

Promulgation of Mythic Pluralism in Amish Tripathi's *Shiva Trilogy*

Vaishnavi. S

(17PEN019)

Thesis submitted to

Avinashilingam Institute for Home Science and Higher Education for

Women, Coimbatore 641 043

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the

Master's Degree in English

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Chapter I

Introduction

Mythology is a subjective truth. Every culture imagines life a certain way.

-Devdutt Pattanaik

Every person's life existence in this world is clung to myth. The contradictory reality is people live in veracity, where veracity refers to truth. Truth can be categorised into different types and they are objective, subjective, logical and intuitive. As a matter of fact, myths are cultural yet universal. Myths generally rely on evidence and faith hence myths are wholly spiritual in nature and they are grounded in faith. The Oxford Dictionary defines myth as "traditional story concerning the early history of people or explaining a natural or social fact". Thus myths are foundational tales that play a fundamental and vital role in the progression of society.

Myths encompass universality and they date from a time before the introduction of writing. There are theories that claim myths to have originated and existed as allegories. According to one of the theories, myth is an allegory of natural phenomena for instance, there are cases like Apollo representing the Sun, elephant representing lord Ganesha and so on. One of the theories also insisted that myths are a distorted description of real historical events. The theory accentuated historical events or personages and it is an approach to the interpretation of mythology. This theory is named "euhemerism" after the mythologist Euhemerus of 320 BC. Myths emerge as allegories for philosophical and religious reasons for example Narasimha, the man-lion avatar of Vishnu. He is one of the destroyers of evil who ends calamities on Earth and restores the dharma. This support the claim that religion has always created myths, and myths usually have a religious origin. The Greek, Islamic, Hinduism, Chinese and Christianity are thus spun around large myths.

The prominent characters in the myths are gods, demigods or supernatural humans and the narrative is grandeur in its style. As mentioned earlier myths are frequently condoned by rulers and priests and are closely related to religion or spirituality. The emergence of myth is attributed to primordial age where myths were considered to be true accounts of their remote past. Creation, society's customs, institutions and taboos were claimed and sanctified by an emanation of myth.

Thomas Mann (1875-1955), a novelist, who is noted for his insight into the psychology and the intellectual perspective in his fiction *The Magic Mountain* quotes, "The myth is the foundation of life, and it is the timeless schema, the pious formula into which life flows when it reproduces its traits out of the unconscious" (1924). He emphasized the eternal and the transcendental peculiarity of myth. Mann referred to myths as an inevitable source to which a man bank on to universalize his personal predicament. Substantiating Mann's quotation, myth manifested the primeval instinct of mankind to respond to their environment and the innate impetuosity to enhance their collective identity.

Myth at a superficial level is simple narratives, which projected an aspect of experience that is inextricably related to the life of a particular community. At a profound level, the narratives hold an intense socio-spiritual significance driven from the value and belief systems bequeathed to a distinct community and mediated through the generation of local wisdom. Simply myths are first-hand knowledge of the environs. Such narratives have played an effective role in structuring the identity, psychological aspect and the collective psyche of the community as a whole.

Simultaneously myths have also beheld universal and individualistic characteristics. Myths generally extracted their sustenance from the cultural standards and the rites thus they are a didactic device with the enormous application. Fatherly myths unravel the areas which are capable of divergent interpretations and those which

are dependent on an individualistic realm of experiences. Myths voiced the age-old worldly wisdom encapsulated in tradition. Firstly, the depiction of a great historical event is called *Saga*. Secondly, a *Legend* is bounded to a historical person or a place and lastly, *Folktales* are traditional adventurous tales. Thus a myth is inclusive of *Saga*, *Legend* and *Folktales*.

Mircea Eliade (1907-1986), a Romanian Historian, perceived myth as stories of origins and considered them as sacred histories. Sigmund Freud (1856-1939), the founder of Psychoanalysis stated in his *Formulations on the Two Principles of Mental Functioning* that “the role of myths contributed to the pious and cultural fantasies that influenced, introduced and modified ego ideals and the pre-oedipal and post-oedipal superego; myths also promoted identifications and sublimation” (38). Carl Jung (1875-1961) founder of Analytical Psychology, enriched myths as the archetypes of the collective unconscious. According to Jung’s definition, myths are the “narrative elaboration of archetypal images” (qtd. in Rochelle 19). The key to his theory of myth lies in his idea of the collective unconscious, whence one shares his or her certain primordial shapes or images of thought then Jung terms it as ‘archetypes’. These are what he calls as archaic remnants of primordial images which are an “unrepresentable element of the instinctual structure of the human psyche” (qtd. in Rochelle 18).

Joseph John Campbell (1904-1987) considers myth and ritual as a second womb. They are embodiments of civilization which protect the individual and he calls it a cultural development. He claimed myth functioned as a proto-science, offering explanations for the physical phenomena that surrounded and affected mankind’s lives. In his masterpiece *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* (1949) he made a comprehensive attempt by bringing together various mythic components from different cultures, in an effort to define the essence of a hero in any tradition (Ausband 14-15). According to Campbell, he called this pattern ‘monomyth’. Just like dreams, myths also arise from

the subconscious mind of man that deals with hopes and fears that have been scarcely articulated (Ausband 14-15).

The development of myths is ascribed to Greece. Ancient Greek philosophers termed myth as 'mythos'. Mythos is anything transmitted by word such as a fable, narrative, story or tale. Greek philosophers distinguished Mythos from Logos. Mythos illustrated intuitive narrations whereas Logos pictured reasonable deliberations. Mythos was the begetter of the oracles and the arts. From Logos originated science and mathematics and explained the divine reason implicit. For instance, Logos answered the questions 'why' whereas Mythos explained the purpose, meaning and validation to existence.

As a contrast, Hindu clairvoyants called myths mithya. They distinguished Mithya from Sat. Mithya is a truth mirrored through a frame of reference whereas Sat is truly independent of any frame of reference. Mithya portrayed a limited and distorted view of reality; Sat projected a boundless and exact view of things. Mithya is a word derived from Sanskrit it a fantasy and a delusion. Sat is an absolute truth and it is perfect in every aspect so it cannot be consolidated to symbols nor it can be confined to words. Therefore for saints, the delusion of myths served as a quintessential window to the truth of Sat.

Myths are deep-rooted in the psyche of the whole society and they are constituted to serve an ample number of functions or to elaborate the mysterious natural phenomenon. Myths are principally a social construct and it is religious and secular in its nature. The divine myths delineated natural divine powers and superstitions. Notions such as rebirth, heaven and hell, angels and demons, fate and free will, sin, Lucifer and salvation are religious myths. Ideas such as sovereignty, nation, state, human rights and other forms of rights are secular. For instance, the old English poem *Beowulf* is a mixture of the Biblical story of Cain and Abel and the dangerous Grendel. Grendel an

archaic creature, who is a monster out of Hell, is a notable example of a myth. In the Indian context Lord Chandra disguised in the form of cock accompanied by Lord Indra coming down to Earth to seduce Ahalya, the spouse of saint Gautam, is a myth.

Therefore myth is a literary form which encloses an intensified surface meaning and myths illuminated nuances of long-held customs and natural circumstances.

If myth is an inkling, mythology is the vehicle of that inkling. Mythology posited stories, symbols and rituals that make a myth corporeal. Symbols, rituals and stories are essentially languages that are heard, seen and performed. As a whole they are paradigm of truths of a culture. For instance, the story of Resurrection, the symbol of the crucifixion and the ritual of Baptism have long established the impression of Christianity. In Hindu mythology, the Lord of the Universe represents many aspects of creation. Shiva is Ishvara, he is alternatively called the Prananaatha or the Pranesvara, where Prana means the life force. In the *Upanishads*, the breath is declared as the lord of the body. Sufficing this Shiva symbolized the *Atman*. *Atman* simply referred to breath. In every living species, breath is responsible for the progression of life and for survival breath is mandatory. Breath is called a purifier because it cleanses impurities from the body. Shiva is also the destroyer of evil and thus he is termed the *Prananaatha*. The story of the battle and the symbol of the flag reinforce the notion of community and nation.

Mythology intends to stay exaggerated and fantastic so that the moral is conveyed. Mythology is modern arrogance to presume that in ancient times people laid their faith in the objective existence of virgin births, fluttering horses, and gods with three headed such as Lord Brahma, ten headed Ravana, talking and transforming serpents, etc. Although mythology underlined the scientific and historical study of myths, it is implied in a looser sense to refer to the body of myths belonging to several individuals or group of peoples. Mythology therefore is the body of myths of a specific

culture and the interpretation of myths. Customs and beliefs are thus evolved from myth and mythology.

Primarily myths are traditional and hence they witness what can be termed mythopoeic age, an age which represented a certain phase in the development of human thought. Creation of Man by Prometheus is a notable Greek myth that can endorse this. By contrast, mythology is an assemblage of several myths which is always associated with a group of people or culture. Mythology according to Spence Lewis in his *Mythology, Folklore and Religion* is “The function of mythology is the investigation and explanation of myths or tales relating to the early religious and scientific experiences of mankind” (1994). Mythology spotlights material, methods and progress of primitive religion and science since quite a lot of myths aim to explain physical and religious phenomena while it was a living faith. Mythology thus is a cultural document. Mythologies synthesize the insights of the myths of the past and as a result brings out discoveries of philosophy and physical science.

The ancient Greeks are the prime subjects in the evolution of mythology. Greek mythology holds a long fascinated humankind. Mythology reminds visions of epic, battles and quests of heroes and gods in a period where evil spirits wandered free and terrorized humankind. Mythology is simply a group of myths relevant to society. Greece thrived upon mythology, for Greeks it was not just a story but a body of scientific knowledge about the world and a normative conception of mankind. As portrayed in Werner Jaeger’s *Paideia: The Ideals of Greek Culture* (1939), a noteworthy comprehensive study about Greek culture denoted there was neither a written code of laws nor a system of ethics in ancient Greece. Grecians lived by the life of modeled heroes and by the proverbial wisdom passed on from one generation to another. Thus Homer the legendary author of *The Iliad*, *The Odyssey* (8 BC) and *The*

Hesiod (650BC) remarkable Greek poet became the significant educators of ancient Greek society.

The classical or Graeco-Roman mythology refers to the mythology and to the associated poly-theistic rituals and practice of classical antiquity. The Roman religion intervened with Greek in course of time. The two traditions had converged to the point of identity by first century BC. Homer's epic poems *The Odyssey* and *The Iliad* focus on event surrounding Trojan War. Homer's contemporary Hesiod's poem *The Theogeny and Works and Days* (8 BC) contain accounts of the genesis of the world, the succession of divine rulers, the succession of human ages and the origin of sacrificial practices (Greek Mythology). Greek mythology influenced culture, arts and literature of different heritage and language. In the fifth century BC tragedians such as Euripides, Sophocles and Aeschylus implied ancient tales of Homer and Hesiod recurrently to explore the forces and passion that governed human behavior.

Mythologists explored Hindu, Greek and Scandinavian myths which had the shades of common origin. Philologists even established an etymological identity of numerous names of gods and goddesses. They conjecture, with good reason, that the Hindus, Germans and Greeks owned a common homeland whence their ancestors migrated in prehistoric times to different parts of the world, and that their common language and religion undertook many fluctuations by contact with new and alien environments. However, even in these modified forms, there are striking analogies, which establish a fundamental unity.

An analogy that fascinated students of comparative mythology is that of the Egyptian to the Indian mythological system. It was not only the myths but also mannerisms and usages are found communal to ancient Egyptians and Indians. Like Indians, The Egyptians had a typical caste-system. Egyptians worshipped the bull Apis. Moreover, Nandi, Shiva's bull, beheld a unique position in Hindu animal mythology.

Osiris the god of life, in Egyptian mythology is found parallel with the Hindu Iswara. There is a sharp striking resemblance between the legendary wars of the three principal gods in Egypt and India. As Osiris battled with Typhon a monstrous serpentine, which was defeated at a greater and even killed by Hours, similarly Brahma brawled with Vishnu gained an advantage over Vishnu, but Brahma was finally overpowered by Mahadeva, who cut off one of his five heads. In Egyptian cosmogony the sun-god Ra shed tears of creative rays from which all beings sprang into existence; and in India, the counterpart of the myth is Prajapati's creative tears from which all creatures are said to have come into being. The Egyptian Horus, like Brahma of the Hindu Triad, was born out of a lotus. Every religion claims for itself exclusive divine origin, classical literature and the sacred books of different nations revealed to the world peculiar and striking affinities in thoughts, customs and cults.

Mythology is prevalent in all races and its underlying idea is to explore the pattern of man's development. It is the expression of mankind's primary efforts to find an explanation for the world he lived in, for the forces that governed his life and to distinguish between good and evil which befell on their existence. When man labeled and termed these forces he lived with these aspects and he ended up in formalizing of belief which paved the way to religion. The gods, demons, supermen and fiends were all off springs of mythology.

The arousal of virtuous and vice characters in mythology varied according to the society which produced them, vacillating from the primitive to the sophisticated. Mythology has been the wagon for the thoughts which produced remarkable lofty classics such as Celtic stories, Sophocles and the Ramayana. Mythology stands by its explanations and illustrations of nature and the character of divinities, thus mythology is a pole star which guides man to live on the right basis. The relationship between

mythology and rituals has closely fraternized since rituals are evidently dependant on nature.

Mythology is arguably the essence and main component of religion. It gives emphasis to the system of concepts that are of high significance to a certain community concerning the supernatural or sacred perspectives. Any mythology can be broadly associated with a specific religion. For instance, myths quoted in *Mahabharata* and *Upanishads* are merely related to Hinduism. Dejected from its religious parameters, a myth may lose its immediate relevance to the community and evolve away from sacred prominence and may transform into a *Legend* or a *Folktale*. Thus religion has been embodied in mythical form.

Mythology can also be considered as merely a history. It has always stimulated to relate actual happenings from time beyond memory. In Indian mythology, the oldest collections of myths are known as *Itihasas* (histories) and *Puranas* (chronicles). Early Indian history per se is shrouded in mystery. Initially, there where the stark, functional, brick-laden cities built along the tributaries of the Indus and the now-dry Saraswati around 2500 B.C. simultaneously the earliest Vedic hymns were being composed. This civilization, covering a territory of more than 1.3 million square kilometers, vanished around 1500 B.C. as inexplicably as it emerged. Some believe that the composers of the Vedic hymns destroyed the civilization; others believe the cities simply died out, letting Vedic culture dominate society. Historians, anthropologists, and sociologists habitually refer to the tales of the *Itihasas* and *Puranas* to perceive what could have happened in India between 1500 B.C. and A.D. 500.

Mythology engraved social norms and expectations as well as the consequences of the actions. For example in 'Bull of Minos', Minos the king of Crete failed to stand by his words. Minos requested Poseidon brother of Zeus, to afford him a bull to sacrifice but Minos enticed by the beauty of the bull denied to sacrifice it. In return, he

was bestowed with a great punishment where he was transformed into a half-man and half-bull monster. The moral driven through Bull of Minos was to never forsake the promises vowed to Almighty. Mythology's core objective was to explain the unexplainable and interrogated why culture followed certain norms. This is one of the functions directly pertinent to religion. For instance, animal sacrifice in Hinduism is mostly associated with Shaktism, rooted in local tribal traditions. Animal sacrifice is part of Durga Puja in the eastern states of India. The goddess is offered sacrificial animal regarding that it stimulates her raging vengeance against the buffalo demon. Thus mythology is a cycle of overlapping and an interconnecting factor which serves to be a representative for the functions followed in the society.

The perception of Joseph Campbell quoted below sums up the innumerable ways of looking at myth:

Mythology has been interpreted by the modern intellect as a primitive, fumbling effort to explain the world of nature (Frazer); as a production of poetical fantasy from prehistoric times, misunderstood by succeeding ages (Miiller)...as a group dream, symptomatic of archetypal urges within the depths of the human psyche (Jung); as the traditional vehicle of man's profoundest metaphysical insights (Coomaraswamy); and as God's revelation to His children (the Church). Mythology is all of these...mythology shows itself to be as amenable as life itself to the obsessions and requirements of the individual, the race, the age (*The Hero* 382).

The archetypal criticism exposed fundamental patterns which had been followed unconsciously in all pieces of work of art. The term "archetype" is derived from the Greek word "archetypes" which means "beginning pattern". Archetype, in literary criticism, means a primordial image, character or pattern that relapses throughout

literature and thought consistently enough to be considered a universal concept or situation. According to Wilbur Scott archetypal criticism is “a demonstration of some basic cultural pattern of great meaning and appeal to humanity in a work of art.” The ancient primordial images registered in the mind of a man are archetypes and they are the conscious symbolic expressions of ancient man’s; mythologizing the knowledge of man, nature, god and their inter-relationship. Therefore the archetypal criticism is also called mythological criticism since myth is a storehouse of symbols regulating man’s assumptions about life death and universe.

The mythical approach or archetypal criticism, which aims at portraying some cultural pattern, seems to have derived mainly from two sources. Firstly, the Cambridge School of Comparative Anthropologists like Sir James Frazer, and also Jessie L. Weston, Gilbert Murray, Jane E. Harrison and E.M. Butler. Secondly, bold and the epoch making works of psychologists like Freud and C.G. Jung to a certain extent their works are on the psychology of ritual and myth of Theodore Reik, Otto Rank and Eric Fromm. Myth and mythic criticism came into the limelight with the literary impression of *The Golden Bough* (1890). The author of this pioneering work was Sir. James Frazer, the Scottish classicist and anthropologist. Published originally in two large volumes in 1890 and later enlarged to thirteen volumes.

The Golden Bough is a monumental work of art in comparative folklore, magic, religion and rituals. John Vickery referring to works like Frazer’s work, Freud’s *Totem and Taboo* (1913) and Jung’s *Psychology of the Unconscious* (1912), remarked that “Out of these and similar books came the controlling ideas of myth criticism, such as the dying and reviving god, the hero’s quest, ritual drama, the scapegoat and the cyclical nature of existence” (Myth and Literature XI). Sir Edward Tyler’s book *Primitive Culture* (1871) too is another substantial work which is responsible for the archetypal criticism.

Jung believed that the resemblances between the myths from different cultures disclose the existence of these universal archetypes. He regarded myths not as relics of the infancy of human race but as revelations of humanity's tendency to draw on a collective store of what he called archetypes, a set of patterns which prevailed in the unconscious mind which people of all cultures expressed through image and symbols. Jung proposed that the comparison of myths such as the images, symbols and structures which were recurrent throughout time and culture, potentially connect people from different times and places. Significantly, Jung proposed that archetypes are not simply forms with which one can passively observe reality, but archetypes were the tools with which the mind begins to apprehend and imaginatively create the world in which one lives.

Mythic or archetypal criticism thus owes more to Carl Gustav Jung, the eminent Swiss psychologist than to any other individual writer. It is built centrally on Jung's theory of archetypes. In his famous work *Archetypes of the Collective Unconscious* (1934) Jung declares:

A more or less superficial layer of the unconscious is undoubtedly personal. I call it the personal unconscious. But this personal unconscious rests upon a deeper layer, which does not derive from personal experience and is not a personal acquisition but is inborn. This deeper layer I call the Collective Unconscious (205).

India is a fertile land, rich and abundant of varied and endless mythologies. Even the trivial village of the nation has one or the other myth to offer. Myths are so widespread in India that even a school-going child is aware of them. Myths are the part and parcel of Indian way of life that is Indians are bound to mythology. It is reflected in various shades of colours in the everyday life of the people of the nation. It is so prevalent that the Indian life and Indian culture are based on the solid foundation of

myths. Vedic mythology, religious mythology, mythologies of great kings, warriors, saints, rulers etc. are blown-out everywhere. Indian mythology is one of the richest and precious elements of Indian culture, which enriches it further and makes it a unique one in the world.

Through generations, different stories in Indian mythology had been passed from generation to generation either of word of mouth or through carefully stowed scriptures. Articles and stories of Indian mythology not only provide educational reading but also demarcate a good source of recreational reading. These valuable stories and events, resembles to be the backbone of Indian mythology, are a great medium for people especially parents to inculcate interest in Indian culture in the younger generation and to impart values of Indian culture to them. The interesting aspect of the stories in Indian mythology is that they usually leave away subtle facts, rules and maxims which merely guide human's daily lives. Naturally, storytelling is the best medium for conveying even powerful messages.

The stories in Indian mythology vary from the elusive maxim conveying tales of *Panchtantra* and *Jatak-tales* to subtle life paradigm, defining stories from *The Bhagavad-Gita*, *The Ramayana*, and *The Mahabharata*. Therefore, each version is right in its own merit. This is a result of the natural evolution where the stories might have gone in the process of modification while passing over from generation to generation for centuries. The mythology of India is ascribed to every experience and emotion of man. The people of India possess a mythology dating back over 3,500 years, and from the day they have written it down. The epics and legends are read by the scholars and learned by the children; they are told and retold by the story-tellers of every village and other areas. The wisdom, adventure and romance contained in myth are intertwined with Indianism.

Indian mythology dates back to as early as 7200 BC when the first human of the *Rig Veda* was created. The hymns of the *Rig Veda* are the first and the newest expression of the sense of beauty and gladness awakened in the Aryan race by the charms and the bounty of nature. Natural elements such as air, water and fire was converted into the worship of cosmic elements and were celebrated. Thus emerged the triad of early Vedic Gods: Agni, Vayu and Surya. The Vedic gods are mere abstractions, intangible and allusive personifications of the powers of nature. It is in the post-Vedic phase or in the Puranas, the gods assumed substantial shape and individual character.

In the late Vedic period, the two popular epics *The Ramayana* and *The Mahabharata* were compiled. The heroes of the Vedic age gradually evolved as the shadowy gods of the Vedic Gods and found their places in the Puranas. This designed the phase of post-Vedic gods or the Puranic Gods who placed their seeds and roots in the Vedas giving rise to the concept of Trimurti. Hindu mythology is beyond mythology. It is a living religion. Throughout India idols of gods and goddesses are worshipped at present as it was done hundreds of years ago.

Hinduism is essentially a religion of variety and diversity. While some of the thinkers reached the highest peak philosophy have ever dared to climb, the lower classes practiced idolatry, animism and the pervasions peculiar to some of the objectionable cults. The Bacchanalian orgies of Greece and Rome are outdated. However, in Indian villages during certain festivals, crowds with phallic emblems can be seen parading the streets, singing obscene songs. Kali may not, at present, claim human victims but is content with the meat and blood of goats and fowl; her form, however, is not changed. In temples dedicated to her, she is still sculpted in her characteristic dancing pose, wearing a garland of human skulls, her mouth dripping

blood, ready to devour the worlds if her lust for blood is not sated. Ganesha, the elephant-god, and Hanuman, the ape-god are also widely worshipped in India.

Indian English writers have brought forward paradigm shifts in their works which reflected the theme and characters of the epic. As the products of ‘Literary Renaissance’, they have inculcated the significance of the western thought mingled with the wisdom of their own tradition. The impact of the western liberalism in attitude and outlook is made evident through their rational approaches to the ancient epic. This quiver has enabled them to re-examine and re-assesses the ancient literature in the light of their ‘new wisdom’. Indian English writers have responded meaningfully to the story of *The Ramayana* with the awareness of what the age demands of them and their literary ideas and ideals. The varied reflections of the themes and characters of the epic, their various perspectives and creative insights are all their enlightened reactions to the age old epic tradition.

An exemplary retelling of myth is Shashi Tharoor’s *The Great Indian Novel* (1989) is a work of fiction that borrowed the plot from of *The Mahabharata*, the great epic of Hindu mythology; it recasted the epic in the context of Indian Independence Movement. Tharoor has reinvented *The Mahabharata*. The figures are taken from Indian history and transformed into characters from Hindu mythology. The mythical history of India is retold as a history of Indian independence and subsequent history up through the 1980’s. In one of his articles entitled “I don’t take critics seriously”, Tharoor writes about this novel: “The book is a satirical novel and a re-invention of an ancient novel in a contemporary way. It is about the highly developed India”.

Myths have been proved to be an irresistible mine of knowledge for historians, anthropologists, sociologists and psychologists and source of inspiration for writers. It is a discipline of mysticism that unveils a message. Retelling of the stories from myth and mythologies is not at all a new aspect in India it is deeply rooted among Indians

and in the Indian society. Meghandh Vadha in Bengali, Parva, Beralge Koral are the best examples. Amish Tripathi had proved the never ending relevance and resourcefulness of mythology with his debut novel *Shiva Trilogy* (2010). Myths have thus become an integral part of a country's culture and sometimes they happen to be the strong determinants and decisive factors of culture itself.

The dictionary definitions of 'culture' offer various meanings: products of human endeavor, process of improvement, and the totality of a way of life. According to Oxford English Dictionary the meanings are 'the arts and other manifestations of human intellectual achievement regarded collectively' and 'a refined understanding of this'; 'improvement by mental or physical training'; and 'the customs, civilization, and achievements of a particular time or people' (Thompson 1996). Oxford Dictionary defined the term Pluralism as a condition or system in which two or more states, groups, principles, sources of authority, etc., coexists. Unanimously Cultural Pluralism is a dynamic by which minority groups participate fully in the dominant society, yet maintain their cultural differences. A pluralistic society is one where different groups can interact while showing a certain degree of tolerance for one another, where different cultures can coexist without major conflicts, and where minority cultures are encouraged to uphold their customs.

Horace Kallen, Professor of Philosophy coined the term 'pluralism' in the early 1900's. The word pluralism is having its roots in the word "plural" which means 'more than one', used mostly in Mathematics. The very term Pluralism has several meanings, depending on the respective discourse to which it refers. Literally Pluralism means the condition or the character of being multiple or plural but to the Social scientists, it is having different forms and facets and therefore have different interpretations as well. The Webster dictionary has defined it as the existence or toleration of diversity of groups within a society or state, whether ethnic, cultural, political or religious.

Diana L. Eck Professor of Comparative Religion and Indian Studies identified the theme about Pluralism. The term pluralism has been understood in numerous ways but Eck is clear to distinguish between pluralism and plurality, two words which are often used interchangeably and without distinction. Whilst plurality is the fact of diversity, pluralism is a response to that diversity and in Eck's account; it is an active, positive response. One may have people from different religious and ethnic backgrounds present in one place, but unless they are involved in an active engagement with one another, there is no pluralism. In other words, pluralism is not and cannot be a nonparticipant sport. There are some who see Pluralism as a social condition, i.e. distinct ethnic, religious, and racial communities live side by side, have equitable access to resources, are willing to affirm each other's dignity, are ready to benefit from each other's experience, and are quick to acknowledge each other's contributions to the common welfare and the special obligation of promoting multicultural community based on mutual-respect and tolerance

The contemporary Pluralism is formed on an entirely different pattern. It is different in at least two important respects. In the first, it confers equal political rights to all, irrespective of difference of creed or caste. Most of the plural societies have opted for political democracy, which ensures general participation in the conduct of state. In the second, this pluralism is generally raised on non-religious or secular foundations. Leaving aside the philosophical foundations of these plural societies, it may be safely asserted that economic and political objectives determine the nature, the variety and depth of social interaction in emergent societies. Defining culture as a process of improvement refers to its ancient meaning, rooted in the Latin origins of the word. As it is possible to cultivate plants in agriculture, it is thought to be also possible to cultivate people in an urban society, which form the basis for education in science, arts and sport. Public culture, therefore, would mean the different ways that such

cultivation is made possible, and the role of public space is to provide the support infrastructure for this process of development.

As a pathway to improvement, the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries used architecture, as part of a wider material culture, to embellish the towns and cities and inject a sense of confidence in their inhabitants. The contribution of public space, as a collection of buildings and urban spaces, to the sense of improvement and culture-building in this period was considerable. This is a trend that can be seen in later periods as well, for example in the modernist movement and its beliefs in the possibility of avoiding revolutions through spatial change. The problem, however, was that this confidence in the role of spatial change could be misplaced, and many optimistic developments of the modernists failed to improve the urban conditions. Indeed, many buildings of high cultural value were removed to be replaced by functionalist machines. Beside this development and modernity culture is the general knowledge of an individual about his identity and connection with the country and people he lives in. Culture is the knowledge, beliefs, attitudes, behavior, values, music and arts of a particular society. But according to Edward B. Taylor the founder of cultural anthropology, culture is not only the knowledge, beliefs, attitudes etc. but also the human's ability and capability in their society.

Cultural pluralism has been developed and improved by cultural pluralists namely William James, Horace Kallen, Randolph Bourne, Louis Adamic and Leonardo Coviello. Cultural pluralism originates when two or more cultural groups occupy a single geographical area, and participate in some common activity/activities, borrow elements of culture from each other, but continue to maintain their respective cultural autonomy. It is the coexistence of many dissimilar things or patterns of activity. In other words cultural pluralism is a system where different culture-groups coexist and share a common cultural platform without losing their respective identity.

In India, past traditions as well as present circumstances favor the growth of a novel type of nationhood which promotes a common national culture, but at the same time ensures various communities freedom to maintain and develop their own cultural and religious traditions, so long as they are not detrimental to the unity and general welfare of the nation. Thus these are the significant aspects of cultural pluralism. William James briefly explained cultural pluralism, that nothing real is absolutely simple, that every smallest bit of experience is plurally related, that each relation is one aspect, character, or function, way of its being taken, or way of its taking something else; and that a bit of reality when actively engaged in one of these relations simultaneously.

Cultural pluralism is distinct from multiculturalism which is often confused with each other. The concept of multiculturalism has acquired ambiguous meanings in the past forty years and these meanings vary across societies. In the 1970s Berry, Kalinand Taylor (1977), made the distinction among three different meanings of the cultural diversity component of multiculturalism. First, multiculturalism is demographic fact: most societies around the world are now culturally diverse. Second, multiculturalism is an ideology: individuals and groups hold general views about their acceptance or rejection of this diversity. And third, some governments articulate public policies and develop programs with respect to the acceptability and promotion of diversity. These three features are closely related. Without the presence of diversity there is no need to be concerned with what people think about it, and there would be no need for governmental action.

Multiculturalism is the phenomenon of multiple groups of cultures existing within one society, largely due to the arrival of immigrant communities, or the acceptance and advocacy of this phenomenon. Supporters of multiculturalism claim that different traditions and cultures can enrich society. It appears frequently, and as a

concept in the writing of many who are concerned with social issues related to race, politics, class, sex and education. Samuel P. Huntington's *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (1996) was among the first works that drew widespread attention to the social problems arising from diversity. In accordance with his concept, it could be underlined that Chinese, Japanese, Hindu, Islamic, Orthodox, Western, Latin American and possibly African civilizations with significantly different cultural backgrounds. In the 12 years since the volume was published anti-immigrant voices intensified increasingly.

According to Harihar Bhattacharyya (1980), multicultural concerns have long informed India's history and traditions, constitution and political arrangements. Much of the writings on Indian history, culture and politics are marked by some kind of multicultural concern. The Indian Constitution as the source of these policies can be said to be a basic multicultural document, in the sense of providing for political and institutional measures for the recognition and accommodation of the country's diversity. According to Dr. Debi Prasanna Pattanayak (1931), the context of Indian diversity consisting 3000 mother tongues, 4600 castes and communities, 4000 faiths and beliefs, 45000 plant/biological species, 65000 animal varieties, one would expect that the Indian Development Planning would be based on multiplicity of approaches and practices. Thus India celebrates its diversity, diversity of its languages, cultures, world views and creativity.

The Indian national spirit triumphed with thousands of diverse cultural and social identities are the best example of pluralism. Thus Cultural pluralism remains to be India's strongest card and its best defense against attempts to wreck its integrity or weaken its national structure from inside and outside. India with its emphasis on unity in diversity indirectly emphasizes on the cultural unity that acted as a unifying thread to tie together diverse cultural groups. But this cultural unity had an inevitable Hindu

cultural or communal overtone. The image of Akhand Bharat (Unified India), spreading from the Himalayas in the north to Kanyakumari in the south was born out of a mythical romantic past which had definite Hindu reflexes. Amish through his work *Shiva Trilogy* had projected the different cultures that prevailed since Indus civilisation and how each civilisation embraced and reacted to pluralism.

Dibajyoti Chaudhari in her article, “Modern mythology” explains that why authors have taken ancient mythology as base. She has quoted Amish Tripathi- author of best-seller Shiva-Trilogy: “There are crucial reasons for retelling mythology. You see in Greece or Egypt, no one talks about Zeus or Amun Ra. But Indian mythology surrounding Ram, Krishna or Shiva is much alive in the Indian mind. They have become the part of our collective consciousness.” Amish Tripathi also considers economic factors at play. He opines, “in the last twenty years, we have emerged as an economically confident nation and there is a new found interest in our culture. I’d say we’re at the right place at right time.” Forbes India’s review on *Trilogy* was “liberals have not read ancient Indian texts: Amish Tripathi the author of bestsellers such as *The Immortals of Meluha* talks about the scientific theories in his works, and why Indian mythology is a liberal’s best ally.”

The Second chapter “Facets of Myth’ unsnarls the presence of myth in *Trilogy*. Myths have been an irresistible mine of knowledge for historians and a source of inspiration for writers. Amish have represented Shiva in a humanistic view and has deconstructed numerous myths from different perspectives.

The Third chapter ‘Semblances of Pluralism’ focuses on culture and the existing pluralism in culture. Cultures are built up in period of centuries, yet they survive on the successful transmission of values, ideas, history and beliefs from one generation to the next. At the same time culture also promotes evolution. It leads nation towards higher state of Consciousness. Amish presents individual psyche and society as a system that

undergoes the process of self-creation and self-generation as opposed to a deliberate construction.

The aim, therefore, of this study is to analyse the modes of popularizing the mythical pluralsim, as seen evident in Amish Tripathi's *Shiva Trilogy* comprising *The Immortals of Meluha* (2010), *The Secret of Nagas* (2012) and *The Oath of Vayuputras* (2013). Therefore the objectives of this study are as follows:

- To unravel the myth and mythology in *Shiva Trilogy* and its prominence.
- To trace the modes of reconstruction of myth as it is done by the author in the *Trilogy*.
- To emphasise the existence of pluralism despite the various cultures in the *Trilogy*.

Chapter II

Facets of Myth

Mythology has been an inevitable source and subject of study in literature through the ages. In every social formation new forces emanate over long periods of time while old forces remain intact even after the new forces become dominant. Myths are believed to be the underlying force of cultures and civilisations. Since time immemorial, critics and theorists have attempted to study and analyse myths. It has been an inevitable source while studying the social, cultural, anthropological and religious history of any particular ethnic group. The approach towards the study of myth has fluctuated with the course of time.

Twentieth century theorists have endeavoured to sanctify myth with the aid of science. This has been done by not probing the role of science in modern civilisations, but by proffering an air of scientific explicability to myth. As quoted by Segal, “They have not taken any of the easy routes: ‘relativizing’ science, ‘sociologizing’ science, or ‘mythicizing’ science. Rather, they have re-characterized myth. Either myth, while still about the world, is not an explanation, in which case its function differs from that of science (Malinowski, Eliade), or myth, read symbolically, is not even about the physical world (Bultmann, Jonas, Camus), or [probably myth reconciles the both] (Freud, Rank, Jung, Campbell). In twentieth century myth has been reconciled with science by the reconfiguration of myth and not by any reconfiguration of science” (137).

In contemporary Indian literature, mythical stories have secured a vigorous presence. Writers like Amish Tripathi and Ashwin Sanghi are among a host of other writers straddling both the mainstream and graphic novel universes, they have attempted reworking mythical pasts and transforming them into new narrative modules.

The Indian literary market is dominated today by novels with such narratives, encompassed with the mythical past. Indian mythology is a rich treasure, trove of tales which are rich in plurality and character.

Amish Tripathi's *Shiva Trilogy* relies on the reconstruction of several Indian mythical characters and stories drawn from *The Ramayana*, *The Mahabharata* and *Shivapurana*. The philosophical arguments represented in *Shiva Trilogy* frequently echo the classical Sanskrit texts of the Vedas, the Upanishads and the philosophy of Shaivism. Tripathi's handling of myths as 'jumbled memories of true past' hearkens back to Jung's monumental idea of 'collective unconscious' or a racial memory comprising of 'primordial images' and archetypes. Contrastingly, Ernst Cassirer, in his *Philosophy of Symbolic Forms*, vol.II (1925) defines myth as "a form of thought", a "symbolic form" obviously, which instead of trying to represent a thing itself acts as a thing and obliterates all reflective distinction between the real and the ideal. So myths can be reconstructed and reinterpreted as long as it does not fail to capture and express the essential "dynamic of the life feeling" (2:38).

Myths like a language assume the role of creator, definer and re-interpreter of tradition and one's perceptions. The definition of myth actually separates myths from all kinds of historicity and any relation to the mundane, material and objective plane of reality; rather myths are endowed with the ability to create, define, transform and mould the pattern of reality in any way it wants to, this is what Tripathi attempts to accomplish in his *Trilogy*. Amish have given a complete form to his synthetic mythology by using mythical themes, mythical narratives, epic form and finally mythical characters in his *Trilogy*. *Shiva Trilogy* tries to edify mankind with the underlying message that humans are all potential Gods and it is through one's *Karma* and self-realization that he or she can gain hope to rise to the level of the Gods.

The introductory part of Tripathi's *Trilogy* brilliantly sums up his vision and philosophy regarding the nature and origin of Gods, meaning and scope of mythological narratives and its relation with religion etc. At the outset, the *Shiva Trilogy* claims to be an interpretation of the rich mythological heritage of ancient India, blending fiction with historical fact. Amish have rendered the mythical God Shiva more relatable to the audiences by imagining him in a human form.

Shiva in traditional Hindu mythology, particularly Shaivism tradition is reckoned "to be the Lord of the Lords, the creator, protector and transformer of the Universe" (Sharma 65). Shiva is one of the Trimurtis where Brahma is the creator, Vishnu the preserver and Shiva the quintessential destroyer (Matchett, "The Puranas", 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* entitled *The Immortals of Meluha* (2012) Lord Shiva's essential Godlike nature is expounded in vivid and powerful words: "Shiva! The Mahadev. The God of Gods. Destroyer of Evil. Passionate lover. Fierce warrior. Consummate dancer. Charismatic leader. All-powerful, yet incorruptible." (132-133)

From the culmination of an interview by Anupama Krishnakumar it is culled out that Tripathi's portrayal of Lord Shiva in his novels is much different from that of a supremely powerful Lord; here he attempts to portray the 'human-like' aspect of Shiva before the apogee is complete. According to his tetra partite division of Gods, Tripathi broaches about a mortal being who becomes God by discovering the God in him. It is based on this aspect of God that the *Shiva Trilogy* is narrated and throughout the *Trilogy* myths have been reconstructed to give a shape to a new pattern of narrative.

The essence of Hinduism is contained in the Vedanta, the scientific and theological doctrine of Hinduism, and in the timeless wisdom of the Vedas. There are five core features in Hinduism: God – Isvara, Soul – Jiva, Time – Kala, Matter –

Prakriti, and Action – Karma. Based on these credos, Hinduism provides a deep knowledge and understanding of life and the universe. In its pure form, Hinduism is also recognised as Sanatana Dharma or the eternal function of the living entity. One of the unique features of Hinduism is that it provides a very vivid and broad description of Gods and his energies. Substantiating these truths of Hinduism, Tripathi has constructed his narrative and has unveiled his grand design, based firmly on the conviction that a man can often rise to godlike stature by virtue of his Karma and this is the most perfect way of interpreting India’s rich mythological heritage: “A man who rose to become godlike because of his karma. This is the premise of *Shiva Trilogy*, which interprets the rich mythological heritage of ancient India, blending fiction with historical fact” (*The Immortals of Meluha* 138-139).

Like Buddha himself, Tripathi’s Shiva is not God-become-man, but man become-God. All the elements of the life and their inter-relationships leading to evolution are stipulated by ‘Natural Law’. Tripathi rewrites Shiva Purana, a hallowed Hindu text as a novel with two sequels. While the first novel *The Immortals of Meluha* (2012) introduces the readers to ancient Indian culture, the second one, *The Secret of Nagas* (2013) philosophizes the concept of good and evil, as discerned in Indian society. The concluding novel, *The Oath of Vayuputras* (2013) asserts that the culture of a nation intending to ignore and violate the Laws of Nature ends up in futility, while the one that abides the Laws of Nature leads its nation towards enlightenment. For a harmonious and progressive life one is required to live in accordance with Laws of Nature or Dharma.

As stated by Alexandre Havard, “Leaders are not born, but trained. Leadership is a question of character (virtue, freedom, self-improvement), not temperament (biology and genetics)” (2007). Similarly in the *Trilogy*, Amish throws light on the transitional phase of Shiva from a Tibetan immigrant belonging to the tribe Gunas to

Mahadev meaning the “God of the Gods”. He limns Shiva as a valorous tribal leader where his uncle once stated, “your destiny is much larger than these massive mountains but to make it come true you will have to cross these same massive mountains” (*The Immortals of Meluha* 4). Despite the truthful words of his uncle Shiva perceives himself to be an impotent, he repeatedly underwent self- introspection, “Do I really deserve a good destiny?” (*The Immortals of Meluha* 5).

Every culture express their mythical quest for an ideal state in terms of their hopes, dreams, imperial ambition, as well as highest state of grace, in such concepts as Utopia, Promised Land, Kingdom of Heaven, Ideal Republic, Krita Yuga or Ram-Rajya and the instrument for such transformation is an Avatara, Bodhisattva, Visionary Seer, a Mahatma, or a Neelkanth. Shiva despite being a common man possess many heroic attributes as depicted in W.H Auden’s essay, *The Quest Hero*, “He resembles the hero of the modern world, a man of hidden powers, intelligence and trustworthy” (Auden 31). In a world of evil he is capable of radiating the invisible message of goodness, truth and justice to the people. *Trilogy* strips the myth of that old-world resonance. Amish gods are humanised, Tripathi’s Shiva smokes marijuana and his body had numerous battle scars on his skin that gleamed in the shimmering reflected lights of the waters. He is a Tibetan immigrant who came down from the shores of the Mansarovar to become the saviour of the Sapt Sindhu. When the Meluhans respect him and call him ‘Neelkanth’, he is not happy with the name and he becomes inquisitive to know the reason behind the naming.

The mythological reason behind the term ‘Neelkanth’ attributed to lord Shiva was at the time of ‘Samudra Manthan’ (churning of the ocean) in the ‘Kshirsagar’ (ocean of milk), many significant entities poured out with all its benefits and was distributed among gods and demons like ‘Kalpwriksha’; ‘Kamadhenu’ - the wish-granting cow, etc. Among them there came out the ‘Amrit’ as well which, with some

intelligence of gods came to their swarga (heaven) but the alarming character was the 'Vish' (poison). Vish, a strong and a high-octane poison that even a drop of it would destroy the whole universe. It created a huge hustle among the gods and the demons. Everyone began to panic and for a solution and they reached out to lord Shiva, the Mahadev. Shiva ended up with a great solution against the dreadful poison where he consumed the whole pot of poison but he did not swallow it which transformed the throat to bluish colour. Thus he is worshipped as 'Neelkantha Shiva'.

Amish in his *Trilogy* imbibe a different myth behind the term 'Neelkanth' credited to Shiva. Amish manipulate Puranic myths which narrate the myths behind *Samudra Mandan*, its effect and how Lord Shiva acquired the name Neelkanth. Thus the writer emphasizes Godhood and divinity of Shiva by portraying him as a common being; miraculous effect of Somras on Shiva changes his destiny. Shiva gets baffled and astonished by the reaction of Nandi and Ayurvati on seeing his blue throat. Meluhans had a quest for the arrival of 'the Neelkanth' (God with a blue throat) for centuries. They felt it in their bones, the legend their savior would erupt from a foreign land and destroy evil. This was the reason, captain Nandi was sent by Emperor Daksha to Mansarovar as a hostage to invite Shiva and his tribes to Meluha. Meluha was under a threat by their enemy Chandravanshis who were presumed to be evil and there was a tittle-tattle that they changed the course of the river Saraswati. The Meluhans who were Suryavanshis, possess the knowledge of preparing 'Somras' the immortal drink. When they consume Somras at constant intervals it bestows a long, healthy and youthful life. After the consumption of 'Somras', Shiva agitatedly asks, "What the hell is going here?" (*The Immortals of Meluha* 28). Shiva in the course of time notice some changes in his body - his frost bitten toe, his knees and shoulders were healed once he drank the Somras. Shiva also felt powerful and stronger as never before but he was sweating profusely.

The throat of Shiva felt unusually cold. Other Gunas were suffering out of high fever. But suddenly when Ayurvati caught the sight of Shiva's neck she was astounded and she resounds loudly, "You have come! My Lord, you have come!" (*The Immortals of Meluha* 23). The neck of Shiva turns to an eerie iridescent blue. Nandi stupefied and collapsed on Shiva's knees uttered, "You have come! The Neelkanth has come!" Further the captain stared in stunned astonishment at the reflection of his "*neelkanth; his blue throat*" (*The Immortals of Meluha* 24).

As per the words of a legend Shiva the Neelkanth ought to be a foreigner and who was not from Sapt Sindu and after the consumption of 'somras' his throat would turn blue, true to his words Shiva is glorified as a leader and is celebrated as destroyer of evil by Meluhans. Shiva ignores the sudden devotion and reverence of Meluhans which arouse due to his blue throat. In the Vedic period there existed two types of divine drinks. One is Soma and another is Sura. The two drinks are quoted in Vedic texts. For instance in the *Rig-Veda* 'soma' is described as a godly concoction, while 'Sura' is described as a prominent human drink. Amish, in *Shiva Trilogy* reframes the concept of the drink of gods and terms it 'Somras', a drink for immortality.

Succeeding to these interpretations Amish retells varying aspects related to Shiva and his course of life. In accordance to Hindu mythology the *Puranas* states that Brahma gives birth to 'mind-born' sons, which means sons created without copulating with a woman. This is a metaphor for mental modification, a twisting and folding of the pristine imagination as it experiences more and more fear. One of these sons is called Daksha, the skilled one. His name alludes to Dakshin, the south, the land of movement, birth and death. The birth of Daksha is Brahma's response to nature. Daksha also means the skilled one. He is skilled at coping with nature's transformation. He does so by establishing culture through the ritual of yagna.

Yagna is all about controlling wild nature and domesticating it so that it comes under human control, becomes manageable, predictable, hence less frightening. Later in myths it is told that Daksha offers twenty-eight of his daughters- the Nakshatras to Chandra, the moon-god. The moon, however, prefers only one of them, Rohini, lavishing her with attention while neglecting the others. Distress, one of the Nakshatras, Abhijit, withers away in sorrow, while the other twenty-six daughters whines to Daksha, Daksha then casts a spell on Chandra to suffer from the wasting disease. In the course of time, Chandra began to wane, much to Daksha's satisfaction. A distraught Chandra pleads to Shiva, the god who defeats Yama, a god of death. Shiva, who is Mrityunjaya, conqueror of death, places Chandra on his forehead. This contact delegates Chandra to wax once again, much to Daksha's irritation. Shiva is therefore known as Chandrashekhara, on whose head the moon exists.

Daksha takes the life of one who does not align to his rules in contrast Shiva gives life instead and expects nothing in return, least of all obedience. The Devas therefore call Shiva Maha-deva, the greatest of gods, he who is God, hence independent of nature's laws. Daksha does not consider Shiva to be Maha-deva. He presumes Shiva as an enemy who opposes him. Daksha fails to realize that Shiva does not distinguish between Devas and Asuras; he is indifferent to their station or their roles. One is not the hero and the other is not the villain. Shiva does not share the prejudices that shape Daksha's thoughts. For Daksha, obedience is virtue. He excludes those who do not obey him. Asuras do not obey him, Chandra does not obey him.

In stark contrast to mythical narratives, Amish have retold the life of Daksha and Shiva in different aspects. Firstly, Daksha the Emperor of Suryavanshis (the descendants of the sun), constructs a nation which explains itself in three words: "Satya, Dharma. Maan", in other words, "Truth. Duty. Honour." (*The Immortals of Meluha* 62) Nandi describes the land of Meluha, "This was a land of abundance, of

almost ethereal perfection! It was an empire ruled by clearly codified and just laws, to which every Meluhan was subordinated, including the emperor.” (*The Immortals of Meluha* 35) True to the myths Daksha cleaves himself to rules and obedience.

Chandravanshis were profoundly known for “Shringar, Saundrya and Swatantrata”, in other words, “Passion. Beauty.Freedom.” (*The Immortals of Meluha* 371) The

Chandravanshis are perceived as evil souls and breakers of laws by the Meluhans since Chandravanshis presumably did not live their lives according to the formulated laws of Suryavanshis. Daksha claims, “Jealousy. They hate our superior ways. Our efficient family system is an eye shore to them” (*The Immortals of Meluha* 109).

Daksha loathes Chandravanshis because he assumes that they devised a devious plan to destroy the Somras and the Suryavanshis. One of the key ingredients in the Somras is the water of Saraswati. According to Meluhans it was Chandravanshis who diverted the course of the river and thus Saraswati started flowing east to meet Chandravanshis main river Ganga. Daksha criticizes Chandravanshis for their duplicity and terms them as untrustworthy people. Progressively in the story it is revealed that Shiva is their Neelkanth and the Meluhans conjecture Shiva to be the ‘Neelkanth’ who would save them and destroy the evil Chandravanshis. Daksha have not been honest with Shiva and his tribes. During one of the encounters with Emperor Daksha, Shiva interrogates Daksha, “Do you agree that honesty is required to make any friendship work? Even if it means deeply offending your friend with the truth?” (*The Immortals of Meluha* 117) Then Daksha replies to Shiva, “I am truly sorry my Lord, said Daksha Somras has considerably positive effects on your body.”(*The Immortals of Meluha* 118) But Shiva in a firm tone questions Daksha:

Do you know that my tribe was also probably given the Somras that night? And they fell seriously ill, perhaps because of the Somras? . . .
You should have told us the complete truth at Mt. Kailash. Then you

should have let us make an informed choice rather than you making a choice for us. We probably would still have come to Meluha anyway but then it would have been our choice. “Please forgive us the deception, my Lord.” said Daksha, with guilty regret. (*The Immortals of Meluha* 118)

Daksha without the knowledge of Shiva makes Shiva and the other Gunas to consume Somras for his own beneficialness. Simply Daksha implies Shiva to end the Chandravanshis crisis and rivalries once and for all. Daksha is well aware of his power position and knew how to cruelly implement it on others. He reflects his attitude in many instances for example he intended to attack Swadweep and make it a part of Meluha. Swadweepans were not in the dire necessity of being governed by Meluhan system. The Meluhan Emperor Daksha owns the attitude of a coloniser which made him feel the urge to unite the free nations under one flag and rule over the entire dynasty.

In the words of Dilipa, the Swadweepan Emperor, they were “more like a confederacy of aligned kings rather than a fanatical empire like Meluha” (*The Secret of the Nagas* 15). Daksha aims to mould the Chandravanshis, in his Suryavanshi way of life: “The evil Chandravanshi way of life has to end and these people have to be brought to our pure Suryavanshi ways” (*The Secret of the Nagas* 13). The coloniser’s attitude of categorizing and transforming the ‘other’ in the structure of the ‘self’ is quite unlike the self-propagated motto of “Truth. Duty. Honour.” (*The Immortals of Meluha* 62) These instances quoted prove Daksha to be an unabashed character and the ulterior motive of Daksha is revealed. Daksha as a whole knocks down one’s life when one denies in aligning to his rules and instincts.

Contrary to the myth Daksha and Shiva in *Trilogy* are framed to be in good terms. Initially, Daksha sent his representatives to Tibet who invites the Gunas and lord

Shiva the chief of Gunas for a better and secured life in Meluha. When Daksha recognizes Shiva as Neelkanth he celebrates him as Mahadev and he believes in the legend and worships him as Lord and destroyer of evil. Shiva repeatedly perceives himself to be a simple tribal man who just happened to acquire a blue throat because of some exotic medicine but Daksha utters, “If that man is you, he can change the entire universe.” (*The Immortals of Meluha* 123) Daksha in the former part of the *Trilogy* wholly relies on Shiva for the righteousness of his life and his kingdom later in the concluding novel Shiva turns to be an opponent to Daksha when he explores the truth. These instances substantiated corroborate that Amish has demythologized Indian Puranic stories.

Secondly, Amish disparately adduce the affinity between Shiva and Sati. In accordance to Hindu mythology Daksha despises Shiva since Shiva was always a rivalry to him. To Daksha’s vexation, his youngest daughter, Sati, disobeys him. One day Sati’s eyes clapped on Shiva, wandering in the mountains. She recognizes him for who he was and she begins to pour her endearments for him. She expresses her desire to be his wife but Daksha denies in granting her permission to wed Shiva. Shiva did not pay her any attention, but it did not deter her; she persuades to love him abundantly. Daksha scorns to accept Shiva as his son-in-law. Thus Sati leaves her father’s house to become Shiva’s wife.

To win the regard of the ascetic Shiva, Sati forsakes the luxuries of her father’s palace and retires to a forest, to devote herself to austerities and to completely surrender herself to Shiva. So rigorous are her penances that she gradually renounces food itself, at one stage subsisting on one leaf a day, and then giving up even that nourishment; this particular abstinence earned her the name Aparna. Her prayers finally bore fruit after testing her resolve; Shiva finally accedes to her wishes and consents to make her his bride.

Lady Sati is an epitome of women empowerment in the *Trilogy*. Sati is extremely fine-looking with a captivating appearance of long, black, flowing hair, piercingly magnetic blue eyes, bronze skin, lovely curved features, a flawless face, air of confidence and dignified walk. But her qualities transcend her physical feature as she is a fierce warrior with unmatched martial skills, courage and compassion. Fore mostly Tripathi introduces Sati to Shiva as a fiercest warrior in the ‘Temple of Lord Brahma’. Amish quotes, “as he sat down, he breathed in deeply and let the tranquil atmosphere suffuse him with serenity. And then it happened. The unforgettable instant that a soul, clinging on to the purest memory of its previous life, longs for. The moment which, in spite of a conspiracy of the gods, only a few lucky men experience. The moment when she enters his life” (*The Immortals of Meluha* 49).

Sati notices Shiva staring at her as she passed by. Then her delicate eyebrow turns into a surprised look and simultaneously reflects an annoyed frown. Shiva made a valiant attempt to tear his glance away, but he realizes that his eyes were no longer in his control. Then Sati mutters to Kritika, “These uncouth immigrants! As if we’ll find our savior from amongst these barbarians.” (*The Immortals of Meluha* 49) From this encounter it could be interpreted that initially Sati is not fond of Shiva but in the due course she fell in love with Shiva for his humanity and justice. Later a hooded figure attempts to attack Sati in the Brahma temple but Sati proves herself as an exceptional sword fighter she deftly stepped aside from the protective hand of Shiva when he tried to help. Acknowledging Shiva and Sati were providential partners in wars. In the course of combat Shiva is viciously inflicted with a deep wound on his shoulder. Sati consciously felt embarrassed since she criticized Shiva. Beside the criticisms Shiva sprang to help Sati, Shiva’s unconditional love for Sati is witnessed from this incident.

Lord Shiva in the verdant gardens of the royal guest house is interrupted by the sounds of ‘dhol’ - a percussion instrument and some *ghungroos* which were anklets

worn by dancers. It is the sounds that emerged from the dance of Sati. Sati dance's correctly but she fails to enjoy it. Generally Shiva is known to be a passionate dancer. Dancing is something which Shiva is as accomplished as in warfare. Shiva always held an imaginary 'dumru' a small handheld percussion instrument. Generally his left hand is open with its palm facing upward; almost it is receiving some divine energy. While dancing Shiva was in his own world.

Lord Shiva did not dance for the audience. He did not dance for the appreciation. He did not dance for the music. He danced only for himself. It almost seemed like his dance was guided by a celestial force. Shiva exerted 'Nataraj' pose before the dance. The pose of the "*Lord of the Dance*" (*The Immortals of Meluha* 80). The Nataraj pose posed by Shiva helps him to ask respectfully for energy for a dance that wants to come to him. Wonder struck Guruji says, "You are the *Nataraj-the Lord of dance.*" (*The Immortals of Meluha* 81) Later through Shiva's words Sati commits herself to dance, for instance Sati energized by the earth danced elegantly, her graceful dance spontaneously receives energy from the earth thus Shiva and Sati are united by dance.

The most famous version of the image of Shiva engaged in the act of dancing is referred to in the Hindu tradition by the Sanskrit appellation Nataraja (or Nataraj), which is translated variously as 'King of Dancers' and 'Lord of the Dance'. In this form of the image, Shiva is portrayed as a four-armed figure dancing within an arch or ring of fire, with his right leg raised and gently crossing in front of the body and his left foot firmly placed on the prostrate body of an imp or dwarf like figure. Each of the two upper hands held a particular sacred symbol, while the each of the two lower ones is engaged in a particular symbolic hand gesture. In *The Immortals of Meluha*, Shiva seeks energy from the Lord of Dance Nataraj. Contrastively the myth behind Nataraj is debunked clearly by Amish in his *Trilogy*.

Eventually Shiva's love towards Sati intensifies, for example, when Sati left the garden Shiva whispers, "Holy Lake, help me get her. I will not ask for anything else from you ever again." (*The Immortals of Meluha* 92) Shiva ultimately yearns to espouse Sati but Sati cannot marry as she is a Vikrama according to the laws of the land of Meluha. Discordantly to the myth cited in above paragraphs, Daksha is delighted when he heard Neelkanth is in love with Sati. When General Parvateshwar exclaims Daksha "You know Sati cannot marry" Daksha in a glee says to Parvateshwar, "If Neelkanth decides to marry Sati no law on Earth can stop him" (*The Immortals of Meluha* 92).

Daksha for Sati's sake would do anything to make her happy, Daksha says Parvateshwar, "If I can find some way to make her happy, I will do it. No matter what the consequences!" (*The Immortals of Meluha* 93) Daksha possess a multi layered and a manipulative character. He is not an honest person but he pretends to be honest, evil character of Daksha stands submissively supreme from the beginning of the novel. He ruthlessly devises a plan and exiles his own daughter Kali and his grandson Ganesh simply because they were Nagas. Regardless of Meluha's rules he insists Sati to marry Shiva only because he is the savior of the land, he does unjust to his own daughters which is revealed in the sequels of *The Immortals of Meluha*.

In the midst of Shiva's and Sati's wedding, Shiva sent out a proclamation banning the concept of Vikrama. In the Vedantic tradition there is the concept of a natural 'Law of Karma'. The law of karma is similar to the rules of action and reaction in Newton's Law. Similarly in *The Immortals of Meluha* when Shiva is taken to Devagiri to meet the king, Daksha on their way, Shiva and Nandi hear a tall Meluhan Kshatriya announcing the procession of vikarma women. Shiva questions Nandi regarding the vikarma women. Nandi explains:

Vikarma people, my Lord, are people who have been punished in this birth for the sins of their previous birth. Hence they have to live this life

out with dignity and tolerate their present sufferings with grace. This is the only way they can wipe their karma clean of the sins of their previous births. Vikarma men have their own order of penance and women have a different order. (*The Immortals of Meluha* 94-95)

Vikrama women were not permitted to marry since they may contaminate others with their bad fate and they have to pay for forgiveness every month to Lord Agni, the purifying Fire God, through specifically mandated *puja*. Shiva claims such oppressions are formed by society and it is not because of person's natural Karma. Amish through his narrative enhance Shiva to be the exemplary of fairness even in human form. When Sati is too hard on herself in performing dance eventually Shiva touches her elbow and moves it to a correct angle. Immediately Sati is horrified and Guruji flabbergasted realizes Shiva must undergo the purification ceremony 'shudhikaran'. Shiva yells in his bedroom, "Why would I need to be purified for touching Sati? I want to spend all my remaining years touching her in every possible way. Am I going to keep on undergoing a shudhikaran ever day? Ridiculous!" (*The Immortals of Meluha* 106)

These words of Shiva evince his perdurable love towards Sati. He was a voice for the whole Vikrama community. Shiva was a paragon of humanity, he conceives every human were pure hearted. A blind man who seemed lost without his son's hand happens to touch Neelkanth's feet to feel his presence. Due to the blind man's act, his son in a harsh tone scolds him and he apologizes to Shiva. The son said that his father is a Vikrama ever since disease blinded him twenty years ago. But Shiva stepped forward bends down to touch the feet of vikrama father. The surrounding is at sea for a moment. Fatherly Shiva sought blessings from the blind man. The blind man gathers the strength and he blesses Shiva, "'Vijayibhav'. May you be victorious." (*The Immortals of Meluha* 200). Shiva brought a revolutionary in the Meluhan society since he is enraged by the so-called obsolete law, then in order to eradicate this law Shiva declares himself as the

Neelkanth and dissolves the Vikarma law, “That is not what I asked. I want the entire vikarma law scrapped. Nobody will be a vikarma from now on. Bad fate can strike anyone. It is ridiculous to blame their past lives for it” (*The Immortals of Meluha* 279).

Sati is married around ninety years ago to Chandandhwaj and unfortunately, the child was stillborn, the first royal woman to give birth to a stillborn. Despite knowing the past life of Sati Shiva realizes Sati as a good woman and he strongly perceives that she did not deserve to be treated as a vikrama. Daksha dumbstruck with the love of Shiva towards Sati opines, “the most powerful force in a woman’s life is the need to be appreciated, loved and cherished for what she is” (*The Immortals of Meluha* 155). Shiva honestly loved Sati for what she was.

Distinctively to the myth, Sati is a widow, Daksha sobs that he fails to save his daughter from the humiliation and intends to seek help from Shiva. All the emotions of Shiva in the universe surged out. His face wore an ecstatic smile. He tries to speak but his voice choked. He bent down, picked up Sati’s hand gently, brought to his lips and kissed it lovingly. Shiva vows Daksha, “I will never let go of her. Never” (*The Immortals of Meluha* 281). An overjoyed Daksha hugs Shiva tightly and said softly, “My Lord” (*The Immortals of Meluha* 281) in the marriage ceremony Daksha and Shiva together pours the ceremonial ghee into the sacred fire and finally Sati a transformed lady heartily marries Shiva and receives blessings of all. Brahaspati beloved of Shiva blesses joyfully, “Akhandsaubhagyavatibhav may her husband always be alive and by her side” (*The Immortals of Meluha* 293). Amish stunningly reconstruct the age old myth and he beautifully throws the light on the divine and eternal love between Shiva and Sati through his fictionalized mythical narratives.

Amish in his *Trilogy* enfold the technique of suspense and fictionalizes popular Hindu mythologies. “There is no single ‘true’ meaning of the myths. Instead There are various readings to which we might subject the myths.” (Courtright 1985, 91). True to

this saying Tripathi has proffered a newfangled anecdote to Lord Ganesh. Amish firstly present Ganesh to the readers as hooded figure who sustains to invade Sati since he assumes Sati had abandoned him for his deformities. Ganesh is exiled from Meluha since he is a Naga and he is initially carried out as an evil character in *The Immortals of Meluha* beside his virtuous character.

Shiva appraise him as his foe presumably for killing his venerated friend Brahaspathi. Once when Sati heard about the pleas for help from the villagers of Icchawar who lives under a mortal threat of man eating lions for many months she charges out to help the villagers. In the act of killing the lions all of a sudden a liger sprung high at Sati. From nowhere a hooded figure (Ganesh) emerged and flung the animal off. The liger's claws struck at the hooded figure, tearing deep through his shoulders. He stood protectively in front of his mother. Ganesh beside all the bitterness he had for his mother Sati he bounced to save her life. When the hooded figure's mask had slips off Sati is awe struck.

The Naga's forehead was ridiculously broad, his eyes placed on the side , almost facing different directions. His nose was abnormally long, stretching out like the trunk of an elephant. Two buck teeth struck out of the mouth, one of them broken. The legacy of an old injury, perhaps. The eyes were floppy and large, shaking of their own accord. It almost seemed like the head of an elephant had been placed on the body of thisunfortunate soul.” (*The Secret of Nagas* 237)

The lines quoted above from the novel sketch the figure of lord Ganesh as pictured in Hinduism. Amish narrate the kinship between Sati and Ganesh in a distinctive way. Emotions were raging through the soul of Ganesh. Anger, betrayal, fear, love. The Naga whispers, “Ugly aren't I?” (*The Secret of Nagas* 237) his eyes wet he questions Sati “Is that why you abandoned me?” he presumes Sati deserts him since

she could not bear his looks. The truth is brought to light to Sati that Ganesh is her stillborn child and is cast aside since he is a Naga. Sati went down on her knees, stumbling, holding Ganesh's face, "My son is alive" (*The Secret of Nagas* 240). She pulls Ganesh's face kisses his forehead and apprises, "I'll never let you go. Never" (*The Secret of Nagas* 240) tears broke out in a stronger flood. He wraps his arms around his mother and whispered the most magical words, "Maa..."(*The Secret of Nagas* 240). Ganesh pouts when he is hungry, as depicted in myths. Finally Sati takes Ganesh along with her to Kashi a land with shining light.

A breath of fresh air is brought to the typical myth in accordance to lord Ganesh. Ganesha's historical origins are unknown and he enters the mythology and iconography of Hinduism with an abrupt and dramatic appearance in the post-Epic or early Puranic period, which is around the fifth century (Courtright 1985, 8) From the work *Ganesha: Lord of Obstacles, Lord of Beginnings* it is interpreted. Once when Shiva left his wife Parvati for a long time in order to meditate on Mt. Kailasa, she became lonely and she craves for a son who would give her love and protection. She rubs the unguents on the surface of her limbs and out of this material she rubs forth a being in the shape of a young man. She breaths him to life and places him at the doorway of her bath, instructing him to admit no one. Meanwhile, Shiva returns from his long meditations and arrives at Parvati's private chamber, but the young man blocks the way and refuses to let Shiva in without the knowledge that Shiva was Parvati's spouse. Not knowing that this guard is Parvati's creation, Shiva became infuriated and, after a verbal affray, Shiva cut off the guard's head. Overhearing the commotion outside, Parvati entered.

Parvati knew what had happened, she overcame with grief and anger at what Shiva had done. She in wrath discloses that unless Shiva restores his son with a new head she would bring the universe to destruction. So Shiva sent his servants in search of

a new head. As they traveled north, the auspicious direction, they found an elephant and cut off its head and returned to place it on the vacant shoulders of Parvati's guardian son. As the son revived, Shiva praises him and gave him the name of Ganesha. Shiva made him lord of his (Shiva's) own group of devotees (ganas), and accepts him as his own son.

The transposed myth in *Trilogy* is Ganesh was the son of Sati and Chandandhwaj. In line with Hindu mythology Ganesh is the son of Shiva and Parvati. In *Immortals of Meluha* Sati is referred to Parvati by Daksha, "She's also called Parvati for a reason- it's because she is your goddaughter" (*The Immortals of Meluha* 92). Shiva embraces Ganesh as his first son, as Shiva reaches Ganesh held his shoulders tightly and blesses him with a long life when Sati reveals the truth. The rage of Shiva purges out when he caught the sight of the unblemished Aum serpent symbol on his Ganesh's bracelet. Shiva bawls in anger, "Your son killed Brahaspati!" (*The Secret of Nagas* 293). Shiva roars in anger and he orders Ganesh to leave his house and his land. Sati pleads, "Shiva he's my son. I cannot live without him" (*The Secret of Nagas* 293). Shiva in a fury said "Then live without me" (*The Secret of Nagas* 293). Ganesh simultaneously adjures "O great Mahadev, you are known for your fairness. The crime is mine. Don't punish my mother for my sin She cannot live without you" (*The Secret of Nagas* 294).

Shiva's anger fades away when Ganesh rescues his dearest son Kartik from a lioness. In the course of action lioness lashes out and bit into Ganesh's chest. Ganesh collapses and went unconscious. When the naga opens his eyes slowly surprisingly he finds a hand applying the medicine so tenderly is not soft and feminine, but strong and masculine and he is frozen when he realizes the hands were Neelkanth's. Shiva senses the fairness and flawless heart of Ganesh and gradually adores and embosoms him as his son. The title 'Lord of the People' is perfectly attributed to lord Ganesh since he is

the supreme deity and he is the lord of success and the destroyer of evils as his father Mahadev, Ganesh also fights to eradicate the production of Somras which is an evil production.

After the death of Sati, Amish suffices that the wise and kind-hearted Ganesh, grew to astronomical heights in India in *The Oath of the Vayuputras*. People revered him as a living God. A belief spread throughout the country that he should be the first God to be worshipped in all ceremonies, before all others. It was held that worshipping Ganesh would remove all obstacles from one's path. Thus, he came to be known as the God of Auspicious Beginnings. His profound intellect also led to him gradually becoming the God of Writers; thus his name acquired immense significance for authors, poets and other troubled souls. One of the prominent myths regarding Ganesh is rescripted through an entrancing narration.

In *Trilogy* Kartik is the son of Shiva and Sati, Neelkanth's first born child. Ayurvati rushes out to Shiva and exclaims, "It's a boy my Lord! A strong, handsome, powerful boy!" (*The Secret of Nagas* 117). Kartik's parents are puzzled in naming him. Shiva thought for a moment and said, "I know! We'll call him Kartik." (*The Secret of Nagas* 117) Daksha his grandfather embraces Shiva tightly and averred in joy, "You, Lord Neelkanth, have purified all that went wrong with my family. Everything is alright once again." (*The Secret of Nagas* 119) Kartik in general adores the art of war, "Kartik, the Lord of War" (*The Oath of Vayuputra* 216). Amish quotes in his work *The Oath of Vayuputras*, "Kartik was still a child, but was already universally respected as a fearsome warrior". Shiva asked Kartik to carry out his mission wanted to save Bhriгу and to ensure the Somras is not completely destroyed.

Daksha plans to execute Shiva and sends Vidyunmali to get Egyptian assassins. He designed a peace treaty for Shiva but in his absence, Sati attends the peace conference and discovers the truth. She fights the assassins Swuth fearlessly, but Sati is

killed. Ready in every way, Swath stares back at Sati, at a face that he knew would haunt him for the rest of his life, and he whispers, “killing you shall be my life’s honour, My Lady.” (*The Oath of Vayuputras* 267) The war ends with Sati’s death, but an enraged Shiva determines to use the Pashupatiasra to end Devagiri forever. Shiva unleashes the astra and finishes Devagiri’s history, along with the Somras manufacturing units hidden below the city. Through this Daksha’s treacherous character is highly revealed and Sati’s death caused immense and forgettable pain to Shiva which instigated him to behead Daksha and made him outrageous.

In the myths Shiva beheads Daksha is critical, he arraigns and insults Shiva Daksha snarls, “I will not invite a man who does not care for culture and who is even indifferent to nature. Look at him. He wanders around naked, smears his body with ash, smokes narcotics, dances in crematoriums, takes refuge in caves and mountains, has no home, has dogs and ghosts and snakes as his companions” (Patnaik 37). When Daksha disrespects Shiva intolerable Sati leaps into the sacrificial fire and sets herself ablaze. She makes herself the offering to the one who is denied offering by Daksha. She burns for Shiva. When Sati follows Shiva, she does it out of unconditional love. Sati does not expect him to change. She serves him without asking anything in return. He decides to show Praja-pati a fear greater than all others fears. His righteous outrage takes the form of Virabhadra, a terrifying warrior. As Virabhadra, Shiva beheads Daksha just as he had beheaded Brahma in the form of Kapalika. The myth of Daksha Shiva and Sati is reframed by Amish in a different perspective.

Later the family of the Neelkanth in the novel establishes fifty-one Shakti temples across the length and breadth of the country. Kali also convinces Shiva to part with the portion of Sati’s ashes that he had kept for himself. She stresses him that Sati belongs to the whole of India and not just to Shiva. Therefore, small portions of Sati’s ashes were consecrated at each of these fifty-one temples so that Indians would forever

remember their great Goddess, Lady Sati. Shiva knew that Kartik had travelled a very long distance to come to Kailash.

After most of Shiva's tasks had been completed Lord Shiva decides to return to Kailash-Mansarovar, Kartik migrates to the south of the Narmada, going deep into the ancient heartland of India; the land of Lord Manu. History had recorded that Lord Manu was a prince of the Pandya dynasty. The Pandya dynasty had ruled the prehistoric land of Sangam Tamil. That nation and its fine Sangam culture had been destroyed as sea levels had risen with the end of the last Ice Age. Kartik discovers that many people continued to live in this ancient Indian fatherland, breaking Lord Manu's law that banned people from travelling south of the Narmada.

Kartik establishes a new Sangam culture on the banks of the southern most major river of India, the Kaveri. And he is an important deity and predominantly worshipped in South India. In myths Kartik is the son of Siva and Parvati and in accordance to myth he is born in Saravana but in *Trilogy* Amish deconstructs the myth, Kartik is the son of Shiva and Sati is known that he is born in Kashi the land of lights. In myths it is said that Kartik decides to leave Mt. Kailash and he desires to go to South India. Kartik's wisdom and courage ensured that the Sangam culture in South India continued to flourish and its power spread far and wide. While Kartik continues to be adored in northern India, especially in Kashi where he is born, his influence in southern India is beyond comparison. He is remembered to this day as the Warrior God, the one who can solve any problem and defeat any enemy.

Krittika, the beloved friend of Sati, in myth Kartik, is cared and brought up by six women symbolizing Pleiades (Kritika in Sanskrit) and thus secures the name Kartikeya. In *Trilogy* Krittika is a rock of support in Sati's life and Shiva even urges that his child should be named after Krittika since the child was a boy Shiva names him K artik. Sati overwhelmingly utters, "Krittika is almost like a second mother to Kartik.

My son is so lucky” (*The Secret of Nagas* 163). Krittika is unable to part away from Kartik even for a moment; she cares and adores him unconditionally. For instance, when Kartik is surrounded by lioness Krittika without minding her live courageously shot up to save him, she is willing to die for Kartik. Krittika in *Trilogy* was married to Veerbhadra.

Shiva’s boon companion and comrade in the Guna tribe is Veerbhadra. In mythology Shiva’s righteous outrage takes the form of Virabhadra, a terrifying warrior. He always wonders “Why does he keep forgetting that he has been my closest friend since childhood? By becoming the chief he hasn’t really changed anything. He doesn’t need to unnecessarily servile in front of others” (*The Immortals of Meuha* 13). In myths Virabhadra is a form of Shiva who beheads Daksha for his unreasonable demands and pride. In the novel, Amish pictures Bhadra as Shiva’s loyal and compassionate friend.

In the *Trilogy* Kali is represented as the younger sister of Sati and she is a replica to Sati in her looks, “I am your twin sister, Kali. The one whom your two faced father abandoned.” (*The Secret of Nagas* 239). Kali similar to Ganesha is cast out from Sati’s life by Daksha. Daksha is ashamed and disgusted with the deformity of Kali and exiles her out from his family. Kali, Sati’s sister, “The Naga woman was actually two women in one body. The body was ore from the chest down. But there are two sets of shoulders flushed to each other at that chest, each with a single arm dangling in either direction. The Naga has two heads. One body, two arms, four shoulders and twin heads” (*The Secret of Nagas* 271).

Kali had a horrific appearance. The novel describes her as having a torso with an exoskeleton covering it. She also had small balls of bone which ran from her shoulders to her stomach like a garland of skulls. On top of her shoulders were two small extra appendages serving as third and fourth arm and she is jet black in colour. In accordance to myths Goddess Kali is regarded as the most fierce and destructive form

of Sati. With red eyes, dark complexion, protruding red tongue and garland of skulls around her neck, she is the annihilator of evil. One of the popular depictions of Kali portrays her as stepping over the chest of Lord Shiva. Tripathi through his flooding imagination has brought a fanaticism to Kali.

A fantasizing description is given about the mythical character Nandi. On the basis of mythology Nandi is the gate-guardian deity of Kailasa, the abode of Lord Shiva. He is usually represented as a bull, which also serves as the mount to Shiva. In *Trilogy* Nandi is the General of Meluha and Amish's personification of Nandi shows his artistic excellence. Nandi plays the role of Shiva's companion. Over the subsequent years after Sati's death, Shiva became increasingly ascetic. He began spending many days, even months, in isolation within the claustrophobic confines of mountain caves, performing severe penance. The only one allowed to meet him at such times was Nandi. Legends perceived that the only way to reach Shiva's ears was through Nandi. Amish had humanized Nandi and ravishingly spun the role of Nandi in Shiva's life.

Amish's *Shiva Trilogy* reconciles the commonalities and differences of philosophies of the Vedanta and Kashmir Shaivism. Both accept dharma as the moral law of universe that accounts for these eternal cycles of nature as well as the destiny of human soul in its evolution. In *The Immortals of Meluha*, this commonality is rendered through the essence of the universe of Om. Its meaning is further deepened by the Indian philosophical belief that God first created sound and the universe arose from it. As the most sacred sound, Om is the root of the universe and everything that exists in the universe and it also continues to hold everything together. Amish Tripathi gives a humanistic explanation of the significance of the word:

“Picking up a palm- leaf booklet and the thin charcoal writing stick from the side table, Shiva drew the symbol . Nandi frowned, that is an ancient symbol that some people used for the word AUM. “But AUM?” Asked

Shiva, “My Lord, Aum is the holiest word in our religion. It is considered the primal sound of nature. The hymn of the universe. It was so holy that for many millennia, most people would not insult it by putting down in written form.” “Then how did this symbol come about?” It was devised by Lord Bharat, a great ruler who had conquered practically all of India many thousands of years ago.” (*The Secret of Nagas* 56)

The three states of consciousness of an individual and the entire physical phenomenon is embodied in the figure of Aum but Amish vindicate a different aspect through Aum. He suffices that King Bharat created the symbol Aum of unity between the Suryavanshis and Chandravanshis. The crescent moon to the right of the symbol is the pre-existing Chandravanshi symbol and the sun above it was the pre-existing Suryavanshi symbol but the bracelets of Nagas had the symbol of Aum but it is colourless and the drawing represented three serpents.

From Neelkanth, Shiva achieves the godly form of Mahadev, an ordinary man becomes “God” that is the motif of Mahadev—The Oath of the Vayuputras (2013). Lord Shiva endowed with great qualities of a leader never boasts of any selfish motive and he works for the common good; this quality of Shiva makes him Mahadev, The Lord of Lords. In this age of demythologization and re-mythologization, Amish has firmly established a fictionalized historical account in Indian fictional writing by rendering the recreation of the traditional myths through the means of the fantasy mode in *Shiva Trilogy*. In a way Amish has broken the conventional treatment of the myths by the early Indian writers. Rohit Panikker, states the reason for the transformation as, “The Indian fiction scene is going through a generational change. We have finally shed our colonial hang-ups where the target audience is Indian. The readers want to read

more about their own roots” (The Times of India). Hence Amish Tripathi in a way has broken the conventional treatment of the myths in his work *Shiva Trilogy*.

Chapter III

Semblances of Pluralism

The term “cultural pluralism” has emerged in modern times through Kallen’s essay *Democracy versus the Melting Pot* (1915) in the Nation in which he has conferred an argument against the “Americanisation” of European Immigrants. It is the sociological term which apostle that different ethnic group must be allowed to foster in society without being forced to assimilate their identity with the relatively larger ethnic groups. Such an approach is opposite to “multiculturalism” which implies forced cultural amalgamation to achieve the goal of utopian social integration. Sometimes the two terms are mistaken for synonyms. Multiculturalism idealizes objective reality while cultural pluralism advocates the tolerance of subjective reality.

In society a healthy ambience is the acceptance but not tolerance of cultural pluralism and multiculturalism as well as subjective and objective reality. Prominently, the major social clashes around the world for the last few thousand years have been due to intolerance towards other cultures. Amish Tripathi’s *Shiva Trilogy* that fictionalizes the pre-historic world of the Sarasvati civilization or Indus valley civilization deals with such a cultural clash originating through rigidity and denial of the truth.

Amish Tripathi has fictionalized the societies with diverse cultural beliefs against the backdrop of the Sarasvati Civilization in his *Shiva Trilogy*. Such diversity is a truer picture of contemporary Indian society as well as most of the other societies across the globe. The societies of *Shiva Trilogy* include the idealised world of Meluha of Suryavanshi, the Chandravanshi, Naga, Vayuputra, etc. All have their individual cultural belief, code of conduct, propriety and values which they eulogize while looking down upon others. In *Shiva Trilogy*, Amish has compared and contrasted these cultural beliefs, codes of conduct, values and ways of life etc. to establish the fact that there is

no absolute right or wrong in cultural context. Only when a community or a person resorts to violence and becomes a threat to humanity, it becomes evil. Harmony can descend to a society only by the acceptance of the alternate realities. Thus Amish advocate cultural pluralism.

In *The Immortals of Meluha*, when the Gunas were invited to Meluha, Meluha is correlated to a paradise. The foreigner utters, “Others call it Meluha. I call it a Heaven” (Amish 2). It was a juncture which offers a lifestyle beyond one’s wildest dreams. Meluha is a land of pure life, every soul is entwined to a virtuous life. The motto of the Suryavanshi’s “Satya, Dharma, Mann: Truth, Duty, Honour” (*The Immortals of Meluha* 62). An adage that has created a duty bound honourable society where rules were supreme. The newly registered tribes Gunas in Meluha are marveled at the almost obsessively meticulous planning of Suryavanshis. Shiva on reaching Meluha and Srinagar, notices something strange about the roads. They were laid out in a neat North South and East West grid. The carefully paved footpath is a stark contrast to the dirt tracks in Shiva’s own land. The differently coloured stones which ran through the roads indicated the underground drainage system. The drains took all the waste water of the camp. It ensures that the camp remains clean and hygienic.

The Gunas are given a building which is assigned for them to stay. The three-storeyed building had comfortable, separate living quarters for each family. Each room had luxurious furniture including a highly polished copper plate on the wall in which they could see the reflection of their face, typically a mirror. The rooms had clean linen bed sheets, towels and even some clothes. Bewildered Shiva throws question on the material of the clothes that Meluhans possessed. Chitraangadh said it is cotton and the plant is grown in the land of Meluha and then fashioned into clothes. Shiva is provided with a bed to lie on. Shiva tosses and turns on his bed constantly. The tiger skin which he had been using is taken away for a washfor hygienic reasons. Shiva mumbles, “This

cursed bed is too soft. Impossible to sleep on!” (*The Immortals of Meluha* 17). Shiva yanks the bed sheet off the mattress, tosses it on the floor and set down. The tribes are offered lands in Kashmir. Chenardhwaj vows to Shiva that Meluha will provide Gunas all the resources needed to lead a comfortable life.

All the buildings were constructed as standard two-storeyed block structures made of baked bricks. The Meluhan city is divided into a grid of square blocks by the paved streets. There are footpaths on the side for the pedestrians, lanes marked on the street for traffic in different directions and were covered drains running through the centre. The roofing of the building had wooden extensions the buildings differed internally depending on the individual’s requirements. The blank walls of the buildings that faced the main roads bore striking depicting the different legends of the Suryavanshis while the walls themselves are painted in sober colours of grey, light blue, light green or white. The most common colour to appear on the walls of Meluha is blue. The holiest colour of the Meluhans is blue denoting the sky. Green represents the nature in the colour spectrum. Meluhans liked to divine a grand design in every natural phenomenon. Meluhans wholly portrayed themselves as propagators of good in every aspect. The most recurring illustrations on the wall of Meluha are about the great emperor, Lord Ram. Lord Ram is deeply revered and many Meluhans worship him like a god. Meluhans living and construction represents simplicity and efficiency.

The motto and the act of the Suryavanshi community is paralleled with certain ethnic groups in contemporary society those who urge to bring and pull down people under same behavioural and philosophic configuration, thus, killing their individuality. In the lecture, entitled “Existentialism is Humanism” (1945), given by Jean Paul Sartre, the leading philosopher of 20th century, the notable idea of the “existence precedes essence” has been presented. He gave this lecture at club Maintenant in Paris, on 29th

October 1945. Existentialism advocates the pre-eminence of identity or existence of an individual before anything.

The emotional, physical, psychological and philosophical needs of each individual cannot be expected to be the same and if it is so, compelling everyone to follow the same rule and expecting all to act equally, is killing individuality. It is a threat for the society. Similarly Daksha after the triumph over Swadweepans proclaims to Dilipa Emperor of Swadweep, “We are going to reform you” but the mercurial people of Ayodhya scoffed at Daksha’s proclaimed intention to reform them since Ayodhya was a vibrant city bubbling with modernity.

Existentialism espouses personal freedom, personal responsibility and a personal discipline through the human consciousness. Human consciousness itself is not an independent entity but is subjective. Adorno, in *On Subjective and Objective*, has referred to “subject” as “selfconscious object”. This existentialist philosophy is found in the motto of the Chandravanshis who value personal freedom before everything.

Daksha pictures Chandravanshis as corrupt and disgusting people to Shiva who lives with no morals and no ethics; they brace a life with no rules. Amish quoted, Chandravanshis living is a primrose path where they interlace their life to shibboleth, ‘Shringar. Saundarya. Swatantrata. Passion. Beauty. Freedom.’ (qtd. in Tripathi 373).

Krittika describes their way of life in *The Immortals of Meluha* as a ‘functioning pandemonium’ since their society is a tumultuous one. The roads of their society were nothing better than dirt tracks. The roads were narrow amidst the potholes. In *The Immortals of Meluha* Amish echo, the Meluhans simply label the Chandravanshis’ conduct of life as ‘encroachment’. Some open grounds had been converted into giant slums as illegal immigrants simply pitched their tents on public areas. The already narrow roads had been made even narrower by the intrusion of cloth tents of the homeless. The Chandravanshis emperor had legalized all the encroachments and had

failed to afford them an alternative accommodation. The encroachments, the bad roads and their construction mirrored their inefficiency and a weak government.

None of the Ayodhyan house is similar, unlike the Meluhan cities where even the royal palace is built to a standard design. Swadweepans house had its own individual allure. The Swadweepans, unencumbered by strict rules and building codes, created house that were expressions of passion and elegance. Some structures were filled with grandeur that the Meluhans were amazed with the divine engineering that has created it. The Swadweepans had none of the restraint of the Meluhans. Everything is painted bright from orange buildings to parrot green ceilings to staggering pink windows. Civic minded rich Swadweepans had created luxuriant public gardens, temples, theatres and libraries and these were named after their family members since they have not received any help from the Government. It is a vibrant city that had exquisite beauty existing alongside hideous ugliness. Ayodha both disgusted as well as fascinated the Meluhans.

The Meluhan women are dressed up fastidiously. The foremost female character to appear in the novel is Ayurvati, the Head State Doctor. She is highly revered by all Meluhans. She and her team of competent nurses are capable of the most suitable treatment. The set-up is in sheer contrast to the often parochial and conservative attitude exhibited in the present Indian society that frowns upon independent working women. Though it is the case around the world as De Beauvoir writes, “man defines woman not in relation to herself but as relative to him; she is not regarded as autonomous being.”

Ayurvati’s appearance is also non-conventional so far as the aesthetic standards of the average Indian woman is concerned. Her forehead bears a white dot and “her head was shaven clean except for a knotted tuft of hair at the back, called choti. A loose string called a Janau was tied from her left shoulder across her torso down to the right side.”(*The Immortals of Meluha* 14) A notable fact is ‘choti’ or a knotted tuft of hair on

the bald skull and Janau are the traditional attributes of highly educated Brahmin males. By assigning similar attributes to both men and women, Amish creates an unbiased society where prejudice is not gender motored. Sati a portrayal of emancipation, she is a streamlined woman and simultaneously a truculent warrior. Sati is also the embodiment of truth, virtue, morality, beauty as well as 'softer' emotions.

In a stark contrast to these characters is Anandmayi. The people of Chandravanshis Empire were living embodiments of the Chandravanshi way of life. The women wore skimpy clothes, brazen and confident about their sexuality. The men were equally fashionable and beauty-conscious and Meluhans called them 'dandies'. Characterization of the relationship between the men and women is as one teetering on extremes. Extreme love coexisted with extreme hate, expressed with extreme loudness and all were built on the foundations of extreme passion. Nothing is done in small measure in Ayodhya. The word 'modesty' did not exist in their dictionary.

An exemplary of Chandravanshis' way of living is Anandmayi. When Anandmayi enters Shiva's tent Nandi and Veerbhadra flank at Anandmayi's appearance. Shiva raises his eyebrow at her appearance. She is taller than her father Dilipa and distractingly beautiful. A deep walnut coloured complexion complements her body that is voluptuous, yet muscular. Her doe-eyes cast a seductive look while her lips were in a perpetual pout, sensual yet intimidating. Her clothing is provocative, with a dhoti that had been tied dangerously low at the waist and ended many inches above her knees, while being agonizingly tight at her curvaceous hips. It is just a little longer than the loin cloth that the Meluhan men wore during their ceremonial baths. Her blouse is similar to the cloth piece that the Meluhan women tied, except that it had been cut raunchily at the top to shape of her ample breasts, affording a full view of her generous cleavage. She stood with her hips titled to the side, excluding raw passion.

Anandmayi demands fifty drinks of milk for her beauty bath and rose petals for her soothing skin.

The Ayodhyans seems to live their life without even the slightest hint of self-control. Loudest emotional voices assault Shiva's ears as if a hideous orchestra is trying to overpower the senses. The common people either laugh like they had just gulped an entire bottle of wine or fought as if their lives depended on it. Shiva being a Neelkanth is pushed and shoved on several occasions by people rushing around, hurling obscenities and called Shiva a blind. There were maniac shoppers bargaining with the agitated shopkeepers at the bazaar and it almost seemed like they would come to blow over ridiculously small amounts of money. For both the shoppers and shopkeepers, the harried negotiation is about their pride in having struck a good bargain in itself.

Shiva notices large number of couples crowded into a small garden on the side of the road doing unspeakable things to each other. They seemed to brazenly disregard the presence of voyeuristic on the street or in the park itself. He heeds with a surprise that the prying eyes were not judgmental but excited. Shiva noted the glaring contrast with the Meluhans who would not even embrace each other in public. Shiva walked down a road which led to his destination. Shiva closes his eyes and took a deep breath as anxiety gnawed at his heart amidst magnificent Gulmour trees and their dazzling orange leaves. Shiva's chant is being disturbed constantly. At the end of the road he saw an old shriveled man who appeared like he had not eaten in weeks. He had a wound on his ankle which had festered because of the humidity and neglect. He dressed in a torn and ragged jute sack which is tied precariously at his waist and hung from his shoulders with a hemp rope. With his weak left hand he sorely balanced a banana leaf and some gruel. The kind of food he had is disturbed at cheap restaurants on the donations of a few kindly or guilty souls. The kind of food that would not even fed to animals in Meluha.

Intense anger surged through Shiva. The old man begging, nay suffering at the doors of Lord Ram's abode is cared by none. On encountering with the old man Shiva interrogates the government of Chandravanshis in his mind, "What kind of government would treat its people like this?" (*The Immortals of Meluha* 387). In Meluha, the government assiduously nurtures all its citizens. There is enough food for everyone. Nobody is homeless. The government works meticulously strives for the citizen's welfare. Shiva mumbles, "The old man would not have had to endure this humiliation had he lived in Devagiri!" (*The Immortals of Meluha* 387).

The Chandravanshis were not evil but they led a wretched life. Sufficing the above instances it can be postulated that Suryavanshis strives to sustain the culture and tradition of their ancestors and thus pursue a life with abundance of materialism and prosperity. Suryavanshis were simply apperceived for their modesty, honesty and duty bound life. Whereas Chandravanshis were a contradictory to Suryavanshis. They had no norms no control and laws. They were drowned in merrymaking and gave prominence to attire, physical looks and adorableness as a whole each soul gave importance to self-growth i.e. to individuality rather to the development of the natives of the land. Simply Ayodhya became the land of individuals and Devagiri was the abode of the Gods.

In the novel, Amish has delineated that both the cultures has their own advantages and disadvantages. None can claim perfection. Thus both must be allowed to thrive without any censure. The cultures of Meluhans and Swadweepans can be compared with the cultures of contemporary society. Meluhan cultures that put so much value on restrain and moderation perceives that vibrant life would lead to evil. In the fictional work, people of both the cultures live in their own subjective realities and believe it to be the objective reality. They are in discord as long as they look down upon

one another, harmony and peace descends on both the cultures when they accept cultural pluralism.

Christopher Isherwood, in his work, *What Religion is in the Words of Swami Vivekananda*, writes about what Swamiji said about tolerance and acceptance. In the chapter entitled *The Ideal of a Universal Religion*, he stated that it is acceptance rather than tolerance which is required. Tolerance means that one thinks that the other is wrong yet one allows the other to exist out of sympathy. Such a belief is bound to create strife. He claimed that only when one accepts that every path is true, society would be at peace, true to this is the life of the Suryavanshi and the Chandravanshi.

Parvateshwar, the General and representative of Meluhans completely understood the praxis of Suryavanshis and he lived by the laws of Ram. In the course of his life he adopts the ideals of Chandravanshis, he realizes the purpose of justice can be attained by breaking the formulated laws. His grandfather protest against the corruption of Lord Ram's way where the children of nobility would not be surrendered into the common pool. They would pursue to be tracked separately and returned to their birth parents when they turned sixteen.

Parvateshwar's grandfather voiced for the common people and took up the vow that neither he nor any of his adopted Maika descendants would ever have birth children. Parvateshwar seeks the help of Shiva concerning Anandmayi and her love. Shiva stated "If the purpose of justice is served by breaking a law, then break it." (*The Secret of Nagas* 253) Parvateshwar realizes that he never hurts anyone by being with Anandmayi and he let his heart serve the purpose of love. Love blooms between Parvateshwar and Anandmayi and they promise each other that they would walk together in the road of life. As the Meluhan ideals is to give priority to duty before anything, Parvateshwar follows celibacy, compromising his love for Anandmayi but

ultimately in the due course he let his individuality conquer the rules, thus achieving freedom of choice.

Panchavati the land of Nagas had been established by Bhoomidevi. The mysterious non-Naga lady had instituted the present way of life. Naga civilization is founded on her laws and statements, combining the best of the Suryavanshis and the Chandravanshis. It loudly proclaims her aspiration above the city gates.

“Satyam.Sundaram.Truth.Beauty.”(*The Secret of Nagas* 380) the city was nothing like Shiva and other characters expected. It had been laid out in a neat grid like pattern, much like Meluhan cities. But the Nagas appeared to have taken the Suryavanshis ideal of justice and equality to its logical extreme. Every single house, including that of Queen, is exactly the same design and size. There were no poor or rich amidst the fifty thousand Nagas living in Panchavati. Consequently everyone had the right to decide what they want to do with their live. But the state provides housing and basic necessities to every civilian. Complete equality prevails in Panchavati. Around five legendary banyan trees, communal buildings were situated. There exists a school, a temple dedicated to Lord Rudra and Lady Mohini, a public bath and a stadium for performances, where fifty thousand civilians met regularly. Music, dance and drama were prized past-times and not routes for knowledge. An organized system-bound life exists in Naga kingdom.

Amish quotes the different perceptions of life in *The Secret of Nagas* and suffice it to the lives perceived by the Suryavanshis and the Chandravanshis. The masculine way of life is life by laws. Laws that could be made by a great leader, perhaps a Vishnu like Lord Ram. Or laws that come down from a religious tradition. Or collective laws decreed by the people themselves. But the masculine way is very clear. Laws are unchangeable and they must be followed rigidly. There is no room for ambiguity. Life is predictable because the populace will always do what is ordained. Meluha is a perfect

example of such a way of life. It is obvious, therefore why the people of this way of life live by the code of 'Truth, Duty and Honour'.

The feminine way of life is life by probabilities. There are no absolutes. No black or white and there was no discrimination. People did not act as per some preordained law, but based on probabilities of different outcomes perceived at the point of time. For instance, they will follow a king who they think has a higher probability of remaining in power. The moment the probabilities change, their loyalties do as well. The laws in Chandravanshi society is malleable.

The same laws can be interpreted differently at different points of time. Change is the only constant. Feminine civilizations, like Swadweep are comfortable with contradictions and they live successfully by the code 'Passion, Beauty, Freedom'. The Pandit in Rajamahoomi enhanced Shiva about the existence of civilisations and he marked humans were nothing individually. Pandit says, "Our power flows from all of us. From the way all of us live together." (*The Secret of Nagas* 50) and he stressed to Shiva that both the civilizations must exist. Because both civilization balance each other. Thus Cultural pluralism can be practiced at varying degrees by a group or an individual. A prominent example of pluralism is Chandravanshis ambages, in which a dominant culture with strong elements of nationalism, a sporting culture, and an artistic culture contained also smaller groups with their own ethnic, religious, and cultural norms. Naga civilization is composure of Suryavanshis and Chandravanshis and they totally paved way for cultural pluralism where equality was embarked. Descriptions sufficed for each civilization substantiates that cultural pluralism is highly prevalent in the Chandravanshis and Naga civilization while subaltern nature is predominant in the society of Suryavanshis.

Though Amish seem to applaud cultural pluralism yet his work also presents the example of multiculturalism. The cultural assimilation of the Gunas, the tribe of Shiva,

the growth and the cultural expansion they undergo when they set foot on Meluha. They are brought into a completely new system of the Meluhans cultural life and are expected to hail and cherish it, as it is superior to their mountain culture. Even at the immigration camp, they are given good hospitality which shows signs of modernity in their lifestyle. Gunas have their own culture which must be equally valuable for them but they are a small tribe in contrast to the large civilization of Meluha and so they are expected to assimilate in order to bring social integration and conformity. Meluhans believe that their ideals of life would uplift the life of Gunas. For instance when Shiva and Bhadra inhaled marijuana in Meluha they were looked down, Gunas were termed to be barbarians and only after the revelation of Neelkanth the tribes were paid reverence.

The tendency of some countries and cultural groups in contemporary world corresponds to the Meluhans where the larger ethnic or cultural group imposes and even binds the relatively smaller ethnic or cultural group with their rules. The consumption of Somras by the Gunas was the initial step taken by the Meluhans to make the tribes fall in line with the codes of Meluhan civilization. The irony of the situation is that when a similar people go to another country, they want cultural freedom for themselves. Thus the dual attitude towards the cultural pluralism and multiculturalism presented in the fiction gives a glimpse of the dualist attitude of the contemporary world. The Meluhans can be compared to colonisers. The coloniser's attitude of categorizing and converting the 'other' in the structure of the 'self' is quite unlike the self-propagated motto of 'Truth, Duty, Honour'.

The Suryavanshis kept on believing that it is their noble duty to save the Swadweepans from the unorganized system ruling the Chandravanshis. They strongly rely on the idea that they were the illuminators of good and that they were capable of creating a utopian society. In the course of the Meluhan wish to rule and civilize the 'others', the idea of utopia shatters: and with the discovery of the real nature of the evil

that lie within their society and simultaneously it discloses they were hideous spreaders of deformities which transform the idea of utopia into dystopia. On comparison to Meluhans liberalism perish in Chandravanshis and Nagas civilization and the idea of multiculturalism is intertwined to their living.

Kashi is an exemplary of Multiculturalism. Amish ingeminates, “Kashi the city where the supreme light shines.” (*The Secret of Nagas* 62) The city had been settled along a voluptuous bend of the Holy River Ganga as it took a leisurely Northwards meander before flowing East again. Kashi had its own superstitions. The city had been built only along the western banks of the river meander, leaving its eastern banks bare. It is believed that whoever built a house on the eastern side at Kashi would suffer a terrible fate. The royal family of Kashi had therefore brought all the land to the East, ensuring that nobody, would suffer the wrath of God. A keen sense of responsibility is reflected by Surapadman king of Kashi for the welfare of his civilians.

The Kashi kings, who were great followers of Lord Rudra banned any sort of executions or killing at Assi Ghat, they also threw it open for cremations for people from any kingdom without prejudice of caste, creed or sex. Any person can find salvation in Kashi. Suppressed people from across the confederacy found solace here. Traders found Kashi as the safest place to base their business. Peace and nonalignment to any other kingdom in Swadweep made Kashi an oasis of stability. Kashi became the land of supreme peace and hence prosperity. Henceforth liberalism practiced by Kashi does not make it vulnerable; rather this liberal framework makes it a melting pot of multiculturalism.

Cultural dissention is the result of people’s obstinate belief in their truth. The perceived truth for an individual is his subjective truth. As the system of faith or reality for a particular cultural group is identical, the term subjective reality can be understood for the subjective faith of a group of people belonging to the same culture and objective

reality stands for the ultimate reality. Each cultural group regards their subjective approach as the only way to reach the ultimate reality or objective reality. Though the terminological and epistemological distinction between the given two terms seems simple yet it is indeed the most ambiguous as the concept of subjective-objective reality is itself overlapping. The idea of objective reality is also vague as objective reality is also influenced by subjective perception. In science, the Quantum theory demonstrates that “the observer affects the observed reality” which means that the concept of reality is not sufficient in itself.

In the book, *Vedanta: Voice of Freedom* Christopher Isherwood culminates the lesson of Swami Vivekananda. It says that everyone looks at the truth from different standpoints which itself is influenced by birth, education, and most important, cultural influence. He asserts that human beings do not reach from falsehood to truth, evil to self-realisation but from lower reality to higher reality. It can be easily understood through the process of scientific development. One cannot claim old technology to be evil when something new has been invented. Every scientific development is truth or objective reality for that particular point of time. How one’s subjectivity alters the perception of objectivity can be easily perceived through the example of the tribe called Nagas in *Shiva Trilogy*.

In *Trilogy*, Nagas are initially projected as terrorist who have been ambushing Meluha. They are described as sinners and evil owing to their deformed body, despised by all and exiled from all societies. They live in the place called Panchvati, detached from and unknown to all. Panchavati is regarded to be a wretched one with sinners due to their Karma. Amish sketch them as hideous hooded figures who veil themselves to hide their horrible stature. When it is resolved to Shiva both Suryavanshis and Chandravanshis are not evil, Shiva is easily deluded into the belief that Nagas are evil. Later, the novel reveals that Nagas’ terrorist attack had been self-defence rather than

blitzes. The deformity in their body is caused due to the side-effect of the elixir called Somras that Meluhans consume to proliferate in power and health. On the one hand, it gives Meluhans a long healthy life but on the other hand it creates deformities. Thus, the people who claim them to be sinners were responsible for their deplorable condition. Nagas only ambuscade the sources that produce the elixir. Panchvati is a highly developed place by knowledge and humanity. Yet everyone considers them evil as their perception of Nagas was based on their subjective information, swayed by external agents.

Brahaspati, the chief scientist of Meluha can be interwoven to objective reality. He completely understands the root of evil and he moves away from evil and he stands for justice. He states Shiva, “Evil is never in a rush. It creeps up slowly. It doesn’t hide, but confronts you in broad daylight. It gives decades of warnings, even centuries at times. Time is never the problem when you battle Evil. The problem is the will to fight it.” (*The Oath of Vayuputras* 15) Brahaspati creates an illusion about his death because he knew the harsh realities of Somras and its consequences. Brahaspati reasons Shiva, “That the Somras has been the greatest Good of our age is pretty obvious. It has shaped our age. Hence, it is equally obvious that someday, it will become the greatest Evil.” (*The Oath of Vayuputras* 19) Nagas were born with deformities as a result of the Somras. Brahaspati explains to Shiva about the cons of Somras.

Amish suffice in his work *The Oath of Vayuputras* that the Somras randomly has its impact on a few babies when in the womb, if the parents have been consuming it for a long period. Somras also operates at a more fundamental level. Human body is made up of millions of tiny living units called cells. These are the building blocks of life. These cells have the ability to divide and grow. And each division is like a fresh birth; one old unhealthy cell magically transforms into two new healthy cells. As long as they keep dividing, they remain healthy. So your journey begins in your mother’s

womb as a single cell. That cell keeps dividing and growing till it eventually forms your entire body and Sati exclaimed the rapid division of cells as cancer. Amish intensely mirror the hideous disease cancer and its existence for ages since Vedic era.

Kali elucidate on the emergence of Nagas. Kali expounds to Shiva that Nagas were born with small outgrowths, which don't seem like much initially, but is actually harbingers of years of torture. It almost seem like a demon which has taken over Nagas body. And demon's bursting out from within, slowly, over many years, causing soul-crushing pain that becomes Nagas constant companion. Then Nagas bodies get twisted beyond recognition so that by adolescence, when further growth finally stops, they are stuck with what Brahaspati politely called "deformities". Brahaspati called it the wages of sins that Nagas did not even commit. They paid for the sins others committed by consuming the Somras. Kali rage that the suffering of the Nagas is collateral damage and has to be tolerated for the larger good. From the instances quoted it is clearly understood that the number of people consuming the Somras grew, so did the number of Nagas. Most of the Nagas were from Meluha. For that is where the Somras is used most extensively.

Brahaspati deduce the other reasons for the existence of evil. When Somras is being made for just a few thousand, the amount of Saraswati water used didn't matter. But when Somras is produced for eight million people, the dynamics changed. The waters started getting depleted slowly by the giant manufacturing facility at Mount Mandar. The Saraswati has already stopped reaching the Western Sea. It now ends its journey in an inland delta, south of Rajasthan. The desertification of the land to the south of this delta is already complete. It's a matter of time before the entire river is completely destroyed. Even the preeminent scripture, the Rig Veda, sings paeans to the Saraswati. It is not only the cradle, but also the lifeblood of civilization. Branga had been suffering continuous plagues for many years, which had killed innumerable

people, especially children. The primary relief thus far had been the medicine procured from the Nagas. Or else exotic medicines extracted after killing the sacred peacock, leading to the Brangas being ostracized even in peace-loving cities like Kashi. The plague is the result of insidious impact of the Somras. Brangas were rationalized because the Brangas were a rich lot but an uncivilized lot, with strange eating habits and disgusting customs. A perception persuades that the plague could have been caused by their bad practices and karma rather than the Somras.

The Somras is not only difficult to manufacture, but it also generates large amounts of toxic waste. A problem that is truly hard to be tackled. It cannot be disposed of on land, because it can poison entire districts through ground water contamination. It cannot be discharged into the sea. The Somras waste reacts with salt water to disintegrate in a dangerously rapid and explosive manner. Brahaspati, realizing the harmful consequences of Somras, approaches Emperor Daksha. But he really did not understand scientific things or involve himself with technical details. He turned to the one intellectual he trusted, the venerable royal priest, Raj guru Bhrigu.

Lord Bhrigu seemed genuinely interested and took Brahaspati to the Vayuputra council so he could present his case before them, but they were not at all supportive. This is where the issue was effectively killed. Nobody accepts to believe Brahaspati about the source of the Brahmaputra. They also laughed at Brahaspati when they heard he is ostensibly listening to the Nagas. According to them, the Nagas were now ruled by an extremist harridan whose frustration with Kali's own karma made everyone else the object of Kali's ire. The outlet of Somras in a river high up in the Himalayas, called Tsangpo, causes a collateral damage.

The Tsangpo flows east only for the duration of its course in Tibet. At the eastern extremities of the Himalayas, it takes a sharp turn, almost reversing its flow. It then starts moving south-west and crashes through massive gorges before emerging

near Branga as the Brahmaputra. The Brangas are being poisoned by the Somras waste. A simple assumption is that the river comes from the east; because it flows west into Branga. The Nagas, with the help of Parshuram, finally mapped the upper course of the Brahmaputra. It falls at almost calamitous speeds from the giant heights of the Himalayas into the plains of Branga through gorges that are sheer walls almost two thousand meters high. The course of a river with its calamitous speed was a great threat to the country.

Daksha the Meluhan emperor accompanied by Swadweepan emperor Dilipa and Maharishi Brighu firmly clasped Somras brought only greatness and they proclaimed that they will not let anyone destroy the good that is at the heart of India's greatness. Conclusively unacceptable subjective reality is a threat to society. An elaborated image of Somras and its pros and cons derive the idea that cultural dissention is highlighted through the characters Brahaspati and Shiva in *Trilogy*. They moved away from imposed cultural identities to a new age of reason and they bravely protested against evil without the sense of fear, objective reality is emphasized through the characters Shiva and Brahaspati and hence Shiva is recognized worldwide as the destroyer of evil.

Cultural pluralism can also be interlaced to science. The embracement of technological development and scientific growth per se by different communities reflects development of a country. Tripathi spotlights the outgrowth of science way back to Indus civilization. Tripathi brought in the concepts of medicine, nuclear fission and fusion and the concept of radio waves which reflected the existence of science with modernity since ages. Firstly nuclear fission as per the Oxford Dictionary it is "a nuclear reaction or a radioactive decay process in which the nucleus of an atom splits into smaller, lighter nuclei. The fission process often releases a very large amount of energy even by the energetic standards of radioactive decay". In *The Oath of Vayuputras* Amish screens a Pashupatiastra launch tower a tower used to project

nuclear fusion. Shiva's entire army and the refugees from Devagiri had been cordoned off seven kilometers from the launch tower, safely outside the Pashupatyastra's blast radius.

Parshuram had been working on making the composite bow for months. Its basic structure was made of wood, reinforced with horn on the inside and sinew on the outside. It is also curved much sharper than normal, with its edges turning away from the archer. Due to the mix of different elements and the curve at the edges, the bow had exceptional draw strength for its small size. It was ideal for an archer to shoot arrows from, while riding a horse or a chariot. Parshuram had named the bow Pinaka, after the fabled great ancient longbow of Lord Rudra. The Pashupatyastra is a pure nuclear fusion weapon, unlike the Brahmastra and the Vaishnavastra which were nuclear fission weapons.

In a pure nuclear fusion weapon, two paramanoos, the smallest stable division of matter, are fused together to release tremendous destructive energy. In a nuclear fission weapon, 'anoos' the atomic particles, are broken down to release paramanoos, and this is also accompanied by a demonic release of devastating energy. Nuclear fission weapons leave behind a trail of uncontrollable destruction, with radioactive waste spreading far and wide. A nuclear fusion weapon, on the other hand, is much more controlled, destroying only the targeted area with minimal radioactive spread. So the Pashupatyastra would be the obvious weapon of choice for those who intended to destroy a specific target with the precision of a surgeon. Amish clearly highlight today's threat towards nuclear fission and his fusion coherently with its consequences and precaution in *The Oath of Vayuputras*.

One of the aspects of science is the field of medicine. Secondly Amish underline science through attacks, consequent injuries and the medical measures taken to save a soul. For instance when Paravateshwar is injured in Branga attack the blood loss of

Paravateshwar is fatal and he is hit at a most unfortunate spot, right on his temple. Ayurvati said Shiva a brain surgery could be done for him. Relevance of technology is enhanced when the General is admitted for medication. A pumping apparatus is attached to the General's nose to ease his breathing. In today's world the pumping apparatus is termed as ventilator. Ayurvati exclaims, "Paravateshwar cannot breathe by himself. If he removes this apparatus, he will die." (*The Secret of Nagas* 89) Ayurvati herself is a representation of medical growth. Daksha exclaims, "You are not the best doctor of this generation but in fact you are the best doctor of all time." (*The Immortals of Meluha* 277) when she saves Sati from severe injury i.e. her body is hit with fire arrow, the so called the legendary of poisoned arrows.

Thirdly, the science of radio waves is mirrored. From the beginning of the *Trilogy* recurrently Amish quote instances where Shiva's internal thoughts are known by the Pandit he conversed with and the Pandit termed it radio waves. The Pandit could receive Shiva's thoughts and similarly Shiva could do the same with the Pandit's thoughts. The Pandit explains the fact behind the science of radio waves. He states that radio waves were a mediation to hear. While all humans can clearly use the properties of light to see, most do not know to use radio waves to hear. Humans are generally dependent on sound waves to hear. A sound wave travels much slower through the air and for much shorter distances.

Radio waves travel far and fast like light. True to this science of radio waves is Shiva's uncle who always heard Shiva's thoughts from his childhood. Shiva interrogates the Pandit, "Why can't I hear everyone's thoughts?" (*The Secret of Nagas* 112) Pandit replies that it was completely different and it was not easy. Since one have to stay within the range of powerful transmitters. The temples are said to be filled with positivity because they are the powerful transmitters. Therefore the temples have a height of at least fifty meters. This helps in catching radiowaves from other Vasudevs

and in turn transmits one's thoughts to Vasudevs as well. The fact behind radio waves can be related to Kashiri Shaivism where there is contemplation of resonance which leads to isolation and liberation in thinking and thoughts.

Cultural pluralism is a practice at varying degrees by a group or an individual. The pluralistic defense of cultural diversity has grown more powerful in the modern world as ethnic and racial groups within multiethnic societies have increasingly sought to exercise political power and retain their cultural heritage in the face of demands for cultural conformity. Contradictory to this fact is the Meluhan society who was superior in everything was the source of hideous disease and resembled to be menace to nature. The ultimate production of Somras was likely to destruct the whole Sapt-Sindu civilization. Brahaspati, the Nagas and the legend Shiva demurrals against the production of Somras.

The Meluhans readily accept Gunas but they totally denied accepting the Nagas because according to Meluhans they were sinners and they failed to tolerate alliance with deformed people. Multiculturalism is illustrated through persisting Chandravanshis, Nagas and the civilians of Kashi. Society relies on science for its progression similarly Amish observed how science emerged and presented various sometimes even incompatible models and fearsome projects and argued that it is due to the complexity of the world and representational limitations exemplary to this idea is Somras.

Amish through his art of work *Shiva Trilogy* has repositioned the sundry canvas of Indian history and furthermore he has explained how pluralism seeped in each civilization and how each civilization embraced and how they were altered and affected by the diverse culture. Amish, the author is convincing in portraying how different cultures affect or influence people; what happens to people when they are displaced from one society to another, and also when and how the unexpected hits the

'others' in a foreign land and asserted the importance of equality beside pluralism in cultures.

Chapter IV

Conclusion

Literature is an ever changing process. In every social formation new forces emerge over long periods of time while old-forces remain intact even after the new forces become dominant. The Indian writers in English contemplate over the ancient past in nourishing the literary art. To capture the ethos and sensibilities of India they went back to the rich heritage of India. Indian writing in English has developed into a plethora of interconnecting genres which carry with them the simplicity of Indian lifestyle and the complexity of Indian beliefs in an adopted language, English. The introduction of English language in the Indian literary scene has changed the face of almost every genre, ranging from drama, thriller, romance, tragedy to non-fiction and poetry. Authors today are striving to interpret and rewrite old stories so that they can become more conceivable and relevant for the current audiences.

T. S. Eliot has commented in *Tradition and Individual Talent* (1919) that the pastness of the past will be present in the future. Tradition and mythology play a significant role in literature. Rewriting mythology is a common technique used in literature. It has also been an interesting topic for scholars worldwide, which is a result of their interest in deciphering the meanings of the myths and legends used. Myths are used in fiction mainly for constructing stories and characters according to the context and in relevance of the myths.

The use of mythology is not new in literature, as it has been experimented by Homer and Virgil many years back. The author has used our Classical legends as the starting point of his story. The characters are not new, but the tales, expressed in the third person knowledgeable narrative, are totally a creation of simplistic imagination. The legends like Shiva, Sati, Nandi, Veerbhadra, Daksha, all revolve around a certain

topography as true human beings of flesh and blood. The objectivity of the author over the pivotal question of 'Virtue' or 'Vice' also allows the readers to form their opinion independently. The divinity is seen from a benevolent perspective where 'Karma' is the only indicator for such lofty act. *Shiva Trilogy* is a journey through the historical past and one may find that how legends are nothing but the core part of history and myths are truly codified social laws. Throughout the entire *Trilogy*, Amish noted that the Hindu Gods were perhaps not mythical beings or a fiction of a rich imagination, but rather they were once human beings like the rest. It was their deeds in the human life that shaped them famous as Gods.

Shiva Trilogy is the celebration of an epic hero Shiva and his journey. Shiva is depicted as a man of flesh and blood who rises himself up to the level of a god by his deeds. It is analyzed how the conventional treatment of the myths is reshaped through focus on the rational representation of technology, the civilized lifestyle, convincing relations and the journey of a man from a Tibetan tribe towards becoming Lord Shiva. The author intends to keep the protagonist as a human and also Shiva is represented from humanistic perspective, where Shiva introspects about the mistakes that he made in his past life and his total reluctance to be called the chosen Neelkanth and the Destroyer of Evil.

The novels show how Shiva as a mortal being acts as a savior and guides people through his wisdom. Amish through his novel *The Immortals of Meluha*, has also tried to vindicate that Lord Shiva was not an imaginary character from mythology but a person from the history. He has also taken Vedic concepts from the scripture and has presented it in his novel in the form of science. Amish have used liberty in reconstructing the mythic stories and characters the way he intended, and wanted his readers to take the lead. He acknowledges this view in one of the interviews published in the Culture magazine as, "These books are purely fiction. I write the story the way it

comes to me.... This is my interpretation. That's the beauty of India. Except for the last 200 years; the tradition of modernizing and liberalizing has been there for long" (10).

In the age of demythologization, Amish firmly establish a fictionalized historical account affirming that dwelling in geography of India imbues people with salvific strength. The fictionist seems to hold that human beings have an active intellect but a passive sensibility. On the other hand, Brahma has intuitive intellect that creates its own matter. Shiva however excels other humans in knowing the sensory data as they are in themselves rather than an average man, who entangled in crudities of life, perceives the manifold brought under the form of space and time. Amish portray the world of Meluha, Swadweep et al in *Shiva Trilogy* as a relative existence. Its existence is dependent on Brahma. In Advaita Vedanta, only Brahma is real. Existence and immutability are the parameters of Reality. Brahma is pure Consciousness. According to the Upanishads, Brahma is existence, Consciousness and endless. This renders Brahma, characteristic of immutability. Indian philosophy believes Brahma to be the only Reality, the absolute existence. Meluhans, in fact still live in an illusory world of lord Ram as after several mutations the later has actually ceased to exist.

Ram Rajya had a set of codes which have undergone changes as per convenience of the mighty without the rulers or ruled ever realizing the change. Amish as a free thinker, tries to explain natural phenomenon with the help of natural causes. Though scientific in spirit, his work has a strong undercurrent of faith in Indian life and thought. He maintains that man in his pristine existence was glorious but now in the present world is in a fallen state. Amish's method of philosophizing seems to be of great relevance in the present world of restlessness and unease. Initially it seems that the author employs mathematical method of philosophy with a view to obtain certitude in knowledge. He denies to believe in preconceived notions. He begins with something vague and indefinite and later on step by step attains clarity and distinctness. Meluhan's

specific values of culture could sustain life for their kingdom alone. Cultural values are essential to preservation of life. Meluhan culture and tradition stoop to work against Natural Law leading to war by Neelkanth. Culture and tradition are strengthened through the enlivenment of Natural Law.

Shiva understands the culture of Meluha and this knowledge helps him to facilitate communication with Suryavanshis. With an intercultural approach that involves not only knowing about another culture but also attempting to understand how one's own culture shapes perceptions of oneself, of the world, and of our relationship with others he engages in uprooting the Evil from the life of people. The agency of culture ought to refine human element. Society should work towards producing enlightened individuals who do not violate laws of nature. Laws of Lord Ram are Laws of Nature. They are responsible for creation and evolution of life, but the present Meluhan royalty distorts them to suit its convenience leading to loss of values and destruction. Cultural values of Meluha have helped Meluhan evolve in the reign of Brahmnyak, Daksha's father.

In this way, Amish's philosophy differs from the Western one where culture implies "customary knowledge" regardless of universal laws that govern geography and culture. Meluhans while too engrossed in geographic and climatic conditions that support the Laws of Nature ignore the unmanifest field of pure consciousness and construct man-made laws of their states at the cost of Laws of Nature. The Trilogy can be viewed as an attempt to revive the culture and tradition of India by bringing to the centre of thinking, the Laws of Nature. Rigveda has been identified as an earliest philosophical text of India. The text speculates about "the unity and ultimate ground of the world" (*Coward, H. Derrida and Indian Philosophy* 5). Rivers in Indian subcontinent have being regarded as the sites of sacred power. Amish through his imaginative faculty establish historically how the given sites became popular as sacred

places. The temples and Pithas simply serve to mark, specify and objectify, the sacredness in every region, wherever Shiva travelled. This gives cultural and historical unity to the nation.

Shiva, the hero of the novel undergoes archetypal-imaginative journey of transformation. The hero in the novel does not fight the villain but the writer elevates the action in his fiction, as the task of Shiva is not to trounce evil individual but to confront the evil that attaches man to itself. Shiva and Sati who set out on their journey, reach the stage of maturation in Swadweep when they confront the cultural other. They gain self-control in Kashi and then set out in search of answer to the mystery of truth versus deception and perception versus reality. Advaita Vedanta accepts the pluralistic nature of the world. It is neither monism nor non-dualism. It believes Reality to be Pure Consciousness. All the diverse areas in the empirical universe are connected at the deeper level. Pure Shiva is capable of seeing into the real nature of things, while others are lost in what they appear to be. *Shiva Trilogy* is a successful attempt to revive the culture, tradition, history and mythological belief of India by bringing to the centre of thinking, the Laws of Nature. Tripathi through his imaginative faculty recognizes the rich Indian cultural identity and her historical unity.

Amish through his work *Shiva Trilogy* aims to bring out the various cultural variations that are prevalent in Indian society. He brings different dimensions to the most prominent myths of India. His work stands unique among other writers for his demythologization and for cultural heritage. Deepak Chopra world renowned spiritual Guru and a bestselling author adduces, “Amish’s mythical imagination mines the past and taps into the possibilities of the future. His book series, archetypal and stirring, unfolds the deepest recesses of the soul as well as our collective consciousness.”

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