



Disloyalty of Vibhishan in Amish Tripathi's Retelling

Vignesh kumar. S^{1*}, Dr. R. Ajith²

^{1*}(Reg.no. 21211254011002). PhD Research scholar (Full time) PG and Research Department of English, V. O. Chidambaram college, Thoothukudi-628008, Email id: vickysivara@gmail.com, Mob: 9092015096 (Affiliated to Manomanian Sundaranar University Abhisekapatti, Tirunelveli)

²Assistant Professor, PG and Research Department of English, V. O. Chidambaram college, Thoothukudi-628008, Email id : ajithranchal@gmail.com, Mob:9446796994, (Affiliated to Manomanian Sundaranar University, Abhisekapatti, Tirunelveli)

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ABSTRACT

Vibhashan is the most righteousness in Raavan's family in the traditional mythology. On the other hand in the retelling of Tripathi, he is driven by ambition. This paper analyses the character of Vibhishan through a different perspective. He is known for his deceit, cunningness, and betrayal for his sibling Raavan. His character is assessed even by Ayodhya brothers. Vibhishan, both in the traditional and in the retelling is a traitor. He doesn't possess much multifaceted qualities like Raavan, but is driven by the ambition of overthrowing Raavan and ruling Lanka. The portrayal of his character shows the binary opposition, he helps Ram and his brother in the war in order to be by the side of dharma, but his moral ethics and his deceit does not show him as a man of worth.

Keywords: ambition, binary oppositions, loyalty, reimagined, traitor.

Tripathi a well known writer of Indian mythology is known for his rewritings. Amish is a good story teller, the stories he heard from his grandmother has inspired him to a greater extent to rewrite mythology. His works have created interest both in India and abroad for reading mythology. This paper is an analyses of the deconstruction of the character Vibhishana in Ram Chandra Series. Structuralism examines language, literature and mythology. Structuralism uncovers the meaning of a text. Peter Barry states that Structuralism, "is the belief that things cannot be understood in isolation they have to be seen in the context of the larger structures they are part of" (39). Binary opposition is the basis of structuralism. The binary opposition of good vs evil develops the plot. His desire to rise against the ordeals and his duty as the minister of Lanka, his loyalty to his brother Raavan evades and he joins the troop of Ram and betrays his brother. This is not analysed in isolation, but the circumstances that leads him to take such decision is also analyzed in the novel. Vibhishan has two different forces within himself.

Betrayal and treachery is part of narratives in literature. Betrayal of Vibhishan, can be analyzed through structuralism. He plays a dual role and is a complex character who cannot be assessed easily. The readers are invited to question the morality of Vibhishana through his portrayal. This paper examines the principles of structuralism through the aspects of ambition, duty and moral values.

Vibhishan's decision to join hands with Ram takes an ultimate turn in the plot line. It was a disguise in the name of dharma to fulfil his ambitions. He turned against his brother to seek power. He reveals all the minute details of the Lanka force and the fort. He was the one who designed the fort, so knows all the secret passages that lead to the other side of the fort. He showcases his military abilities to Ram and his brothers. He provided suggestions to each move for the Lankan warfare. Lakshman is against Vibhishan, but had to accept him to know more details about the fortification of Lanka and the other important details. He is also aware of the temper of Lakshman, "Vibhishan wondered if he had made a mistake in seeking Ayodhya's help. But Raavan probably knew about his treachery by now. His boat, too, had, burned. There was no going back; not for him. He would either sink or swim with Bharat now" (Lanka 198).

He was a man of intelligence and understood the psychology of the opponent. He was aware of the world around him, and tried to seize the opportunity at the right time.

Loyalty, according to Tripathi is not static it is dynamic, he conceptualizes this in portraying Vibhishan's character. Though a man who strictly followed the rites and rituals taught by his father, and as a man who practised dharma, he is ready to betray his brother and position himself as the ruler of Lanka. Taking sides with the Ayodhya brother, he calculates every act and moves appropriately. Vibhishan, was accepted by his step

mother, but Raavan did not accept him as his brother, he always humiliated him. This increased the desire for Lanka's throne. Joining hands with Ram was the only way to secure his throne.

Vibhishan guessed what the scroll was, but he still couldn't contain his excitement as he rolled it open. A royal Ayodhya decree, marked with the seal of the emperor of the Sapt Sindhu, Ram. It formally acknowledge Vibhishan as the King of Lanka and committed Ayodhya through all means, including military, to placing Vibhishan upon the Sigiriya throne.

His heart skipped a beat. *I'll show that . . . that monster. . . I'm unworthy, he said. . . I'll show. . .* (199)

The internal conflict between dharma and loyalty to family members was at war initially, later on he was keen on securing the throne. From the way he spoke, the brothers understood that Vibhishan was waiting for a long time to overthrow his brother.

Lakshman and Bharat suspect that Vibhishana had planned his betrayal long before. "Vibhishan would have gone to any incredible enemy of his brother," said Bharat. 'When he built this tunnel, Ayodhya had no reason to declare war on Lanka. Vibhishan was waiting for anyone who would pick a fight with King Raavan.' 'I guess Raavan sealed his fate the day he decided to trust Vibhishan'" (203).

The brothers believed that Raavan did not foresee the real character of his brother. Though his ally with Ram was for a greater cause, he betrayed his own country men. His mean character is witnessed when he reveals the truth about the plague in Sirigiya. People outside Lanka were suffering from a devastating plague, but it did not affect people in Gokarna. People believed Sigiriya is cursed. Only Vibhishana knows the actual cause of the plague. However, Vibhishana knew that the cause was not the plague, but the lead water pipes.

In excessive quantities, lead begins to poison and weaken you. You see, lead dissolves in water, especially the kind of water we have in Sigiriya. And everyone who drinks that water slowly starts showing signs of illness. It seems like the plague. But, it is not the plague. The illness spreads gradually, over many years. Net-net, Raavan dada has been slowly poisoning himself and his beloved city. (209)

Lakshman and Bharat are shocked to know that Vibhishana saved his mother and sister, who now live in Gokarna. This water even poisoned the army that stayed in Sigiriya, the soldiers fell sick, and this was an added advantage for the war strategy. When he revealed this secret, the brothers were awestruck. His motive was too mean. Through the depiction of Vibishan's character, Tripathi represents the binaries in mythology. He can be termed as a traitor, archetype, for his act of treachery. His ambition is the main reason for the act of treachery. Being driven to a

In the traditional Ramayana, Vibhishan is treated as a man of dharma, therefore he leaves his brother Raavan is follows adharm and joins hands with Ram, the righteous. Whereas in Ram Chandra Series, he is ignoble. He goes against moral values and does not prove himself to be a man of virtue. Therefore he can be termed only as a traitor or betrayer.

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