and explorations applying the large number of considerations that constitute the ever growing body of feminist literary theory.

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Annexure

AN EMAIL INTERVIEW WITH GITHA HARIHARAN

Thursday, January 13, 2011 8:23 AM

**Message body**

From Shanthi,

Thanks a million ma'am. Ma'am I use my son Pravin's mail ID.[I am mentioning this because you had addressed me as "Pravin"] Ma'am, your answers to my questions(one of my Q's at least sounded very amateurish the minute I clicked the 'send' button) give me the hope that I am proceeding on the right track in my research. I hope and pray that my thesis work should be completed within about two months time ! Do grant me the pleasure of showing you my completed work if and when I meet in person. I take leave for the present with sincere thanks.

Love,
N. Shanthi Premkumar

--- On Tue, 1/11/11, Githa Harihan <contact@githaharihan.com> wrote:

From: Githa Harihan <contact@githaharihan.com>
Subject: Re: questions
To: "Pravin" <pravinkumarp@yahoo.com>
Date: Tuesday, January 11, 2011, 3:48 PM

Dear Pravin,

A few brief responses below the questions.
best
Githa Harihan

> Dear Ma'am, I submit my heartfelt thanks to you for your infinitely generous gesture in lending your ear(eye) to my request first of all,}
> caring enough to send a reply and most wonderful of all, being so
> absolutely, lovably unassuming as to agree to answer my questions even
> when approached in such an informal manner. Can’t help saying, “luv u
> so much”. Ma’am, I restrict myself to four questions as I already
> said. QUESTIONS: 1. In TFN, in the end when Devi comes back to her
> mother’s home, she resolves in her mind that she would “stay on and
> try to make sense of it all”. Why couldn’t she have made the same
> honest attempt to make her marriage work too? In one place, we read that,
> the rooms in Baba’s household reek of Devi’s tears. If Mahesh is
> guilty of making statements like, “Thank God, we Indians are not
> obsessed with love, Devi is equally guilty of not sharing with her
> husband, her dreams about “passionate bodies
> > tearing away at night”. When Devi can be bold and assertive in walking
> > out of her marriage and going away to Gopal, why couldn’t she have
> > shown the same boldness and assertiveness in claiming her rights and
> > insisting on the honouring of her wishes and emotions?
> Yes, of course there is the possibility of her choosing either path of
> action. The point is to stick to the “internal logic” of the novel / the
> purpose of the novelist and see which choice is compatible with this
> larger scheme.
>
> 2. Did you have the feminist agenda in mind as you shaped the story of
> your novels and
> > created the characters? For example, marital bliss and a happy married
> > couple are almost non-existent in all of your first four novels. Did you
> > consciously want to put across the thought that marriage is not the only
> > life option?
> I don’t think “feminist agenda” necessarily calls for portraying only
> unhappy marriages. Yes, most relationships are vulnerable to power
> struggles and this is what I want to show.
>
> 3. Ma’am, you have used stories, fables, myth
> > successfully to enlarge the spaces that your characters inhabit in TFN,
> > GVM and WDT. In fact the myth and fables so enrich the background of your
> > novels, rather one’s mind becomes so tuned to them, that it is as if
> > every sentence in your novels is elastic. Every sentence can be expanded
> > to include a multitude of meanings. But you
> > have brought this kind of narration where the story seems to progress in
> > several layers to a minimum in ITS. Was it because you thought that the
> > labyrinthine structure became a bit too complex for the average reader in
> > WDT? Do you agree that because of this change, ITS reads just that tiny
> > bit flat, when compared to your three earlier novels? 4. Am I right in
> > concluding that Dilshad in WDT represents the author, you? If yes, have
> > you “insinuated” yourself into the other three novels too? In what
> > guise? Ma’am, thank you once again for sparing me your valuable time
>
> A lot of questions here! Yes, I changed course with ITS for various
> reasons -- first, I was done with a “trilogy” where the tale is the
> protagonist. Second, I felt daring enough to try and write about the world
> around me without magic, except the dubious magic of everyday life.
> In WDT, there is a bit of me in all four women – Sheherazad, Dunyazad,
> Dilshad and Satyasama.
>
> > With love,
> >
> > N. Shanti
On Mon, 12/13/10, Githa Hariharan <contact@githahariharan.com> wrote:

From: Githa Hariharan <contact@githahariharan.com>
Subject: Re: questions
To: "Pravin" <pravinkumarp@yahoo.com>
Date: Monday, December 13, 2010, 3:19 PM

> >> Dear Shanti,
> > You are welcome to write me your questions. I am very busy till the 21st,
> > so it may take me a little time to get to them though.
> > best
> > Githa Hariharan
> >>
> >> Dear ma'am,
> >> I belong to
> >> Madurai, Tamilnadu. "A feminist reading of Githa Hariharan's
> >> doctoral thesis. I would deem it a great privilege bestowed on me if I
> >> could
> >> possibly ask you just four questions(one on each of your first four
> >> novels) and
> >> get your response via e-mail. I furnish below, a few details regarding my
> >> name
> >> and nature of work.
> >>
> >> Name
> >> : N. Shanti
> >>
> >> Nature of work, place : Asst. Professor, Sri Meenakshi Govt Arts
> >> College, Madurai
> >>
> >> Publications : Have
> >> published a collection of my poems in
> >> Tamil, under the title, "Nila Pennae".
> >>
> >> Have had a few of my English poems published in "Kavyabharathi" and
> >> "The Journal of the Poetry Society of India"
Dear Shanti,

You are entitled to your reading of the novels as long as you can "support" your reading with "internal evidence". It's not as if I "know" the answers and am holding them back from the reader!

best

Githa Hariharan

> Dear Ma'am,
> Do forgive me for disturbing you again. But I must ask you something about "When Dreams Travel". Ma'am, I understand the end of the novel thus:
> Shahrzad has had a brief passionate affair with the merchant traveller. When Shahryar knows of it, he does not want to openly disclose it and punish her either because he is ashamed or because he still has some regard for Shahrzad. So he concocts a story of illness and sudden death.
> The sweet Shahrzad, he had known, does not exist for him any more. So he is...
> justified in building a tomb in her memory. Meanwhile Shahrzad has been
> banished to some obscure palace and is quietly growing old there.
> Am I right, ma'am? Please do tell me, where I am wrong.
> Ma'am, I have a question on "In Times of Siege", too.
> "Does Meena represent your model of liberated womanhood, conscious of
> both rights and responsibilities, taking both seriously, and seeking her
> place as fellow human being in the erstwhile male world, eager to do her
> bit towards the shaping of society?"
> Ma'am, do forgive me if you think I am too presumptuous in claiming
> your time and attention like this, but I would be very grateful if you
> would answer these questions and your answers would be a great help to me
> in the study of your novels.
>
> With hope and thanks,

> N.Shanti