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Mythopoeia has always been a steady proponent in the construct of any socio-cultural order. In contemporary times, owing to the rise of cultural studies, a steady interest in revisionist literary texts has also surfaced. The association of Indian culture and values with a plethora of mythological narratives have made several scholars curious because they do offer an array of new perspectives of understanding the art, aesthetics and also the politics of myths within a larger social, religious and cultural context. Similarly, by exploring the trope of myth, it has been possible to look at other countries' cultures as well.

This anthology offers new readings of classical myths across continents and cultures. The anthologized essays have collectively explored the various trends of revisionist literature. Sincere attempts have also been made to highlight the ways in which re-readings of select literary works can admirably transform set notions and ideas of human existence.



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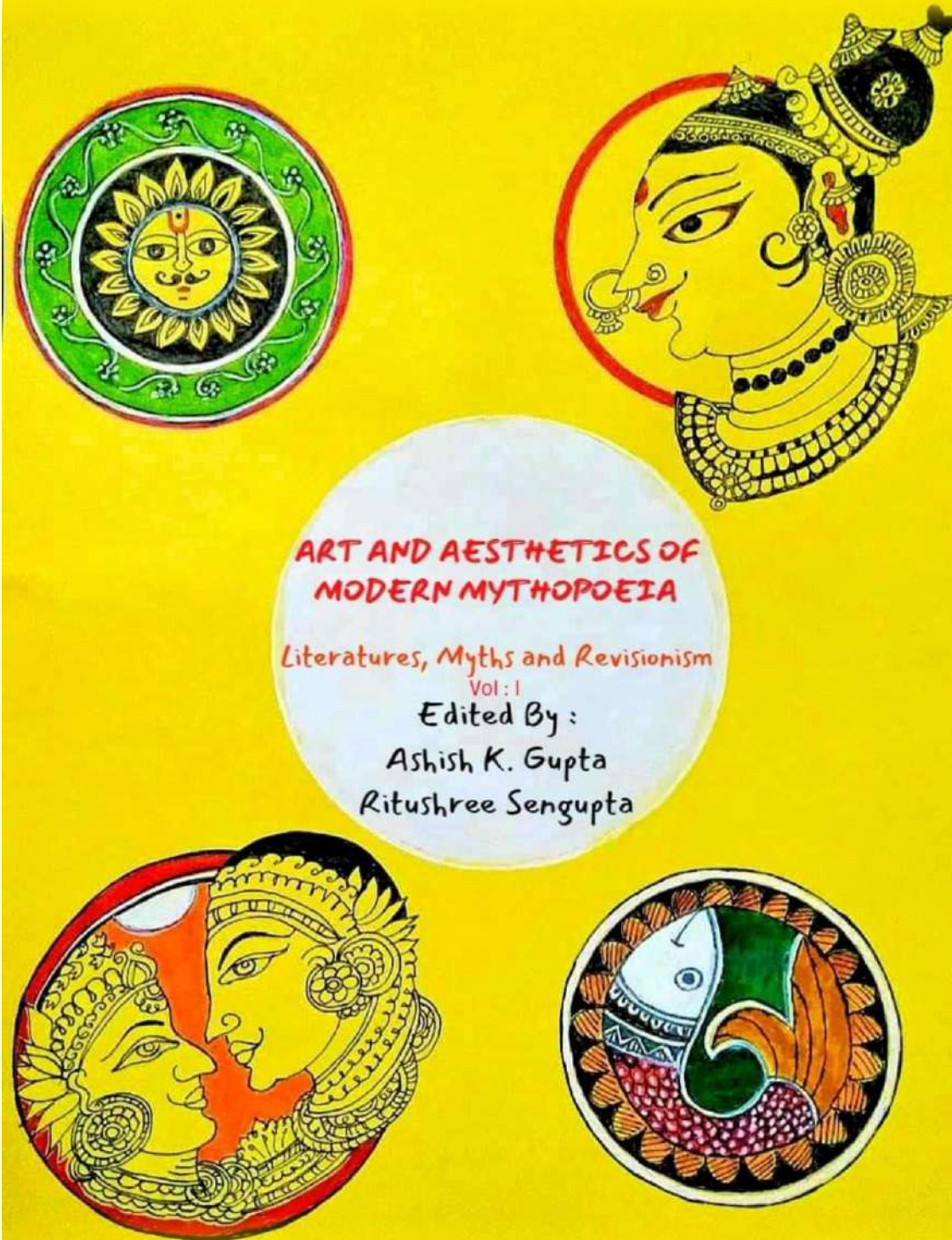
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ART AND AESTHETICS OF MODERN MYTHOPOEIA
Literatures, Myths and Revisionism Vol - One

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Art and Aesthetics of Modern
Mythopoeia:
Literatures, Myths and Revisionism

Volume One

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Dedicated to the Loving Memory of

Prof. Ananta Charan Sukla (1942-2020)

(Former Professor of English, Sambalpur University, Sambalpur and
Founding Editor of the *Journal of Comparative Literature and Aesthetics*)

Foreword

Myth is a strange phenomenon to the modern world of rationality and scepticism. In spite of the doubtful argumentation which is so characteristic of modernity, myths seem to remain as a bridge between ancient and modern worlds.

It fits in more closely with the post-modern world-view, for it is open-ended and accommodates diverse interpretations in tune with ethnic and other outlooks. Some anthropologists view them as springing from religious rituals. In the course of time, as religions gained currency, rituals were forgotten, marginalised or downsized, but myths remained as part and parcel of a particular religion, perhaps as means for appeasing deities.

From primitive societies myths entered epics were created on moulded myths, in tune with the contemporary social situation. In the nineteenth century, myths were attempted as explanations of natural phenomena. The social root of a myth is also very pertinent since ruling ideas, customs, institutions and taboos of a particular age were expressed and sanctified through a particular set of myths.

As human societies have developed, irrational belief in a myth or body of myths has been replaced by its role in anthropological or folkloristic studies. In fact, the growth and function of a particular social setting has been attempted as subject to being traced through its myths. James Frazer in *The Golden Bough* did pioneer work in presenting myths as meaningful; it even influenced thinkers like T.S. Eliot. Sigmund

Freud has tried to interpret myths psycho-analytically, while Jung has explored the 'collective unconscious' of a group or nation through its myths. Devdutt Pattanaik, a recent mythologist, has succinctly defined it: "Facts are everybody's truth. Fiction is nobody's truth. Myths are somebody's truth." Mircea Eliade has argued that one of the foremost functions of myths is to establish models for behaviour.

Debated as myths may seem, these are conceptually inspiring quite a good number of modern scholars and commentators. Ethnic identity has become a keynote in the re-telling or re-interpretation of myths. Thus, young Indian scholars try to view their epics, plays and momentous events in history in terms of mythical concepts reigning in Indian culture. It is, unmistakably, a sure sign of academic alertness and should be encouraged by academicians of all disciplines.

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