

## Myth, Adventure And Secrets: A Review Of "The Secret Of The Nagas"

V. Hariharan<sup>1</sup>, Dr. T. Deivasigamani<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Ph.D Research Scholar, Department of English Annamalai University.

<sup>2</sup>Associate Professor of English, Annamalai University.

### Abstract

Amish Tripathi's *The Secret of the Nagas*, the second installment of the captivating Shiva Trilogy, takes readers on an exhilarating journey through ancient India, blending mythology, mystery, and adventure. Following the success of *The Immortals of Meluha*, this novel delves deeper into the life of Shiva, the fierce warrior and protector, as he confronts new challenges and dark secrets that threaten the balance of the land. With the introduction of enigmatic characters, intricate plots, and unexpected twists, the story explores themes of loyalty, love, betrayal, and redemption. Tripathi's rich ability of storytelling and skill of imaginative world-building bring to life a mythical past where divine beings, political intrigue, and hidden truths collide. This present research article unpacks the novel's gripping narrative, its exploration of moral complexities, and the way it seamlessly intertwines ancient legend with contemporary themes, making it a must-read for mythology and fantasy enthusiasts alike.

### Introduction

It continues the enthralling adventures tale of Shiva, the Tibetan tribal leader destined to become the savior of Meluhan. Set of the novel of against a backdrop of myth and imagination, the novel masterfully combines elements of mystery, action, and philosophical discourse. With vivid world-building and a compelling narrative, Tripathi invites readers to question notions of good and evil while unraveling an intricate plot filled with surprises.

The theoretical framework of Naga women writers' creative literature is derived from this historical experience, which has been erased and suppressed. It is a process of self-definition and land redefining. Until recently, Naga women were not as influential as Black feminists in both literary works and activities. The Naga people have a troubling conception of sexual violence as a result of their stress on moral chastity that is disconnected from reality. The Indian security forces stationed in the Naga regions since India's independence in 1947 have been recognized as the most violent and vicious sexual violence abusers in the history of the Indo-Naga armed conflict.

Amish is a devotee of Hindu mythology and has a deep affection for Lord Shiva, which enables him to use Mahadev to further his thoughts. Additionally, he attempts to convey the true essence of a lord. "The Secret of the Nagas" is a groundbreaking book that has raised the standard for fantasy with an Indian subject, making it extremely valuable just for that reason. It demonstrates that Indian fantasy is capable of performing the same things that mainstream fantasy in the West has been doing for decades.

Myths are stories that are passed down from one generation to the next that attempt to explain how our world functions or how we ought to interact with one another. Oral communication gave rise to the epic stories, which were then passed down through the same tradition, conserving the past. In recent history, the new tradition is dissecting the idea of fusing myth and history in English-language contemporary Indian fiction. Although the novelist has fictionalized the characters to a greater degree, they share more similarities with our Hindu religious and Mythical texts. S.T. Coleridge, A notable Romantic poets, asserts myths and their transformative 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)

The novel picks up from the cliffhanger ending of *The Immortals of Meluha*, where Shiva, the fabled Neal Kanth, is confronted by the mysterious Naga assassin who killed his friend Brahaspati. Driven by grief and a thirst for justice, Shiva embarks on a perilous journey to uncover the truth behind the Nagas, a cursed and misunderstood race. As the story unfolds, Shiva discovers that appearances can be deceiving and that the Nagas are not the malevolent beings they are believed to be. Tripathi skillfully uses this revelation to challenge stereotypes and societal prejudices.

The narrative describes how Kartik, was attacked by three lions when he was playing in a nearby park in Kashi. Ganesha, Sati's first child, suffers a fatal wound while defending Kartik. Shiva is pleased by Ganesha's service and pardons him. Here, Shiva and Sati, the twin sister of Sati, end up confronting Daksha after he admits to killing Sati's first husband and denouncing Kali and Ganesha. Daksha holds Shiva responsible for the mistrust and incredibility that exist between him and Sati. Sati tells her father to return to the region of Meluha because she is so irritated by his critical and denunciatory behavior. Under Kali's guidance and direction, Shiva and his wife Sati depart toward Panchavati, the Naga capital, across the Dandak jungle.

Another noteworthy aspect of *The Secret of Nagas* is how it gives voice to underrepresented groups, including women, Brangas, and Nagas. Parashuram, a pandit the only person who knows of the medicine recipe, tells him that Nagas are once angels. The fact that nagas are not malevolent surprises Shiva. Additionally, Parashuram claims that Nagas assisted him in the conflict with Brangas. In spite of the contaminated food and water there, they provided him with medication to help him live. He discloses that "They [Nagas] never kill innocents. They fight for justice; despite the injustices they face. They help the oppressed whenever and where they can. They truly are the best of all" (TSN 266). Shiva is forced to reconsider the idea of Nagas after hearing this comment from Parashuram. The Meluhans and Swadeepans were manipulators of the idea of marginalization. Due to their differences from the Suryavanshis, and Chandravanshis, they were labeled outcasts. Shiva recognized the distinction between them. It was the primary cause of the Nagas' subjugation. Foucault's writings "The Order of Discourse" states that "in every society the production of discourses at once controlled, selected, organized and redistributed by a certain number of procedures whose role is to ward off its powers and dangers, to gain mastery over its chance events, or evade its ponderous, formidable materiality" (52). According to Foucault, information about the oppressed classes was generated by the prevailing discourse in the society. They are victimized as mad and are said to be different. Shiva disputes this idea, claiming that being unique is not a sign of evil.

As they arrive at their target, a group of ships equipped with DaiviAstras—weapons of mass destruction—attack them. Lord Rudra, who is regarded as the world's supreme ruler, prohibited those stars. In any case, they protect themselves from the sudden and unexpected onslaught. Sati starts to question whether her father is responsible for this invasion. They escaped from an attack arrived Panchavati. After Kali transports Shiva and his companions to a school, Shiva discovers Brahaspati teaching a lesson, despite the fact that he was previously believed to have killed by the Naga. This was the great lie said by Nagas about Brahaspati. In Maika, the city of births, even the flawless Meluha is laced with a terrible secret. Regarding the book's contents, the author writes:

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)

One of the novel's strengths lies in its intricate plot. The narrative seamlessly weaves together multiple storylines, including Sati's struggle with her past, the political intrigue in Meluha and Swadweep, and then Shiva's quest for truth. The pacing is well-maintained, with moments of intense and adventures action balanced by quieter, introspective scenes. As Shiva delves deeper into the mysteries surrounding the Nagas, he is forced to confront uncomfortable truths that reshape his understanding of the world.

"Myths are nothing but jumbled memories of a true past. A past buried under mounds of earth and ignorance" (Gupta 27).

Myths are stories that are passed down from one generation to the next that attempt to explain how our world functions or how we ought to interact with one another. Oral communication gave rise to the epic stories, which were then passed down through the same tradition, conserving the past. In recent history, the new tradition is dissecting the idea of fusing myth and history in English-language contemporary Indian fiction.

According to Jacques Derrida, 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)

In *The Secret of the Nagas*, The mythological elements blend seamlessly with philosophy, morality, and human emotions. The novel, rooted in Indian mythology, reimagines ancient characters and events, offering a unique perspective on good and evil. A central theme is the illusion of appearances—what seems evil may not be so, and true understanding requires looking beyond prejudice. Through Shiva's journey, the novel emphasizes values such as duty, courage, and compassion. The mythical backdrop, combined with moral dilemmas and spiritual undertones, encourages readers to question their beliefs and embrace a broader perspective on life and humanity.

Adventure plays a central role in *The Secret of the Nagas*, propelling Shiva's journey as he uncovers hidden truths about the mysterious Nagas and the dark forces threatening his mission. The novel takes readers through dense forests, treacherous landscapes, and bustling cities, each filled with danger and intrigue. From fierce battles with formidable enemies to the exploration of ancient secrets, Shiva's quest is marked by life-threatening challenges that test his courage and determination.

A pivotal part of the adventure unfolds when Shiva and his allies pursue the elusive Naga assassins, leading to dramatic encounters that reveal shocking revelations. The journey to the land of the Brangas and the perilous search for answers in the unexplored territories keep readers on edge. Through these thrilling sequences, Amish Tripathi masterfully combines elements of action, suspense, and discovery, creating a gripping narrative that captivates readers from start to finish.

"It is your karma to fight evil. It doesn't matter if the people that evil is being committed against don't fight back. It doesn't matter if the entire world chooses to look the other way. Always remember this. You don't live with the consequences of other people's karma. You live with the consequences of your own" (Tripathi, 302)

This line emphasizes personal responsibility and moral integrity in the face of evil. It highlights the importance of taking righteous action regardless of external circumstances. The reference to "karma" underscores the idea that one's actions, whether good or bad, have consequences that the individual must bear. The statement makes it clear that we cannot justify inaction by blaming others or conforming to societal indifference. Even if the victims do not resist or the world remains passive, it is our duty to stand up against wrongdoing. Ultimately, what defines our character is not the choices of others but our own moral decisions. This line serves as a reminder to follow one's conscience and principles without seeking

validation or fearing judgment from society. By doing so, one ensures a life lived with integrity, free from the burden of guilt for failing to act against injustice.

In *The Secret of the Nagas*, Several pivotal secrets unfold, transforming the journey of Shiva, the protagonist, and revealing hidden truths about characters and events in the trilogy's universe. In *The Naga Identity and Intentions*, Initially perceived as vicious enemies, the Nagas are revealed to be more complex, with motivations that challenge preconceptions. Their leader and certain key figures emerge as guardians with noble intents rather than mindless villains.

From *The Family Connections and Uncovering the Past*, Some of the most shocking secrets are related to familial relationships. Shiva encounters truths about characters whose destinies intertwine with his, including revelations involving betrayal, loyalty, and redemption. In *The Real Source of Evil*, Shiva's quest to identify and eradicate evil takes a significant turn. What seemed clear-cut becomes ambiguous as hidden agendas, political complexities, and spiritual insights are uncovered. The perception of "evil" becomes a philosophical challenge rather than a physical enemy.

In *The Secret of the Nagas*, The end brings significant revelations that reshape Shiva's understanding of good and evil. The novel ends with the shocking truth that the Nagas, whom Shiva believed to be his enemies, are not the villains he presumed them to be. Instead, they are victims of a society that shuns them for their physical deformities.

Shiva also discovers that the real antagonist is not a person but the corrupting influence of the Somras, the divine drink that causes immense harm to the environment and people, including the birth defects in the Nagas. The revelation challenges Shiva's earlier perceptions and sets him on a path to confront the true source of evil.

Additionally, the identity of the Naga warrior is disclosed, adding a deeply personal twist to the conflict and making Shiva realize the complexity of morality and judgment. The book concludes with Shiva's resolve to battle the larger, hidden dangers, preparing readers for the next part of his epic journey in *The Oath of the Vayuputras*, third and final place of the *Shiva Trilogy*.

In *The Naga Society and Stereotypes*, The Nagas, shunned by mainstream society due to their physical differences and mysterious ways, emerge as a misunderstood group with their own intricate culture, values, and surprising roles in the preservation of balance. Finally, As Shiva's journey unfolds, characters such as Sati, Parvateshwar, and Anandmayi face dilemmas that lead to growth and transformation. The revelations bring them closer to understanding the nuanced realities of their world. Tripathi presented that Life is the most essential thing. It's only when you face mortality every day that you realize how simple that concept is. Weak people frequently do not even recognize how far they have fallen, while strong ones uphold their morals through all hardships.

This line from *The Secret of the Nagas* underscores the profound truth about the value of life. It conveys a simple but powerful message: the significance of life becomes crystal clear only when death becomes a constant presence or possibility. The statement implies that many people often take life for granted until they face mortality—either their own or that of others. Confronting death on a regular basis forces individuals to reevaluate their priorities and recognize the inherent value of simply being alive. Even, The line points out the simplicity of this realization. Despite life's complexities, survival remains the most fundamental concern. Everything else—wealth, power, material pursuits—becomes secondary in the face of death. In the novel, this line reflects the experiences of characters living in a world of danger and uncertainty. Facing death regularly heightens their appreciation for life, relationships, and the present moment.

Character development is a key highlight of this novel. Shiva's transformation from a reluctant leader to a determined savior is portrayed with depth and nuance. His internal conflict and moral dilemmas make him a relatable and compelling protagonist. Sati, Shiva's wife, emerges as a strong and multifaceted character who grapples with societal judgment and personal loss. Her courage and resilience are evident throughout the novel, making her one of the most memorable characters.

The Nagas, initially portrayed as sinister and dangerous, are gradually revealed to be victims of prejudice and injustice. This shift in perspective adds complexity to the narrative and underscores one of the novel's central themes: the fluidity of good and evil. As Shiva himself notes, "Evil is not a distant demon. It lurks within us all. And it takes a moment of weakness for it to come alive." This quote encapsulates the novel's exploration of morality and the human condition.

Tripathi delves into several thought-provoking themes, including identity, redemption, and the nature of truth. The novel challenges readers to question societal norms and biases, particularly through the portrayal of the Nagas. The recurring motif of duality—good and evil, truth and deception, acceptance and rejection—is central to the story's philosophical underpinnings. Symbolism plays a significant role in enriching the narrative of the novels. The Nagas, with their physical deformities, symbolize societal outcasts who are often misunderstood and marginalized. Through their journey, Tripathi emphasizes the importance of empathy and understanding.

Tripathi's writing is simple yet evocative, making the novel accessible to a wide audience. His vivid descriptions bring the ancient landscape to life, while his use of dialogue adds authenticity to the characters' interactions. The blending of mythological elements with contemporary storytelling techniques creates a unique and engaging reading experience.

In *The Secret of the Nagas*, Amish Tripathi continues Shiva's epic journey, blending mythology, philosophy, secret, and adventure. The novel reveals that the Nagas, initially perceived as evil, are not inherently bad but victims of societal prejudice. The key revelation is that the Naga warrior, who seemed to be Shiva's enemy, is actually his ally. Additionally, the truth about Brahaspati's disappearance and the dual nature of the Somras as both a boon and a curse brings forth the novel's central moral theme: good and evil are often a matter of perspective. Shiva learns that real enemies are not individuals but destructive ideas and ignorance. This installment deepens the moral complexities of Shiva's quest and sets the stage for the ultimate battle between right and wrong, urging readers to look beyond appearances and question conventional definitions of good and evil.

Tripathi's ability to challenge conventional narratives and present complex characters makes this book a compelling read. As Shiva's journey continues, readers are left eager to uncover the next chapter in this epic saga. For those seeking a story that combines action, mystery, and profound insights, *The Secret of the Nagas* is a must-read.

Our Classical legends served as the basis for the author's narrative. The stories, told in the third-person knowing narrative, are entirely the product of simple imagination, yet the characters are not new. Legends such as Shiva, Sati, Nandi, Veerbhadr, and Daksha all walk a particular terrain as actual, flesh-and-blood humans. The author's objectivity about the crucial issue of "Virtue" or "Vice" also enables readers to make their own decisions. A benevolent view of deity holds that the sole sign for such a noble deed is "Karma." The Shiva Trilogy is a trip through our past where we could discover that myths are actually codified social laws and tales are simply the fundamental elements of history. Amish pointed out throughout the trilogy that the Hindu gods were originally human humans just like everyone else, rather than being fantastical creatures or works of fiction. Their actions in human life are what made them well-known as gods. In conclusion, since the monarchy is holding the miraculous drug hostage, it may be argued that it is on the brink of demise. The crown prince is killed. Shiva's philosopher mentor, Vasudev, betrays

his unwavering devotion by frequently enlisting the help of the dark side. Therefore, it may be concluded that Shiva's path will not be straightforward, and he will encounter numerous difficulties along the road.

Millions of people worldwide are impacted by the marginally experienced condition. The vast majority of people worldwide are prevented from taking part in the progress because of marginalization. Political, economic, and sociological discussions all touch on marginalization. Women do not constitute a cohesive group with shared activities, interests, or skills.

Through the protagonist Shiva's voice, the author conveys the paradoxical idea that a person is a god if they have the guts to oppose evil. Despite being regarded as God, he is incapable of distinguishing between good and evil. He felt guilty about killing thousands of people in a battle because he thought they were bad. Even God is unable to identify wickedness. Because there is no permanence in this kaliyugam, which is the modern world. Everybody has advantages and disadvantages. The only problem is identifying the positive aspects of the referenced wicked works.

#### **Work cited**

1. Gupta, Ashish. "The Secret of Nagas." Shiva Trilogy of Amish Tripathi: Viewsand Reviews. Dattsons, 2019.
2. Tripathi, Amish. The Secret of the Nagas. Westland Publications, 2011.
3. Coleridge, S. T. Poem: Mythology in an Age of Reason.
4. Foucault, M. The Birth of the Clinic. Vintage, 1975