

## Reading Past through the Present: A Comparative Analysis of Nandini Sahu's *Sita* with Valmiki's *Ramayana* through an Indic Perspective

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### ABSTRACT

The intellectual exercise is always related to either deconstruction of the meaning or embellishment of meanings by interpretation of a text. It has always been the intellectual rigour of the thinking human, to find out more and to make sense of it, at the same time. *Ramayana*, for me, has always been one text that has always stayed imminently relevant in my memory by the sheer virtue of its literary oeuvre and all the teaching it imparts, either metaphysically or metaphorically. For a long time, I have always yearned for an opportunity to write something about it or anything closely or even remotely related to it. And in the words of Tulsi, “everything happens according to Rama's wish only”. I have finally been endowed upon with the opportunity to do so by expressing my opinions about Nandini Sahu's *Sita*, a poetic memoir of the heroine of the epic in the first-person narrative.

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Since epics are a highly masculine form of poetic utterance because of the gender dynamics that were there in the past and present, we see that the structure of the narratives has also played a seminal role in these epics by being the carriers of such ideas, meanings or even the relative or obscure absence of it. Being male-centric, the female in these narratives have either been marginalized, treated as subalterns, have been stereotyped or have had no representation of voice, power or authority. What's sad is the fact that nothing has remained aloof from such a treatment. But when we analyze it closely, we find that the Indian tradition has been different from the West. While the West doesn't have a continuous tradition, we have a full-fledged philosophical system that had nothing to do with anything religious or remotely ritualistic, it was merely an exercise in intellectual rigour.

In the Indian dialogic tradition, we have many instances of females like Lopamudra, Gargi, and Maitreyi speaking up for their beliefs, being part of the discourses, thus proving that the Western lens of a monologic tradition cannot be strictly adhered to, here our analysis of the epics, especially from the point of view of gender in two ways:

A) That the gender mechanics and the patriarchal elements, though very much present by virtue of human interpersonal relationships, aren't exactly similar in nature and treatment to what is understood of The Vedic text Jaiminiya Brahmana cites Rishi Atri having many women seers

as 'Mantrakritas', composer of mantras and richas. In Indian tradition, the endeavour of creating one's own space was always subjective unlike in the West where it has always been political, so the question that I handle here is the abject nitpicking of incidents of these epics from a theoretical standpoint without using theories related to our system;

B) That the discourse-tradition in India was dialogic, so the question of being able to voice one's opinion was always there, given the fact that one is capable of doing so, that is why we see conversations happening in texts where Sankaracharya had a *shashtratha* with Mandana Mishra's wife Ubhaybharati. Besides, we have made our gods speak to us in discussion and answer our queries because we are polyphonic in the sense that there is no centralization of knowledge on the basis of any distinction. All voices are valid and nothing can contain every voice within a single consciousness, unlike the monologic tradition of the West where information is delivered and no contestation takes place and this marginalizes everything and everyone who is not represented or doesn't voice, merely by virtue of this form. So, when we directly use that lens, we are bound to miss the subtleties of our own epics because I think that everything is in these texts and whatever's missing is being fulfilled by this great tradition, of which Nandini has become a part.

Now, we have this multiplicity of opinions because of our diversity of values and philosophical standpoints which act as the vector behind the huge corpus of various versions or readings of the original text. For example, the Ramayana alone carries different aspects of our interpretations and questions on such interpretations as we find of storytelling.

Herein, lies the space of Nandini's Sita who seems to be engaged in a time transcending *shashtratha* against all and everything that has stood against her or every woman and surprisingly against her husband as well because Nandini's Sita is not a re-telling in the sense that one may take a very amblyopic position of calling her as a subaltern or a marginal character in the grand-narrative or in the theoretical discourses that revolve around the Ramayana-texts by virtue of the intertextual nature of our existence by a compulsive theoretical standpoint creation or the constant urge of meaning discovery or even creation of it. It has always been the standard practice of questioning a few tropes or shall I say, the default punching bags in order to write anything that is stimulating for an English literature student without spending a moment to discover the grey matter out of all that which has either been labelled as black or white; which to me is perfectly okay as it increases our awareness but does that include our own world view, is the main question. But during the course of my arguments, I will be able

to emphatically establish that despite being a novel and distinct attempt to find her own voice, and successfully so, Nandini has not broken away from the great Indian traditions already established in this ancient land.

These traditions have been seldom discovered or sought after because of our unawareness about our own knowledge systems and the incessant urge to find all and everything that comes from the West to be useful. The structure of our education system also alienates us from our knowledge system because it is heavily leaning on the side of the Anglo-American ethos and relatively more towards European thinkers in terms of literary theories.

Also, I attempt to show that the meta-narrative of our cultural space is self-explanatory in every sense because it contains all the answers to every question that we may ask. The thrust is to establish that just by merely, stating the obvious and countering all that which is superfluous but eminently visible, we may able to say that Nandini has done a seminal work of transcending the barriers of Saguna-Nirguna and bridging the gaps between the modern, the ancient, the historic, the mythologized and the Universal. This has been done by simplifying Sita's questions with all-inclusive feminist meanings rather than as a political tool, aloof from us, in order to build a room of her own.

At the outset, I would like to highlight that I see in her approach a conscious choice of sentiment that is subtle for a public-private conversation with her husband, who is the archetype of how a man should be, but nowhere does she put aside her personal side to become a thorough and thorough political feminist tool who sees all and everything in the negative light and who would demean anything just to prove her point over patriarchy, thus attaining a sublimity of stature.

Firstly, to begin with, transcending this whole time-space continuum of *Ramayana* age to contemporary times requires a very large and exhaustive understanding of our society from a multidisciplinary point of view to even comment upon anything definitively but Nandini tries to make the narrative inclusive from the first word so that the past meets the present without any interruption in the flow of time. Her Sita has all such life attitudes:

“She is there since the commencement of a timeless history  
since the unwritten agenda of the society  
prevails to define me, you or her in altered  
forms and repudiations. Sita dwells in  
the Sitapurs, Rampurs, Udaipurs of India;

she is on the Internet, in T.V. soaps,  
in households, streets, call centers, universities, in temples  
and churches, in Ceylon, in the back waters of Kerala, in  
your concealed perception, and in the Indian Constitution.  
She is the erstwhile woman Prime Minister  
of India, and the woman President; the  
multi-tasking working mother and the homemaker; the gang-raped girl  
in the Delhi bus at night, and the  
battered baby girl in the AIIMS trauma center.  
She is in the hot, helpless tears of the poor, in the  
hidden fears; yet again, she is the confident,  
adamant, stalwart new woman, resilient as the Pegasus.  
Sita--Sati Sita--she is not just the hypothetical or the  
historical substance of academics. She is truly animated to this  
living, present living; she is pertinent.  
She is the past and the present, she is the comprehensive  
social, political or religious attitude  
of the progressive Indian woman.” (Sahu, 1)

Here, Nandini doesn't distinguish her only as a social creature but a political one too because while the story is political, its outcome is social and that too for Sita only, but her own attitude is similar to a religiously committed wife of a husband.

The analysis of her side of the story always happens from one aspect as for a literary student it is patriarchy that prevails but for some, it is the Pativrata because it suits a narrative and creates a discourse around. While the Western tradition has no such concept of Pativrata, we tend to equate equity with equality of the sexes and thus, try to create a mean of gender expectations ending up placing our questions wrongly. We should remember that she was all three mixed into one, all the time.

Luckily enough and like a very perceptive author, Nandini chooses to use the inter-semiotic approach for the purpose of voicing Sita by not only translating our concerns for the missing voice of Sita but also translating the images that are culturally archaic but symbolic as well, giving readers the democratic space to imagine, re-imagine the personae and build an argument in support of the structure of the narrative. She wistfully questions everyone to question and

requestfully asks whether they could ever be in the position to do so, that too, the formal portrait only. Nandini writes:

“The one who suffers and succeeds, and never regresses.  
I am the new woman. Can I be construed correctly without  
your understanding of Sita? Can your collective faith in me get  
pronounced without deconstructing Sita?  
Can your sympathy, empathy, inquisitiveness  
about the fractured identities of us,  
the women of the world, of this  
earth and hearth, be lessened  
without deliberating the anguished formal portrait.” (Sahu, 1-2)

The idea of identity and its constructs have always been part of the "normative" structures and narratives set forth by the society for their members and no one, not even the royalty has been completely free from the eternal law or Dharma of their times, but to see a constant negotiation of space and privity of autonomy as in the case of both Rama and Sita is a unique event in Nandini's case, as it has always been a rare sight to witness because the feminist stance rips apart Ram for his acts, unmindful of their status, the tradition of the epic and the relationship between them. It is because the urge to break free from the status quo has always been the case with any progressive thinking mind but it cannot take undue liberties of choosing events at one's own convenience. This either makes Rama look like a helpless, ineffective ruler or makes him unclear towards his commitments. It also leads to the replacement of the whole system after bringing chaos and destruction all around with people questioning their tradition without knowing it fully, which is exactly opposite to what a king or a subject should do, as the King of the State, in the ideal conditions under the utilitarian principle of statecraft, i.e., upholds the Order and the subject abides by it. Nandini writes:

“True, our notions of justice are prejudiced.  
True, dharma surpasses all metamorphosis.” (Sahu, 22)  
“People of Ayodhya, the common mass, from all  
classes, castes and sections enjoyed the bliss.  
Live and let live was the principle of the peaceful control;  
There were new beginnings in all sectors of the state;  
My Lord Rama was most reputed among his subjects.

Every evening about the country men he meticulously enquired.

He had empowered his citizens of free judgment” (Sahu, 85)

In fact, I am surprised that the author understands the concept of duty and so does her Sita in the chronology of events that have nothing to do with the couple but as a public entity, so when we focus on Sita, we miss this point of the difference between the king and his subject relationship of India and that of the West as it was her choice to accompany her husband to the jungle despite Rama being against it.

Secondly, we can't deny that it is the society that regulates gender on the basis of its panoptic hegemony by pushing the individuals or sexes into certain “life attitudes” and “modes of perception”. So, if we stretch the idea of "woman putting herself into the text into the world and the history-by her own movement" to write themselves within the history of feminist conversations by building strong narratives against the patriarchal systems, by using the logic of antilove whose presence is basically the absence of female autonomy over a feminine mode of writing called the “White Ink” or “Ecriture Feminine”.

Here in this case, Nandini brilliantly does the same by adding more shades to it thereby highlighting her inclusive universal eco-feminist urges in a feminine way, she doesn't shy away from being what she is. She rejoices in her identity, and extols in the vastness by summoning the “Sitaness” of it in the harshest of places-forest and in the toughest of times-vanvas or even her exile:

“Ecology was my home now, free from the  
wistful four walls of the stately mansions and palaces.

The daughter of Mother Earth, I was ultimately in her lap.” (Sahu, 93)

Her Sitayan thus contains every woman and man of his times too.

But at the pretext of questioning, though very rightfully, his man who himself is torn between his duties as a king, the upholder of Dharma who finds his own personal-self becoming marginalized when he has to maintain fairness as a king by maintaining the ideals of Ram Rajya because the name of Ram is bigger than Ram himself:

“Rama-Rajya saw its radiance in the hands of  
Maryada Purusottam Rama and earth-born Sita.  
A magnificent golden age dawned upon Ayodhya;  
That day his generals Bhadra, Mangala and

Kasyapa came with their daily reports of the state.  
From their reactions Rama knew something was at stake.  
“What is the matter, why there’s this grim silence?  
I need to know the public opinion of the circumstances.  
I can augment beyond myself, let it be harsh.  
“My Lord, in the market places, gardens  
river banks and sea-shores, people praise  
Rama Rajya openly, and your destruction of the evil forces.  
But it’s brutal in the parts of a washer man  
whose deserted wife came home and was seeking justice.  
He rejects her and says, king Rama has set this ideal once.  
His wife was abducted by a rakshasha  
who reserved her with him for one whole year.  
This is weird that she is accepted as his wife once more!  
Oh Rama! You stand for justice to the universe,  
how could you succumb to this callousness dear?  
You left your pregnant wife with this insecure prospect?” (Sahu, 85-86)

On the flip side of it, we resort to the mode of analysis that is fairly dominated by the biblical tradition of the English language where the king is divine by virtue of his position and has arbitrary rights of self-expression even over his subjects. This is not the perception upheld in our Indian knowledge systems as we don't subscribe to the Hohfeldian opposites of rights versus liberty but we did have "liberty as a right" kind of instance of Ram killing Shambhuka which is criticized too because it is an incident of a different world order as well as of a different knowledge system. Holding this complexity to her heart, she distinguishes between the public man and her personal man saying:

“He was brimming with the commendation of Rama and  
Rama-Rajya, its peace, prosperity and the auspicious  
days. My husband, the father of my sons,  
the incarnation of Dharma, the fundamental of all  
arts and sciences, the best son, the noblest  
king, the paramount brother, the wisest, the valiant  
personality, the righteous, benevolent ruler,

the charismatic seer. Did anyone question,  
what about the best father and the finest, loving, caring husband?" (Sahu, 96)

Ram is a mortal avatar bound to his Karmic principles and his birth in this form has a pre-ordained purpose as well according to our Indian worldview, he is bound by the Dharma of his times. Surely, this huge cultural background and all the philosophical context can't be just done away with just for the sake of "The Laugh of the Medusa", besides why do I even have to submit to the portraits of Medusa when I have the glowing examples of Sita, Parvati, Manasa- all forms of the Shakti herself, far vaster and theoretically and text-image wise different from the Greek mythology.

Whenever you would think that Nandini would fall for the Western template, she magically finds her own Lakshman Rekha by writing this:

“Ravana sent Mareecha in disguise of a golden deer.  
Me, Vaidehi got enamored by the  
glee, as if its body an amalgamation of Nature and treason;  
“This enchants me, nowhere had I seen such seduction  
such elegance, such a living being of delight!  
Let me have it, let me have it, let me have it!!”  
Whosoever has said that a woman’s greed and a man’s wrath  
has to be controlled, is true to the essential.  
Real or just enchantment, you decided to get me the deer;  
Frailty, the name is not woman. But I have  
learnt, the feeble and freckle mind of a woman  
for the golden-deer became her hydra-headed monster.  
You had advised me to ignore the deer because Nature  
doesn’t produce animals of gold. Going beyond her  
I had summoned the wrath of Mother Nature.” (Sahu 26-28)

Her sheer idea of looking inwards and searching for the answers to all her problems through a self-dialogue rather than an outward enquiry and cursing the consequences or even her husband makes her exercise truly representative of the best of both worlds by claiming her own female authorship fearlessly on the face of all the subtle chauvinistic social ethos without compromising an inch of the intellectual or argumentative space of the historicity of the Indian tradition and its philosophical context of cause-and-effect of our Karmic traditions within the



limitations of the narrative, because if Ram has to answer than Kaikeyi or Shoorpanakha too must be held accountable to some degree for their digressions as well along with Sita.

The idea of "the Self or Atman" in the Indian knowledge system always insists on controlling the controllable which Sita does and this is precisely the reason why we call our gods Saguna and his avatars as Leela, which the West doesn't understand because their reference point is the platonic idealism or the theory of form within the logocentric approach used by literature students, hence the gap in understanding as we go far deeper into it beyond their comprehension. So, if we don't make this distinction here, then our side of the story falls flat and we can't and we shouldn't.

Though, I would like to establish by stating the obvious that the question of Ram Rajya and Sita's second final exile isn't a part of Valmiki's text since there is no Uttara-Kanda in his version of the epic. So, a lot of questions go out of the syllabus instantly, if we consider this question. But, I guess, the intertextual nature of our existence, as rightly pointed out by Ramanujan in his "300 Ramayanas" essay gives us this space of dialogue by giving us the freedom to ask questions from the Lord unlike the Western or Abrahamic canons where commandments are handed out to be abided and rather than a dialogue with the almighty themselves.

Thirdly, I find it unfair that Ram becomes a composite mythologized figure of many versions of the story all condensed into this one image-text and he is questioned unfairly in principle for his Ram Rajya at everyone's own convenience by calling it a chauvinistic utopia, while the question should be succinctly directed at the Maryadic limitations or the creative liberties taken to build a narrative around a misplaced notion, that too, in which incidents are not all situated in one story rather spread across various versions. So, the whole thrust of questioning seems misplaced in the sense that it is not the Ram Rajya but the Maryada and the sincerity of the seeker to make sense of this narrative chaos rather than falling for the ordinary, uninformed interpretations and theorizing on the basis of it.

Moving ahead, while Nandini's Sita is able to break away from the shackles of another patriarchal ploy of deification by claiming out loudly that for her, loving her husband and expecting love in return is another direct departure of Nandini from the conventional thought processes and is an assertion of the Indian traditions, as any criticism is always focused on the "current literary process "on the basis of the issues of the contemporary times or certain contemporary moments incorporated into their work through a process of transformation.

Nandini's Sita herself is symbolic of this process of transformation as Nandini writes:

“Some say that Sita cannot be a contemporary  
role-model. It’s time to disrupt that  
customary expelling image, and critique me as an individual.  
Women! When the society asks you to be  
‘like Sita’,and decides your future by  
virtue of public morality, forces you be chaste  
and submissive, please redefine your lives.  
Let me hark back, there is yet another  
veiled, unseen Sita in the Ramayana, the one  
who questioned the standards and rulebooks  
of public morality, purity, chastity set for her.  
Live life like Sita, communicate a new relevance of her.  
My fire-ordeal was never a metaphor for subjugation.  
Rather I was archetypal for expressing what  
any other woman would have repressed;

With this poem, I am not amending sacred religion  
or creating a profane version of faith. Mine is the  
collective tale, shared fate of Sita, Salma or Margaret.  
Then, what is new about retelling my legend told  
by all regional, folklore and classical Ramayanas? With this,  
I am getting out of the traditional Sita, and this is a text hybrid.” (Sahu, 121-122)

There are very few moments in our collective memory when love has been so directly confessed purely on human terms by putting aside every concern or ideological argument because in the end, it is a love story at its heart and be it the readers or the writers, everyone seems to be waiting for that catharsis or the emotional closure. Be it Valmiki or Kamban or Nandini, all express that same desire although at different stages bereaved by the sight of the death of the love birds or be it Nandini's Sita who speaks out loudly for her love. She is aware of her deepest self which must have been the case of those two great souls whose story is nothing less than a tragedy or a leela. Suffering in the mortal plane symbolizes our philosophical worldview as we see that this whole nature of existence in its essence is

temporary, the transient cyclical nature of our existence and our atheist Carvaka philosophies or the Buddhist and Jain world views also substantiate the same view. But Nandini uses this cycle to question Rama, and very aptly she asks those same questions that will always be relevant and answer them:

“With freedom, I exude the  
sparkle concomitant with mystical holiness. With  
freedom, I made an assortment to culminate the cycle of torments, exceeded the parameters of  
history.  
I am born again and again, baptized  
by different names; going back to Mother  
Earth by choice, I became immortal, I  
entered her deathless encirclement. Oh  
Mother Earth! I swear, I shall take birth  
again and again, and in every birth  
I will be the free-spirited, contemporary,  
enlightened woman, for I am the manifestation of freedom.” (Sahu, 127-128)

“Don’t be  
a glorious victim, don’t get flattered being called  
a besieged beauty or an effervescent and  
pioneering woman. It’s just identity politics.” (Sahu, 126)

The process of transformation that I mentioned earlier that takes issues out of the contemporary times has also been subverted on the above-mentioned count that rather than looking for issues alien to the text, Nandini yet again turns inwards by becoming the passionate advocate for all those females who have been silenced or have been pushed into the margins, though if all get their due, the text would digress into an endless abyss and lose its thrust, but nonetheless, the highlighting of the causes of Urmila (The forgotten wife of Lakshmana), Anusuya (Sage Atri's wife), Mandodari, Tara and Ahalya's liberation or deliverance by Rama's visit to Rishi Gautam's hermitage where she lives in her accursed visible state. Unlike the story of her liberation after getting touched by Rama's feet, which is a trope mostly used as a process of transformation, here she is more concerned with the issues of marriage and the inherent discord of it, the agency of choice not being provided and who else is better than Sita to highlight this.

But thankfully, she doesn't subvert any trope herein because as a literary writer, one has to be aware of the fact that literary events are always separate from us by either a century or a millennium, especially if it is something related to mythology. It is also perfectly possible to not be able to distinguish the idea, as done by the original author from what it is thought of today. Between the description of the ancient text in order to find the human sense of it, in the present context and its present host of meanings.

In this endeavour of discovering that human sense-ultimately all senses are human; the author assumes the risk by attempting to adverting the presence of the ancient author by gauging his sense of the text along with simultaneously translating or interpreting the text for the current contemporary processes and readers. Here, the question of fire-trial also comes in because Rama as a person has always been voraciously questioned, and very rightly so, for allowing all this trial and tribulation to happen right in front of him:

“Oh Rama! My esteemed husband for lives!  
I may be your ultimate love and dedication.  
But you rescued your pride, not me, from  
Ravana; thus, Sita may be your Muse eternal.  
But think twice, you'll get the 'loyalty' of  
the real Sita the day you no more demand her to be 'loyal'.  
I might be forced to believe that the second exile was  
due to public opinion. But can you justify the reason  
why did you ask me the first fire-test in Lanka oh Rama?” (Sita 128)

But after reading Valmiki, one becomes clear of the subtleties of love and the hidden anger in his heart about the crossing of Lakshman Maryada or Lakshman Rekha by speaking ill of Lakshmana by hinting at foul play on Lakshmana's part so as to get Sita, in case Rama doesn't return as Lakshmana wasn't responding to his stress calls which were originally shouted out by Mareech to lure Lakshmana away from Sita while Ravana hiding as a fox waiting for the opportune moment to abduct her. I, therefore, connect the question of the fire-test with this incident, one of *Maryada*. It is therefore evident that when you leave your wife and don't find her it is very natural that Rama must have asked Lakshmana who was responsible for her safety about the conditions of disobeying his orders. When they are united, Sita requests none other than Lakshmana to prepare the fire.

Nandini questions the symbolic importance of the virtue of chastity without going into the trap of patriarchal control of rhetoric by allowing time to be its true assessor. She writes:

“Providence was pitiless to me, yet it didn’t  
make me stranded. When my husband  
gave in to the questions of ethics and loyalty  
I had the courage and conviction to exercise  
my freedom to choose a life of a docile  
wife or death-by-choice of a stubborn woman.” (Sahu,127)

“I used my  
admirable cognizance to withstand, subsist and  
finally rise above my anguish. What else  
is freedom? With freedom, I exude the  
sparkle concomitant with mystical holiness. With freedom...” (Sahu, 127)

Here Nandini, not only constructively critiques the oppressive modes of logocentric rhetoric because the very significance of the metaphysics of logocentric linguistics is based on the fact that the acts of language are the articulated unity of sound and sense within the phonic, i.e., speech is the primary form of language and writing is secondary as writing is “a sign of a sign”. So, the situation described in the Valmiki's *Ramayana* is exactly along a similar line. All that is driving the action of that emotional moment is uttered in description but the intent behind the act is never revealed. Here, Nandini uses her voice to affect a point of departure, in an act of transformational necessity through characterization of the plot so as to subvert the whole process of transformation itself by making it a question of propriety, a timeless question of situating herself as either the feminine form of “shakti” or “Bhakti” by resorting to a sublimity far greater than her husband. Nandini writes:

“The world still does debates about Sita’s purity and pollution.  
By contrast, Sita’s silent living out life as doled out to her  
minus enormous arguments speaks her conviction.  
Your rejection of Sita is comprehensively judged by the world  
as unacceptable, but my rejection of Rama is believed as  
an illustration of highest dignity of a just woman.  
This is my poem, lucid, unembellished, ironical

engaging my personal notion of the lives of women.  
It's invigoratingly redolent, delineated with the  
uncontrolled brevity of the 'Woman' who knows  
exactly what and where the striking philosophies are  
since I am candid as the west wind and the twilight charcoal.  
Women! Don't be intrigued by the questions patriarchal.  
Comprehend and accomplish the kinetic dichotomies of  
life; I offer you my reciprocated sisterhood universal." (Sahu, 129)

Thus, her rejection of the imposed autonomy of being abandoned and her ultimate rebuttal of deciding to take the fire-test earlier is a resounding slap on the face of all the contradictions and complexities of the "transcendental signified". Thus, Nandini upholds the Western concept of the

"Metaphysics of the pure presence" on one hand while justifying it by upholding the ontotheology of privileging "Presence over Absence" by saying that it is Ram who loses by his decision as in this quest of self-assertion of all the issues at stake, the solution lies in the careful balancing between both worlds.

Thus, to sum up the arguments put forth, Nandini's Sita is an interesting study of one such character with an endless contestation around her idea especially from the Western feminist perspective and political leanings but with a complete lack of structure and a discourse which doesn't take into account the Indian values and philosophy of "causality or dependent arisings" which are "causally conditioned". Rather than completely resorting to the postmodern deconstructionist idea, one may also examine Ramayana from this Indic perspective by not using Sita as tool to question Ram or patriarchal tendencies only, though it is also a necessity, but certainly not always the core thrust of any exercise. In this regard, Nandini's Sita is a shining beacon of light in the sense that she doesn't become a part of the subversion of authority by accepting her abandonment in silence, but resists as she is an eco-feminist and a self-assured woman who can speak up for herself every time unlike her husband who has always been a man of his times and it is not Rama whose fame is bigger than his name but it is Sita, Nandini's Sita and many others alike who outshine their better half by the sheer force of their will power to stay resilient to their times and not fall for any of these situation dichotomies, as all such studies ultimately end up offering these three preferences:

A) Power over-, and

B) Power against

C) Going along with the times.

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