

A Study of Postcolonial Ecologies and Energy Colonialism in Amish Tripathi's *Sita: Warrior of Mithila*

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Abstract: Amish Tripathi's novel *Sita: Warrior of Mithila* reinvigorates the legend of Sita through a new narrative style that takes an ecological, ethical, and postcolonial perspective. This paper discusses how Tripathi depicts Sita as a decolonial resistance and an environmental harmony. Through the prism of postcolonial ecocriticism, energy humanities, and ecofeminism, the paper examines modernity, energy colonialism, and patriarchal power. As revealed in the analysis, Sita's leadership in Mithila is a locally based form of sustainable leadership grounded in energy ethics and governance. The study situates Tripathi's work in a wider ecocritical sense, in which he attempts to bring power and responsibility into balance through his mythmaking of today.

Keywords: Postcolonial Ecocriticism, Energy Humanities, Cultural Hybridity

Introduction

Amish Tripathi's *Sita: Warrior of Mithila* (2015) retells the story of Sita, the second book of the Ram Chandra series. The myth accompanies the novel's historicity as a tool to address urgent sustainability, social justice, and ethical leadership issues of contemporary life. Yet, he re-maps it with an urgent ecological message. The environmental concerns, applause of indigenous knowledge, and criticism of unrestricted utilisation of power and resources make him have a moral sense of urgency in the story. A remarkable change is occurring in contemporary postcolonial literature; authors are increasingly resorting to myth as the focal point of exploring environmental catastrophes and moral imperatives of global governance that grapple with colonial pasts. It is an intentional decolonisation of narratives, a renewed engagement with indigenous views, and a fresh perspective on the interrelationship between nature and human population. Graham Huggan and Helen Tiffin (2010) suggest in their landmark book, *Postcolonial Ecocriticism: Literature, Animals, Environment*, that environmental exploitation cannot be considered outside the reality of the past and the present, as it is inherent to the primary operation of imperialism and the spread of capitalism. This is an eloquent point at the intersection of colonialism, money, and ecological destruction. Even the institutions that propelled the growth of the empire are often closely coupled with the ecological devastations that we observe today.

Myth as an Ecological and Postcolonial Archive

The rewriting of Sita described by Tripathi corresponds to the theory of environmentalism of people with low incomes that Rob Nixon has suggested in *Slow Violence and the Environmentalism of the Poor* (2011). This notion suggests that ecological awareness is not usually generated out of privilege but can be brought about by hardship, a strong sense of attachment to the land, and the realisation of the interdependence of life. It is an attitude that is developed by communities that suffer direct loss of the environment. In this case, the ecological awareness is inspired by the necessity to survive and moral restraint in the sense that it is directed at the abstract interests of those who are not direct participants.

The character of Sita in Tripathi's novel is contrasted with imperial power structures that prevail throughout the book in the form of extraction, ridiculous consumption, and infinite demand. Her message that the key to power is balance, not domination, offers a powerful alternative to conquest and control. It is an ethic of balance emphasising harmony, reciprocity, and respect for nature. It is an ethic that puts the well-being of life and the conservation of the environment above the unstoppable accretion of power and wealth. The firm morals of Sita are reflected in everything she does and lead her into conflict with the rest of the characters, who believe in military power and physical possessions more than in ecological well-being and social justice. The main message of the novel is that true power lies in creating harmony, stability, and ethical accountability instead of taking advantage of people and the environment.

Postcolonial Ecocriticism: Empire, Ecology, and Slow Violence.

Postcolonial ecocriticism is an attempt to remake the long-term effects of colonial exploitation on the ecosystems, societies, and life itself. It goes beyond considering colonialism in the short run and looks at its sustainable ecological effects. This framework illustrates that present ecological crises have a long history rooted in the legacy of imperialism and reflect how colonial relations impose an attachment to nature. Rob Nixon explained the phrase slow violence in his book, *Slow Violence and the Environmentalism of the Poor* (2011). He calls it a gradual, delayed and usually invisible environmental destruction, the violence that occurs over time, that is typically subterranean and difficult to perceive, define, or find any resolution to. It is usually committed by influential actors like corporations and governments that strive for short-term economic benefits at the expense of long-term sustainability and people's well-being.

In *Sita: Warrior of Mithila*, slow violence is a situation in which actions and ideologies of kingdoms champion militarisation, expansion and technological might at the cost of the well-being and ecological stability of the population. They are trying to dominate and control the world by depleting resources, contaminating and causing health hazards to their citizens. The impacts may not be apparent at hand, but in the long run they cause a lot of destruction of the environment, social wrangles and eventual breakdown of these kingdoms. This is an insidious sort of slow violence that can be strongly felt in the actions and ideologies of particular kingdoms whose interests and needs are militarisation, expansion, and technological advancement and power acquisition at the cost of ecological sustainability and the welfare of the population. These kingdoms, driven by a desire to dominate and control, engage in activities that drain resources, pollute the environment, and endanger the health of their citizens. The aftermath of these measures might not be quite evident at the moment, but the sum of them all, as time goes on, results in the extensive destruction of nature, social conflicts, and, consequently, the disintegration of the kingdoms themselves.

Tripathi unveils the veiled violence of power, particularly when Sita considers rulers who care more about their wealth than their subjects and country. It turns out that the land will fight against people as soon as their leaders forget their duty to the land. It is more than a philosophical, evidential statement. It harshly critiques leaders who lose sight of their role to the land, people, and sustainability, and points out that a profit-oriented scenario can result in long-term damage and ruin nature and its dependents. When leaders give up on conservation, they accomplish their own ruin.

The following echoes Nixon's point that governing structures that pursue political power, economic development, and prosperity, even in the face of environmental and social inequity, frequently provide the genesis of the sort of environmental disasters we experience today. These short-term objectives translate to resource wastage, erosion, displacement, and the marginalisation of disadvantaged populations who bear the greatest costs. With these themes, *Sita: Warrior of Mithila* can be seen as a comment on how greed and short-sightedness ruin the world, as well as the social injustice that occurs. It challenges us as ethical servants and good stewards to act against the slow violence that pervades our world.

Mithila and Indigenous Ecological Governance.

Mithila by Tripathi is a strong instrument of opposition to extractive modernity and colonialism. It presents an image of sustainability that is very different from unsustainable practices in other places because it draws on an indigenous knowledge system and has a profound understanding of interconnection. The kingdom values a culture of nature conservation, people's well-being, and the prudent utilisation of resources, which are based on a sense of balance, reciprocity, and great respect for the environment. Sunaina, in the novel, states that a civilisation that consumes above itself is already on the path of destruction. This can be compared to the position of Vandana Shiva, who criticises Western development patterns that stimulate monocultures and the oppression of diverse and sustainable local customs.

Shiva has pointed out in her book *Staying Alive: Women, Ecology and Development* (1988) how the Western model of industrialisation distorts biodiversity, local self-sufficiency and cultural diversity. Shiva insists on the significance of biodiversity, local self-sufficiency and local knowledge systems. The fact that Mithila was not willing to extend its borders, although it was so powerfully armed, is a symbolic action that illustrates Shiva's ecological thought. It is an indication of dedication to the well-being of the citizens and conservation of the environment, rather than the construction of empires, which represents sustainability, moderation and ethical resource utilisation.

Mithila as depicted by Tripathi is a symbolic post-colonial state that challenges energy colonialism, which is the misappropriation of resources that propagates inequality and damages the environment. The appreciation of the kingdom for ecological balance, native knowledge, and no expansion of evolution provides an insight into the visions where sustainability, social justice, and ecological health are set before power and profit.

Energy Humanities and The Critique of Extractive Modernity.

The modern world is shaped by its attitude towards energy. Energy Humanities is an emergent discipline that claims that the way we conceptualise energy is significantly implicated in politics, economics, and society. It was demonstrated by scholars like Imre Szemen that energy regimes the systems in production, distribution, and consumption of energy support exploitation. Regimes dependent on fossil fuels, in particular, encourage an illusion of endless growth and a right to consume resources. It is a highly ingrained ideology in the modern world, and it promotes economic development at the expense of the environment and even socio-justice. Consequently, human beings utilise resources without considering both the ecological and human expenses in the long run. The unsustainability and unfairness of this nature of energy regimes, which uses both natural resources and human labour, is the subject of Energy humanities critics.

An example of such critique was put forward in the fictional book *Sita: Warrior of Mithila* by Amish Tripathi. The novel depicts kingdoms in conflict, each with its own pattern of controlling and utilising resources. The kingdoms obsessed with weapons, infrastructure, and domination represent modern, power-hungry empires. Their

merciless approach to resource extraction and domination resembles the acts of countries and corporations that extract resources without considering anything else. This desire for power diminishes the environment, introduces inequality among people in society and ultimately causes destruction of self. The assault on the environment through the ongoing building of grand architecture, the unending manufacture of weapons, and the endless demand for territorial growth are all metaphors of the destructive logic of extractive modernity. These acts underscore an attitude that places more emphasis on immediate gain at the expense of future sustainability, which is highly ingrained within present-day fossil-fuelled economies.

The opposition between the so-called energy empires as discussed above and that of Mithila governed by Sita is sharp. Sita represents the moral fantasy of clean energy consumption that Szeman writes about. She makes decisions which are informed by responsibility and restraint. Her kingdom is governed to care for citizens as well as the environment, preserving natural resources. Sita understands that the world is united as a whole and strives to ensure that her world is sustainable in the long term. Her energy policy is established not on modern terms, but it is implicitly sustainable. The welfare of the kingdom does not lie in the exploitation of other peoples or the consumption of resources. Rather, it thrives under ethical behaviour, a socially balanced environment, and long-term respect for the environment. She provides a radical proposal to the extractive modernity and points in the alternative direction to a more just, sustainable future.

Sita questions the extractive logic of energy empires. Her quote of wisdom, “power exists to serve, not to be served,” also offers a moral answer to energy colonialism. This assertion in the story undermines the fact that the empires thrive on exploitation. Instead, is power based on compassion, justice and protection of the weak? What Sita says refutes past and present progressions of energy colonialism that squander human and natural resources to create and gain. Her vision is a strong alternative: leadership that is more concerned about the wellbeing of everybody as opposed to a few people. It indicates a total change of attitude, rejecting the exploitative habits of modern society and pursuing a more enlightened and sustainable relationship between people and environment.

Creating a strong contrast to the form of governance observed in other kingdoms in the narrative, the novel *Sita: Warrior of Mithila* reveals the significant moral impacts of extractive governance. In the novel, the destructive power of leaders whose primary goal was to extract resources and conquer is underlined, and its harmful results are revealed. This is not just a plot point, but a very effective comment on the devastating aspects of unbridled exploitation, as are the real-life impacts of colonialism and industrialisation. Greed and extractive practices, regardless of ecological constraints, are bound to bring inner conflict, environmental destruction, and eventual destruction in society. Some examples in the story include clearing forests to get timber, contaminating waterways to get mines, or excessive farming that results in famine and social disturbances.

Moreover, the novel is characterised by female leadership that directly questions the patriarchal norms firmly integrated into imperial systems of power. As a leader, Sita is a sharp contrast to the traditional, usually violent and egocentric male leadership related to conquest and the expansion of territories. She also believes that collaboration, empathy and understanding of the interrelatedness of all things are some of the highest priorities in her leadership. What is important about this representation is that it defies the historical conception of power as masculinity and violence and presents a new model of power containing caring, diplomacy, and the maintenance of ecological equilibrium. This radically different treatment of power is evident in both Sita and the way she makes decisions, treats her people, and handles conflict.

This combination of opposing circumstances is a stunning illustration of the fact that it is ecological balance, rather than conquest and domination, that can, in the end, be considered the defining feature of true civilisation. According to the novel, the real success of a given society cannot be judged by its military strength or its economic well-being, but rather by whether it manages to live in balance with nature and its people. The flourishing kingdoms are the ones that take into consideration the natural world, sustainable management of resources, and the welfare of citizens. The story reinforces the notion that civilisation does not lie in conquering people, but rather in living in harmony with the earth and its vast multitude in a manner that brings about long-term success to everyone. The consequences of upsetting this balance, as observed in the unsustainable practices of other kingdoms, are a lesson for the modern reader.

Conclusion

Combining the main ideas of postcolonial ecocriticism, energy humanities and cultural hybridity, *Sita: Warrior of Mithila* turns out to be a strong and convincing commentary on energy colonialism and extractive modernity. The mythic paradigm of the novel focuses on present-day matters and provides a subtle approach to the connection of power, environment, and social justice. Tripathi creatively revises the character of Sita as a decolonial ecological politician and the dimension of the ruler who explicitly views the future of sustainability, care and responsibility. Sita's leadership is not merely to reign over, but to tend to the land, help develop a spirit of togetherness, and make choices that help safeguard the generations to come.

As a means of mythic narration, the novel takes an active part in the global environmental discourse, serving as a powerful reminder that ecological justice and social justice are synonymous. The disparities of environmental degradation are very unfair to underprivileged groups, and Tripathi brings this to light in his work, calling on readers to see the moral side of environmental concerns. The contemporary mythic nature of Tripathi does not merely represent a naive nostalgia about the past; it represents a radical, progressive ecological dream of the future and makes readers imagine a scenario where sustainability, compassion, and justice are the order of the day.

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