

PENANCE IN GITHA HARIHARAN'S THE THOUSAND FACES OF NIGHT

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ABSTRACT

India stands for its civilization with great tradition and rich heritage. It produced great epics of the world i.e. Ramayana and Mahabharata where we find myths and tradition of our nation. The novel 'The Thousand Faces of Night' deals with penance in its myriad forms, in its familiar and not-so-familiar ways in the context of the exploration of the Indian woman situation in physical and psychological terms. Penance in the novel as it springs from and results in a multiple response ranging from self-inflicted suffering to protest, revenge and violence.

Githa Hariharan illustrates a character in the Mahabharatha who could be regarded as the very incarnation of penance is Amba Who was unfortunately married to Bhishma and wanted to take revenge on him by doing penance. Similarly Mayamma did penance to change the course of the horoscope. Ten years of penance she was blessed with a son on an auspicious day but her hopes were short-lived.

Hearing the stories of Amba, Mayamma, Sita, and other women characters, Devi accepts penance as an inevitable part of woman's life: "That which is hard to get over, hard to get, hard to reach, hard to do, all that can be accomplished by penance: it is difficult to overcome penance"(67).

KEY WORDS: Penance, Revenge, Psychological, Inevitable