



## **The Re-writing of Myth in Amish Tripathi's *The Secret of the Nagas* through The Deconstructionist Lens**

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### **Abstract**

**Aim:** *The present critical research paper aims at decoding *The Secret of the Nagas*, the 2<sup>nd</sup> book of Amish Tripathi's *Shiva Trilogy* through the transmogrification or metamorphosis of the tradition of epic writing into fanciful writing or fantasy writing by Amish Tripathi, the contemporary Indian writer of mythological fiction. Here he showcases how the mythical Lord Shiva gets transmogrified into a common friendly human being or in other words, he has fictionalized Lord Shiva as a common friendly human being.*

**Approach:** *The present research paper undergoes the re-writing approach of literature through a deconstructionist perspective.*

**Outcome:** *Through the practice of re-writing, re-tweeting, and re-constructing approach, the author has fictionalized Lord Shiva as a common human being.*

*4000 years ago, He used to be a God of gods in Hindu mythology but in the contemporary literary landscape, He remains God no longer but a simple human being. His adventures that occurred 4000 years ago are now considered myths of Mahadev. The Shiva Trilogy of Amish Tripathi, compounded of The Immortals of Meluha (2010), The Secret of the Nagas (2012), and the Oath of Vayuputras (2013), is a landmark work that demystifies and decodes the tradition of Indian religion, folklore, myths, symbols, and folklore into fantasy.*

**Conclusion:** *The writer's unique, daring and salutary effort of transforming mythologies into fantasy writing provides new avenues to the ensuing creative generation. Intelligentsia says that the first and foremost purpose of literature is recreation and enjoyment and the writer has been hundred percent successful in this literary approach.*

**Keywords:** Amish Tripathi, *the Secret of the Nagas*, *Shiva Trilogy*, transmogrification, mythology, fantasy, etc.

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Notwithstanding criticisms, condemnations, and censures directed to folklore and myths to cross-examine their reality, validity, and authenticity of theirs, multiple writers have interpreted and they have been re-interpreting and re-tweeting mythological anecdotes and stories. The main logic or rationale for this rapacious, insatiable, and unsatisfiable interest of different writers in fables, myths, parables,

and mythology is to be deciphered the sense and signification of their existent regard to their ancient past. This common practice of rewriting, retweeting, and retelling mythological anecdotes and stories involves the reconstruction, and reshaping of past and ancient mythological stories and their figures and characters as per the context and conditions. Ashwin Sanghi, Amish Tripathi, and Ashok Banker are writing in a blended way. They are fantasizing about mythologies and folklore. With such kinds of reconstructions and implementations, they are making their trials to modernize Indian myths and folklore.

A myth is a story, passed down from one generation to other one, and it tries to explain how the world of our works or how we should treat or deal with each other. The stories relating to epic emerged through oral communication and were transmitted through the same tradition, preserving the past. The new tradition is deconstructing the principle, involved in combining myth, and history in the recent history in contemporary Indian fiction in English. In Amish Tripathi's view, "Myths are nothing but jumbled memories of a true past. A past buried under mounds of earth and ignorance" (Gupta 27). The characters of the book have greater parallels from our Hindu religious and mythological scriptures, yet they have been fictionalized by the novelist up to a greater extent. Let's see how a Romantic poet of note is assertive about myths and their transforming nature:

The intelligible forms of ancient poets,  
 The fair humanities of old religion,  
 The Power, the Beauty, and the Majesty,  
 .....; all these have vanished;  
 They live no longer in faith of reason!  
 .....  
 Skill doth the old instinct bring back the old names. (Coleridge)

Jacques Derrida is of the view about *Deconstruction*: "... we will not listen to the source itself to learn what is or what it means, but rather to the turns of speech, the allegories, figures, metaphors, as you will, into which the source has deviated, to lose it or rediscover it—which always amounts to the same." (Gupta 80)

As regards *The Re-writing of Myth in Amish Tripathi's The Secret of the Nagas through The Deconstructionist Lens*, it would be much better to comprehend and grasp the main characteristics of deconstruction propounded by Jacques Derrida about comprehension and interpretation of literature. Jacques Derrida is of the view that *Deconstruction* is not a special theory, but a democratic, liberal, and reader-oriented literary reading comprehension. It is not synonymous with destruction. It makes an effort to find multilayered possibilities in literary readings, or artistic views and reviews. It dares to challenge the autonomy of an artist's mission, vision, and perception of his artistic innovation and creation. Ashish Tripathi believes in eluding realities:

There are many realities. There are many versions of what may appear obvious. Whatever appears as the unshakable truth, its exact opposite may also be true in another context. After all, one's reality is but perception, viewed through various prisms of context. (Gupta 22)

Praveen Asokan tweets: "In my words, *Shiva Trilogy* is a philosophical fiction, where mythology meets Bollywood. Cheers to Amish who have brought down an insight about Lord Shiva." We have some famous quotes in the trilogy: "Creation and destruction are the two ends of the same moment. And everything between the creation and the next destruction is the journey of life."

In Amish Tripathi's *Shiva Trilogy*, the journey of Lord Shiva from the head of the *Guna* tribe to God is mirrored in *The Immortals of Meluha*. He

upgrades his pose and posture with surveillance and resolution. He has multiple battle scars on his skin showcasing Him as a great warrior. Every day Shiva and his people are forced to fight against *Prakatis*. Meluha offers them to come to their land. The immigrants go there. *Somras*, a drink is given to them. They suffer illness after having that. Ayurvati cures them on command of King Daksha. The people find Shiva's blue throat and administer him as *Neelkanth*.

Every country is possessed its manners, mores, and ethos. India is considered a spiritual and religious country. The author talks of worshiping styles and beliefs of Indians. they worship God in four forms which are known as *Nirgun*, *Aakar*, and *Avatar*. First, *Nirgun* is synonymous with *Nirakaar*-formless God, *Aakar* is *in a form i.e. Lord Vishnu*, and *Avatar* is the *incarnation of God i.e Lord Ram*. Amish Tripathi adopts the fourth type of worship and depicts and describes Shiva as a simple “human being of flesh and blood, making him like an ordinary being or common people (Paul 428).”

Amish Tripathi in his trilogy talks of social stratification or social hierarchy or traditionally speaking, our society was stratified into four varnas-- Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaishya, and Shudra. This stratification was patterned on God's body lines. If these were drawn to represent His head, it means Brahmins, If these were drawn on His shoulders, it means Kshatriyas, if for thighs it means Vaishyas, and if for feet, it means Shudras. There were also tribe symbols: Birds meant for Brahmins, animals meant for Kshatriyas, flowers meant for Vaishyas, and fish meant for Shudras. Every caste was created on the quality of people but the Nagas and Vikarnas were pathetic people because they were misbehaved by the high caste or in Amish Tripathi's words they are misbehaved by the Meluhans. They are not allowed to enter 'Sapt sindhu'. Their city exists to the south of the Narmada river beyond the border of Meluhan land. How precarious and traumatic the condition of the Nagas is! They ask a question to God in a song:

I honoured you, lived by your rules, coloured myself in  
your colour,  
And yet, you abandoned me.  
You hurt me, you deserted me, you failed in your duties,  
And yet, I am the monster.  
Tell me lord, what can I?  
(Tripathi 144)

*The Secret of the Nagas* is the second book of Tripathi's trilogy. The first book of the trilogy titled *The Immortals of Meluha* ends with Shiva charging to protect Sati from a Naga standing near a tree. At the end of the book, Shiva finds Sati standing out of the famous temple of Ram of Ayodhya waiting for him. The Naga is supposed to have killed Brahaspati, Shiva's friend. The Naga runs away from Shiva's clutches by leaving behind some coins with bizarre engravings. Having consulted with Daksha, Sati's father, and Dilipa, Ayodhya's king, Shiva and Sati come to know that the strange engravings of the coins relate to King Chandraketu, ruler of Branga in eastern India. A community of Brangas lives in Kashi, which is visited by Shiva with Sati to get more information. They are followed by Parvateswar, his Nandi, Veerbhadra, Ayurvati, the doctor, Bhagirath, Anandamai, the princess, and the prince of the city of Ayodhya. Parvateswar is mortally wounded at Kashi while he was trying to tranquilize a riot taking place in the Branga community. Parvateswar is cured by Divodas, a Branga leader, but Shiva comes to from Ayurvati about the medicine containing herbs, found only at Panchavati, known as the capital of the Nagas.

After making consultation with Divodas, Shiva does know that Branga community keeps suffering a mortal plague compelling and forcing them to weld Nagas, the dreaded group of people living in the south of India. Kartik is born to Sati at Kashi. Shiva is on his journey to Branga place while "Sati staying back at

Kashi to help the King with a lion attacks on the local villagers” (Gupta 40). while Sati with her soldiers is about to lose against the lions but a group of Nagas soldiers arrive there and help them to kill the attacking lions. The group of Nagas soldiers was led by a man and a woman.

The secret of Naga woman is demystified here. She is nothing but Kali, the twin sister of Sati. Her father, Daksha, denounced her because she was born with two extra hands and the Naga man is revealed as Ganesha. He was also denounced by Daksha because he was also born to Sati with a deformity resembling that of an elephant, and she was told by Daksha that she bore a dead child. Having known their reality, Sati brings back both Kali and Sati. All four—Sati, Kartik, Kali, and Ganesha—start living with one another. They wait for Shiva’s arrival. At Branga, Shiva happens to know about a medicine recipe expert, Parashuram, a bandit. He lives in isolation and seclusion and kills anyone who tries to access him in the forest. To control Parashuram, Shiva and his army have to go under a ferocious fight against him, and finally, become victorious against him. The secret of Parashuram was that he was a Vasudev, one of the scholars who were guarding him during his journey. On the contrary, Parashuram was also surprised to know that Shiva was the fabled Neelkanth. He feels very much remorseful for Shiva and severs his hand for his sense of mistake. He provides the medicinal recipe to the Branga people, and thereafter sets about to Kashi under the aegis of Shiva. At Kashi, Sati introduces Ganesha and Kali to Shiva. After identifying Ganesha as the attacker on Sati near the famous Ram Temple of Ayodhya, he leaves the four—Sati, Kartik, Ganesha, and Kali-- under extreme annoyance and starts living in the Branga community.

Next, the story portrays a scene of three lions’ attack on Kartik while he was playing in a local park at Kashi. Ganesha gets mortally injured in defense of Kartik. This service of Ganesha pleases Shiva, who forgives him. Here Shiva with

Sati happens to confront Daksha because he confesses to having denounced Kali and Ganesha and to have murdered Sati's first husband. Daksha blames Shiva to cause distrust and disbelief between Sati and himself. Sati gets extremely annoyed with her father's denunciatory and critical actions and orders him to get back to the land of Meluha. Shiva with Sati, his wife, leaves for Panchavati under the instruction and advice of Kali through the path of Dandak forest, to the capital of the Nagas. While they were to their destination, they are assaulted by a cache of ships wrought with *Daivi Astras*, weapons of mass havoc. Those stars were forbidden by Lord Rudra, known as the supreme ruler over the world. They save themselves from the unexpected and sudden attack anyhow. Sati becomes dubious of her father's hand behind this invasion. Well, all is okay. Kali carries Shiva and company to a school where Shiva finds Brahaspati quite alive, hale and hearty while teaching a class though he was thought to have murdered the Naga earlier. This was the secret of Brahaspati. Even the perfect of Meluha, is perforated with a horrible secret in Maika, known as the city of births. The author writes about the contents of the book:

Unknown to Shiva, a master puppeteer is playing a grand game. And in a journey that will take him across the length and breadth of Ancient India, Shiva searches for the truth in a land of deadly mysteries only to find that nothing is what it seems. In fact, the book has it all —philosophies, spiritual messages, secrets, battles, and mysteries. (Gupta 42)

The reader will explore that the sinister and menacing Naga warrior kills his friend Brahaspati, a teacher, and will find stalking him with his wife Sati. Shiva, an immigrant from Tibet to Meluha is prophesied as a destroyer of evil from this land. He won't rest until he gets success in his vision and mission. And his mission is to destroy his demonic adversary. He will reach the door of the



Nagas, known as the serpent people as Lamia, the serpent woman of John Keats, to have his vengeance and revenge upon them. Shiva is sure of the evidence of the malicious and malevolent evil permeating everywhere in the world.

To conclude, it may be said that a kingdom is on the verge of death and destruction since it is ransoming the miraculous drug. The crown prince gets killed. Vasudev, Shiva's philosopher guide, betrays his unquestioning faith as Vasudev and company tend to take the aid of the dark side. Thus, it can be said, Shiva's journey is not going to be very easy, and on the way that he has to face many trials and tribulations.

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