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WHEN THE GANGA DESCENDS: A Posthuman Exploration of a Religious Myth toward Planetary Sustainability

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Abstract: Human beings' moral understandings and accepted social roles are located within a community's central epistemological, metaphysical, and cultural paradigms. This paper explores the trajectory of Ganga myth from the ancient belief systems to its present manifestations in the contemporary world of ecological catastrophe. The ancient myth of the river Ganga and her descent to the earth's surface tends to overcome the human-nonhuman dichotomy underlining the posthuman idea of patterns of continuity. Through mythical representations, narratives like *Ma Ganga and the Razai Box* bring forward negotiations on species interconnection, environmental ethics, and sustainability issues. The paper examines how holistic worldviews propagated by Indian mythology inspire reverence, reciprocal partnership, sustainability, and responsibility towards planetary development and wellbeing.

Keywords: Environmental Ethics, Mythological Stories, Nonhuman Subjectivity, Posthumanism, Species Interconnection.

1. Introduction

The present paper owes half of its title to an article published on 28 June 2013 in the English weekly, *The Hindu*, "When the Ganga Descends." It was a commentary on the heavy floods that had gushed down Uttarakhand during mid-June. Projecting the idol of Hindu Lord Shiva, submerged in the flooded river Ganges,

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the most revered river of India, in Rishikesh, Uttarakhand in India, the article expresses condolence on the death toll rising to thousands of pilgrims. Chitra Padmanabhan, the author, writes that if the monsoon rain had not swept away Uttarakhand, those days would have been days of festivity and celebration for Hindus across the country. She writes, "They would have relived the mythology of Ganga's descent from heaven to earth with a dip in its waters"(Padmanabhan). As per the report submitted by the state government on 9 May 2014, 169 people died, and 4021 people were missing, presumed to be dead. On 7 February 2021, a glacier burst caused another furious flood in the conjoined tributaries of Ganga, namely Dhauli Ganga, Rishi Ganga and the Alanknanda rivers, resulting in large-scale devastation in the Chamoli region in Uttarakhand. The rise in the global temperature adding to the complexities of climate change, depletion of natural resources, etc., have led to disastrous ramifications trending in either dearth of rain or sudden fury of excessive rainfall in the past few decades across the globe. According to the Indian Network for Climate Change Assessment Report (2010) of the Ministry of Environment and Forest, Government of India, the rise in temperature would increase the frequency of occurrences and intensity of storm surges and inundation due to sea-level rise by the end of the century (2071-2100).

For the past many decades, the world has been obsessed with short time economic gains and, driven by large corporations and consumerism, has been exhibiting a wasteful use of resources. Natural resource depletion, ecological degradation in the form of desertification, freshwater scarcity, and loss of biodiversity have added to the long list of challenges people face. Humanity has recently begun to understand at a deeper level that their unsustainable ways of living have contributed to most of the ecological problems. Sensing the urgency to impart sustainability values among the human inhabitants, the United Nations General Assembly (2015), formulated the Agenda for Sustainable Development with seventeen sustainable development goals grouped under the five pillars of Planet,

People, Prosperity, Peace, and Partnership. Planetary sustainability, among the others, is grounded on the belief that natural planetary resources like rivers, soil, forests, and mountains protect biodiversity, ecosystems, and wildlife. Therefore steps should be taken to conserve and sustainably use these resources, which are the world's natural and cultural heritage.

The developments in cosmological sciences, systems theory, and quantum physics have opened up deep and profound understandings of the organisational structures of the universe and humanity's place within it. The Gaia Hypothesis, introduced by James Lovelock in the 1970s, propounds that earth and its biological systems behave as a single entity. This entity has closely controlled self-regulatory negative feedback loops that keep the conditions on the planet within boundaries that are "favourable to life" (Boston). Similarly, the work of Thomas Berry, a cultural historian in the field of scientific and religious cosmology, provided a broader perspective on humanity's relationship to the earth and the universe to face ecological crises. This new conceptual understanding of reality has laid ample stress on religion which, in its philosophical and spiritual signification, corresponds to the meaning of human existence as an integral entity of the large cosmos. As the term is characterised by "an obligation" (Graham) and related to the knowledge of a set of principles of divine nature (dogmas), it is often considered to be impeding scientific progress and development.

From the posthuman perspective, religion may be understood as a "symbolic system concerned with ultimate questions about the origins of the cosmos, human destiny and 'transcendent meaning'" (Graham), meandering through, as Douglas E. Cowan writes, "the search for something beyond ourselves" (11). While forming and interpreting living religions, the mythical stories act toward an "ecological approach to nature" (Rukmani 102). These stories comment on the present reality by fusing the human minds to depths of life meanings and relationships among the other inhabitants of the world and

the surrounding. Myths facilitate understanding the anthropocentric challenges, inculcate a sense of sustainable living, and reorient the relationship between religion and planetary sustainability. Harping on the same string, the author writes in the above article, "Myths have meanings that we ignore at our own peril" (Padmanabhan). This intersection of ecology with religion and mythology within the realm of eco-spirituality has opened up a fertile ground for discussions on the community's interaction with the natural world and the cosmos. By reflecting on the Hindu mythical story of Ganga's descent, the paper analyses how a new level of human consciousness can be unfolded within children's stories, with earth-centred mythologies meditating on the urgency of posthuman deliberation. It aspires to build interconnected and inter-related relationships between human beings and other species and resources toward an ecology which is worth living for all.

2. Religious Myths Performing Planetary Sustainability

Generally of an unknown origin, myths are stories that describe the origins of gods, supernatural beings, human beings, nature, rituals, ethical practices, etc. thereby giving meaning and responsibility to human life. They explain unfamiliar situations and events which are beyond common human understanding and experience. Myths have been used, since ancient times, to explain the events in nature in terms of human action. They have been used to interpret all the natural entities, such as rivers, water, sky, cloud, fire, rain, floods, and earthquakes, their origins in connection with human beings. It is more visibly through a posthuman lens that myths, in their religious and cultural manifestations, address what is tangible, concrete, and human and explain the relationship with the human and the non-human others, including supernatural and divine. Jacques Waardenburg opines that "Mythic elements derive their force precisely from the fact that they suggest rather than explain, and that they constitute cores of meaning without having been put together in a definite pattern" (55). Mythical stories, taken together, create belief systems and thus represent a culture's

worldviews. In this connection, Jack Carloye writes, "Even when a culture no longer believes that its myths are true explanations, however, these stories often survive as receptacles of important cultural values" (284). As these mythical stories and values progress through the ages, they prove to be plausibly relevant and applicable in a large context. They also need to be represented and articulated in manners pertinent to the changing times, placing immense stress on methods of articulation of "mental abilities necessary for adaptation to . . . any environmental context" (Sternberg 1036).

The idea of anthropocentric humanism, which views humans as the only being endowed with agency and the rest of the world as passive, inert and worthy of human exploitation, has been challenged by the legends and mythical stories. With these myths, where humanity is no longer considered detached from its creation and cosmos, the world itself spreads as an open space – a location – for "intra-action" (Barad 141) in which coalition takes place between human and non-human entities. Here, considering a human as just one actor among many actors (both humans and non-humans) widens the scope for thinking beyond anthropocentric ways. The inner correspondence and vitality between humans and other non-human beings lead to an interspecies bondage. Reciprocity among all the entities in the world demands a reverence for all other entities echoing the philosophy that all life is ultimately *Brahman* and that humans are hurting their own selves in the process of harming someone. A celebration and recognition of plurality and call for reverence and compassion for the natural environment resituate humans within the limits of nature. Correspondingly, the mythical stories with ample representation of non-human characters like rivers, mountains, forests, and animals refrain from subscribing to any dichotomy between the human and the non-human, which was looked upon once upon a time as "pre-scientific perspective" (Cassirer xvii). Modern society has eventually accepted that human's quest for progress and development is formed on the reductionist foundations of human-centeredness, and the

present crisis can be read as a consequence of disregard for holism and species interconnectedness.

2.1 Indian Myths and Ecological Sensibility

Joseph Campbell, in his *Myths and Symbols in Indian Art and Civilization,* a recollection of studies of the great German Indologist Heinrich Robert Zimmer, notes that "India's treasure of myths and symbols is immense" (11). Indian mythical stories were made a part of routine communal exchanges where people from different strata of the society had intellectual deliberations. These gatherings or *panchayats* constituted the worldview and still are "avenues for communion" (Donly 41), which informed the ignorant masses who they were/are as individuals and as members of the large community. Hence there exists an intricate relationship between religion, social structure, demeanour, and conduct of individuals in Indian culture. The readers are taken into a seductive world of magic and imagination, wherein lies the commentary on the truths of life.

Indian epics and scriptures, encompassing mythical narratives, are knowledge bases that mould individuals' abilities and competencies that facilitate adaptation to the environment. Despite being accused of being irrational, these texts, along with *Puranas* and *Dharma Sastras,* have consistently regulated human conduct of life, supplementing existential needs of identity. The notions of *Dharma* (religious and moral lawful conduct in Hinduism) and *Karma* (law by which good and bad actions determine the future form of existence) are central to the Puranic mythology serving as a yardstick for leading an upright life which includes respecting all the other forms of entities thriving on the planet. One's *karma* (action) is expected to be linked to one's own *dharma* (duty). Evidently, the present catastrophic condition of the planet, which is the fruit of adverse human deeds, corroborates the notions of *dharma* and bad *karma.* In *Kurma Purana*, there is a reference to humanity's narcissistic obsession with their own greedy ends leading to the usurpation and destruction of planetary wealth and the ultimate downfall of all life forms on the planet: "Then greed and passion arose again

everywhere, inevitably, due to the predestined purpose of the Treta (Third) age. And people seized the rivers, fields, mountains, clumps of trees and herbs, overcoming them by strength" (Dimmit and Buietenen 39). Both secular and religious literature promote *dharma* as a regulating principle to sensitise the readers to live in harmony with nature. Environmental stewardship, which rests on the concepts of *karma* and *dharma* provides novel ways for sustainable living and environmental protection initiatives. The pivotal concern in the present state of environmental deterioration and disaster is re-vitalising the significance of living with and beyond the self. *Dharmic* living is therefore using one's rightful actions to cultivate the values of relationship, responsibility and respect. This is how, in the words of Levi Strauss, mythical thinking "play[s] the part of conceptual thinking" (8).

Central to Hindu mythology is the myth of rivers as preservers and destroyers of life. This dual aspect of the river is represented in different cultures' myths, rituals, and religious practices. Water is perhaps the most sacred symbol of spirituality in India, and the creation myths display a close relationship between myth and the environment. According to cultural historian Simon Schama, water sources conform to the "universal law of circulation that governs all forms of vitality" (50). Hindu philosophy over the centuries has viewed rivers as personifications of divinity. Rising in the southern Himalayas on the Indian side and emptying into the Bay of Bengal, Ganga is known to be a river goddess personifying salvation, purity, health and prosperity. In the Hindu mythological stories, Ganga flows through the three realms of heaven, earth, and underworld as Mandakini, Ganga, and Bhogavati, respectively. In these stories, Ganga is represented as a primordial fluid, a divine energy of life interlinking all these three realms. This infusion of the divine presence within the river fosters a cultural intervention within ecological thought by expounding its sacred dimension and forming ontological associations with it. This infusion of 'sacredness' ignites reverence for the river through rituals and practices referred to in religious myths and further

adds to their cultural signification. In this regard, Matt Edgeworth's words are worth noting: "most rivers are neither natural nor cultural, but rather entangled of both" (15).

Reverence for certain landscapes as sacred landscapes (*pavithrasthān*) is integral to the Indian belief system, and they are venerated as holy and of enhanced sacred value. These sites, which comprise mountains, rivers, hills, caves, etc., possess stories of divine dwellings or presence within them. Association of sacred value with the relevance of a place or natural resource like rivers enhance the awe and reverence for that particular entity where human beings seek contact with the almighty or the divinity. Religious symbols in a particular religion or region express how a person understands human existence and connections with all the elements outside the 'self'. The symbols and sacred rituals from the Vedic Age through the Upanishads and the Puranic Age have preserved a chain of mythological stories which say a lot about the cosmos and human relationship with it. Opening up a post-anthropocentric and post-dualistic vision of life, where there is an interaction of differences, is based upon the reconnection of humans with nature, which promotes biological diversity.

3. *Ma Ganga and the Razai Box* as a Metaphor for Sustainability Actions in Children

The five basic elements that define existence in Indian religious philosophy are Earth (*Prithvi*), Water (*Jala*), fire (*Agni*), Wind (*Vayu*), and Space (*Akasha*). Of these elements, water is considered the "foundation of the whole world, the basis for life and the elixir of immortality" (Singh 1). The flow of water is regarded as 'life in circulation.' In Indian mythological stories, which are replete with descriptions of a variety of water bodies, rivers assume a prominent place. They are regarded not just as flowing bodies of water but as life-giving and life-nurturing goddess mothers. In Indian religious tradition, though all the rivers are revered for their inherent purity and sacredness, the Ganga is considered the most revered of them all for its power of sanctity and purifying spirit. She symbolises life-force, purity,

plentitude, and salvation. She has been invariably depicted in ancient Indian scriptures including Vedas, Puranas, Upanishads, and epics like *Ramayana* and *Mahabharatha* and acquires special significance in creative expressions from poetry to narrative fiction. These literary examples explicitly portray intrinsic spiritual and religious values underlying the image of Ganga. The Ganga holds an omnipresent existence not only in the mythical, religious and literary realms of Indian consciousness but also as an important agrarian landscape that sustains the lives of people and the non-human world. Ganga not only provides people with water for their daily needs but also offers food sources like fish and shrimp and is a natural habitat for thousands of rare aquatic animals. As Vandana Shiva observed, "If Ganga lives, India lives: If Ganga dies, India dies" (Das and Tripathi 99).

Written keeping in mind the new generation of earth-carers, Geeta Dharmarajan's *Ma Ganga and the Razai Box*, published in the year 2006, exemplifies the urgency on the part of writers of children's fiction to engage with the mythological imagination and wisdom to comment on environmental concerns like pollution, flooding, soil erosion, and so forth. The image of desolated and weary Ganga is compared here to the ever-flourishing Ma Ganga that drives the reader, through a spiritual reflection on human beings' moral responsibility, towards preserving natural resources. The work sheds light on the sustainability values and informs the readers on how planetary resources should be conserved, as they are required for the nourishment and growth of the overall ecosystem. Daniel Christian Wahl writes in this regard: "What we are actually trying to sustain is the underlying pattern of health, resilience and adaptability that maintain the planet in a condition where life as a whole can flourish. Design for sustainability is, ultimately, design for human and planetary health" (43).

Ma Ganga and Razai Box is the story of a young tribal girl Yasho, fondly called Yasho of the Hill People, who reprimands the river Ganga for flooding their village, leading to soil erosion and for completely neglecting the misery of the villagers.

Personified as 'Ma Ganga' in the story, Ganga stands strong, voices her opinion at the angry Yasho, and points out the ages of ruthless torments meted upon her by the human companions: "I am tired of always taking the blame" (Dharamarajan). In contrast to the representation of Ganga in the old mythical tales as a symbol of *sukhada* (prosperity), *moksha* (salvation), and *shakti* (prowess), the story presents such an image of Ganga, who has been depleted of her vigour, stands as a carcass of human brutality, fuming, scheming and threatening to wipe out the earth. She vanishes into Yasho's *razai* (quilt) box and refuses to come out unless the villagers mend their ways and bring her the matted hair of Lord Shiva. Dharamarajan uses Shiva's matted hair as a metaphor for trees where the strands of hair allude to the roots in accordance with the visual similarity between them. Drawing heavily from the religious scriptures on the legend of the birth of the river Ganga and her stride toward the earth's surface, Dharmarajan's story cements the position of mythical metaphors as the "bedrock of our civilisation" (Murphy 121).

The story alludes to the mythic tale of penance by Bhagiratha, the king of Ikshavaku dynasty, to bring Ganga Devi, the daughter of mighty Meru, to the earth so that she can carry his ancestors' holy ashes back to heaven to attain salvation. Brahma agrees to Bhagiratha's wish but declares that it would be necessary to gain the grace of Shiva. Lord Shiva, the sole contender, could receive the gigantic current of the river and prevent the water force from cleaving the earth and shattering the life forms on earth. Lord Shiva ultimately conceded to the request, undid his matted locks and delayed the cascading current of the river in the labyrinth of his locks. He slowly released her onto the plains bestowing her life-giving boon on all the earthly creatures.

The story comments on the repetitions and cyclical patterns of evolution in natural worlds and human beings running their course from moral uprightness (*dharma*) to dissolution and decay of earthly elements. Realising the contextual undertones of Ma Ganga's demands of "matted hair" (Dharamarajan), Yasho indicates to the ignorant villagers: "Let's plant trees everywhere.

The roots and branches of trees are like Shiva's hair. They will hold the soil" (Dharamarajan). The insight thus gained by Yasho inspires the villagers to plant trees all over the banks and the hills, enabling the village to salvage back the annihilated glory of the natural resources around them. Yasho's enlightenment suggests how sustainable education can blend mythological, aesthetic, and intuitive perspectives of nature with the scientific and rational, culminating in learning nature holistically. Subsequently, the villagers toil day and night to plant new trees of hope and convert "the barren hills and muddy streams" into a wealth of flora and fauna, "springing all over the hills and valleys" (Dharmarajan).

To understand how the local population responds and reacts to the environmental ideologies, we need to examine the cognitive categories and symbolic processes giving religious meaning to natural resources such as Ganga (Alley 298). The stand taken by the river in the story destabilises the idea of the human as the sole agency on the surface of the earth as opposed to the performative and agentic quality of the non-human river exerting its significance. The voice of the non-human river, which is believed to be a 'weaker' category than humans, is heard loud and clear, acting as a motivating factor toward a hospitable world. Here the agency of Ma Ganga helps in developing perspective toward non-humans. The posthuman thought emerges when the mythical subjectivity of Ganga limits the power of humanity by empowering the natural environment.

In *Ma Ganga and the Razai Box*, the flood (*pralaya*) can be taken as the final culmination of the *kaliyuga* (dark age) when the world will come to an end. In traditional Indian myths, the flood has been depicted as an impending dangerous catastrophe looming over humanity's heads, which seems to be occurring due to ignoring the warnings of potential catastrophe. Such flood myths inspire people to mend their ways and restructure the social order. Salvador and Norton consider that the defining character of the flood myth is humanity's "capacity to begin anew with a wiser understanding of correct living" (14). Dharmarajan's story of Ma Ganga succinctly uses the ancient

flood myth with contemporary imagery of soil erosion as depicted in the anger of the villagers in their failure to cultivate crops.

The Ganga in mythical stories is represented as a symbol of mother, always nurturing and taking care of her young ones. In the story, the villagers are the ungrateful children of the fragile Ma Ganga, who have abandoned her after ravaging all her wealth. Having been deprived of all her fertility, Ganga is now forced to bring havoc in the form of a sweeping deluge so that the people uphold her dignity. Her refusal to come out of the razai box with unstoppable confidence displays her power to exert her voice in having her own opinions. The river Ganga in the mythical version of the story is a vibrant entity whose actions are decided by those around her, whereas the Ganga in the text is efficacious and totally in control over her actions and thoughts. Within her refusal to budge to the demands of the human population, Ganga unveils an ontological power to challenge anthropocentrism by maintaining the same disinterestedness towards the human world as she has been subjected to over the years.

Dharamarajan's description of the enormous potential of water confers upon it a material agency and rejects its function merely as a resource. Commenting upon the humans' mishandling of natural resources and the uncanny future of unsustainability, Rajani Kannepalli Kanth asks to "put pieces of planet and its people together" (267). Yasho and her people make the reader realise the necessity to value one's own heritage and "the value of the intergenerational interchange to strengthen the collective memory … and the autonomy of community to manage their territory and build it as a safe place for children" (Motta and Yoshikawa 66). The flood myth here calls for collective action in order to avoid a dangerous future with a symbolic intervention of divine purification force in the form of Goddess Ganga. This purification is not of any organic or moral impurity, but it still leads to a radical restructuring of the natural order of being in ecology. It is a "symbolic submission" (Salvador and Norton 59) to our failures of the past or our *karma*

where there is a merging of the divine, the human, and the nature. This retaliative torrent instils hope in the young readers towards a newly born earth where they can dwell in sustainable ways.

The insights Yasho and her people gained amend the faulty belief of human superiority and profess to take action to replenish the planet of its lost vitality before it is too late. Dharamarajan seems to place immense hope on the human ability to rise from the ashes and emerge as a harbinger of hope for the whole planetary life. It is here that the cultural beliefs and religious values act as a catalyst for a sustainable future. The story envisions a silver lining in the seemingly dark future that the world might fall into due to its non-sustainable ways. Ma Ganga's proclamation that "the people are seeing sense once more" (Dharmarajan) instils hope for a bright future. Commenting on the need for religion to combat anthropocentrism, American historian Lynn White, in his article "The Historical Roots of our Ecological Crisis," writes, "What we do about ecology depends on our ideas of man-nature relationship. More science and more technology will not get us out of the present ecological crisis until we find a new religion, or rethink the old one"(1207).

The humans in *Ma Ganga and the Razai Box* live in a world fraught with environmental disasters in the form of floods and soil erosion. The most viable solution is possible only by recognising and engaging with that environment, underscoring the need for human intervention instead of creating sustainable utilisation of natural resources. Water, as a resource in the story, operates as the ultimate unbiased agent that unites and binds all organic forms of life and also acts as a 'proto' being giving a ray of hope in retrieving the lost paradise. In the words of Mercia Eliade, water "precedes all forms and upholds all creation" (188). The active concern of the Ma Ganga for the conservation of *dharma* and the admonition for humanity to recognise the vitality in the non-human voices a strong opportunity on the part of nature to speak back to power. Seemingly shocked by the state of ecological deterioration and the lack of discourses to uplift the

awareness of the children, contemporary writers like Dharmarajan aspire to write, keeping in mind the unpredictable future the young generation might encounter. Yasho and her villagers develop an eco-spirituality towards all earth resources by realising that the flood and soil erosion are results of their faulty karma and life consists of either overcoming these obstacles or suffering the repercussions of their actions. Eventually, they adopt a lifestyle in cognisance of *dharma* where each person pledges to lead a life attuned to the general welfare of the environment.

Ma Ganga and the Razai Box throws light on the ways in which an individual is connected to all other life forms on the planet and how this relationality, intimacy and communion is a source of visionary guidance towards leading a sustainable life. Posthumanism views the planet as a complex dynamic system where humans interact with biospheric, atmospheric and geological spheres. Human beings are not to be taken as the centre of action in these relational encounters, but just as one constituent part in a large loop of processes. It displaces the view that humans are the masters of the world and are in possession of a license to exploit it. The villagers in the story, emulating these deliberations of reciprocity among planetary factors, address the misfortune of flood and soil erosion through effective negotiations in their adaptive mechanism of survival on the planet. Reverence for the divine Ganga extends the ethics of respect to include all life forms and support for effective alternative technologies and equitable redistribution of wealth.

4. Conclusion

Planetary Sustainability and biodiversity are receiving much attention today in the wake of the degradation of the environment under the pretext of development and modernisation. These debates have also opened up a need to turn back and examine the ways different cultures address biodiversity. The traditional totemic beliefs, myths and practices have undergone several layers of social filters as they have been handed down to the subsequent generations, yet they remain the

most authentic source of cultural knowledge, "basically and universally human" (Leeming 6). From this perspective, any nation's religious and mythical tradition is a catalogue of how its citizens cherish and preserve the ecological harmony between human and non-human entities. How humans are one of the myriad species on the planet whose health, survival and prosperity are intimately entwined with the planet's health, wellbeing, and sustainability depends largely on the cultural framework. Most often, these realisations of human existence spring from the spiritual awareness of particular communities. This spiritual alertness can be acquired from institutionalised religious bodies or even through metaphysical connections where the inner world or self maintains a connectedness with the outer world.

As a field of enquiry, posthumanism also considers the earth a sacred site where all the residing stakeholders are to be valued. Among the different worldviews on ethical beliefs, ancient cosmological ideals exist in each society that are still cogent towards contemporary challenges human beings face. The ancestral wisdom of most of the communities states that the intrinsic values of conservation of nature and preservation of the planet are formed by instilling a reverence towards nature. Belief in the sanctity of all life forms is a connecting link between human responsibility, ethics, rational thinking and posthuman ecojustice for non-humans at par with humans. This idea of reverential development combines spiritual value with the contemporary socio-economic and cultural domains while assisting in planetary sustainability.

In inculcating mythical knowledge that treats the natural world as an active and dynamic agent, sustainability measures can be envisioned. As the future citizens of the planet, children are the ones who need to be sensitised to the interconnectedness of the cosmological web around them. When exposed to meaningful and purposeful experiences that are time-tested and proven worthy, children come with answers to questions about who and what they are. These opportunities open the doors for the youth to take responsibility for their lives and actions based

on a profound and fervent value system. Through the mythical story of Ganga and Lord Shiva, Dharamarajan successfully comments on the evolution of human consciousness and responsibility marked by the temporal transformations of the Ganga myth. Dharmarajan fuses subjectivity into the fluid category of the river by highlighting the human and posthuman ontologies as integral features of Indian religion and mythology.

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