ISSN 1682-5268 (on-line); ISSN 1608-0599 (print)
Shìdnij svìt, 2023, No. 3, pp. 171–178
doi: https://doi.org/10.15407/orientw2023.03.171

UDC 316.346.2:233(540)

QUEERING/QUERYING THE NATION: INTERROGATING ALTERNATIVE MYTHOGRAPHY IN DEVDUTT PATTANAIK'S *SHIKHANDI*

Gourab Chatterjee
PhD (Arts)
School of Language and Literature
Kalinga Institute of Industrial Technology (KIIT)
Patia, Bhubaneswar, Odisha, 751024, India
gou86rab@gmail.com
ORCID: 0000-0002-5799-9666

Debanjali Roy
School of Language and Literature
Kalinga Institute of Industrial Technology (KIIT)
Patia, Bhubaneswar, Odisha, 751024, India
itsmeanjee@gmail.com
ORCID: 0000-0002-2496-6091

Tanmoy Putatunda
School of Language and Literature
Kalinga Institute of Industrial Technology (KIIT)
Patia, Bhubaneswar, Odisha, 751024, India
tanmoy.putatunda@gmail.com

The grand narrative of nationalism, which "has typically sprung from masculinised memory, masculinised humiliation and masculinised hope", as observed by Cynthia Enloe, in her book *Bananas, Beaches and Bases*, is essentially a gendered discourse and excludes any gender location that does not conform to the standards of heteronormative masculinity. Therefore, any attempt to locate and identify instances that debunk this gender binary in the history of the nation creates space for multiple localized narratives and destabilises the hetero-patriarchal power-centre of the nation-state. *Shikhandi and Other Tales They Don't Tell You* by Devdutt Pattanaik, published in 2014, during the legal tug-of-war regarding section 377 of the Indian Penal Code, tries to create an alternate mytho-historical framework by selecting queer occurrences from Hindu mythologies to challenge the broader discourse of monolithic understanding of "Indian-ness".

This paper seeks to interrogate the subversive potentials of these narratives, deliberately chosen from "Hindu" myths, in critiquing and questioning the homogenised, hegemonic and masculinist constructs of the mytho-historiography of the nation. It also aims to explore the use of mytho-history as an agent in shaping nationhood and validating the queer space in the narrative of the nation.

Keywords: Devdutt Pattanaik; Gender; India; Mytho-history; Nation; Queer; *Shikhandi and Other Tales They Don't Tell You*

Shikhandi and Other Tales They Don't Tell You by Devdutt Pattanaik was published in 2014, following the year marked by the (in)famous verdict of the Indian Supreme Court

(ISC), which illegalised homosexuality by overturning the Delhi High Court's decriminalisation of non-peno-vaginal sexual activity in a judgement on Section 377 of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) in 2009. Section 377 of the IPC outlaws people who "voluntarily has carnal intercourse against the order of nature with any man, woman or animal" [The Indian Penal Code 2019] and thus puts a ban on any non-conformist sexual behaviour including homosexuality. Because of the long history of the legal ban and the social taboo on homosexuality in India, the struggle for the removal of Section 377, which was a colonial introduction during the second half of the nineteenth century, from the IPC was not only a legal battle for the queer communities of India but rather a fight against the people "who believe they have the moral responsibility and duty in protecting cultural values of Indian society" [In the Supreme Court of India 2013]. However, the homogenisation of "cultural values", which are essentially diverse in India and can hardly be described in monolithic terms, are often determined by a notion of a constructed past, both mythological and historical, originating from hetero-patriarchal nationalist discourses. By invoking the figure of Shikhandi, a mythological character from the *Mahabharata*, who changed their sex, the publication of *Shikhandi and Other Tales They Don't Tell You* by Devdutt Pattanaik besides questioning the dominant ideological position which upholds the penalisation of homosexual acts, attempts to propose an alternative mythography as well as historiography to legitimise the claim of the queer people of India to strike down Section 377. This article interrogates the way the book subverts the nationalist construct of gender, values and hetero-normativity, and how it "seek[s] to refamiliarize us with events which have been forgotten through either accident, neglect, or repression" [White 1978, *87*], as noted down by Hayden White, by reconstructing the mythological narrative.

Manufacturing National Myths

Mythology, which, as Durkheim observed, "is the collection of beliefs common to [a] group" [Durkheim 1995, *379*] and the way, through which the group "imagines man and the world" [Durkheim 1995, *379*] is inseparably intertwined with the collective consciousness of the community's past, and how it subsequently forms the narrative of history, the history which validates the community's present. Nation, an imagined political community, "to be distinguished, not by [its] falsity or genuineness, but in the style in which [it is] imagined" [Anderson 2006, *6*], which is "at once visionary and nostalgic" [Smith 1997, *36*], often chooses, constructs and appropriates the past to legitimise the claim of nationhood, which can hardly survive without having a "worthy and distinctive past" [Smith 1997, *36*]. Mythology, being one of the essential constituent elements of history as pointed out by Joseph Mali, who proposed the term "mythistory" to demonstrate the inevitability of a story that "has passed into and become history" [Mali 2003, *xii*], becomes a crucial repository of narratives to channelise and "manipulate mass emotions" [Smith 1997, *37*]. Since "[p]erceptions of the past are constantly being constituted and reconstituted anew" [Chakravarti 2014, *27*], to suit the purposes of the ideological construction of national identity, the history of a nation undergoes continual changes. The changes are embedded in the selection and modification of the common mythologies by the nationalist bourgeoisie and how it is used as a tool to shape the collective consciousness of citizens of the nation.

The reformulation of history during the colonial period in India, as envisaged by the nationalist leaders, thus became a site for a mythological reworking marked by ideological exchanges among the discourses of nationalism, colonialism and orientalism, and eventually led its people to a reconstructed mythistory. In the early historiographic works on the Indian past, Partha Chatterjee observed, "[m]yth, history, and the contemporary – all become part of the same chronological sequence; one is not distinguished from another…" [Chatterjee 1992, *117*]. Moreover, due to the orientalist attempt "to 'recover' and reconstruct modern historical consciousness" [Chatterjee 1992, *122*], the language and vocabulary of Indian nationalism, which would be called a "great menace" by Tagore [Tagore

1918, *111*] because of its sectarian parochialism, were heavily infested by words taken from Hindu mythology. Thus, Krishna and Rama, characters from two "Hindu" epics, became prominent figures in the nationalist discourses. Aurobindo Ghosh, who in his "Uttarpara Speech", called India a "Hindu nation", "born with the *Sanatan Dharma*" [Aurobindo n.d.], also valorised Nationalism which "grew as Krishna grew who ripened to strength and knowledge" [Aurobindo 2021]. M. K. Gandhi and Vinayak Damodar Savarkar, two distinct leaders in the domain of Indian socio-politics, even after representing "two alternatives and opposed concepts of Nationalism and Hinduism", both used "religious cultural metaphors and invoked the hero of the epic Ramayana, (Rama)" [Bhosale 2009, *421*].

The valorisation and glorification of Hindu mythological heroes gave rise to a brand of nationalism, which, according to Sikata Bannerjee, goes hand in hand with something she termed "Masculine Hinduism" [Banerjee 2005, *2*]. She stated that the masculinist form of Hinduism, which "anchored the image of strength within the Hindu nationalist discourse", "constituted a form of resistance to colonial British hierarchy" [Banerjee 2005, *45*] which viewed the colonial subjects as the effeminate other. Sara Suleri noted that "the feminization of the colonized subcontinent remains the most sustained metaphor shared by imperialist narratives" [Goodyear 1992, *16*], and "it makes evident that the colonial gaze is not directed to the inscrutability of an Eastern bride but to the greater sexual ambivalence of the effeminate groom" [Goodyear 1992, *16*]. Therefore any attempt to resist the homoerotic undertone of the colonial and oriental discourses paved the way for a nationalist, rigidly masculine and hetero-patriarchal reading of mythologies which only focused on the "heroic" and "masculine" deeds performed by the mythological characters, suppressing the instances of sexual ambivalence and queerness. Any occurrence, which has the potential to destabilise this masculinist Hinduised nationalist discourse, often propagated by the state, is eventually demonised and otherised – "be it religious or sexual in nature" [Narrain 2004, *157*].

However, as observed by Hégy, a myth that "requires constant reactivation without which it would progressively die away, coming to be seen as an illusion or a childish tale" [Hégy 1991, *99*], can be reformulated and reoriented to construct an alternate narrative of the mythistory, patronised by the nation. In *Shikhandi and Other Tales They Don't Tell You*, Devdutt Pattanaik brings out characters performing non-conformist sexual acts and undermining the hetero-patriarchal gender discourse, from the same Hindu mythology, which provided the national heroes and thus subverts the homogenised national myths of India.

Queering/Querying the Nation

Imperialist Britain, functioning as a Western hegemonic power and the aggressor in colonial machinations, had always constructed a masculine persona through its literary and political discourses. In contrast, India employed feminine symbolism in its post-colonial nationalism to foster a collective identity that mobilized its people against imperial and colonial forces. However, by popularizing this notion of the nation as a distressed mother imploring her sons to defend her honour amid colonization, Hindu nationalists continued to iterate the same tropes of gender binaries and heteronormativity that bore the imprints of the colonial enterprise. India in the post-Independence phase, shaped by the Gandhian ideals, continued to bear the remnants of colonial heteronormativity, as manifested in the persistence of Section 377 of the Indian Penal Code which criminalized sexual acts that could not be categorised under heteronormative sexual relations.

Shikhandi and Other Tales They Don't Tell You by Devdutt Pattanaik, a noted Indian mythologist, was written at a critical juncture in the history of independent India when the "hitherto private realm of sexuality emerged as a focal point and basis for various forms of political assertion" [Narrain 2004, *144*], specifically when the constitutional validity of Section 377 of the Indian Penal Code was being contested. In the writ petition (7455/2001)

filed by NAZ Foundation before the Delhi High Court impleading the Government of NCT of Delhi; Commissioner of Police, Delhi; Delhi State Aids Control Society; National Aids Control Organisation (NACO) and Union of India through Ministry of Home Affairs and Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, Section 377 was deemed "violative of Articles 14, 15, 19(1)(a)-(d) and 21 of the Constitution" [In the Supreme Court of India 2013] as the rights to life and liberty of all Indian nationals safeguarded by these articles of the Indian constitution are undermined by the discriminatory nature of the Section.

Drafted in 1860 by Macaulay, the Code (Section 377) reflected the Judeo-Christian ideologies of the Empire that considered sodomy punishable by law. The term "homosexual" though not used explicitly in the Code, "has in the past been used to prosecute homosexual activity" [Stoddard & Collins 2017, n.p.] and continued well after the Independence as it suited the agenda of the broader discourse of creating national identities. Pattanaik's *Shikhandi* employed the myth of Shikhandi from the *Mahabharata* to interrogate this criminalisation and marginalisation of "queer" relations and identities in his contemporary discourses of society and nationhood; he strategically used elements from the past to probe the present discourses of heteronormative national identities and binary understandings of sexuality. The mention of "they" in the title of the book *Shikhandi and Other Tales They Don't Tell You* clearly hints at the normative discourses of nationalism which "besides endorsing patriarchy and casteism, also frown upon queer behaviour" [Pattanaik 2014, *13*] and constructs and manipulates history/myth merely to validate the gendered and patriarchal reading of nationalism. The book is divided into two parts. While in the first part of the book, Pattanaik articulates analyses of queerness and its correlation with myths, the second part projects queerness or any non-normative behaviour as embedded within Indian mythology with his reading of select myths. The mythological tales chosen by Pattanaik often deal with characters from the Sanskritic epic traditions who have been serving the heteropatriarchal nationalist agenda since the beginning. Each chapter of the book is followed by a commentary of the author, who not only clarifies his own purpose in writing the book but also provides information on how the normative reading does not allow the queer and gender-fluid instances of Indian mythologies to be explored.

Pattanaik argues, "Feminism, the idea that men and women are equal is, however, discovered in Hinduism as the scriptures point to the difference between the soul and the flesh. The soul has no gender. Gender comes from the flesh. The unenlightened value the flesh, hence gender, over the soul" [Pattanaik, 2014, *11*]. Pattanaik goes on to explain that in the past, the categorization of individuals based on gender created divisions that affected the relationship between men and women. These divisions were particularly evident during the monastic period, where women were classified into various groups such as devadasis, sanyasis, and widows. Additionally, societal attitudes emphasized the importance of chastity during this time. He further argues, "[t]he idea of *trittiya prakriti* (third gender or third sexuality) first appears in the *Mahabharata* and is elaborated a few centuries later in the *Kamasutra*. It refers to people of this category using the feminine pronoun and classifies them as feminine and masculine" [Pattanaik 2014, *175*].

Towards an Alternate Mythopoeia

The story of Shikhandi, a character from the *Mahabharata*, is presented as a complex figure who challenges conventional notions of gender and identity. Pattanaik examines the story of Shikhandi who is born female but later transforms into a male to question the rigidity of gender roles and challenge the dominant narrative of male heroism. Shikhandi, born Shikhandini, the eldest child of King Drupada, was the reincarnation of Amba, a princess who was kidnapped and subsequently rejected by Bhishma, the most revered Kaurava warrior, famous for his vow of celibacy. In the great battle of Kurukshetra between the Pandavas and the Kauravas, Shikhandi aligned with his brothers-in-law, the Pandavas, and played a pivotal role in Bhishma's demise. The narrative of Shikhandi involves Sthuna,

a yaksha (demigod) who lent Shikhandi his manhood for a night, thereby angering Kubera, the king of the yakshas. However, when Shikhandi returned the borrowed organ to Sthuna, Kubera was pleased with Shikhandi's integrity and granted the continued use of the manhood for his lifetime. In the battle of Kurukshetra, when Bhishma refused to engage in combat against Shikhandi as he saw her as a woman, Arjuna, the greatest Pandava warrior defeated Bhishma by shooting a volley of arrows from the chariot, shielded by Shikhandi. Interestingly, this chariot was being driven by none other than Lord Krishna, who stands as a symbol of gender fluidity integrating the masculine and feminine aspects that serve as a symbol of acceptance, inclusivity and the inherent diversity of gender expression. Moreover, in the *Mahabharata*, Arjuna, who is considered to be the greatest archer and warrior described in masculine terms throughout the epic, assumed a different gender identity by cross-dressing as Brihannala that allowed him to perform tasks typically associated with femininity, such as teaching dance and performing arts. The presence of such instances of gender fluidity and queer expressions in the *Mahabharata* allowed Pattanaik to utilise them as references to substantiate his argument.

The climactic moment of the battle where Bhishma, the epitome of masculine strength and prowess "whose celibacy granted him the power to choose the time of his death" [Pattanaik 2014, *41*] is defeated by Krishna, Arjuna and Shikhandi who together stand for gender fluidity one way or the other. This image serves as the cover page illustration of the book by Pattanaik who seeks to highlight the gender fluidity and multiplicity of identities by emphasising marginalized characters who deviate from the binary understanding of gender as well as the trope of heroism bordering on masculinity. The non-binary image of Shikhandi was deliberately placed between Krishna and Arjuna, the two main characters from the *Gita*, which "[a]s a text of colonial politics, [...] permits war to be placed at the centre of debate in a national movement that would not or could not wage it against Britain" [Kapila and Devji 2013, *xiii*] and was constantly invoked and revered by the nationalist leaders. By exploring the complexities of characters like Shikhandi, who undergoes a transformation from a female to a male, Pattanaik challenges the rigid gender roles and norms embedded in traditional mythological interpretations. By acknowledging and amplifying the voices of marginalized characters, he challenges the limitations imposed by masculinist nationalism and encourages a more nuanced exploration of diverse identities and gender fluidity within mythological contexts. In this sense, Pattanaik's approach helps challenge and deconstruct masculinist nationalism by broadening the scope of mythology and acknowledging the existence and significance of diverse voices and perspectives. Pattanaik focuses on how the articulation and retelling of such myths reflect the systematic omission of the liminality and fluidity of the narrative to reflect and perpetuate mostly patriarchal, masculine and heteronormative ideals. According to him,

> "Modern retellings shy away from the conflict created by Vyasa between the sexual Amba/Shikhandi and the asexual Bhisma, who has taken the vow of celibacy. Bhisma's celibacy grants him long life; his contact with the sexual being leads to his death. This reinforces the traditional association of sex with mortality, materiality and the mundane, and celibacy with immortality and the transcendental" [Pattanaik 2013, *47*].

In an interview, while discussing the question of LGBTQ in the contemporary Indian context, Pattanaik points out how political ideologies manipulate Hindu mythology "to show that Indian culture had no room for anything queer" and "how Ramayana is patriarchal and Hindu gods are misogynists" [Chanda-Vaz 2017] by cloaking the language in order to maintain the pretence of objectivity. On the other hand, Pattanaik affirms:

> "Buddhist, Hindu, and Jain mythologies admitted that nature always has third genders and sexualities. You will never have god in Islam, Judaism or Christianity embracing the female gender, or queer sexuality. But Hindus have Shiva who becomes Gopeshwara (a gopi for Krishna) and Vishnu who becomes Mohini for Shiva" [Chanda-Vaz 2017].

In another myth borrowed from Tamil temple lore, Pattanaik discusses the tale of Mahadeva, or Lord Shiva who became a woman in order to deliver the child of one of his devotees. Pattanaik focuses on such instances of gender fluidity in Indian myths and how in devotional literature, such instances of "queering" are commonplace and how the "[q]ueer vocabulary helps break the fixed structures of humanity and flow into divinity" [Pattanaik 2014, *52*]. It is worth noting that in Hindu mythology, Lord Shiva is often associated with androgyny which is expressed through several narratives, iconography and symbolisms as in the case of Ardhanarisvara, a combination of the words "*nari*" and "*ishvara*" where the former symbolises femininity and the latter represents masculinity. Whereas Shiva is depicted as the deity who displays traits traditionally associated with masculinity such as strength, determination and destruction, he is also represented as an ascetic yogi embodying "feminine" qualities such as compassion, intuition and nurturing. The *hijra* community of India (a community "comprising transsexuals, transvestites, hermaphrodites and eunuchs" [Pande 2004, *50*]), whose ritualistic "clap" was used by Pattanaik as a metaphor to describe the function of the book in the society, often "identify with Shiva, as the deity who contains within himself both male and female energies" [Pande 2004, *55*]. The myth says, as it has been recounted by Alka Pande, that Shiva, who was supposed to be the creator, after witnessing the world had already been created by Brahma, shed his phallus, thinking it useless. The *hijra* community sees the phallus as an emblem of ascetic energy responsible for the fertility of the earth, and thus combines the asceticism of Shiva with the sexual drive, the "*yoga*" (restraint) with the "*bhoga*" (indulgence), where the later one was devalued by "the founding fathers of the Indian republic" [Pattanaik 2014, *28*]. The androgynous representation of Lord Shiva in Hindu mythology serves as a reminder of the fluidity and interconnectedness of gender and the divine. It conveys the idea that divinity extends beyond conventional gender identities and embraces the totality of existence.

A further instance of the nuanced and liminal depiction of sexuality can be found in the tale of Chudala that Pattanaik discusses. According to this myth, Chudala, a wise yogini, turned into a hermit named Kumbhaka to share her knowledge with her husband King Shikhidhvaja who, although appreciated her as a great wife, would not pay attention to the words of wisdom emanating from a woman. Intimating the king that the sage Durvasa had cursed him to turn into a woman every night, Kumbhaka transformed into Madanika, and the king allowed her to stay in his hermitage without pursuing a physical relationship. However, Madanika expressed her desire to experience pleasure as a woman, and the king agreed to help her. Later, Madanika tested the king's detachment by creating an illusion of herself with a stranger. The king remained unaffected, demonstrating his immunity to lust. Chudala revealed her true identity and explained that wisdom is not limited to being a hermit or a householder but lies in overcoming desire and attachment. The king recognized the wisdom in his wife's words and acknowledged the limitations of his knowledge. With his wife as his teacher and lover, Shikhidhvaja returned to his kingdom and ruled wisely alongside Chudala. Through this myth, Pattnaik draws attention to the discourses of gender, sex, and detachment as embedded in the collective imagination. He also discusses the overtone of bisexuality which is explored in Vatsyayana's *Kamasutra*, the famous ancient Indian text on sexuality and eroticism, which talks about sexual intimacy between people "of the third nature, in the form of a woman and in the form of a man" [Vatsyayana 2003, *65*]. Considering that King Shikhidhvaja initially treats Kumbhaka, the male in intellectual terms and Madanika, the female in sexual terms and it is only after being enlightened that he acknowledges the woman in intellectual terms, this narrative evokes similar discrimination and categorization demonstrated by Bhishma in his refusal to recognize the warrior identity of Shikhandi and treat her as a woman as Shikhandi's sexual identity did not conform Bhishma's binarised notion of sexual identities. By choosing to "tell these tales", Pattanaik also raises the question as to

whether or not the king also sees the man in sexual terms – a question that a queer mind may pose. He analyses how queerness is used as a tool here to mitigate the patriarchal bias that also characterises contemporary society. By doing so, he interrogates and subverts the nationalist construct of gender, values, and hetero-normativity by revisiting and reconstructing mythological narratives.

Reconstructing Indianness

Devdutt Pattanaik's *Shikhandi and Other Tales They Don't Tell You*, by replacing and displacing the dominant myths with another set of narratives, not only highlights the role of mythology in the formation of national identity and the construction of history but also shows how a nation's mythological past can be invoked to legitimise the claim of the queer people. Hayden White, in his book *Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth-Century Europe*, proposed a critical approach to history that acknowledges its narrative nature and explores the underlying myths and metaphors that shape historical accounts, stated that "the historical narrative does not reproduce the events it describes" rather "it tells us in what direction to think about the events and charges our thought about the events with different emotional valences" [White 1978, *91*]. To him, "[t]he historical narrative does not image the things it indicates; it calls to mind images of the things it indicates" [White 1978, *91*]. Pattanaik deliberately used the tool of history and mythology, which had been often manipulated and reworked to suit the ideological agenda of nationalism, to alter the direction of the way nationalist history is constructed and the notion of Indianness is built up in the popular imagination. By amplifying the voices of marginalized characters and acknowledging their significance within mythology, Pattanaik broadens the scope of interpretation and challenges the limitations imposed by hetero-patriarchal nationalism. Pattanaik's approach promotes inclusivity and diversity by recognizing gender fluidity and diverse identities within mythological contexts. His text sheds light on the omissions and silences in traditional mythological interpretations, exposing the systematic exclusion of liminality and fluidity for perpetuating patriarchal, masculine, and heteronormative ideals. By highlighting instances of gender fluidity and queerness in Hindu mythology, Pattanaik aims to create an alternative mythopoeia that challenges dominant national myths and fosters a more nuanced understanding of diverse identities.

REFERENCES

Anderson B. (2006), *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, Verso, London and New York.

Aurobindo S. (2021), *The Life of Nationalism: When Sri Aurobindo Invoked Sri Krishna*, in *Renaissance*, August 15, available at: https://journal.aurobharati.in/the-life-of-nationalism-when-sri-aurobindo-invoked-sri-krishna/ (accessed July 10, 2023).

Aurobindo S. (n.d.), "Realization of Cosmic Consciousness – Uttarpara Speech – Sri Aurobindo (1906–1910)", in *Sri Aurobindo Institute of Culture (SAIoC)*, available at: http://www.sriaurobindoinstitute.org/saioc/Sri_Aurobindo/uttarpara_speech#uttarpara_speech (accessed July 10, 2023).

Banerjee S. (2005), *Make Me a Man!: Masculinity, Hinduism, and Nationalism in India*, State University of New York Press, Albany, NY.

Bhosale B. G. (2009), "Indian Nationalism: Gandhi vis-a-vis Tilak and Savarkar", *The Indian Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 70, No. 2, pp. 419–427.

Chakravarti U. (2014), "Whatever Happened to the Vedic Dasi? Orientalism, Nationalism and a Script for the Past", in K. Sangari & S. Vaid (eds), *Recasting Women: Essays in Colonial History*, Zubaan, pp. 27–87.

Chanda-Vaz U. (2017), " 'The mythology of one god is what we call religion': Devdutt Pattanaik", in *Scroll.in*, July 22, available at: https://scroll.in/article/843919/the-mythology-of-one-god-is-what-we-call-religion-devdutt-pattanaik (accessed July 10, 2023).

Chatterjee P. (1992), "History and the Nationalization of Hinduism", *Social Research*, Vol. 59, No. 1, pp. 111–149.

Durkheim E. (1995), *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*, Transl. by K. E. Fields, Free Press.

Goodyear S. S. (1992), *The Rhetoric of English India*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago.

Hégy P. (1991), *Myth as Foundation for Society and Values: A Sociological Analysis*, Edwin Mellen Press, Lewiston, New York.

"In the Supreme Court of India" (2013), in *Supreme Court of India*, December 11, available at: https://main.sci.gov.in/jonew/judis/41070.pdf (accessed July 9, 2023).

Kapila S., & Devji F. (2013), "Introduction", in S. Kapila & F. Devji (eds), *Political Thought in Action: The Bhagavad Gita and Modern India*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, pp. ix–xv.

Mali J. (2003), *Mythistory: The Making of A Modern Historiography*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago.

Narrain A. (2004), "The Articulation of Rights around Sexuality and Health: Subaltern Queer Cultures in India in the Era of Hindutva", *Health and Human Rights*, Vol. 7, No. 2, pp. 142–164. DOI: https://doi.org/10.2307/4065351

Pande A. (2004), *Ardhanarishvara, the Androgyne: Probing the Gender Within*, Rupa & Company.

Pattanaik D. (2014), *Shikhandi and Other Tales They Don't Tell You*, Zubaan and Penguin Books India.

Smith A. (1997), "The 'Golden Age' and National Renewal", in G. A. Hosking & G. Schöpflin (eds), *Myths and Nationhood*, Routledge, New York, pp. 36–59.

Stoddard E. & Collins J. (2017), *Social and cultural foundations in global studies*, Routledge.

Tagore R. (1918), *Nationalism*, Macmillan and Co. Limited, London.

"The Indian Penal Code" (2019), in *Legislative Department, Ministry of Law and Justice, Government of India*, April 25, available at: https://lddashboard.legislative.gov.in/actsofparliamentfromtheyear/indian-penal-code (accessed July 9, 2023).

Vatsyayana M. (2003), *Kamasutra*, W. Doniger & S. Kakar (eds), Transl. by W. Doniger & S. Kakar, Oxford University Press.

White H. V. (1978), *Tropics of Discourse: Essays in Cultural Criticism*, Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore.

І. Чаттерджі, *Д. Рой*, *Т. Путатунда*

Небінарний запит до нації:
дослідження альтернативної міфографії
в "Шікханді" Девдутта Паттанайка

Великий наратив націоналізму, що, як зауважує у своїй книзі "Банани, пляжі й бази" Синтія Енло, "зазвичай поставав з маскулінізованої пам'яті, маскулінізованого приниження та маскулінізованої надії", є суттєво гендерним дискурсом і виключає будь-яку гендерну ідентифікацію, не узгоджену зі стандартами гетеронормативної маскулінності. Тому будь-яка спроба знайти й ідентифікувати в історії нації те, що розвінчує таку гендерну бінарність, створює простір для різноманітних локалізованих наративів і розхитує гетеропатріархальний центр влади національної держави. "Шікханді та інші оповідки, які вам не оповідають" Девдутта Паттанайка, опубліковані у 2014 році під час юридичного "перетягування канату" щодо розділу 377 Кримінального кодексу Індії, – це намагання створити шляхом відбору з міфології індуїзму історій, пов'язаних із нестандартною сексуальною орієнтацією, альтернативну міфоісторичну структуру й кинути виклик більш широкому дискурсу монолітного розуміння "індійськості".

Ця стаття має на меті дослідити потенціал розвінчувального впливу цих історій, навмисно відібраних із міфів індуїзму, на критику та піддавання сумніву гомогенізованих, гегемоністських та маскуліністських конструктів міфоісторіографії нації. Також автори статті намагалися дослідити використання міфологічних історій як фактора формування нації та легітимізації в національному наративі простору нестандартної сексуальності.

Ключові слова: Девдутт Паттанайк; гендер; Індія; квір; міфологія; нація; "Шікханді та інші оповідки, які вам не оповідають"

Стаття надійшла до редакції 11.07.2023