

?PDF? ? A River Sutra

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A nicely written, peek into a somewhat different world Smooth and easy to digest I found myself trying to actually see the bungalow, the jungle and importantly the river, in my mind The chapter about the poor, little singing child really threw me at the end.All in all, makes me want to read Indian literature. loved it With Imaginative Lushness And Narrative Elan, Mehta Provides A Novel That Combines Indian Storytelling With Thoroughly Modern Perceptions Into The Nature Of Love Love Both Carnal And Sublime, Treacherous And Redeeming Conveys A World That Is Spiritual, Foreign, And Entirely Accessible Vanity Fair Reading Tour Of the many stories and themes that flow through A River Sutra, one stands out above all passion The individual stories that are told alongside this river are both awe inspiring and heartbreaking Altogether, these stories of passion, the story of A River Sutra, function to demonstrate the functions of mythology as set by Joseph Campbell Here, I will focus on the first and fourth function of mythology The pain that is seen throughout A River Sutra points to the metaphysical function of mythology The impact of this horror on a sensitive consciousness is terrific this monster which is life Life is a horrendous presence, and you wouldn't be here if it weren't for that The first function of a mythological order has been to reconcile consciousness to this fact, Campbell, Companion 3 Life's horrendous presence is most clearly demonstrated in A River Sutra through The Teacher's Story and The Musician's Story It is worth noting that both of these stories are about musicians Among its many themes, the novel also points to the importance of music as the sound of

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life though that is a topic for another paper. The story of the teacher, Master Mohan, broke my heart. It started so beautifully as Mohan found his young protégé and worked so desperately to provide him opportunities and, ultimately, happiness and safety. This is a story of passion between teacher and student. As much as Master Mohan was helping the boy, the boy was also helping him. With Mohan's unappreciated status in his family, the boy was a shining light. When the boy was murdered in front of Mohan, I cried. I had to put down my text and mourn this child and the loss of beauty and hope. I hesitated in picking up the text again. The following stories of the executive and courtesan lifted my spirits. Each not only overcame a negative situation, but seemed to be the better for having suffered through it. I started to connect to the novel and felt hope returning. In *The Musician's Story*, however, I was again faced with life's horrendous presence. Though it was clear at the beginning of *The Musician's Story* that there was not going to be a happy ending, I did not think it would be quite so grim. When the ugly woman was betrothed, I saw a glimmer of hope. Her passion for music began to soar. As she spent time with the bridegroom, her father's student, I believed I saw love in the making. Knowing the story would end sadly, I feared her bridegroom was going to be killed. The fact that he freely chose not to marry her was actually far sadder. Though this was not as heartbreaking as the murder of the young boy in *The Teacher's Story*, I was again left wondering: Why do we have to face this pain? How are we supposed to reconcile it? The novel answered these questions for me as it approached the fourth function of mythology: All societies are evil, sorrowful, inequitable and so they will always be. So if you want to help this world, what you will have to teach is how to live in it. And that no one can do who has not himself learned how to live in it in the joyful sorrow and sorrowful joy of the knowledge of life as it is. Campbell, *Myths to Live By* 104. *The Minstrel's Story* reveals to readers that one cannot hide from life, but must face it head on in order to actually be alive. Naga Baba first appears to us as a peaceful ascetic. It is rather shocking when we later discover that he has become the unspiritual archaeologist. And, while this may be a rather dramatic example, it acutely demonstrates how we must reenter the world. Mehta 281. We cannot dwell in our sorrows nor hide from the world in a cave.

Schindler's List

The Mists of Avalon

The Running Man

The Elfstones of Shannara

2010: Odyssey Two

Foundation's Edge

Moo, Baa, La La La!

The Blue Sword

Pawn of Prophecy

Howliday Inn

A Pale View of Hills

Queen of Sorcery

The Man From St. Petersburg

The Skull Beneath the Skin

The Dark Wind

We must be in the world to experience it and to live Life eats on life Campbell has told us this A River Sutra has demonstrated it Life can be horrific However, it does not end there It is horrific because we care, because we have both passion and compassion Passion fuels us Without desire, pain, and struggle, the glory of the world would mean nothing The pain that we feel in our life of passion is a sign that we are alive If we moved through safely, unharmed, untouched, unmoved, what would be the point A lovely setting for some peaceful spiritual tales. My Take This was absolutely lovely to read A very peaceful and calming flow of words, descriptions, life that allows the reader to sink into Indian culture It is so very different from the type of novels I usually read big surprise and it sank into me that what many Americans generally read is quite possibly how A River Sutra is viewed by an Indian reader And I could very well be wrong in that There is an insight into life related by the main character which feels as though we are experiencing the real life of this culture, this man The tales that travelers tell provide quick insights into different aspects of Indian life and its various religions I love how important art is in the culture Mehta relates The day to day tasks, the interest in sugarcane for its juices in drink and as sugar Cute, Sir s curiosity uses the guilt of requiring enlightenment from the Jain monk as to why he gave up so much for his new life of absolute poverty It s the monk s response that is even humbling In part of his story, Ashok questions his father s true adherence to his faith, how he can justify the devastating conditions of his workers with his supposed religious beliefs, his ahimsa. Master Mohan s life is a torrent of wonder and horror that will make you weep while Nitin Bose s tale is something of a throwback to the days of the sahib and running an estate The sad tale of reincarnation and Rahul Singh s woman The story of the ugly woman whose father is a master veena player is so beautiful as she explains to Sir how the seven notes of the scale are simply the sounds of nature The turns that life takes as Naga Baba continues his journey of enlightenment. Oh, I do like Tariq Mia s observation that they the people Sir has encountered were like water flowing through lives to teach us something The Characters The Narmada River is one of India s holiest pilgrimage sites, worshipped as the daughter of the god Shiva. We never do find a name for the

Fevre Dream

A is for Alibi

Space

man who desires to be the manager of the Narmada rest house, one of many sanctuaries built by the Moghul emperors across India to shelter the traveler and the pilgrim. Instead, Mehta refers to him as sahib or sir throughout the story. His identity is not important, instead, it is his meditations on life and his encounters which are important in this story. Mr Chagla is Sir's clerk for the rest house. Constable Shashi is with the Rudra police station. Dr Mitra is a medical doctor with many degrees who prefers his six bed hospital near the Narmada River where he can collect the stories about the river. Tariq Mia is a mullah in a nearby village and a friend of Sir's. Of the short tales scattered throughout the story, Ashok is a Jain monk whose wealthy family regrets his choice. Master Mohan is a music teacher blessed with the most marvelous student, Imrat, and the most horrible wife, Nitin Bose, the manager of a tea estate, is the nephew of an old colleague of Sir's who is badly in need of exorcism from the lustful Rima. Rahul Singh kidnapped the exquisite and beautifully trained daughter of an old woman. Naga Baba is an ascetic Naga who rescues Uma on the night of Shiva, think Halloween with a Naga twist. Professor V.V Shankar is the archeological authority on the Narmada who comes to stay at the rest house. Sheela and Asha are his assistants. Murli his guide. Shiva is the Creator and Destroyer of Worlds. Kama is the God of Love with his sugarcane bow, the honeybees, and the arrows of desire. Parvati is Shiva's consort.

The Cover: The cover is a metaphor for the Narmada River in a tightly twisted length of red silk, a sari twisted yet again on itself. I think the title is a metaphor for those people to whom Tariq Mia referred, a thread of life, a River Sutra, and how we live that life. Indian stories, woven together, but not fantastic. Only one story stood out, that of an old music teacher taking a young, blind exceptional singer under his wing. Absolutely moving, very sad story. Love reading it again and again. Loved the old Indian narrative voice, like a song in the background, that carries the main stories of the many people encountered near the Narmada river. Despite the editing typos which are the publisher's issue, Mehta's prose is near prose poetry and easily apprehensible and subtly deeper than consciously acceptable. I am surprised at the beauty of this book which I'm not sure if Mehta knows gives the reader a certain peacefulness that being with or at the Narmada river is

supposed to give And, I am paranoid by what strange imps have been spying into my next wishlist of things to read since it happens to be Kalidasa's poems and plays which are set often near or on the Narmada river. This book is nominally about an Indian clerk who has retired to the Narmada River, but it reads as a collection of stories than a single cohesive book. This isn't too much of a flaw, though, since each of the stories is lovely and could stand up on its own. Each story is about someone the clerk meets or is told about, and each of these people has some connection to the holy river. A few of the tales are happy, and several of them end in tragedy, but they all have some sort of moral without being preachy and they're all somehow comforting. A very nice read. I hate reading Hindi/Sanskrit poetry in translation. Now that it is out of my system, I have mixed feelings about this one. Stories are interesting, some more than others but there is no novel here. There is the common theme of Narmada and love but no central narrative to bind all the stories. Also, the book is targeted at the western audience which becomes painfully clear when 2 Indians talking to each other about Indian music, feel the need to say that, I was not even permitted to sing the seven notes of the scale the sa, re, ga, ma, pa, dha, ni that are the do, re, mi, fa, so, la, ti of western music. On reading that sentence, I suddenly felt like when somebody seems to be talking to you and you look back and realize that they are talking to the person behind you. I seem to be running into this thing again and again with Indian English writing. Perhaps this is what has changed with the current crop of writers. That they are telling stories of Indians for Indians. A Government official in India is in charge of a Government Rest House a sort of inn. He is told stories about various individuals: a Jain monk previously from a wealthy family, a music teacher, a courtesan searching for her lost daughter, an insane playboy, a River Minstrel and an anchorite who worships Shiva. All this takes place near the river Narmada, a place of spiritual pilgrimage to Hindus. Gorgeous, lush writing that taught me something of Indian culture.

A RIVER SUTRA

GITA MEHTA

Translated by the author, Gita Mehta. First published in 1956. This edition with a new introduction by the author is published by Penguin Classics. The text is based on the original Sanskrit text.