

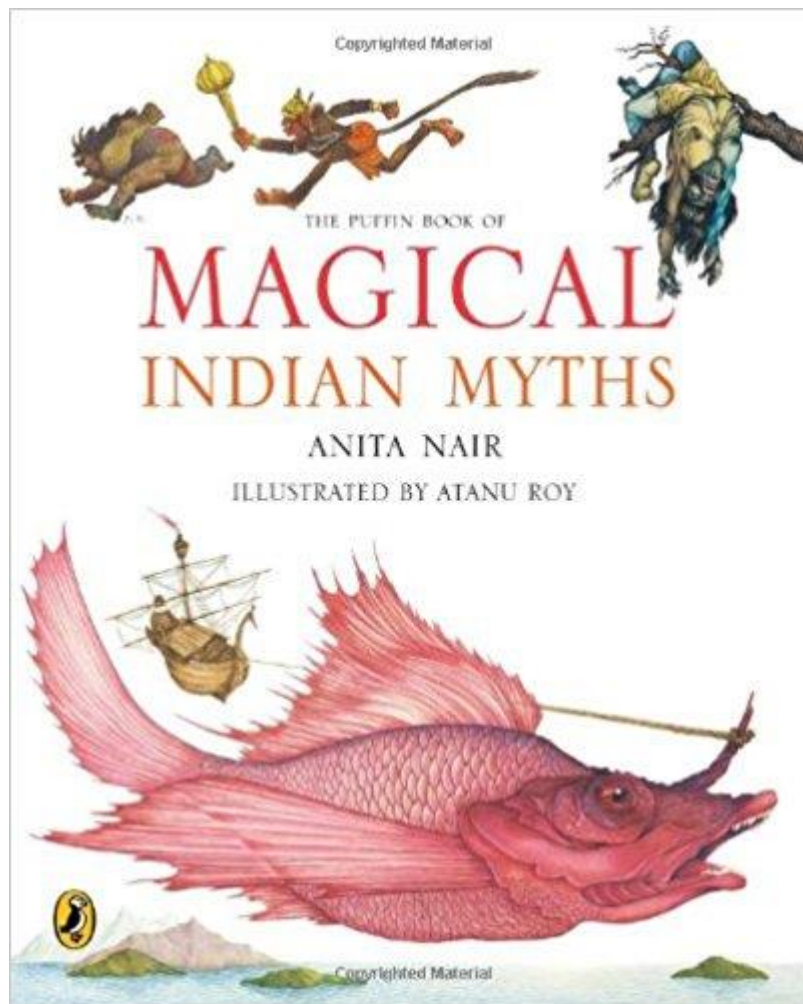
An Ecological Insight into Anita Nair's  
*The Churning of the Cosmic Ocean*

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**“The Churning of the Cosmic Ocean”**

This paper deals with “The Churning of the Cosmic Ocean”, a mythological story in her collection *Magical Indian Myths*. It is about the second incarnation of Lord Vishnu – The

Kurma. After a great flood, rarest things in this universe have stored under the deep ocean. Everything is washed away. So the gods decide to retrieve them, especially the rare things like *amirta*, the nectar of life for immortality, and other rare things. But it is not possible for gods alone to do that work, so they have asked Asuras to help them for their search and asuras also accept to help.

As per the suggestion of Brahma, they ask the great snake Vasuki to be the rope and the mountain Mandara to be churned with the notion of Lord Varuna, the god of night and ocean. But Varuna is not able to bear the mountain, so Lord Vishnu, with his personal motif of finding his consort Lakshmi from deep sea and land, accept to help. That time Lord Vishnu is accepted to change himself to be a tortoise to bear the mountain Mandara on its upper hard shells. Asuras in one side and Gods in other side start to pull Vasuki - the so-called rope.

At first, they have found Kamadhenu, the cow of plenty, Airavata the white elephant, Uchchaih-sravas, a magical horse, Sura – the goddess of wine, Parijata tree, Rambha and other nymphs, and Moon. But everyone who has involved in this work gets tired. Especially few persons are died for the poison of Vasuki and for tiredness.

At last Goddess Lakshmi rose from the ocean with a lotus in her hand. “Along with her, the ocean yielded the much-prized water of life. Wearing white robes, the god of medicines, Dhanwantri appeared, bearing the jar of Amrita in his palm” (15). But there are few disputes between Asuras and Gods. But Lord Vishnu in the disguise of Mohini, changes the mind of all asuras for accepting the priority of giving amrita to Gods at first. But Raghu, the asura disguises like a god and get the mighty amrita.

At the same time this malpractice is showed by Moon and Sun, to Lord Vishnu. So, Lord Vishnu cuts the head of Raahu. But he has already tasted the liquor of immortality, so Rahu, becomes Rahu and Kedhu and they always try to swallow Moon and Sun for vengeance. but they can arrest sun and moon occasionally by swallowing. Both sun and moon have the power to come out of their attack.

## Eco Criticism

Derek Gladwin at his page in *Oxford Bibliographies* informs “Ecocriticism is a broad way for literary and cultural scholars to investigate the global ecological crisis through the intersection of literature, culture, and the physical environment”. This story has few ecological crisis, named, cosmic ocean, vasuki the snake, tortoise- the Kurma, mountain Mandara, Kamadhenu, the cow, Parijata tree, and Amrita.

## Cosmic Ocean and Human Civilization

This story happened at cosmic ocean, after the great flood has washed and swiped the entire universe. Ocean and its water are the main reason for the birth of new beings. Early beings are come out of water from fish to reptile, and to mammals. This world is covered with seventy percentage of water. All civilizations are born at the shores of these oceans and other water places. This natural element water has all sorts of vitamins and energetic proteins in it. That is the reason for the birth of many water beings and related beings. *National Geographic website* informs the human activities in its page as:

Human activities impact nearly all parts of the ocean. Lost and discarded nets continue to lethally snare fish, seabirds, and marine mammals as they drift. Ships spill oil and garbage and transport critters to alien habitats unprepared for their arrival. Mangrove forests are cleared for homes and industry. More than half of the U.S. population lives in coastal areas, spilling garbage and sewage into the ocean. Fertilizer runoff from farms turns vast swaths of the ocean into dead zones, including a New Jersey-size area in the Gulf of Mexico. The greenhouse gas carbon dioxide is turning ocean waters acidic, and an influx of freshwater from melting glaciers threatens to alter the weather-driving currents. (<https://www.nationalgeographic.com/environment/habitats/ocean/>)

## Pollution of Water

So, water resources are polluted by the activities of the developed and developing countries for doing business. Human activities are the main reasons for the pollution and oceans

have been started to get evolution. Nature never destroys other things unnaturally or artificially. It is the works of human beings to ruin nature's characters to get change.

## **The Fish**

The fish is diagnosed to be the first being in the world and when the fish gets evolution, it is either water and land living beings like tortoise and other beings. This story of second avatar is also reminded the evolution in this universe. It becomes a holder of Mountain Mandara for the churning. When the readers read about this tortoise, it is assumed to be a role model of the military troop in Roman period. It cannot swim but it can survive or float in the water. It is one of the best example creature in this universe with shell. But now-a-days they are smuggled by the frauds, the human beings for money.

## **Parijata**

**Parijata**, *Nyctanthes arbor-tristis*, is believed to be evolved from this churning of ocean. This flower is an official flower of the state West Bengal in India. This flower is used for the remedial medicine of fever and arthritis in Siddha. It's a rare flower in this world. It is in Asian countries only.

## **Kamadhenu**

Kamadhenu the cow has come out of ocean. This cow becomes to be the property of the sage. But in this world, maximum of population is drinking the milk of the cow. Especially in India as it is in Hindu myth, it is portrayed as a holy being. Indians pray cows. The habitual worship of cow, is because it has antibiotic elements in its. And the Mountain Mandara is now in Africa. They are volcanic range. But there is no connection with this mythological mount,

## **Herbals**

Usually mountains have herbals in its vast area. In this story also the herbals juice takes a part to heal the wounds of either Gods and Asuras, at the time of pulling the rope-Vasuki. Mountains are the place where all saints and deities are located.

## Vasuki the Snake

Vasuki the snake is a mythical one. But here the main thing is, it is standing for the moral. Other myths are portraying snake as a cruel and satanic one. But here this great snake is projected to be a good and serving one for the favour of goodness. At last Amirta the elixir, ocean drink for immortality.

## Great Combination

Kamadhenu - cow, Uchchaih-sravas - horse, Parijata tree, Sura the goddess of wine, Rambha and other nymphs for happiness, Lotus, Dhanvadhri the God of Medicine, and elixir the Amrita are invented while churning the cosmic ocean. From this story one can understand the simple ecological concept of preserving ocean. In India, people have the habit of calling ocean as mother sea, because ocean is one of the five elements (water) and this ocean is a source for fishermen, this ocean has all sort of antibiotics in its herbal plants. Those beings are come out of churning is a simple symbol of the characteristic sketch of the ocean, which has all sort of source for living beings. If everyone in this universe know this secrecy and start to avoid such polluting the ocean, even now-a-days also human beings will get some worthy things from the ocean now-a-days the ratio of taking pearls from the deep sea is getting low also due to this pollution. So from this story one can understand the main motif of preserving ocean and other beings is clarified.

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