

AN EMBARKED JOURNEY FROM PRE-LIMINAL TO LIMINAL STAGE OF SWAMI RAMA'S ÉLAN VITAL; A BRIEF STUDY OF HIS AUTOBIOGRAPHY "LIVING WITH THE HIMALAYAN MASTERS"

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Abstract.

In the transitional space between two locations. The transition from one thing to another is not yet complete. The concept of a doorway can be understood as a liminal space, as it serves as a demarcation between the interior and exterior realms, as well as between rooms that are connected. For instance, the caterpillar experiences a liminal transitional phase during the process of encasing itself within a cocoon. A highway can be considered a transitional zone that connects the origin and the intended endpoint. In 1967, Victor Turner introduced the concept of liminality, which he defined as a transitional state that exists between two distinct states. Turner characterised liminality as a state of being "betwixt and between," representing the first phase preceding a final state. The concept of liminality was created from the careful observation of ceremonies performed by the Ndembu tribe in the central region of Africa. The author posits that a ritual, particularly one that serves as a rite of passage, encompasses a transformative experience for the individual involved, particularly in relation to their societal standing. The present study is an attempt to adopt the concept of Liminality to autobiographies. The autobiography of Swami Rama is selected for this study. It is undeniable that every individual life has these the three stages that are 'threshold' from past to the present. It is applicable in prominent people's lives who have turned from a common man to an ideal person in the society and serve his fellow men. This study discusses a few incidents in the author's life and connect them to transformation.

Key words: pre liminal, transformation, persistence , reticence , memory studies and threshold.

Introduction

Turner initially employed the concept of liminality to elucidate the intermediary phase embodied by rituals. The process encompasses several phases of moving from and returning to

regular existence: the pre-liminal, liminal (occurring during the ritual), and post-liminal stages, which entail the reintegration into daily life. The state of adolescence can be conceptualised as a liminal phase, characterised by the Swamy's transitional status between childhood and adulthood. The critics have made a significant contribution by asserting that liminality is a new notion within the realms of literary theory and literary memory studies. The concept of liminality serves to facilitate processual methods and mitigate the creation of false certainties that arise from static concepts. In the realm of literary memory studies, scholars have identified two distinct views pertaining to the concept of liminality. The first perspective involves an examination of the mnemonic liminality inherent within literature, while the second perspective focuses on the representation of mnemonic liminality within literary works. The concept of "fictional privileges" in literature, specifically in relation to mnemonic liminality, is given significant focus. Because literature is experiential and has a unique way of showing consciousness, fictional works are good at expressing the subjective experience of mnemonic liminality. The representation of mnemonic liminality can be observed in various parts of literature. These representations pertain to several aspects, such as the intricate interconnections between memory and imagination, the intricate dynamics between Swamy and collective memory, the complexities of communication, and the pivotal significance of language and media in these phenomena. The idea of liminality serves as a theoretical framework within the field of literary memory studies, allowing for the identification and interpretation of the literary representation and contemplation of these transitional aspects of memory, together with an examination of the narrative strategies employed in the process. While there is a theoretically infinite range of ways available, certain gadgets appear to be particularly efficacious. The examination of *Midnight's Children* demonstrates that the utilisation of magic realism, metaphors, and allegories serves as highly effective methods for portraying the state of memory's liminality. Additionally, the conduct of the narrator assumes a pivotal role in the enactment of mnemonic liminality. For an instance, the novel *Midnight's Children* showcases the narrator's partial unreliability and abundant intertextual and intercultural connections, which serve to symbolise the liminal parts of his recollection. The narrator exhibits a transgression of boundaries when his recollecting self superimposes upon his remembered self, or when he alternates between his subjective viewpoint and a remarkable omniscience that gives the impression of him being the repository of others' memories. Furthermore, the utilisation of structural devices such as leitmotifs and the process of imbuing space and objects with meaning are powerful strategies for portraying the state of mnemonic liminality. The following questions are the research questions for the present study.

Application of the concept of Liminality is intertwined with autobiographies in Literature:

The concept of liminality is applicable to autobiographies in several ways, as it can help us understand how individuals navigate and make sense of transformative experiences and transitions in their lives. Liminality, originally introduced by anthropologist Arnold van Gennep and later developed by Victor Turner, refers to the in-between or transitional phases in various rites of passage. It involves a sense of ambiguity, ambiguity, and the suspension of the normal social or cultural order. In the context of autobiographies, liminality can be explored in

the following ways:

Life Transitions: Autobiographies often depict the author's life journey, which may include significant transitions such as moving to a new country, changing careers, experiencing a major illness, or undergoing a personal transformation. These transitional periods can be seen as liminal phases, where the individual is neither fully in the old state nor fully in the new state. Authors may reflect on the challenges, uncertainties, and personal growth that occur during these transitions.

Identity Formation: Liminality is also relevant when authors explore their identity formation. Autobiographies frequently delve into the process of self-discovery, especially during adolescence and young adulthood. These phases are often characterized by a sense of ambiguity and confusion as individuals grapple with questions of identity, belonging, and purpose.

Cultural and Social Change: Autobiographies can serve as important records of cultural and social change. When an individual's life spans significant historical or cultural shifts, their autobiographical accounts can capture the liminal experience of living through these changes. This might include discussions of political upheaval, technological advancements, or shifts in societal norms.

Narrative Structure: Autobiographies are inherently structured as narratives, and the process of crafting one's life story can itself be seen as a liminal experience. Authors must select and arrange events and memories, sometimes reconciling conflicting versions of their own life. This process involves a certain level of detachment from one's past self and the creation of a new narrative identity.

Reflective Growth: Autobiographies often include a reflective element where the author looks back on their experiences and seeks to make meaning from them. This reflective process is akin to the liminal phase of "reaggregation" described by Turner, where the individual returns to a new state of being, having been transformed by their liminal experience.

Incorporating the concept of liminality into the analysis of autobiographies allows for a deeper exploration of the author's journey, the challenges they face, and the transformations they undergo. It provides a framework for understanding how individuals navigate the complex and evolving terrain of their lives, making autobiographies not just personal stories but also valuable cultural and anthropological artefact

It is a well-known fact that the concept of liminality is connected to memory studies. The stages of pre liminal, transition and post liminal can be applied to any life of an individual. The present study has selected the auto biography of Swami Rama 'Living with Himalayan Masters'. It is one of the best autobiographies in among Indian spiritual icons. His journey from living with his Guru to become a monk is highly inspirable. His deeds executed out of ignorance, his uncertainty in taking decisions and his confusion in accepting his faith are considered under pre liminal stage.

Proposed Methodology

The methodology is descriptive in nature for this study. It is a qualitative method. The contextual analysis will be done in three stages of liminal spaces in select autobiographies. The

significant phases of the lives of the authors are analyzed through the text from the select books written by the authors,

Research questions

What is the concept of liminality and what are the stages of liminality?

How is applicable to the study of autobiographies in literature?

Life Journey of Swami Rama

'Living with Himalayan Masters' is an autobiography of Rama in a third person narration. Swami Rama, born in 1925, achieved renown as a yogi subsequent to receiving instruction from his mentor, Bengali Baba. The individual embarked on a journey, seeing many temples and engaging in scholarly pursuits alongside numerous Himalayan saints. Additionally, he underwent training and acquired knowledge in India and Europe prior to his relocation to the United States in 1969. The individual in question founded their inaugural ashram in Nepal, and then, in 1966, they formed the Himalayan International Institute of Yoga Science and Philosophy. Following this, he established the Himalayan Institute of Yoga Science and Philosophy in the states of Illinois and Pennsylvania. He was also crucial in providing a huge medical centre to assist thousands of needy people in Dehradun. Swami Rama has authored numerous works that have been published in both India and the United States. The book titled "Yoga and Psychotherapy" authored by him provides an elucidation of Hathyoga, a practice that has gained recognition in numerous academic institutions in the Western world. The author has espoused the notion in his literary works, including Enlightenment without God and Living with the Himalayan Masters, that individuals have the capacity to attain inner tranquility independent of organised religious systems. In these books, the author also offers a critique of the inclination of yogis to utilise extraordinary abilities as a means to showcase their state of enlightenment. One of his most renowned works is "Living with the Himalayan Masters," which offers insights into his perspective on life, education, yoga, meditation, and spirituality.

His experiences in his childhood related to Pre liminal aspects

This autobiography is divided into fourteen chapters. From Spiritual Education to Himalayas to Journey to the West. There are many incidents that he encountered in his childhood and adulthood that are belonged to pre liminal stage. In the mountainous region, he adhered to a dietary regimen consisting of a single daily meal. The individual in question would consume a single chapati, a portion of veggies, and a serving of milk. On a particular day, nearing the hour of one o'clock, the individual proceeded to cleanse their hands, thereafter taking a seat. At this point, the meal was presented to them.

The Swamy proceeded to recite a prayer of gratitude and was on the verge of commencing their meal when their superior entered the room and interjected, "Hold on!" I inquired, "What is the issue at hand?" He said, "A venerable swami has arrived."

The Swamy is experiencing hunger, and it is imperative for Rama to provide sustenance to fulfil this need. The contended that they would not engage in the specified action, despite their status as a swami, due to their hunger and the unavailability of further sustenance until the following day. He stated that he believed the Swamy in question would not perish. The Swamy's spiritual mentor instructed him to offer sustenance. Please provide it to me; however, do not do so only based on my request. Present it as a gesture of affection. I expressed my hunger by stating, "I am experiencing a sensation of hunger." How can one cultivate feelings of affection towards a Swamy who is consuming food that belongs to oneself? In his unsuccessful attempt to persuade me to offer my food to the swami, he resorted to issuing a command, stating, "I hereby order you to offer your food!" The spiritual leader entered the room. The Swamy in question was an elderly gentleman who possessed a beard that was white in color. Equipped alone with a single blanket, a walking stick, and wooden sandals, the Swamy embarked on a solitary journey amidst the mountainous terrain. (43)

The speaker expressed their satisfaction upon the arrival of the Swamy, as conveyed by the statement made to them by their superior. Could you please bestow a blessing upon this youngster on my behalf? However, Rama expressed that he did not require your blessing. I am in need of sustenance. I am experiencing a sensation of hunger. According to my supervisor, if an Swamy were to lose control during a vulnerable moment, they would therefore experience defeat in the ongoing struggle of existence. As a result, his Guru recommended that the Swamy kindly provide their sustenance to the swami. The Swamy in question was instructed to provide water and afterwards cleanse the feet of another Swamy. Although compliance was exhibited, there was a lack of satisfaction and comprehension regarding the purpose behind these actions.

The Swamy provided assistance in cleansing the other person's feet, following which I his Guru requested the latter assume a seated position and proceeded to serve them their meal. Subsequently, he discovered that he had abstained from consuming any sustenance for a duration of four consecutive days. *The Swamy accepted the food and expressed, "May God bestow blessings upon you!" One will not experience the sensation of hunger unless food is presented in front of them. I hereby extend my benevolent wishes to you (P44)*

. The auditory perception of his voice continues to resonate within Rama's auditory system. Since that particular day, he has been liberated from the compulsion that had frequently driven me towards immature desires. The demarcation between selfishness and selflessness, as well as love and hatred, is exceedingly tiny. Upon traversing this threshold, Swamys derive pleasure from engaging in acts of altruism, devoid of any expectation of reciprocation. Selflessness is a prevalent attribute observed among notable Swamys across the globe. The attainment of any goal or accomplishment necessitates an act of unselfish service. If activities are committed without selflessness, the rituals and knowledge of the scriptures become futile.

In another incident, Rama was chided by his Guru for not meditating. He replied that he was pretending that he was meditating. The teacher warned him and taught him that A teacher frequently uses such measures to assess an individual's attitudes, integrity, and self-control. The individual in question will provide a single confidential piece of information, followed by

discreetly sharing another with a different student, explicitly instructing both recipients to refrain from divulging the information to any other individuals. Instead of retaining the secrets, they engage in a reciprocal exchange of information. In this way, he finds out that they are not equipped to keep a greater secret. The individual asserts that he communicated to another person the instruction to refrain from disclosing the information. However, what was the reason for his decision to not retain the information privately? Educators also administer more rigorous assessments. On occasion, individuals may instruct others to remain in a specific location for an extended period of time, typically lasting three days, without returning. Despite the inclement weather conditions of cold temperatures and rainfall, the aforementioned circumstances only occur subsequent to a prolonged period of time, during which individuals may experience adverse consequences. There are numerous tests of this nature. Regularly subjecting an individual to tests is necessary in order to foster the development of self-reliance. Through the process of testing, educators are able to instill self-discipline and foster self-reliance among their students. Assessing a student's progress is crucial in order to determine their academic development. The practice of administering assessments to pupils serves the purpose of evaluating their individual progress and identifying any flaws that they may not have been consciously aware of.

Another incident in the life of Swamy Rama when he was young reveals his ignorance, perseverance and stubborn nature which was in the process of harnessing by his Guru to transform into his strength later made readers realize how significance it is to change himself. During their journey to Nepal, Rama and his master sought temporary lodging within a forested area located near Tanakpur. The individual's superior instructed him to have sustenance, despite the fact that it was two o'clock in the early hours of the day. The master instructed his disciple to proceed to the marketplace located at Tanakpur, a distance of twelve miles, through a route that traversed through the surrounding forest. Another individual, referred to as "Swamy," who was accompanying the group, firmly expressed to the master that he should refrain from sending the youngster. This individual further stated that if he were the master's student, he would not have allowed the boy to be sent. The instructor instructed another individual, referred to as Swamy, to maintain silence and refrain from behaving in a manner that would undermine his masculinity and spiritual status as a Swamy. He placed emphasis on the necessity of providing training to Rama in a similar manner. Subsequently, he instructed his student to expeditiously approach while grasping the lamp and ensuring an ample supply of oil within it. Additionally, he cautioned him to ensure that matches are kept in his pocket, to carry a staff in his hand, to wear appropriate footwear, and to proceed to the food grain shop in order to procure an ample supply of groceries to sustain him for a duration of three to four days. Rama silently acquiesced and departed without uttering a single word. Throughout the duration of that extended evening, instances arose wherein tigers and snakes traversed the pathway directly ahead of the individual in question. The vegetation on either side, namely elephant grass, exhibited considerable height, surpassing the individual's stature. The individual perceived many auditory stimuli emanating from the vegetation, although he remained unaware of their origins. Using a diminutive lamp, I traversed a distance of twelve kilometres to procure the necessary provisions from the shop, thereafter returning to my starting point at the early hour of seven in the morning. The individual in authority inquired about his well-being,

prompting me to recount the events that had transpired during our journey. Eventually, he expressed his contentment and proceeded to engage in culinary preparations. Rama has the ability to comprehend. Fearlessness is also a crucial need for gaining enlightenment. Individuals that consistently exhibit fearlessness are very commendable. Attaining a state of complete liberation from all fears constitutes a significant milestone in the journey towards enlightenment.

Conclusion

The inclusion of the liminality idea in the examination of autobiographies facilitates a more profound investigation of the author's trajectory, the obstacles encountered, and the metamorphoses experienced. Autobiographies provide a framework that makes it easier to understand how people navigate the complex and changing landscape of their lives. Consequently, autobiographies transcend being mere personal narratives and assume the role of significant cultural and anthropological artefacts. The current study is focused on presenting a limited number of experiences that are specifically associated with the pre-liminal stage. Liminality, as previously said, refers to the notion of a transitional state between the past and the present. The author's personal encounters have played a significant role in facilitating their transformation into an exemplary individual, ultimately leading them to the post-liminal phase.

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