being born to a virgin and abandoned by her. He is then raised by a charioteer named "Suta," who is in many class distinctions below Brahmins and Kshatriyas. The narrative of Karna is consequently still relevant today in a society where there are classes that are socially, economically, and culturally disadvantaged and where some people enjoy privileges while the others do not.

The author of this prize-winning book, Shivaji Sawant, vividly depicts the inner strife and tumultuous life of this Mahabharata hero in this book. This book includes several dramatic scenes that diverge dramatically from The Mahabharata's main narrative. However, the epic has undergone numerous transform and new features over the course of thousands of years, which has given creative writers the freedom to explore characters like Karna, Draupadi, Arjuna, and many others. From his student days on, Karna and Arjuna's conflict, which is poignantly defined by prejudice, takes root in his mind and heart.

His desire to upstage Arjuna in the sport of archer is driven by his profound resentment over the way he was wronged by Guru Drona. Numerous fictitious events are added into the story to highlight Karna's unique and mystical character for the audience. Although he is far from Drona and other people, he is attracted more to Ashwathama, the son of Drona. For instance, neither Bhishma's involvement in proclaiming Karna's unmatched archery prowess nor the incident in which Karna successfully placed his arrow in the throat of a tiny bird can be found in the classic Mahabharata. These events seem to be essential for developing character. Another made-up story is Kunti attempting to poison herself after becoming pregnant while still a maiden. Her body is unaffected by the toxin. The author has expertly constructed scenes that show how severely affected Kunti is when she must abandon her child in the river. At this book, Kunti is given permission to learn right away that her child is safe and sound in a Suta's home.

Pandu eventually had to quit the kingdom and embrace reality in the forest because of his act of shooting a Rishi. He travels with both of his spouses. As the narrative advances, Kunti and Madri give birth to the Pandavas via the mystical mantras that Rishi Durvas has provided. The majority of the occurrences proceed as they do in The Mahabharata, up until the Pandavas and Kauravas mature and their hatred intensifies. Each section of the book tells the story of one of the main characters, such as Kunti, Duryodhana, etc. However, despite barely receiving a mention in the original epic, Karna's wife Vrushali is given her own chapter in this book. She also has children of her own. The episodes involving Krishna killing Shishupal that are omitted from the original are dramatically heightened by the author. Another

interpolated event involves Karna expects Draupadi to show respect him like she did the others and Draupadi silently walking by him. Karna is seen to be prepared to stop Dushasana from undressing Draupadi, yet he does not find her attractive. The author made every effort to defend Karna's honour and show his graciousness.

### **1.1 Statement of problem**

Modern society overlooks depressed individuals. The wealthy are getting richer while the poor are going poorer. We ought to make an effort to ease the suffering of our society's unhappy citizens. Shivaji Sawant has made an effort to provide the Karna who have not previously obtained justice in Mahabharata. We each should make our own offerings by understanding the injustice of the character Karna. This book was written by Sawant in an effort to better comprehend the suffering of the dead. This book depicts a different stage of the protagonist's journey. Because they are completely free to reinterpret and deconstruct the myths as they see it, writers can influence readers to appreciate their work and, ultimately, understand their rationale for writing the book.

The life path of Karna is the primary focus of the book *Mrityunjaya*. Is Karna, who seems to be a bad guy in the Mahabharata conflict, really a bad guy? Or does his life have other facets? *Mrityunjaya* made this discovery. The opening line of the book *Mrityunjaya* is spoken by Karna. We learn more about Karna's personality as it emerges through the words of those around him. Karna's significance to us as a brother and a commander is revealed by Shona.

### **1.2 Rationale of the study**

The writer's primary objective in portraying Karna as a generous person is to draw the reader's attention to him, and he has been successful in this endeavour. People are constantly interested in learning more about the genesis of the myths and legends they read about and hear, thus author Shivaji Sawant employed his blending approach to gratify his readers' desire. He combined a distinct perspective with a conventional Indian epic tale about the captivating skilled archer Karna. In order to enhance the attraction of the book, Sawant has added a little bit of imagination to some mythological aspects. Everyone's attention is captured by the novelist's singular blend of compelling storytelling,

religious symbolism, and profound philosophical ideas. The author Sawant did a wonderful job of fairly sharing a wide range of emotions across the characters.

### 1.3 Scope of the study

As a writer, Sawant has been successful in combining mythology and fiction while changing it in his own unique way. Since there is no distinct difference between mythology and fiction, this ambiguity allows the writer to express himself in his own unique way. In this sense, Sawant took a risk by portraying Karna as a person, despite the objections that would be raised. In other terms, Sawant has sparked the readers' interest and excitement. In spite of the fact that the framework of depicting Gods in human shapes is ubiquitous in myths and Indian puranas, Sawant has explained it by incorporating the tale of Karna, who overcomes death inspite of being dead. He ascribes rational justifications to prevalent myths. Sawant has reimagined the mythology from a novel angle. His ability to tell a powerful story is strengthened by his attribution of coherent, logical interpretations to the symbolism.

### 1.4 Limitation

- Shivaji Sawant used the traditional Indian myths as the basis for his compositions.
- The writer's depiction of the myth does not change the belief or faith of the people, but it does provide an opportunity to reread the *Mrutyunjay* from many aspects.
- Sawant takes numerous individuals and events from Indian mythologies, reimagining them as modern-day mortals using theories.
- Sawant has reimagined his protagonist as a survivor of death and a rational man who rejects the myth and looks for realistic explanations for the miracles.

### 1.5 Hypothesis

- It is anticipated that the elements of Mythology are found in the Novel *Mrutyunjay*.
- It is assumed that social, religious and historical aspects are used in the novel.
- It is expected that the mythology and fantasy are intermingled in the novel.
- The writer skillfully makes a replica these characters and represents them with a distinctive way.

- The writer presented the story of Karna as undefeatable, the death conqueror.

## 2.0 Literature Review

Mahabharata was the war in itself. These works offer a way to experience the epic through the perspective of a particular character.

The ultimate day of the Mahabharata is the setting for *Dharamvir Bharati's play Andha Yug*, which has five acts and depicts destruction, the devastation of human beings, moral principles, identity, and how war demeans society. It highlights battle's deaths and aftermath. It suggests that not even God could have prevented the widespread slaughter. Krishna dies at the climax of the play.

The Mahabharata's "Adiparva" chapter inspired *Girish Karand's Yayati*. However, he had not accurately captured the personalities of the characters as they appeared in the epic. It tells the tale of a monarch who trades his old age for his son's youth in order to satiate his sexual urges. The narrative was slightly altered by Karnad, who also introduced some new characters and depicted the king as a lusty guy who would do anything to satisfy his carnal desires. A father telling his son to forsake his youth so that he might enjoy his virility is an example of the patriarch humanity's effect.

A great example of a Mahabharata myth is *Shashi Tharoor's The Great Indian Novel*. It is a parody book that contrasts the political climate after independence with the Mahabharata. Characters from mythology are created from famous people in Indian history. Throughout this book, the author retells the tale of India's fledgling freedom as a conflict between social groupings and individuals who are linked by their shared political and personal histories.

The Marathi book is *Mritunjay by Shivaji Sawant*. In this book, the role of Kunti's son, Karna, is highlighted. He was a superb soldier. He sided with Duryodhana in the conflict between the kauravas and the pandavas out of friendship. He was Kunti's son who was raised by a charioteer. Through the eyes of a character from the Mahabharata, the author explores the essence of life in this book. In this book, the author suggests that Krishna and Karna have a paranormal bond.

*Mukund Lat's Dharamsankat* is a great resource for discovering the answers to your dharma-related concerns. It shows that the best way to learn

about any dharma is through stories. Because of this, very few thinkers have discussed karma in their writings. However, the focus of this book is on the early, widely accepted ideas of the Mahabharata. The novel is a classic since it discusses the shastras extensively.

Another mythological Mahabharata tale is *Namita Gokhale's "Puffin Mahabharata."* She has portrayed the conflict from an unique perspectives. The Mahabharata is a tale of both triumph and defeat, of both dignity and heroism. She has made an effort to keep Dushasana and the characteristics of Bhima and Duryodhana in harmony. The story is carried through to its terrible end, with the reader left with a sense of the futility of war after being denied access to such power, rather than the triumph itself.

### 3.0 Objectives

1. To explore for the mythological interpretation of the novel Mrutyunjay.
2. To study for historical, cultural, and religious elements in the literature.
3. To recognize myth and its literary applications.
4. To identify the novels' authenticity.
5. To study the realism and fantasy of the novel.

### 4.0 Research Methodology

This research is based on the novel published by Shivaji Sawant. Most novels are based on the mythology and philosophy of ancient India. Shivaji put new outlook on ancient Indian legends, philosophy, historical elements, and culture. Close reading, reinterpretation, and in-depth examination of primary sources by current authors would be the foundation of the research process by reinterpreting psychological, ethical, moral, and social issues. Additionally, the study will be considering current, pertinent critical literature while conducting research.

As a result, the study follows the following methodology

- In depth Study of Shivaji Sawant's novels.
- Studied Earliest Indian mythologies.
- Reading of Indian philosophy and its cultural ideology.
- The Usage of libraries for the study.
- Use of journals, browsing articles, study material on internet.

### 5.0 Expected Outcome

The English-speaking ruling class in India is experiencing a type of sociocultural crisis as a result of industrialization. This section typically reads the best-selling books from the West; therefore fantasy requires an Indian parallel. Globalization has had a direct impact on the growth of mythic books that deal with the cultural existential problem. When ancient myths are transformed into the vernacular of modern media and technology these mythological tales, when interpreted as reflections, help the English-speaking, globalized class to find their place thus resolving the identity conflict. Ancient mythological novels can be analyzed using cultural symbolism. As a result, a legitimate explanation for the rebirth of Indian myths in Indian fiction written in English can be found in the fear over Indian identity in the globalized era. In the era of capitalist development, myth becomes a product that may be consumed. They reveal historical and social reality that has been altered by its psychological value when it is closely examined. These legendary novels exemplify the connection between the literature and history, which they metaphorically reflect, when interpreted as tales or mystical stories. They are the channel for the literature's deeper tensions and anxieties, which are exposed through Ideological Psyche.

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