



Amish Tripathi's *The Shiva Trilogy: Significance of Mythopoeia*

Indra Pal Singh

Former Ph.D. Research Scholar, Department of English, University of Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh, (Indian)

Email: indrapal1219@gmail.com

Abstract: Amish Tripathi's debut novel *The Immortals of Meluha* (Shiva Trilogy I) can be interpreted from multiple theoretical perspectives. Amish Tripathi is a new Indian English writer who has displayed an unsurpassed brilliance in recreating Hindu mythology. His Shiva is a Tibetan immigrant who migrates to Meluha to lead the Suryavanshi vengeance and destroy evil. Shiva's clan constitutes a different diasporic community. As a leader of the community Shiva cannot be defined from traditional diasporic perspective. The conventional diasporic consciousness of displacement, dislocation, alienation, nostalgia, desire for the Homeland and identity-crisis is not shared by Shiva's diasporic community. Infact his tribe is satisfied with the Meluhan scheme of things; Meluhan magnificence has mesmerized their mind. Amish has humanised the legendary figures and mythological characters. His Sati is a Vikrama woman who is supposed to be the carrier of bad fate; inspite of being a subaltern she manifests rare skill of martial arts. The women in the fiction do not demand for political equality, economic rights and social identity; they are embodiments of excellence and perfection. Lady Ayurvati is an experienced, professional doctor who is adept in the prescription of medicine as well as in the conduct of surgery. Kanakhala is the prime minister of emperor Daksha; she looks after the administrative, revenue and protocol matters. The text can also be conceived in ecocritical perspective.

[Singh, I.P. **Amish Tripathi's *The Shiva Trilogy: Significance of Mythopoeia***. *J Am Sci* 2022;18(2):44-47]. ISSN 1545-1003 (print); ISSN 2375-7264 (online). <http://www.jofamericanscience.org>. 8. doi:[10.7537/marsjas180222.08](https://doi.org/10.7537/marsjas180222.08).

Keywords: Humanizing, Reconstruction, Monomyth, Myth, Campbell, Hero Motif, Amish Tripathi.

Introduction:

Shiva in traditional Hindu mythology, especially Shaivism tradition is considered to be the Lord of the Lords, the creator, protector and transformer of the Universe (Sharma, 65; Issitt & Main, 147, 168; Flood 1996, 151). Shiva is one of the Trimurti where Brahma is the creator, Vishnu the preserver and Shiva the quintessential destroyer (Matchett, "The Purāṇas", 139). He is there to destroy all worlds and dissolve them into nothingness at the end of time (Zimmer, 124). In the introductory part of the first book of the trilogy titled *Immortals of Meluha* (2012) we see how Lord Shiva's essential Godlike nature is described in vivid and powerful words: "Shiva! The Mahadev.

Shiva! The Mahadev. The God of Gods. Destroyer of Evil. Passionate lover. Fierce warrior. Consummate dancer. Charismatic leader. All-powerful, yet incorruptible. Quick of wit – and of temper. No foreigner who came to India – be he conqueror, merchant, scholar, ruler, traveller – believed that such a great man could ever have existed in reality. They assumed he must have been a mythical God, a fantasy conjured within the realms of human imagination. And over time, sadly, this belief became our received wisdom. But what if we are wrong? What if Lord Shiva was not simply a figment

of a rich imagination but a person of flesh-and-blood like you and me? A man who rose to become god-like as a result of his karma. That is the premise of the *Shiva Trilogy*, which attempts to interpret the rich mythological heritage of ancient India, blending fiction with historical fact. The *Immortals of Meluha* was the first book in a trilogy that chronicles the journey of this extraordinary hero. The story was continued in the second book, *The Secret of the Nagas*. And it will all end in the book that you are holding: *The Oath of the Vayuputras*. This is a fictional series that is a tribute to my God; I found Him after spending many years in the wilderness of atheism. I hope you find your God as well. It doesn't matter in what form we find Him, so long as we do find Him eventually. Whether He comes to us as Shiva or Vishnu or Shakti Maa or Allah or Jesus Christ or Buddha or any other of His myriad forms, He wants to help us. Let us allow Him to do so.

Yadyatkarma karomi tattadakhilam
shambho tavaaraadhanam My Lord Shambo,

My Lord Shiva, every act of mine is a prayer in your honour

Shiva is adept in dancing in the novel too as in the myths. In the novel Shiva before beginning his dance takes the preparatory pose which is the Nataraj pose. He prays to lord Nataraj the God of dance for

blessing him. The dance master who sees Shiva's dance is so much impressed with the dance that he calls Shiva as Nataraj a reference to the Shiva as Nataraj in the myths. Shiva attains the status of *Neelkant* after his throat turns blue after drinking somras. In mythology, though, Shiva's throat turns blue after he drinks *halahala* a potent poison.

About the author:

Amish Tripathi, a Libran born on October 18, 1974 is an alumnus of Indian Institute of Management Calcutta. He is renowned for his novels *The Immortals of Meluha* (2010), *The Secret of the Nagas* (2012) and *The Oath of the Vayuputras* (2013). The three books jointly encompass the Shiva Trilogy. Tripathi's debut work *The Immortals of Meluha* cognizance's the racy- thriller subject matter into mythology, breaking into the zenith within a week of its initiation. Shiva is a valiant combatant and defender. Shiva accepts the proposal and moves to Meluha with his tribe. They get in touch with the city of Srinagar and are received there by Ayurvati, the Chief of Medicine of the Meluhans. Shiva and his tribe are awed with the Meluhan mode of existence. On their former night of hang about at Srinagar, the Gunas rouse up amid high fever and sweating.

Reciprocating the Shiva of his novels, the 38 year old IIM graduate, Amish also abandons his booming career as a banker with a sole and intentional purpose to transform into a flourishing and admired writer. The ideal permutation and balance of adventure, action and love along with ideologies, mythology and philosophy is what has led Amish to his providence of producing this nationally acclaimed chartbuster.

MYTHICAL CHARACTERS IN THE SHIVA TRILOGY

Amish uses of myth as the main theme of his novels, these cannot be ignored. In a way, these myths are the integral part of the novels. Some of the main characters are Gods, and some characters are super humans. In Shivas Trilogy lord Ram is God, although he is not an active character, but many times his presence and power is reminded to the reader. The other male mythical characters are- Shiva, Brahaspati, Parashuram, Rudra, Daksha and many more. Due to limitation of work, only few characters can be discussed.

PARASHURAM:

According to *srimad Bhagwata*, book nine, chapter fifteen, Parashuram known under the name of Ram was the son of Jamadagni and Renuka. He was called as one of the avatar of Vasudev and the destroyer of the race of kshatriyas. It was said that Parashuram attacked kshatriyas twenty one times and

<http://www.jofamericanscience.org>

7 exterminated them from this earth. Now the question arises why did Parashuram do that. There is a mythical story behind it. There was Arjun(a kshatriya) ruler of Haihayas. He threw his worshipped made the lord Dattatreya happy and through his blessings he had secured a thousand arms, fame, bodily strength, mastery in yoga, and even a power to reduce his body to the sixth of an atoms. He now, roams about in the world like wind. Ravana with ten heads did not want to show his strength in front of Arjun. Who with his hundred arms was able to stop the flow of waves of the river Narmada. Arjun once imprisoned Ravana in his capital Mahishmati and later set him free. Once roaming in the dense jungle for some sports, in which Jamadagni, (father of Parashuram) lived Arjun came across that place. Jamadagni had many Kamdhenu cows with him. When the ruler Arjun reached, their Jamadagni extended his hospitality to Arjun and his men, army and animals. Arjun on seeing so felt jealous of this. He for a long time wanted to have Kamdhenu cows, so without taking the permission of the king he ordered his men to take away the cows along with their calves, *Te cha Mahishmatim ninyuh Savatsan krindatim balata*. When Parashuram returned and came to know about the bad act by Arjun, became angry and taking his axe and bow rushed to Arjun's kingdom. When Arjun came to know this, he sent his men with elephants, horses, soldiers armed with arrows; javelins etc, in fierce battle Parashuram single-handed killed his men. Seeing this Arjun himself came for the battle but Parashuram chopped away all the hundred arms of Arjun. When he was killed, his ten thousand sons ran away from the battlefield and thus Parashuram returned save to the hermitage along with the cows. He told the story to his father about the battle with Arjun. On hearing this, he became sad and said to Parashuram that we are Brahmins and we should not commit a sin by killing men, we are known for our forgiveness now to repent the sin of killing a king you have to visit the holy places, pilgrimage for one year.

DEV GURU- BRAHASPATI

One of the manas sons, Brahaman Angira got a son. Angiras was very clever, wise intelligent and knowledgeable. He knows all the Vedas, Shastras, he is handsome, merit able and humble. He started the prayer of Lord Shankara. He did concentration for about ten thousand years in Kashi then Mahadev appeared in front of him and tells that he is very happy with his devotion. Mahadev asked him to tell whatever he wants. On seeing Mahadev in front of him, Angiras became very happy. He said after seeing the God, his all wishes are fulfilled. After listening this, Mahadev again became very happy. He

editor@americanscience.org

told he had done too much devotion so he will be lord of all deities and will be revered and respected in the entire Universe. His name will be BRAHASPATI. He is a great orator and learned, so his name will also be Wachaspati. The man who will do prayer of the Linga established by him and read this prayer will get whatever as he wants. Moreover, any planet cannot interrupt him. After this Mahadev called The Brahma, Indra and all the deities and told the Brahma, let the Brahaspati be Head of all deities.

Science in Shiva Trilogy:

A number of scientists in the name of rishis, their knowledge of Somras and daivi astras is so scientifically explained in the novels that modern scientists may wonder. "So what did Lord Brahma do?" asked Shiva. "After a lot of research, Lord Brahma invented the Somras, which consumed, reacts with oxidants, absorbs them and then expels them from the body as sweat or urines. Because of the Somras, there are no oxidants left in the body." "Yes. That's why all Meluhans are taught about two things from a young age-water and hygiene. Water is the cleanest absorber of the effluents that the Somras generates and excretes as toxins. Meluhans bathe at least twice a day. All ablutions are done in specific rooms and underground drains then safely carry the waste out of the city. " Manufacturing the Somras is not without its fair share of difficulties. It requires various ingredients that are not easily available. For example, the Sanjeevani trees. The manufacturing procedure also generates a lot of heat. So we have to use lot of water during the processing to keep the mixture stable.

Also, the crushed branches of the Sanjeevani tree have to be churned with the waters of the Saraswati River before processing begins. Water from other sources doesn't work". In the concept of Neelakanth, the blue colour symbolizes slow poison or the negative thoughts. The same in the neck indicates that the poison is neither to be drunk nor to be spitted out but to be kept in the throat temporarily so that it can be neutralized at appropriate time. The well described slow poisons are attachments, anger, greed, desires and ego. (Kama, Lobha, Moha and Ahankaar). The root cause of anger is non fulfillment of desires. Anger in turn can be expressive or suppressive. Expressed anger will lead to aggressive behavior and resultant social unhealthiness. It can also rupture a heart blockage and precipitating a heart attack or rupture of a blood vessel in the brain leading the brain hemorrhage. Suppressed anger on the other hand will release chemicals in the body leading to illness like acidity, asthma and diarrhea and cholesterol deposition in the blood vessels leading to future blockages. One can manage anger

<http://www.jofamericanscience.org>

with taking the right and not the convenient action, neutralizing anger by willful cultivation of opposite positive thoughts etc. For example the process of silently passing on love to any individual can take away the angry This way, Amish points out science at every step in Shiva Trilogy. In the production of Somras, hygiene, civilized way of house construction, the concept of Neelakanth, deformities of people whom we today worship as Gods with extraordinary power. All the miracles are seen with scientific objectivity.

Conclusion

Amish Tripathi through this novel tries to address the social reality of the contemporary society. He recasts the Shiva myth to represent the malicious designs of people in power and how their selfish desire leads to destruction and devastation. He suggests a rational outlook to solve these problems. The fantastic elements of the Shiva myth are interwoven with the contemporary reality. The issue of environmental pollution is addressed through mythical narrative. Amish Tripathi did not invent a new world but reveals a world of magical realism in which supernatural realm mixes with the natural and familiar world. For instance, in the novel the intake of Somras turns Shiva's throat blue whereas according to Shiva myth Lord Shiva consumed poison during the Sagar Manthan. The writer gives the supernatural element a scientific tone as the readers may not believe that a human being can drink poison so he introduces an elixir drink that turns Shiva's throat blue. Hence, fantasy and realism combine to project the writer's worldview or vision of a more rational, just and fair society for all.

References:

1. Abrams, M.H. A Glossary of Literary Terms. New Delhi: Harcourt India, 2001. Reprint.
2. Ahmad, Aijaz. In Theory: Classes Nations, Literatures. London: Verso, 1992. Print.
3. Barry, Peter. Beginning Theory: An Introduction to Literary and Cultural Theory. New Delhi: Viva Books, 2010. Print.
4. Brady, Ralph. *A Critical Analysis in Depth*. New York: Barrister Publishing Co, 1966. Print.
5. Childs, Peter and et al. The Routledge Dictionary of Literary Terms. London: Routledge, 2009. Reprint.
6. Das Manoj. Twilight of Gods, Titans and Men. Myths, Legends, Concepts and Literary Antiquities of India. P1.
7. Flaherty, Wendy Doniger O'. Hindu Myths. Ed. Betty Radice. New Delhi: Penguin Books, 1975. Print.

editor@americanscience.org

8. Guha, Ranajit, and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, eds. *Selected Subaltern Studies*. New York: Oxford University Press. 1988. Print
9. Hall, S. "The West and the Rest: Discourse and Power". *Race and Racialization: Essential Readings*. Das Gupta, T. et al (Eds). Toronto: Canadian Scholars Press. 2007. Print
10. Hari, D.K. *Understanding Shiva*. Bangalore: Sri Sri Publications, 2006.print.
11. Joshi Shankarrao Baldeekshit, ed. Venkatesh Mallepuram. *Shiva Rahasya Shamba Kriti Samputa: Kannadu Karnat vol 1*. p383.
12. Kumar, Sajit & M. Gagan. *Trueman's Specific Series UGC NET/SLET*. New Delhi: Danika Publishing Company, 2007. Print.
13. Martin, Michelle. "Eco-edu-tainment: The Construction of the Child in Contemporary Environmental Children's Music." *Wild Things: Children's Culture and Ecocriticism*. Ed. Sidney Dobrin and Kenneth Kidd. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2004. Print.
14. Menon, Ramesh. *Siva*. New Delhi: Rupa Publications, 2006. print.
15. Mishra Lata. *Ethical Wisdom and Philosophical Judgement in Amish Tripathi's The Oath of Vayuputras*. P25. *Linguistics and Literature Studies* 1(1): 20-31, 2013. <http://www.hrpub.org>
16. Review in *People*. Quoted on the jacket of *The Immortals of Meluha*. New Delhi: Westland Ltd, 2010. Print.
17. Review in *The Afternoon*. Quoted on the jacket of *The Immortals of Meluha*. New Delhi: Westland Ltd, 2010.Print.
18. Rueckert, William. "Literature and Ecology: An Experiment in Ecocriticism." *The Ecocriticism Reader: Landmarks in Literary Ecology*. Ed. Cheryll Glotfelty and Harold Fromm. The University of Georgia Press: Athens, 1996. Print.
19. Segal, Robert. *A Very Short Introduction*. United States: Oxford U.P, 2004.Print.
20. Shukla Ambri, Suman Swati and Shuchi Srivastava. "The Immortals of Meluha and the Science in their Belief" *International Journal of Research in Humanities, Arts and Literature*. Vol. 2, Issue 5, May 2014, 89-94. ISSN (E):
21. Tripathi, Amish. *The Oath of Vayuputras*. New Delhi: Westland Ltd, 2013. Print.
22. Tripathi, Amish. *The Immortals of Meluha*. New Delhi: Westland Publishers, 2010.print.

2/21/2022