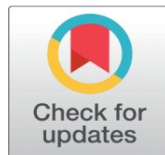


WAR TERRORS AND TRAUMA: PSYCHOANALYTICAL STUDY OF RAMAYANA REINTERPRETED IN SCION OF IKSHVAKU OF AMISH TRIPATHI

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ABSTRACT

War has always existed as a major aspect of human history leaving behind everlasting impacts across the world including in shaping cultures, societies and as well as individuals. The questions related to the cause of war and its impacts, including the long term economic, social and cultural consequences keep on increasing but the psychological complexities remain poorly understood such as traumatic memories, behavioural changes etc. Trauma is a deeply troubling and destructive side of human psyche that leaves non-physical wounds which will be externally invisible but internally can cause a long-lasting damaging impact such as even disorders like depression, anxiety etc which needs to be treated at the earliest stage for recovery and healing. The paper delves into Amish Tripathi's reimagining of the Ramayana in Scion of Ikshvaku through psychoanalytical perspective to understand the human psyche in relation to war and trauma as this modern retelling of the ancient Indian epic convey timeless significance, universal themes and motifs. This is Amish Tripathi's first book in Ramchandra series, set in a mythical world that blends history and fantasy as it shares the story of Prince Ram who navigates through the challenges of duty, leadership and complexities of war within and with the external world.

Keywords: War, Trauma, Scion of Ikshvaku, Inner Turmoil, Ramayana, Amish Tripathi, Reimagining, Contemporary Relevance, Psychoanalysis Theory

1. INTRODUCTION

Ramayana, one of the most popular epics of Hindu mythology, is originally a smriti text from ancient India, attributed to Valmiki who is often referred as "Adi Kavi" or the first poet. This epic narrates the journey and life of Ram the prince of Ayodhya, who is believed as the seventh incarnation of God Vishnu, about his 14 years of exile, abduction of his wife Sita by the demon king Ravana and his eventual return to Ayodhya to be crowned king. The story has been interpreted differently across the globe through different types of Ramayana texts over the centuries like:

Valmiki Ramayana, Adhyatma Ramayana, Kilippattu Ramayana, Kamba Ramayana, Ramcharitmanas etc which plays a very important role in Indian mythology and cultural heritage, This study analyses the timeless struggles between duty, righteousness, morality, and the role of leadership during war through the novel Scion of Ikshvaku which is the first book in Ram Chandra series written as a prequel to the Shiva Trilogy from the bestselling author Amish Tripathi, published in 22 June 2015, inspired by Ramayana and received widespread recognition for its fresh and unique narrative style. This novel has won the crossword book's "best popular award" and it became a significant commercial success after getting translated into different languages across the globe expanding its reach beyond India into international markets. The author adapted central characters, themes, and plot from Valmiki's Ramayana also by adding various deviations to it making the storyline very interesting. This is the source of inspiration for Amish Tripathi to write a modernized version that reimagines Ram not as a divine figure but instead as a humanized hero and a man of principles that enabled even ordinary people to learn about the struggles, challenges, personal growth and responsibilities of rulers especially at the time of crisis.

There are various symptoms of traumatic experiences such as survivor's guilt, panic, fear etc that are present in this novel Scion of Ikshvaku along with various behavioural changes in characters such as lying, dissociation, loss of interest and even criminal behaviours which can be studied through the lens of psychoanalysis. Many theories by psychologists can be used in psychoanalysis for better understanding like Freudian concepts, Jungian archetypes, Judith Herman's trauma theory etc. The purpose of this paper is to delve deeper into the psychological complexities and impacts of war and trauma using Amish Tripathi's modern and reimagined version of Ramayana in his novel Scion of Ikshvaku that's inspired from the ancient Indian epic of Valmiki's Ramayana and points out how the characters experience with war, traumatic events including violence, and death can resonate with the psychological complexities and conflicts of modern day audience. The study uses psychoanalysis as a medium to explore deeper into the unconscious mind's motivations, repressed desires and fears in this novel Scion of Ikshvaku to blur the line between classical epics and contemporary psychology theories which is visible in this the reimagined version of the Ramayana highlighting how such mythological retellings can reflect timeless human inner struggles and conflicts especially including moral dilemmas and by applying psychoanalysis the paper offers valuable insights hidden within such mythological literature.

The impacts of war on society especially in: economic, political, social, psychological and health sectors has always been a central element in human history because it not only influenced in shaping the geographical and political landscape but also in defining the concept of leadership which is continually tested to make the right decision for the greater good, sometimes, even at the cost of their own personal desires for prioritizing the public interests or welfare while maintaining unity and resilience at the time of crisis hence making the duties and responsibilities of a leader very crucial. Dilemmas faced by leaders in times of war and peace are not just modern phenomena but have been present throughout history, even deeply rooted in ancient mythologies that has been analysed, translated, and interpreted differently in different languages by individuals and passed down to generations. The study explores the mechanism of identification process in literature between the readers and characters in the text. This identification or recognition involves readers seeing oneself in each character's place or perspectives perceiving the same rights, duties, depicted in narrative. This perception aligns the individual self-understanding with the ideological frame work

in text which helps to influence in changing and developing reader's sense of self and relationship.

1.1. OBJECTIVES

The paper aims to understand and explain the role of id, ego, superego in shaping the thoughts, feelings, and personality development of the characters and explain the relevance of psychoanalytic theory in understanding human behaviour and unconscious mind. The study is made to provide deeper insights into the mythology and psychological intersection by reinterpreting the mythic retellings through psychoanalytical lens. A comparative analysis and reinterpretation of Scion of Ikshvaku with traditional narratives of Ramayana is done to delve into shifts in themes, character-development, and highlights the symbolic representation of war as the internal psychological complexities and battles of each individual characters in the novel. The study also aims to understand how the human psyche plays a major role in shaping behaviour and relationships with others with the examples of many characters like Ram, Sita, Lakshman etc within the context of their experience with war and traumatic events by utilising various psychoanalytical theories and determines the contemporary relevance of such ancient mythic retellings to modern psychological issues.

1.2. TEXT ANALYSIS

Scion of Ikshvaku by the bestselling Indian author Amish Tripathi, published in June 2015 is a mythological retelling inspired from the ancient epic Ramayana, this story reinterprets the early life and journey of Ram, a scion of the Ikshvaku dynasty, dealing with several internal dilemmas and conflicting choices as any human through the path of dharma and righteousness. The novel blends mythology with contemporary issues making the story more engaging and relatable for modern readers. The term "Scion of Ikshvaku" refers to the descendants of ancient Indian king Ikshvaku, who is considered as progenitor of the Suryavansha, and in context to Ramayana, this title is used for Ram who is a direct descendant of Ikshvaku. Set around the time period of 3400 BCE, India, the story opens with its first narrative device as foreshadowing in which Raavan is shown flying away with Sita in his Pushpak viman and then onwards the story is told in flashback, it traces the birth of the Ayodhyan prince Ram, and how his internal conflicts and identity struggles emerges from early childhood as he was tormented by his own family members and countrymen for the horrific defeat his father, the emperor Dashrath, suffered at the hands of Raavan, the demon king of Lanka, on the day Ram was born (Tripathi). The story is told in third person perspective and is a fast-paced narrative style looking at the early phases of Ram's life filled with action and adventure.

In this material world we live in people are diverse and are also treated unequal based on gender, nobility, religion, culture, social and political status etc leading to countless conflicts and violence. Amish Tripathi points out the evils of such unfair divisions and inequality that was especially birth based present even in Ramayana times and how the central characters like Ram aimed to build an ideal society for inspiring people to recognize their true potential and by harnessing their goodness for the betterment of the society that will help to end inequality and crimes. Guru Vashishta teaches his disciples that there are both masculine and feminine ways of civilization. While the feminine ways values beauty, freedom and creativity, it can also lead to divisions and decadence. The masculine ways value honour, duty and truth but it can also lead to intolerance and fanaticism. When Ram and his brothers

are taken away by Guru Vashishta for years of training to develop strong characters and prepare them to become very powerful rulers, the princes grow up with very distinct personalities: prince Ram was simple, idealistic, and a selfless follower of law. Prince Bharat became cynical and advocated for freedom. Prince Lakshman was very protective of Ram and prince Shatrughan was very wise. After completing their education when they return home, king Dashrath was finally able to recognise the worth of his neglected son when he was saved by Ram from a life-threatening attack and soon bestowed upon him the title of Crown Prince. Many days later Guru Vishwamitra approaches Ram and Lakshman with a mission to defeat the demoness Tadaka and her son Subahu. Afterwards they attend Sita's swayamwar in Mithila and Ram wins her hand in marriage which enrages Raavan who starts a war to attack Mithila and fails to win but as the consequences of firing an Asuraastra by breaking the law made Ram force himself into exile with Sita and Lakshman. During their exile they meet Raavan's estranged step-siblings Vibhishan and Shurpanakha (Tripathi). But an unfortunate incident occurs when Shurpanakha gets injured while trying to attack Sita followed by Sita's abduction by Raavan setting the beginning of the epic battle in Ramayana.

From a psychoanalytical perspective Ram's leadership can be studied as the manifestation of his superego leading to his strict adherence to the laws while ensuring all his actions and decisions are guided by a strong sense of justice and morality to inspire and uplift all individuals. The nobility and their dissatisfaction to this ruling method where everyone is equal before the law show their resistance to change and them even labelling of Ram as "dictatorial" is their defence mechanism to resist the change that limits their hierarchical power and privileges. In the Scion of Ikshvaku chapter 18, Vishwamitra is questioning Ram by asking "You have surprised me, prince of Ayodhya. Why did you disobey my direct order to kill all the Asuras? And what did you tell them to bring about this dramatic transformation? Is there some secret mantra that can suddenly civilise the uncivilised?" (Tripathi, 200) to which Ram answers in a calm and thoughtful way highlighting his intelligence and compassion, showcasing the need of non-violent conflict resolution to help everyone especially the weak to feel safe and treated justly. The novel offers a nuanced understanding and exploration of social inequalities, traumatic impacts of war, and psychological issues and insights. By using psychoanalytic concepts such as cathexis, anti-cathexis, the struggles between life and death instincts, etc the readers gain a deeper understanding of complexities of human behaviour and unconscious desires through the thoughts, actions, and emotions of various characters as demonstrated within the novel. For example: Raavan's pride and possession with power, he invests his mental energy in desire to dominate or destroy other kingdoms and that's an example of cathexis meanwhile Raavan's denial of his own weaknesses and vulnerabilities leading to mask his feelings with extreme anger and violence is anti-cathexis. The primary force guiding Ram to protect his people, maintain law and order for the betterment of his kingdom are mainly driven by life instincts (Eros) while Raavan's destructive desires for power and control represent death instincts (Thanatos.) Sigmund Freud's main goal was to bring unconscious libidinal urges into consciousness using psychoanalysis for helping individuals to effectively deal with the impulses and desires within their conscious awareness leading to an increasing decline in relying on the ego's defence mechanism and therefore providing psychological insights, enhanced self-awareness and control over the emotions resulting in better mental health and well-being ("Psychoanalysis").

2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The theory applied in this paper is the theory of psychoanalysis which is a therapeutic approach as well as the theory of mind developed by Sigmund Freud. Psychoanalysis is a method used to emphasize the role of the unconscious in shaping behaviour, thoughts and feelings. It is a type of therapy that aims to release repressed emotions and memories of clients in order to help them gain insights to resolve conflicts and anxieties. Freud explores the factors that affects the very development of our personality through this theory and focused on the unconscious state of mind (Cherry). In the novel Scion of Ikshvaku psychoanalytic theory can be explained as demonstrated by different characters while dealing with their internal conflicts, unconscious desires, and external challenges especially in the context of mythological influence by dividing the legendary Ramayana characters based on the distinct interplay between the three parts of mind: id, ego and superego.

In Scion of Ikshvaku the central character of Ram embodies superego which is the aspect of psyche that is concerned with moral conscience. He sacrifices his own personal desires for the greater good of his people and always adhere to rules, ideals and social expectations in every decision he makes such as to banish himself from sapt sindhu to atone for the sin of firing a Asuraastra without the permission of the Vayuputras. In this novel, Ram was tormented from early childhood by everyone in Ayodhya including his family members by unfairly blaming his birth as inauspicious as it was the same day his father was defeated in war, still he holds no grudge towards them because he believes that duty to his father and kingdom should come first by also fulfilling their expectations and wishes even when they conflict his own desires. This reflects superego's role in regulating behaviour according to ethical standards and social expectations. Whereas Sita can be viewed in the lens of ego the rational part of the brain that balances between instinctual desires of the id and moral constraints of the superego by finding practical ways to fulfil desires while balancing reality. Such as her decision to accompany Ram in exile being driven by her duty towards her husband while refusing id's emotional impulse to stay in palace and avoid hardship. Ravana's desire for Sita reflects id's lust and desire for instant gratification without concern for the moral implications. Him kidnapping Sita shows id's desire to possess and control without the thought of its consequences or any sense of ethical boundaries. Kaikeyi can represent the concept of repression which is the unconscious blocking of socially unacceptable or uncomfortable thoughts, emotions and desires such as her repressed desire for power through her son which was fuelled by jealousy and insecurity leading her to demand Ram to be exiled and Bharat crowned as king. Later leading to guilt and regret as she faces the destructive consequences of her actions.

The novel also explores the psychological impacts of war, violence and death in characters and how they approach and respond to this in their own separate ways, for example: Bharat and Shatrughan going against the laws constructed by their brother Ram and slaying the criminal who caused the tragic death of the female character named Roshni from Scion of Ikshvaku who was portrayed as the daughter of Manthara and also as the rakhi-sister to the four princes of Ayodhya (Tripathi, 163). But Ram's strict and selfless devotion to law and dharma can be interpreted as his coping mechanism against the chaos and violence to control and maintain the moral order and duties towards his people highlighting Freudian concept of repression in which personal motives and desires are sacrificed for the greater good or welfare of others.

Tripathi also points out the collective trauma in this novel using the decay of socio-economic and political decay before Ram's leadership in Ayodhya as the aftermath of a horrible defeat in war as the failures of past leadership left heavy impacts on both rulers as well as the people leading to societal trauma. Tripathi offers a modern perspective and invites the modern-day audience to reflect on their own struggles and experience by offering striking similarities between the readers and the characters emotional depth and psychological complexities. This compares ancient mythical narrative to its modern retellings with focus on its psychological depth for better understanding of human condition across generations as the ancient epics carries timeless significance and relevance to modern-day realities.

3. RESEARCH GAP

The paper explores the impact of psychological aspects on individuals using psychoanalysis and also highlights the lack of in-depth analysis and exploration of contemporary psychological theories in ancient mythological narratives especially in relation to war and trauma as there are still scarcity of studies in topics regarding long term impact of childhood trauma, tracing the behavioural changes in children due to trauma and the importance of its awareness as the complexities of the human psyche influence both the internal and external human condition and leads to significant changes in thoughts, behaviour, relationship with others etc highlighting the need to apply psychoanalytic theory to offer rich insights. While there are many existing psychological studies and research on various topics of Ramayana that has analysed the story based mythological, historical, cultural, feminist and numerous other perspectives, still contemporary reimagined versions of Ramayana like Amish Tripathi's Scion of Ikshvaku has received lack of attention in the field of psychoanalytical criticism especially involving the ignorance of post-war psychological issues and aftermaths such as PTSD(post-traumatic stress disorder), survivor's guilt, etc as most of the existing studies focused more on war and victory. The complexity of trauma, especially the psychological struggles of secondary characters have also been overlooked hence the paper aims to bridge the gap between ancient mythic narratives and contemporary retellings based on Freudian and Jungian psychoanalysis that includes understanding of each characters individual psychological struggles such as leadership anxiety, childhood trauma, war induced terrors, identity struggles etc for the better understanding of human condition at the time of chaos.

4. LITERATURE REVIEW

Ramayana has been a timeless source of inspirations across generations and has also been adapted as well as reinterpreted diversly across literature, films and many other creative platforms. Like Amar Chithra katha founded by Anant Pai which is a popular Indian comic book series that has presented a graphical narrative of Ramayana, The legend of prince Rama which is a Japanese Indian animated film (1992) directed by Koichi Sasaki, Ram Mohan, and Yugo Sako that made Ramayana accessible to much wider audience with a unique blending of Japanese and Indian style. Devdutt Pattanaik's The Book of Ram, Ramanand Sagar's Ramayan, Nina Paley's Sita Sings the Blues, etc are some more examples of the various literary and film adaptations and influence if Ramayana. While Amish Tripathi's Ramchandra series has been a huge commercial success, many scholars have also criticized him for oversimplification of many central characters and themes of this series by using creative liberty and pointed out several inaccurate information that have been made

about the mythological characters, their historical and cultural backgrounds. However, Tripathi's series has also been praised for making his version of Ramayana more engaging and relatable to the modern generation. The foundational work of Freud (1917) on Mourning and Melancholia have helped in better understanding of trauma and loss and its various impacts on individual psychology. Freud's theories on the effects of trauma suggests that such individuals, especially the ones suffering from traumatic memories, exposed to extreme violence or loss, can experience unhealthy and deep psychological disturbances that gets reflected in both conscious and unconscious mind. This perspective has been further expanded by scholars like Cathy Caruth, who points out through her work on trauma about the inability of the survivors of trauma to fully comprehend or properly articulate their experiences. In her work *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative, and History* (1996) Caruth states, "Trauma is not locatable in the simple violent or original event in an individual's past, but rather in the way that its very unassimilated nature—the way it was precisely not known in the first instance—returns to haunt the survivor later on." (Caruth, 4). Based on *Scion of Ikshvaku* the main character's journey throughout the novel aligns with Caruth's perspective of narrative gaps. Ram is tested just like many other mythical heroes, as he is being made to face lots of challenging situations which include not just the war with outside world but also the psychological war within himself while having to maintain the duties and responsibilities of being the future king who is even willing to sacrifice his own needs and desires for the betterment and welfare of his people. Amish Tripathi's reimagining of Ramayana offers a modern interpretation of how psychological effects of war and trauma especially the internal battles are important to understand to study how it affects not only an individual and his/her behaviour but also how it affects the society as a collective and he encourages to bring more attention towards such underexplored areas in classical retellings. According to Nimavat, Dushyant in *Political and Cultural Discourse in Amish Tripathi's Scion of Ikshvaku*, He highlights how issues of contemporary relevance are represented in the book while emphasising the need of ideal order in society and also shows the rising complexities in laws, justice and morality which has relevance to even today's society and politics (Nimavat). In this reimagining of Ramayana in which Ram is humanized, as he is represented not as a god but just as any other human with no extraordinary or supernatural powers, makes his journey more relatable to the modern audience who have been through similar situations and those who are struggling with similar feelings or emotions like sorrow, guilt, childhood trauma, loss of loved ones etc. Compared to C. Rajagopalachari's Ramayana, which is one of the many traditional retellings that shows the central characters like Ram, Sita etc as very perfect in everything and almost similar to divine beings with all their actions and thoughts being guided by unshakable moral purposes, but here in Tripathi's novel the same characters are shown differently with more psychological depths as they faces their own individual struggles, burdens of duty, search of self-identity and much more. Sita is depicted as a strong independent woman with high intelligence and strength by Tripathi which contrasts with many patriarchal interpretations of Ramayana that shows her only as a supportive wife. In *Scion of Ikshvaku* Ram's inner-battles and struggles through can be understood through the study of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), which include many symptoms such as: flashbacks, self-doubts, guilt, and regrets which is seen in many other central characters as well due to various challenging events and situations like war, separation, death, violence etc. Erik Erikson in his work *Childhood and Society* (1950) states "I have focused on the problem of ego identity and on its anchoring in a cultural identity because I believe it to be that part of the ego which at the end of adolescence integrates the infantile ego stages and

neutralizes the autocracy of the infantile superego.” (Erikson, 239). This discusses how trauma influences both personal identity and the collective psyche, stating that identity is shaped by individual experiences and societal forces. This concept aligns with Ram’s character, where his personal trauma symbolizes the collective emotional scars of Ayodhya.

In Postcolonial Perspective on Raavan in Amish Tripathi’s Scion of Ikshvaku and Sita: Warrior of Mithila. The paper examines the role of oppressive caste system through post-colonial lens and challenges the traditional narratives of Raavan as the villain by describing how much he liberated his people and brought military victories through strategic means. It also calls for a nuanced understanding societal issues and points out the need for a boarder-interpretations of epics, mythological themes, complex characters and their historical context (Prabu). Social, political, environmental issues, women empowerment etc are some of the major themes discussed in the paper The Scion of Ikshvaku’: A Forum for Debate on Contemporary Issues, The analysis concludes enforcing the need of a new social order and encourages the reader to reflect on the various contemporary social issues and challenges of the modern governance as Tripathi’s work shows how strong leadership and responsible citizens are very essential for developing an ideal society and new social order (Ashakiran). American psychiatrist like Robert Lifton and Judith Herman’s work on trauma and recovery such as Home from the War: Vietnam Veterans—Neither Victims nor Executioners and Trauma and Recovery: The Aftermath of Violence- From Domestic Abuse to Political Terror have examined the psychological effects of violence and trauma on individuals and societies by encouraging the need of empathy instead of combat for conflict resolution which will eventually result in better mental health as well as personal relationships. From a psychoanalytic perspective, the war be seen as the result of struggle between the darker impulses and moral principles of the human body’s unconscious and conscious mind. The character of Ravana can be seen as a symbol of the shadow archetype, representing the repressed and hidden aspects of the self that are driven by the darker impulses of unconscious mind while the character of Ram can be seen as representing the conscious mind’s attempt to impose order and moral principles on these chaotic forces of the unconscious mind. The experiences of Sita can be seen as a classic example of traumatic stress as it displays the ways in which trauma can affect one’s own self perception as well as relation with others but also encouraging the readers to understand the many ways in which everyone can cope with trauma as well as recover from it.

5. DISCUSSIONS AND KEY FINDINGS

Literature has a profound impact on society as it shapes the way individuals think, speak and perceive the world. In Amish Tripathi’s reimagining of the Ramayana in Scion of Ikshvaku the major focus is on human conditions, emotions, trauma, and motivations of the various characters in novel rather than the divine or supernatural forces as it helps to connect with the similar emotions, conditions and experience of modern audience struggling to find solutions to their own dilemmas. According to Carl Jung, a towering image in the history of psychology, myths express universal archetypes that constitutes fundamental elements of the collective unconscious that are shared across all human cultures which helps us to solve problems and shape an understanding of ourself and the world around us (Jung). The word psyche originally means soul or spirit and eventually with the development in knowledge of psyche, we started exploring the total personality that encompasses all of one’s thoughts, emotions, feelings and behaviour to understand

life and world better. The impact of Tripathi's reimagining can also be seen in its ability to spark important discussions and debates about the role of mythology in modern society. By reinterpreting the Ramayana in a contemporary context, Tripathi encourages readers to think critically about the ways in which mythology can be used to shape our understanding of ourselves and our place in the world. This, in turn, can help to promote a deeper understanding and appreciation of the epic's themes and motifs, as well as its continued relevance to modern audiences.

Ram's inner battle with his shadow self that includes his unconscious and darker aspects of psyche can be studied from a Jungian perspective as Jung states "One does not become enlightened by imagining figures of light, but by making the darkness conscious" (Jung). Through Scion of Ikshvaku, Ram's confrontation with his fears, anger and helplessness especially after Sita's abduction shows him rediscovering his inner repressed self. According to Cathy Caruth who's a leading trauma theorist "Trauma is not locatable in the simple violent or original event in an individual's past, but rather in the way that its very unassimilated nature—the way it was precisely not known in the first instance— returns to haunt the survivor later on." (Caruth, 4). This points out how trauma is not confined to one particular event or experience like just war but also induced due to various factors like childhood neglect, violence, separation anxiety, social pressure, guilt and shame etc. Ram's tough and reserved exterior is only to mask his inner struggles and this also aligns with Judith Herman's perspective as he states "The conflict between the will to deny horrible events and the will to proclaim them aloud is the central dialectic of psychological trauma" (Herman, 1).

In psychoanalytical theory, it was Sigmund Freud who first described about defence mechanisms which came to be known as psychological strategies that are unconsciously used to protect a person from anxiety arising unacceptable thoughts, emotions, situations or feelings. Ann Freud later expanded on her father's theory by describing several defence mechanisms used by ego (McLeod) which upon close interpretation is visible within various characters of Amish Tripathi's novel Scion of Ikshvaku as it helps these central characters to cope with their own philosophical and psychological struggles including trauma, stress, and many more internal conflicts that occurred mainly as the result of war and defeat. For example: in chapter 28, Bharat is exhibiting denial as his defence mechanism as we read the lines "When the time comes, I will place these rather than myself on the throne," said Bharat. Ram and Sita immediately understood the implication. With this one gesture, Bharat would effectively declare that Ram was the king of Ayodhya and that he, Bharat, was only a caretaker in his elder brother's absence." (Tripathi,315). The outright refusal to admit or recognize the harsh reality or truth which a person finds very difficult to cope with is called as denial. Bharat took Rama's sandals and placed them on the throne by refusing to rule as a king in his brother's absence as he was deeply disturbed by Ram being banished from Ayodhya for fourteen years. Suppression is another defence mechanism which involves consciously trying to forget or push away unpleasant memories, emotions, information or thoughts and not dealing with them directly. For example: in chapter 29, Ram is focused on his journey ahead as well as demonstrating suppression of emotions when we read the lines "Word that Dashrath had passed away had made Ram repeatedly curse his fate for not being able to perform the duties of an eldest son and conduct the funeral rites of his father. It broke Ram's heart that he had discovered his father so late in his life. Returning to Ayodhya was not possible, but he had performed a yagna in the forests for the journey his father's soul had undertaken." (Tripathi,320).

Sublimation is a defence mechanism in which an individual redirects their unacceptable impulses into an acceptable or socially constructive form. For

example: lines from chapter 5, “The local people, besides being good hosts, were also brilliant warriors. Vashishta had hired their services to help train his wards in the fine art of warfare. They also served as combat opponents during examination, like right now.” (Tripathi,52). This is a form of sublimation as the combat training transforms their negative emotions of aggression, frustration, and vulnerability into physical activity by becoming skilled warriors with positive emotions like confidence, strength and resilience. In chapter 11, projection is revealed through the lines “Dashrath continued, ‘I blamed you for my defeat. My entire kingdom blamed you; cursed you. You’ve suffered all your life, and yet you never rebelled. I thought it was because you were weak. But weak people celebrate when twists of fate hurt their tormentors. And yet, you risked your life trying to protect me.” (Tripathi,128). In order to justify one's own behaviour and shift the blame onto others is where projection gets used as a defence mechanism where an individual attributes unwanted thoughts, feelings, and motives to another person. Displacement is a defence mechanism that leads to redirection of an impulse, which is usually aggression or distress, to a person or object that did not trigger the impulse. For example: in chapter 30, Shurpanakha express her aggression towards Sita who poses no threat as we read the lines “What happened next was so sudden that very few had the time to react. With frightening speed, Shurpanakha reached to her side and drew her knife. Lakshman, who was standing to the left of Sita, saw the quick movement and rushed forward, screaming, ‘Bhabhi!’ Sita quickly moved in the opposite direction to avoid the strike.” (Tripathi,348). Amish’s Scion of Ikshvaku has effectively portrayed both the negative and positive aspects of such defence mechanisms which can either be overused in an unhealthy way for avoiding challenges in life or can be used in a healthy way resulting in higher adaptiveness and self-awareness.

6. CONCLUSION

Myths and legends are an important part of Indian culture and the impact of these stories in everyone’s psyche and daily life are very significant whether we are aware of it or not. In Scion of Ikshvaku by Amish Tripathi, the author succeeds in creating a fresh and modernized reimaging of ancient Indian epic Ramayana by humanizing each legendary characters while also preserving the core themes of the epic. The novel highlights how leadership should be driven by duty, morality, and truth for the greater good and well being of the people at the crucial time of crisis as demonstrated by the central character of Ram in this story providing a timeless guidance for leaders today as well as helping to motivate readers to overcome their internal struggles by teaching them the core values of duty, righteousness and selflessness to face the world filled with challenges. The novel could also help younger audience to take interest in mythology and can serve as a medium for presenting timeless values from ancient epics in a manner that resonates with modern sensibilities.

In Indian mythology, war more than just a physical battle also represents the inner turmoil, the conflict between duty, righteousness and psychological struggles. The study contributes by helping to provide deeper insights of modern day issues especially regarding trauma, emotional strength during war or post-war time period, moral and identity crisis etc by using psychoanalysis and introducing various modern psychological theories into such classical myths so it could resonate with readers of all age and transcend time as such ancient epics like Ramayana holds very high historical, cultural, and timeless significance as well as gets retold and reinterpreted over the generations while uploading values of righteousness, duty,

resilience, also the strength of human mind and character. This paper highlights the need to reinforce the significance of reading mythological texts not just as a cultural heritage or for spiritual guidance but to also explore the psychological depth of the texts with relation to human experience especially regarding trauma or inner suffering and the importance of taking steps towards healing and recovering.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

None.

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