

# Amish Tripathi's *The Immortals of Meluha*: A Reading From Contemporary Literary Perspectives

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## Abstract

This paper intends to show that Amish Tripathi's debut novel *The Immortals of Meluha* (Shiva Trilogy I) can be interpreted from multiple theoretical perspectives. Amish Tripathi is a new Indian English writer who has displayed an unsurpassed brilliance in recreating Hindu mythology. The stories of The Ramayana, The Mahabharata, the Upanishads and The Shiva Purana inspired him a lot and his Shiva Trilogy reconstructs several Indian mythical characters. His Shiva is a Tibetan immigrant who migrates to Meluha to lead the Suryavanshi vengeance and to destroy evil. Shiva's clan constitutes a different diasporic community. As a leader of the community Shiva cannot be defined from traditional diasporic perspective. The conventional diasporic consciousness of displacement, alienation, desire for the Homeland and identity-crisis is not shared by Shiva's diasporic community. Infact his tribe is satisfied with the Meluhan scheme of things; Meluhan magnificence has mesmerized their mind. Amish has humanised the legendary figures and mythological characters. His Sati is a Vikrama woman who is supposed to be the carrier of bad fate; inspite of being a subaltern she manifests rare skill of martial arts. The women in the fiction do not demand for political equality, economic rights and social recognition; they are embodiments of excellence and perfection. Besides, the text can also be conceived in ecocritical perspective.

**Keywords:** Hinduism, Mythology, Subaltern, Post feminism, Diaspora, Ecocriticism, *The Immortals of Meluha*

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## Introduction

Amish Tripathi is a brilliant Indian English writer who has achieved fame and fortune for his Shiva Trilogy. He is admired for his sincerity, solemnity and simplicity of theme and technique. He has become eminent for his fascinating fabrication of myth and history, spirited narrative

style, and magnificent treatment of sublime subjects. According to Shashi Tharoor, "Amish is a fresh new voice in Indian writing-steeped in myth and history, with a fine eye for detail and a compelling narrative style." *The Immortals of Meluha*, Tripathi's first novel and the first in the *Shiva Trilogy*, was published in February 2010. The second book in the series, *The Secret of*

*the Nagas*, was released on 12 August 2011, and the third installment, titled *The Oath of the Vayuputras*, was released on 27 February 2013. The trilogy is a fantasy re-imagining of the Indian deity Shiva's life and adventures. His trilogy is unlikely the traditional discourse. Instead of working on the grand style of myth making, he strips the myth of that archaic resonance. His gods are humanised, and his language is lively, racy and elegant. Tripathi's Shiva smokes marijuana and exclaims "What the bloody hell!" and even "Shit!" He is a Tibetan immigrant who has come down from the shores of the Mansarovar to become the saviour of the Sapt Sindhu. Tripathi's Ram, in the new book *Scion of Ikshvaku*, released on 22 June 2015, is a young boy who tries to win the affections of his father. Tripathi humanises Shiva and Ram before deifying them; their world teeming with details from rituals, philosophy, science, technology, legend and lore. Publishers rejected *The Immortals of Meluha* more than twenty times. Almost every publisher rejected the story saying, "Nobody is interested in religion." One of them asked for a love story; another wanted him to cut out all the "boring, frustrating" philosophy. It is true that he has presented the philosophy of religion but that in order to recreate Shiva as the destroyer of evil:

"A man becomes a Mahadev when he fights for good. A Mahadev is not born as one from his mother's womb. He is forged in the heat of battle, when he wages a war to destroy evil." (344)

Shiva's crusade is against the manifestations of evil. Though the book seems to be an adventure story it has philosophic speculations on evil:

".... Many wars have been fought against men', said the Pandit. 'And many more will be fought in the future. That is the way of the world. But it is only a Mahadev who can convert one of these wars into a battle

between good and evil. It is only the Mahadev who can recognise evil and then lead men against it. Before evil raises its ugly head and extinguishes all life'." (394)

Interestingly, the writing changed Amish from atheist to Shiva devotee. He confesses: "I turned atheist in the 90s when India went through troubled times – communal riots, bomb blasts... Mumbai where I live was badly affected. I blamed religion, also extremists on both sides – right and left. Writing the books pulled me back from disbelief."

### **The Immortals of Meluha and Hinduism:**

This integral religious philosophy or philosophical religion is called Vedanta which constitutes the culmination of the ancient scriptures known as the Vedas. Vedanta which contains the essence of Hinduism is one of the world's most ancient religious philosophies. Based on the Vedas, the sacred scriptures of India, Vedanta affirms the oneness of existence, the divinity of the soul, and the harmony of religions. Vedanta is the philosophical foundation of Hinduism; but while Hinduism includes aspects of Indian culture, Vedanta is universal in its application and is equally relevant to all countries, all cultures, and all religious backgrounds. The three fundamental Vedanta texts are: the *Upanishads*, the *Brahma-sutras/Vedanta-sutras* and the *Bhagavad-Gita*. There are five principles in Hinduism: (1) God – Isvara, (2) Soul – Jiva, (3) Time – Kala, (4) Matter – Prakriti, and (5) Action – Karma. Based on these principles, Hinduism provides a profound knowledge and understanding of life and the universe. One of the unique features of Hinduism is that it provides a very vivid and vast account of God and His energies. *The Immortals of Meluha* is the journey of an extraordinary man who explores his energies and gives new meanings to the concept

of religion. In this fiction The concept of law of Karma is discussed and illustrated at length.

“Now who the bloody hell are the Nagas?” asked Shiva.

“They are cursed people, my Lord,” gasped Nandi. “They are born with hideous deformities because of the sins of their previous births. Deformities like extra hands or horribly misshapen faces.”(59)

“.....Shiva asked, ‘Who are vikarma women?’

‘Vikarma people, my lord,’ said Nandi sighing deeply ‘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 suffering 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 their own order.’(92-93)”

“Who decides that the vikarma people had committed sins in their previous birth?”

‘Their own karma, my Lord’, said Nandi, his eyes suggesting the obvious. ‘For example if a woman gives birth to a still born child, why would she be punished thus unless she had committed some terrible sin in her previous birth? Or if a man suddenly contracts an incurable disease and gets paralysed, why would it happen to him unless the universe was penalising him for the sins of his previous life?’” (93)

Karma is thus a concept in Hinduism which explains causality through a system where beneficial effects are derived from past beneficial actions and harmful effects from past harmful actions, creating a system of actions and reactions

throughout a soul's reincarnated lives forming a cycle of rebirth. The causality is said to be applicable not only to the material world but also to our thoughts, words and actions.

### **The Immortals of Meluha and the retelling of myth:**

According to M.H. Abrams, “Myth is one story in mythology- a system of hereditary stories which were once believed to be true by a particular cultural group, and which served to explain (in terms of the intentions and actions of deities and other supernatural beings) why the world is as it is and things happen as they do, to provide a rationale for social customs and observances and to establish the sanctions for the rules by which people conduct their lives.” Myths are traditional narratives in which people explain the nature of the world and their place in it. Myths in the strict academic sense serve to complement, supplement and reinforce the religious ideology of a people. The more popular usage of the term myth is a usually traditional story of ostensibly historical events that serves to unfold part of the world view of a people or explain a practice, belief or natural phenomenon. Whereas myth deals with the religious world and natural phenomena, legends are semi-historical narratives coming from the past that recount the deeds of heroes, movement of peoples, and the establishment of local customs. Legends serve the function of entertaining, instructing, inspiring and bolstering the pride of a family, tribe or nation by using a mixture of realism and the supernatural or extraordinary. Often historical figures are given attributes, values and ideals that place them above the real of ordinary people. As a result these historical personae lose their humanity and acquire a mythological status that serves to make their actions beyond the realm of human scrutiny. In postcolonial

fiction of the twentieth century, myth is used as a framing device that incorporates and interrogates historical event, thereby functioning as a form of alternative history. In spite of the prevalence of cross-cultural symbolic systems and radically hybrid forms of narration, the dominant method of reading myth in postcolonial literary criticism remains dependent on conceptual models that construct myth as originary racial narrative. This particular approach fosters readings of contemporary secular myths of nation, land or identity within culturally monolithic frames. The early structuralist approaches to myth and later poststructuralist deconstruction of myth give ample scope for postcolonial reading of myth as the ideological coded middle space between sacred and secular narrative. *The Immortals of Meluha* interrogates existing discourses, archetypal myths; the myth in the narrative however, does not belie the socio-cultural context. His Shiva story unfolds, strangely, around 1900 BCE. That is when the Indus Valley Civilization begins to decline. However, Tripathi does a Vedic-fication of the Indus Civilization, superimposing on its geography Vedic gods, religion and caste system. Mohenjo-Daro becomes Mohan Jo Daro where Shiva goes to Lord Mohan's Temple; where Brahaspati and Brahma become scientists; where doctors perform cosmetic surgery. Tripathi unveils a strange hybrid mythical land where the glory of Harappan civilization meets Vedic religion, American slang and even modern conveniences such as restaurants. Meluha is a near perfect empire, set up many centuries earlier by Lord Ram, one of the greatest monarchs that ever lived. However, the once proud empire and its Suryavanshi rulers face severe perils as its primary river the revered Saraswati is slowly drying to extinction. They also face devastating terrorist attacks from the east, the land of the Chandravanshis who have joined forces with

the Nagas, a cursed race with physical deformities. The present king of Meluha, Daksha, sends his emissaries to North India in Tibet, to invite the tribes that live there to Meluha. One of those invited are the Gunas, whose chief Shiva is a brave warrior and protector. Meluhans recognise Neelkanth, their fabled saviour from his blue throat. He meets King Daksha, after reaching Devagiri. While staying there, Shiva comes to know that Princess Sati, the daughter of Daksha is a vikarma, an untouchable in this life due to sins of her past births. The Chief scientist of Meluha, B ahaspati invites Shiva and the royal family on an expedition to Mount Mandar, where the legendary Somras is manufactured using the waters of the Saraswati river. Daksha makes arrangement for Shiva to explore the entire kingdom of Meluha. He is accompanied by Sati, Veerbhadra, Krittika, Nandi, B ahaspati and Parvateshwar on his journey across the land of Meluha. They visit many different cities where Shiva is welcomed with great grandeur and splendour; many pujas are held in his honour. During a similar puja in a city, a man disrespectfully talks to Shiva for allowing a vikarma (Sati) to attend the puja. Enraged by the disrespect shown by the man toward Shiva, Sati challenges the man for an Agni Pariksha. Even though the chances for Sati's victory were low, she wins the Agni Pariksha and instead of killing the man, she forgives him. On their way to another city, the group comes across a village under attack. As they rush to the save the village, they find out that it is being attacked by the Nagas and some Chandravanshi soldiers. During the battle, a naga fires an agnibaan towards Shiva. But Sati saves Shiva heroically. Severely injured, she is taken to the village where Ayurvati treats her. Sati's life remains in danger because of the poison of the agnibaan. Somras gives Sati power to come round. Daksha comes to visit her

daughter and asks Shiva to marry his daughter. Shiva agrees and also makes up his mind to dissolve the Vikarma Law. After returning to Devagiri, Shiva and Sati get married along with Veerbhadra and Krittika. One morning, the whole of Meluha wakes up to loud noises coming from Mount Mandar. Shiva and his troops reach the hill to find out that a large part of Mandar has been blasted off and many of the inventors killed. There is no sign of Brahaspati, but Shiva finds the insignia of the Nagas, confirming their involvement in the treacherous wars of the Chandravanshis. Enraged by this, Shiva declares war on the Chandravanshis. With consultation from the Devagiri Chief Minister Kanakhala and the Head of Meluhan Army, Parvateshwar, Shiva advances towards Dharmakhet, the border area of Swadweep, the land of the Chandravanshis. A fierce battle is fought between the Meluhans and the Swadweepans in which the Meluhans prevail. The Chandravanshi king is captured and brought before Daksha. The Chandravanshi princess, Anandmayi, tells them that they too have a similar legend that the Neelkanth will come forward to save their land by launching an assault against the 'evil' Suryavanshis. Hearing this, Shiva is dumbfounded. Shiva decides to visit Ayodhya, the capital of Swadweep. He then visits the famous Ram temple of Ayodhya. There he meets the priest from whom he comes to know about the karma, his fate, and his choices in life, which will guide him. As Shiva comes out of the temple, he hears a scream. Running to the location he watches in horror as a Naga is about to attack Sati.

### **The Immortals of Meluha in subaltern perspective**

In critical theory and post colonialism, subaltern refers to the populations that are socially, politically and geographically outside

of the hegemonic power structure of the colony and of the colonial homeland. In describing "history told from below", the term *subaltern* is derived from Antonio Gramsci's work on cultural hegemony, which identified the groups that are excluded from a society's established structures for political representation and therefore denied the means by which people have a voice in their society. The terms subaltern and Subaltern Studies entered postcolonial studies through the works of the Subaltern Studies Group, a collection of south Asian historians who explored the political-actor role of the men and women who comprise the mass population—rather than the political roles of the social and economic elites—in the history of south Asia. Marxist historians had already been investigating colonial history as told from the perspective of the proletariat, using the concept of social classes as being determined by economic relations. In the 1970s, subaltern began to denote the colonized peoples of the Indian subcontinent and described a new perspective of the history of an imperial colony as told from the point of view of the colonized rather than that of the colonizers. In the 1980s, the scope of enquiry of Subaltern Studies was applied as an "intervention in South Asian historiography". The cultural theorist Stuart Hall argued that the power of discourse created and reinforced Western dominance. The discourses on how Europe described differences between itself (The West) and others used European cultural categories, languages, and ideas to represent "The Other."

Subaltern Studies which was introduced around 1982 recaptured history for the under-classes, down-trodden and under-privileged people and for the unheard voices. Subaltern theory takes the perspective of the "Other" as the one whose voice is throttled on account of race, class, or gender. This theory is based on

deconstruction as Derrida has proposed it. It emphasizes that norms are established by those in power and imposed on the "Other." Instead of dwelling on histories of the elites and the Eurocentric bias of current imperial history, scholars of the subaltern studies focused on subaltern in terms of class, caste, gender, race, language and culture. They advocated the idea that there may have been political dominance, but that this was not hegemonic. The chief proponents were Ranajit Guha and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak who wanted to reclaim their history, to give voice to the subjected peoples. In Amish Tripathi's *The Immortals of Meluha* Vikrama people are the subalterns who are culturally, politically and socially outside the hegemonic power structure. They are excluded from the established structures of the society. They represent 'The Other' of the dominant Meluhan ideology/discourse. Vikrama people have to live with dignity. They have to tolerate their present sufferings with grace. They are considered as outcasts and untouchables. One must undergo 'shudhikaran' or 'the purification ceremony'. (103) if he/she happens to be touched by Vikrama person. Vikrama men and women have separate orders of penance. Vikrama women have to follow several strict rules:

"They have to pray for forgiveness every month to Lord Agni, the purifying Fire God, through a specifically mandated puja. They are not allowed to marry since they may contaminate others with their bad fate. They are not allowed to touch any person who is not related to them or is not part of their daily life". (93)

The Governor of Jhoolshwar organized a yagna, a ceremonial fire sacrifice in honour of the Neelkanth. Shiva asked Sati if she would be

coming to the yagna the next day. The reply made Shiva disheartened:

"I am very sorry, Lord Neelkanth,' said Sati courteously. 'But it may not be possible for me to attend the ceremony. I am not allowed to attend such yagnas'". (218)

Meluhan ideology has the strategic insight to keep them as their other. If they begin to resist the dominant discourse, it might lead to instability:

" Many such discontented people can become a threat to society as a whole.....If you make a person believe that his misfortune in this birth is due to his sins in his previous birth , he will resign himself to his fate and not vent his fury on society at large" (211)

In spite of being subordinated and segregated, the Vikrama people are given power to respond. Sati is a Vikrama woman but she is empowered to challenge a man in a duel, the Agnipariksha fight; she is courageous to immolate her life for her husband. Shiva is bent on challenging and changing the established ideology of the nation:

"I am sorry, but I think this system is completely unfair. I have heard that almost one twentieth of the people in Meluha are Vikrama. Are you going to keep so many people as outcast forever? This system needs to change." (212)

Shiva touches Sati but does not undergo the purification ceremony; he even touches the feet of a blind Vikrama man and authorizes his vikarma son, Drapuka to raise his brigade. His inspiration encourages the blind Vikrama person to bless him. The action is symbolical of resisting the hitherto unchallenged discourse:

"The entire crowd was stunned into silence by what the Neelkanth had done. Forget the gravity of touching a vikarma, the Neelkanth

had just asked to be blessed by one....Shiva had broken the law. Broken it brazenly and in public.” (198)

### **Post feminism and *The Immortals of Meluha*:**

Traditional feminism perpetuates the idea of women as victims, while post feminism concentrates on idea of empowerment and liberation. Post feminism encourages women to define femininity for themselves. The theory seeks to break down gender roles and stereotypes. Post feminism is a modified mode of empowerment and independence; individual choice, (sexual) pleasure, consumer culture, fashion, hybridism, humour, and the renewed focus on the female body can be considered fundamental for this contemporary feminism. It is a new, critical way of understanding the changed relations between feminism, popular culture and femininity. Media discourses play a crucial role in the representation, evolution and development of this new feminism. Amish's *The Immortals of Meluha* does not represent women as victims; rather they are embodiments of empowerment. Besides being a noble woman, Sati is a lady warrior, a brave fighter who is no less valiant than a male warrior. In the chapter *The Hooded Figure Returns* Sati has displayed her valour and prowess; she is like a ferocious tigress:

“As the Chandravanshis came closer, Sati suddenly broke through the cordon and attacked the hooded figure. Sati's surprise attack slowed the charge of the Chandravanshis.....Sati was attacking the hooded figure with fierce blows.... He (The hooded figure) tried to move behind Sati, to club her on the back of the head and knock her unconscious but she was too quick. She moved swiftly to the left to face her enemy

again. Taking a knife out of her angvastram folds with her left hand, she slashed outwards to cut deep across the hooded figure's immense stomach.” (161-162)

Sati is not only a fearless fighter but also she is willing to sacrifice her life for her husband Shiva. In order to protect Shiva from the agnibaan or the fire arrow Sati leaps forward:

“Sati twisted her body in mid-air as she leapt in front of Shiva. The arrow slammed into her chest with brutal force, propelling her airborne body backward. She fell to Shiva's left, limp and motionless.” (251)

Though Sati is daring and desperate she is considerate and compassionate. She accepts Tarak's challenge, defeats him in the Agnipariksha, a trial by fire and forgives him. She shows an amazing agility, fierce ferocity and kind tenderness. Besides Sati there is Lady Ayurvati who is an experienced, professional doctor who is adept in the prescription of medicine as well as in the conduct of surgery. Apart from them there is the prime minister of Meluha, Kanakhala who takes care of the administrative, revenue and protocol matters.

### **The Immortals of Meluha and a post diaspora:**

Diaspora Literature involves an idea of a homeland, a place from where the displacement occurs and narratives of harsh journeys undertaken on account of economic or political compulsions. Basically Diaspora is a minority community living in exile. The very beginning of *The Immortals of Meluha* is marked with a distinct diasporic consciousness. Shiva is not a native of Meluha. He is the Tibetan immigrant, the leader of a tribe called the Gunas. Nandi, the Meluhan representative informs Shiva about the opportunities given to the immigrants by

their government. Shiva is tempted to hear of safety, peace and prosperity which are like distant dreams for his clan. He decides to move to Meluha with his tribe:

“This will change our lives completely. I believe the change will be for the better. Anything will be better than the pointlessness of the violence we face daily.” (6)

Though Nandi persuades and convinces Shiva to leave Tibet for better prospect, the migration of the Gunas is voluntary and not forced. However this diasporic tribe has a different consciousness in comparison with the traditional feelings of a diasporic community. The honour and respect they have received make them forgetful of their native homeland. The ideas of displacement, dislocation, alienation, exile, nostalgia, rootlessness, desire for the homeland and identity-crisis are hardly associated with them. In fact the tribe is blessed with a comfortable life.

Diasporic writings resist cultural authoritarianism and challenges official truths. One of the most relevant aspects of diasporic writing is that it forces, interrogates and challenges the authoritative voices of time/History. Shiva though an immigrant raises his voice against the dominant discourses of Meluha. He resists and challenges the Vikrama tradition; he is also critical of the Maika system and shudhikaran ceremony.

### **The Immortals of Meluha from Ecocritical viewpoints:**

If Ecocriticism is “The study of literary texts with reference to the interaction between human activity and the vast range of ‘natural’ or non-human phenomena which bears upon human experience” (Peter Childs) Amish Tripathi’s *The Immortals of Meluha* can be interpreted in ecocritical perspective. “In ecology, man’s tragic flaw is his anthropocentric (as opposed

to biocentric) vision and his compulsion to conquer, humanize, domesticate, violate, and exploit every natural thing” (Rueckert 113). Anthropocentric “assumes the primacy of humans, who either sentimentalize or dominate the environment (Martin 217-218) Biocentric “decenters humanity’s importance... explores the complex interrelationships between the human and the nonhuman...” (Martin 218) The near perfect society of Meluha and its Suryavanshi rulers experience perilous hazards as its primary river, the revered Saraswati, is slowly dying to extinction. While Suryavanshis try to humanise and domesticate Saraswati, Chandravanshis violate and exploit the revered river:

“And the Somras cannot be made without water from the Saraswati,’ continued Daksha. ‘The Chandravanshis are aware of this and that is why they are trying to kill her’”. (110)

Somras which postpones their death considerably, allows them to live their entire lives as if they are in the prime of their youth and guarantees their superiority is prepared from the water of Saraswati. In fact one of the key ingredients in the Somras is the water of the Saraswati. The fact of the gradual waning of the flow of the Saraswati has depressed and dejected Kanakhala:

“And the last few years have been horrible’, said Kanakhala as she controlled her tears at the thought of the slow death of the river most Meluhans regarded as a mother.” (110)

### **Vision of Caste-less society in The Immortals of Meluha**

In the Bhagavad-Gita, Ch.4, Verse 13 The Lord says: "The fourfold caste has been created by Me according to the differentiation of Guna and Karma;" Among the spiritual masters venerated by the Hindus, Namdev was a tailor, Sadna a

butcher, Kabir a weaver, Ravidas a cobbler, Sena a barber, Nabha a pariah, and Dadu a cotton-ginning Muslim. Swami Adbhutananda, a disciple of Sri Ramakrishna, was an illiterate domestic servant in his pre-monastic days. Yet the caste system, in its crystallized form, became the symbol of privileges and oppression. Hence, in the 11th century Ramanuja violated caste rules; in the 12th century Basava, the founder of the Lingayata movement, in the Following centuries, Ramananda, Chaitanya and many others were taking steps against the meaninglessness of caste custom. Two centuries ago Rammohan Roy in Bengal became vocal against it. Actually, each day the citadel of caste hierarchy is being undermined in modern India. The orthodox among the Hindus may still try to uphold the caste system mentioned in Rig Veda and Bhagavad-Gita. The hereditary profession was the correct method in olden days, but when education has been democratized, when information technology is sweeping over the world, the hereditary profession as a norm cannot and should not exist. As far as character based classification is concerned, one definitely has a choice. All spiritual sadhanas are for the improvement of one's character. One must become a brahmana by character whatever be one's birth or profession. One could incidentally be born as a shudra, but if one takes up a profession of defending the country, one could become a kshatriya or if one takes up scriptural studies and spiritual pursuits then one could become a brahmana by character. In his first book, Amish has depicted Meluha-which stretches from Lothal to Harappa-as a society based on merit although it is divided into the four castes. King Daksha informed Shiva that it was Lord Brahma who invented the Somras, the drink of the gods and implemented an elaborate system of controls on its use. He administered the Somras medicine to his select group of seven

adolescent boys of immaculate character. They achieved superhuman intelligence and reverential status under his tutelage, and they came to be known as Saptrishi. They followed the code of conduct which Lord Brahma instituted; they used their skills, knowledge and intellect to perform the task of priests, teachers, doctors etc. As their responsibilities grew they selected many more people to join their tribe. They devoted their lives to the pursuit of knowledge and for the wellbeing of society without asking for any material gain in return. These Saptrishis and their followers came to be known as Brahmins. Later some of the Brahmins started misusing the awesome powers of the Somras. Some Brahmins became Kshatriyas to conquer kingdoms and rule and some became Vaishyas to accumulate fabulous wealth. It was Lord Ram who decided equal rights for the four castes and administered Somras to everybody. He perceived the conflict between a person's natural karma and what society forced him to do. He went against the rigid caste system. According to Parvateshwar,

“In Lord Ram's view, any society that conducted itself on any principle besides merit could not be stable. He believed that a person's caste should be determined only by that person's karma. Not his birth. Not his sex. No other consideration should interfere.” (96)

In his kingdom every child regardless of whether he is born to a Brahmin or a Shudra, would get exactly the same treatment at the Gurukul. They were given caste-specific training after a comprehensive examination, the result of which decided which varna or caste the child will be allocated to.

## **Conclusion**

Amish's narrative thus can be studied from contemporary literary perspectives. Amish's

Shiva is like a Shavian representative whose awe-inspiring appearance, thundering voice, appealing concepts, surprising skills, iconoclastic attitude and irrefutable arguments not only overwhelm Meluhans but also make the readers wonder-struck and speechless. Amish Tripathi's fictional narrative has combined his aptitude for religion, philosophy, history and mythology; it recreates myth with a modern style and humanizes his characters to contrive the story of the man whom legend turned into a god.

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