

Self to Cosmic Consciousness: Transformative Journey of Shiva in *The Immortals of Meluha* and *The Secret of Nagas*

- Lata Mishra

Abstract: Present paper is an attempt to explore identity, reality, knowledge and the dichotomy of the order/chaos axis in context of a universal understanding of consciousness. The paper in its first section, analyses the childhood memory and consequent dreams of Shiva under the lens of Carl Jung's *On the Nature of Dreams* (1967). The brief introduction of the two selected novels is followed by the study of the various Vasudevs, whom Shiva meets on his transformative journey to the kingdoms/cities in the novels that exist as organic entities. These cities can thrive and grow, but they also age and decline, as if they have the life of their own. The journey begins from Mt. Kailash in Tibet to Meluha and Swadeep. Shiva then marches to Brangaridai and Dandak Forests near Narmada. The second section focuses on Shiva's meeting with the second Vasudev. In the third section the Vasudev of Magadh Temple gives Shiva insight into the masculine and feminine principle operating in the universe. Plurality of truths contained in scriptures formed by blend of history, folklore and empirical knowledge is limited by finiteness of human mind as well as culture of the time. Amish Tripathi delves deep into this great Shiva myth of India and employs it as vehicle of a new vision and interpretation.

Keywords: Shiva mythology, order/chaos, masculine/feminine, Indian philosophy

Debutante author Amish in his two novels namely, *The Immortals of Meluha* and *The Secret of Nagas* (Shiva Trilogy- Part 1 & 2, the third part yet unpublished), provides integral analysis on the modern world. Amish's potential to create myth for our modern times that makes pertinent points about the real world is marvellous. The work combines the narrative excess with philosophical debate. Amish recreates the myth of Shiva, Ganesh, Sati and Kali through his study of all spheres of Indian life and literature. He makes Shiva myth appealing and intelligible to the modern mind. Those who still keep the oral tradition alive through chanting and singing of hymns and folk songs deserve gratitude and admiration of young generation. At the same time there is also a need to understand and reinterpret its meaning. Recitation without a knowledge of its meaning does not enlighten one. Amish insists to engage oneself in action because actions purify as knowledge liberates. Through recreation, "The Shiva Trilogy" becomes living inspirational scripture capable of providing spiritual direction in the modern world. Meluhan order in the novel is perceived as masculine attitude, that reflects the authoritative, vertical, hierarchical order of being and knowledge, while Swadeepan chaos as Feminine attitude that contains the seeds of order within. While chaos initially may mean confusion but as will be inferred it

is a kind of order that is difficult to perceive as such. Vasudevs initiate and direct Shiva in his *karma*. There are almost nine discourses with them. Vasudevs are presented as scientists who live in temples which serve as transmitters from where they communicate with each other through radio waves. Here the two novels are also explored through the application of the nonlinear dynamics theory and the discussion on the chaotic attractors of dynamical systems. The complexity theorists view all systems as self-organizing. As Indian philosophy perceives, Amish too presents individual psyche and society as a system that undergoes the process of self-creation and self-generation as opposed to a deliberate construction. As amply explicated in the paper, the society is in constant interaction with its surroundings and any attempt to block the system would be to cut it off from the interactions that maintain it, thereby likely leading to its destruction.

I

Childhood memories reside in the conscious and unconscious mind. An individual suppresses traumatic memories unconsciously and these memories are "repressed memories." Such memories are the ones suppressed beyond the realm of conscious awareness. Repressed memories are often, the stuff that contains unbearable pain, fear or disgust, experienced by an individual. Shiva as a young child has suffered such an experience when one day while returning home in dusk at his native place, Mt. Kailash, he falls upon a man and woman caught in an act. Initially the young boy is excited to watch and later report to his teenage friends but suddenly he realizes that it's a sexual assault by the man. As the victim woman notices him and cries for help, scared Shiva flees from the spot, never turning back.

And then came the moment that would haunt him for the rest of his life... The hairy monster turned to see who the woman was calling... The boy quickly picked up his sword and fled... He could hear the man's heavy breathing.
(IM,221)

Carl Jung, a Swiss psychiatrist and the founder of analytical psychology regarded the nature of dreams to be "a spontaneous self-portrayal, in symbolic form, of the actual situation in the unconscious" (Jung, 1967, Vol. 8, par.505) Our unconscious mind in our dreams expresses itself in a language of symbols, images, and metaphors. Shiva's suppressed memories of this incident diminishes his personal value and makes him feel bad about himself. Repression is an unconscious act while suppression is conscious effort. However hard Shiva tries, he finds forgetting difficult. For this he often resorts to Marijuana. Jung suggests two functions of dreams. Dreams compensate for imbalances in the dreamer's psyche. They bring unconscious contents that have so far being suppressed by consciousness to the surface. Shiva's dream of the same woman calling for help keeps recurring in the novel. Shiva moves to Meluha on beckoning of Nandi, the Meluhan captain. Meluha is a vast empire extending from Kashmir to Gujarat, Rajasthan and parts of Uttar Pradesh. Here he meets Sati, the daughter of Daksha, the emperor, and falls in love. When Sati explains him why she would not attend *yagna*, a ceremonial fire sacrifice organized by the royal party, Shiva's mind

revolts at the humiliation of his beloved and the injustice done to vikarmas in Meluha. Shiva is desperate to bring dignity back to his beloved and the dream of the childhood traumatic event is back that night. He wishes to 'redeem' himself. Vikarmas are the subjugated group in Meluha. This system of labeling of Vikarma is not based on caste but as 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. ... They are not allowed to marry since they may poison others with their bad fate,. They are not allowed to touch any person who are is not related to them or is not part of their normal duties. (IM, 93).

Sati is one of the vikarmas, but is privileged to live in a palace. She strictly adheres to all other rules laid down for vikarmas. Any person who touches a vikarma has to observe *Shudhikaran* ritual. According to Jung, when the dreamer recognizes and accepts the unconscious contents in his psyche, greater psychological balance is achieved. Jung further argued that dreams unite consciousness and the unconscious in a healthy, harmonious state of wholeness. He termed, this process as individuation, which is the "complete actualization of the whole human being" (Jung, 1967, Vol. 16, par.352). Amish's aim in this metanarrative seems to provide practical knowledge of consciousness, this knowledge is boundless, infinite field of wakefulness that can be explained by an individual as his/her own simplest form of awareness. Knowledge proper is obtained by ordering, connecting and synthesizing the Shiva-Vasudev meetings into some system. The discourses held in these meetings leaves readers with the hope to achieve infinite creativity and fulfillment. Shiva evolves through continuous development of consciousness to become a universal human being. He cognizes and represents universal mechanics of creation and lives higher states of consciousness. The other terms Jung uses for consciousness is ego or persona. Persona is the mask that one wears in society to adapt to its norms. Beneath the persona lies shadow that is all that is repressed. A selfconscious person confronts with his shadow and the world of darkness. Shadow often surfaces in our dreams and is of the same gender. Shiva's dream remains the same with minor deviances. Acting upon a thought, in waking state of consciousness, one is bound to a cycle of experience, impression, desire, action and further experience. The childhood experience leaves impression on the mind of Shiva. Whenever in adulthood the new impressions associate themselves with similar past experience stored in Shiva's mind an impulse is created that rises to the thinking level and assumes a form of thought. Through this thought a desire emerges and in turn Shiva spurs into action.

II

Vasudevs in the novels serve as stimulants to Shiva. The rise of self-consciousness in Shiva may be traced in his relation with all Vasudevs in the two novels. The first Vasudev Shiva meets is in Brahma Temple at Meru. Shiva meets Sati and falls in love at this place. This Vasudev reappears in Shiva's dream. In the chapter "Attack on Mandar," Amish brings in the Derridean play between "presence" and "absence" and

concomitantly dissolves their difference. The first Vasudev of Brahma Temple convinces Shiva that the existence (presence) of the world is actually constructed around its absence. In other words, it is the absence that constructs the presence and the existence of "presence" is impossible without the conception of its "absence." The Pandit engages Shiva in a dialogue and fittingly argues:

"What is the colour of that leaf?...It's green."..... Light falls on that an object and when it reflects back from that, you see that object....What normal sunlight is made of?...White light is nothing but the confluence of seven different colours...White sunlight falls on that leaf. The leaf's physical properties are such that it *absorbs* the colours, violet, indigo, blue, yellow, orange and red... It doesn't absorb the colour green, which is then reflected back, Hence I see the leaf as green... What colour it absorbs and what it rejects. Or is it every single colour in the world, *except* green?" (Amish 295).

Martin Heidegger, rejects calculative, utilitarian view of reason. To him reason is not the sole source of legitimate. The knowledge of *truth* cannot be confined to rationalized propositions about beings alone but ought to encompass the knowledge of the Being of beings. Rational and scientific knowledge just give the information from one particular perspective. Therefore any one kind of knowledge of beings cannot be privileged over any other. No propositional knowledge is absolute; it is all relative. Vasudev continues his discussion:

There are many realities. There are many versions of what may appear obvious,' ... 'Whatever appears as the unshakeable truth, the exact opposite may also be true in another context. It is the context or perspective that you're looking from that moulds which particular reality you see.' (296)

In their interaction both the Vasudev and Shiva rise to self-consciousness. Vasudev is informative, but Shiva is investigative. He sees things external to him. In an attempt to know them he works on them and shapes them. His interactions with Kali, Ganesh, Parashuram and societies of Meluhans and Swadeepans, in general, enables him to inwardise them. In this way he gains self-consciousness. Indian philosophy believes that at birth, an individual's mind contains past impressions (*karmasaya*). These impressions combined with hereditary constitution and social influences develop the psyche of an individual. Vasudev in the novels address Shiva as 'fellow traveller in *karma*, *karmasarthi*' (IM,46) Jacques Derrida's introduction of the notion, *Différance* suggests that without differentiation there could be no experience, meaning or being. Following this, the search for absolute truth or singular vision of self and the world seems a fancy idea. Taking this further, the absolute must rest upon the foundation of that which is different from itself. This argument leads to a respect for differences and rejection of Hegelian-like attempt to integrate all ideas. The ideas thus are integrally related to their polar opposites. The one cannot be treated as superior to the other. Jung echoes similar ideas but takes a step forward:

"...he who accepts what approaches him because it is also in him,

quarrels and wrangles no more, but looks into himself and keeps silent. He sees the tree of life, whose roots reach into Hell and whose top touches Heaven. He also no longer knows differences" (301).

Amish, in accordance to Indian philosophy re-enlivens the universal field of pure consciousness. Reconciling or holding together of opposite values is the fundamental property of consciousness. This theme of opposites co-existing the universe surfaces repeatedly in the conversation of Vasudevs. The second Vasudev, Shiva meets is at Mohan Temple of Mohan Jo Daro at Meluha. To analyse the Shiva- Vasudev conversation carried here, it would be appropriate to first discuss Dynamic Systems Theory and consider individual and society as a system. The concept of chaos is taken from the field of mathematics that studies System. Oxford Dictionary defines system as "a set of things working together as parts of a mechanism or an interconnecting network; a complex whole" (1212).

III

Dynamical Systems Theory and Chaos Theory deal in the long-term qualitative behavior of dynamical systems. The study reveals that Systems that are stable in relation to their environment can become unstable and vice versa. This theory basically studies continuous state, deterministic systems. It includes both discrete and continuous time systems as well as linear and nonlinear systems. Dynamic Systems Theory was originally developed for applications to the problems arising in physics and engineering, but complex social systems can also be well explored through the application of the Chaos Theory or as also referred to as nonlinear dynamics, dynamical systems theory, or dynamical systems method by the mathematicians. Sometimes dynamic systems may exhibit aperiodic behavior and the linearity or cyclicity is affected. This effect, that may occur due to just a minor change in the system may lead to major changes in future states of the system. Edward Lorenz while working through computer on the weather pattern observed that in dynamical systems even rounding numbers, that may be regarded as an insignificant change causes significant changes in results. This effect that triggers large changes on future results is termed as *the butterfly effect*. The world we live in, does not comprise mere objects but rather is made up of network of living and non-living complex systems. The components of the system are in continuous interacting relationships. Oxford Dictionary defines chaos as "the property of a complex system whose behavior is so unpredictable as to appear random, owing to great sensitivity to small changes in conditions." and "complete disorder and confusion" or "mayhem" (Thesaurus, 137). According to Edward Lorenz (1993) chaos is a system "that is sensitively dependent on interior changes in initial conditionswithin one and the same system" (Lorenz, 1993: 24). The Oxford Dictionary defines order as "the arrangement or disposition of people or things in relation to each other according to a particular sequence, pattern or method" and "a state in which everything is in its correct or appropriate place" or "the state that exists when people obey laws, rules or authority". (816). Thus chaos and order seem to stand poles apart. In social systems also, order and chaos

are often conceived of as polarized twin concepts, order referring to permanence, chaos to the opposite. The relationship between the two concepts is, however, more complicated. "Order," for instance, does not necessarily indicate absence of chaos. In society, though the systems show a cyclical pattern--the formation, dissolution, and reformation of order, yet it is observed widely that the pattern never repeats itself completely. The social life in one cycle is never an exact replica of the previous one. Determinism is the philosophical belief that every event or action is the inevitable result of preceding events and actions. Thus, in principle at least, every event or action can be completely predicted in advance or in retrospect. In thermodynamics, energy transfer is studied in three types of systems: isolated, closed and open ones. An isolated system is one that does not allow any exchange of energy or matter while closed system may exchange energy but not matter with an outside system. *Open systems can exchange both matter and energy with an outside system.*

Since the two novels, *The Immortals of Meluha* and *The Secret of Nagas* thematise chaos theory, it may lead to an assumption that the narrative is about fractured time, lost meanings and the absurdity of human condition, but Amish has created a narrative in which the chaos theory symbolizes precisely the ways in which human beings can gain knowledge of the world and make knowledge meaningful in their particular human context. The structure of the novels is built around the juxtaposition of or interrelationship between two worlds of Suryavanshis and Chandravanshis. The first novel is set in Meluha and Ayodhya, capital of Swadeep, while its sequel takes the readers to Kashi, Magadh, Brangaridai and Dandak forests. The kingdom of Suryavanshis is Meluha and that of Chandravanshis is Swadeep. Meluha runs along the lines of RamRajya and strictly follows the Laws of Lord Rama. The Suryavanshi motto is '*Satya, Dharma, Maan*'. Devagiri, the capital of Meluha is described as:

the city was divided into a grid of square blocks by the paved streets. There were footpaths on the side for pedestrian.... all the buildings were constructed as standard two storied block structures made of baked bricks.....All windows and doors were built strictly on the side walls of buildings, never facing the main road.....The most common background colour though, appeared to be blue....the city was divided into many districts... Each district had its own markets, commercial and residential areas. (IM, 62-63).

The Chandravanshi motto is '*Shringar. Saundarya. Swatantrata*.' (ie. Passion. Beauty. Freedom). Their capital Ayodhya is described in words:

Some open grounds had been converted into giant slums... The already narrow roads had been made even narrower by the intrusion of cloth tents of the homeless. There was constant tension between the richer home owning class and the poor landless who lived in slums. The Emperor had legalised all encroachments established before 1910 BC. That meant that slum dwellers could not be removed unless the government created alternate accommodation. (IM, 372).

Here each house had its own individual allure. The Swadweepans...

created houses that were expressions of passion and elegance. The Swadweepans had none of the restraints of the Meluhans. Everything was painted bright. (IM, 373).

In the most ordered city of Meluha, children are also brought up in most disciplined fashion:

all children that are born in Meluha are compulsorily adopted by the empire. All pregnant women have to travel there (Maika) for their delivery.... Once the child is born, he or she is kept in Maika for a few weeks for health reasons while the mother travels back to her own city.'...'The child is then put into the Meluha gurukul... They grow up with all the resources of the empire available to them... When the children turn sixteen, they are allocated to the applicant parents... (IM,97).

Freedom for citizens is severely limited with social laws rigidly maintained by ideological means and force. Parent-child bonds are deliberately eroded with the child estranged from mother and its identity diluted soon after its birth. Healthy children are transferred to Maika, while the deformed and disabled ones deported from the kingdom and thus ideal society maintained and prided upon. Some Meluhans however 'tired of the regimented life' have taken refuge in Kashi, 'They tolerated the chaos of the Chandravanshi ways for the pleasure of watching their children grow'(SN,77). Melhuan society can be placed within the modernist paradigm considering its reliance on totalizing theory. At the center, a logos is said to be at play; as in Daksha's forces of rationalization and Parvateshwar's adherence to Laws of Lord Rama. Thus the grandnarrative of Meluha is replete with assumptions of homogeneity, desirability of consensus and order. Daksha rests his views on some kind of conception of tension-reduction as the operative force in social structural development. The deformed are deported out of kingdom. The diseased and handicapped are segregated from the mainstream society. Order is seen as desirable without further explanation. Deviance is defined in terms of distance from assumed acceptable standard of normativity. The liberal Chandravanshi life is described as:

The people were living embodiments of the Chandravanshi way of life. The women wore skimpy clothes, brazen and confident about their sexuality,. The men were as fashion conscious as their women- what Meluhans would call dandies. the relationship between the men and women could only be characterized as one teetering on extremes. Extreme love coexisting with extreme hate, expressed with extreme loudness, all built on the foundations of extreme passion. (IM,374)

Suryavanshis regard Chandravanshis as corrupt people:

'Yes,' said Daksha. 'The Chandravanshis are corrupt and disgusting people. No morals. No ethics. They are the source of all our problems. Some of us believe that Lord Ram was too kind. He should have completely destroyed them. But he forgave them and let them live. In fact, we have to face the mortification of seeing the Chandravanshis rule over Lord Ram's birthplace-Ayodhya!' (IM,100)

Further, in Book 2, Daksha continues "The evil Chandravandravanshi

way of life has to end and these people have to be brought to our pure Suryavanshi ways"(SN,13). Handicapped people and mothers of still born, in Meluha are *vikarmas*. Apart from *vikarmas*, Meluhans are segregated into four categories: Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaishya and Shudras. Only royal class are allowed to keep track of their biological child brought up in Meluha. Meluha is beset by desperately low fertility rates following strict rules prohibiting mothers from reaching out to her child, almost immediately after birth. As a result, privileged return to their parents after education while the rest, according to their talents and knowledge are allotted parents of particular class. The patriarchal order of Meluhan society manages to keep broadly under control practices, such as caste discrimination and violence. However, soon readers realize that Daksha has been faced with the false choice of accepting and implementing such a social structure, for it is a form of totalitarianism. Chapter 2 of Book I, 'Land of Pure Life', reveals the anxiety of king Daksha, as his kingdom that so far seemed impenetrable and safe haven for its citizens is under threat by treacherous Chandravanshis. Apart from the occasional attacks, the kingdom figures as a model of empiricism and order. The entire kingdom, in fact looks like a microcosm of the universe with all in perfect order. However this rationality and empiricism soon seems to be destabilized. Swadeepan society which initially seems to be critique of Meluha, has found grounding in the insights of chaos theory and Lacanian thought. They privilege disorder rather than order. Their starting point is paralogism: privileging instabilities (Lyotard, 1984). This model of society begins with far-from-equilibrium conditions as being the more "natural" state, and places a premium on flux, nonlinear change, chance, spontaneity, intensity, indeterminacy, irony, and orderly disorder. No permanent stable order is possible or even desirable. No center or foundation exists. They consider the search for an overall, all-encompassing totalizing theory as an illusory exercise. Shiva meets the third Vasudev in Ayodhya at RamJanambhoomi. Shiva fights war against Chandravanshi on being convinced by Meluhan emperor of their being evil. Later in despondent and remorseful mood he ponders over the war and defeat of chandravanshis, whom till now he had thought to be evil. The Vasudev enlightens Shiva that universe is a manifestation of the illusion of duality. The dynamics of existence of the masculine and feminine principles is the most fundamental concept in life consciousness. He says,

'Yes, a duality that is one of the many perspectives of the universe-the masculine and the feminine. The Asuras and the Suryavanshis stand for the masculine. The Devas and the Chandravanshis speak for the feminine. The names change, but the life forces they embody remain the same. They will always exist. There is no way that either can be destroyed. Otherwise the universe will implode. (IM,392)

The Vasudev's discourse on duality in universe finds its analogy in the Danish physicist, Niels Bohr's Principle of Complementarity. Bohr argued that every entity in Nature possesses pairs of contradictory characters such as corpuscular property and wave property. He found that the contradictory characters are complementary to each other

rather than being exclusive. In order to integrally comprehend the entity as a whole, both the contradictory characters need to be taken into consideration. Nagas are introduced as evil force in Book 1 by Nandi, the Meluhan captain as:

'They are cursed people, my Lord,... are born with hideous deformities because of the sins of their previous births. Deformities like extra hands or horribly misshapen faces. But they have tremendous strength and skills. The Naga name alone strikes terror in any citizen's heart. They are not even allowed to live in the Sapt Sindhu,'...

Our land, my Lord, the land of seven rivers. The land of Indus, Saraswati, Yamuna, Ganga, Saryu, Brahmaputra and Narmada. This is where Lord Manu mandated that all of us, Suryavanshis and Chandravanshis, live.' (IM, 59)'

These Nagas, who are dreaded terrorists in Meluha and as reported, have allied with Chandravanshis, in Book-I, readers come to know in Book II, have settlements in Panchavati. Naga people parade the city once a week singing songs that reflect their emotions:

*You were my world, my God, my creator,
And yet, you abandoned me.
I didn't seek you, you called me,
And yet, you abandoned me.
I honoured you, lived by your rules, coloured
myself in your colours,
And yet, you abandoned me.
You hurt me, you deserted me, you
failed in your duties,
And yet, I'm the monster
Tell me Lord, what can I... (SN, 147)*

The appropriated modified discourse on the Chaos theory can be applied to the examination of the novels. Kellert defines chaos theory as "the qualitative study of unstable aperiodic behaviour in deterministic nonlinear dynamical systems" (2). A determinist linear thinking of Suryavanshis over-simplifies reality. Their life and its working is as predictable as the movement of pendulum, a simple example of a dynamical system. Dynamical systems theory is the branch of mathematics devoted to the motions of systems which evolves according to simple rules. Man as well as society, as a system are complex in nature and thus cannot be studied as an isolated system. An isolated system, in physics is one where there can be no exchange of matter or energy. Every complex system is also a *dissipative structure*, as explained by Prigogine, as it takes on and dissipates energy as it interacts with its environment. Man constantly interacts with his ever-changing environment. Thought processes are generally non-deterministic in nature more like a maze, but the Meluhan rules do not realize that disorder, confusion, uncertainty, or instability prevails all the time. This is "the butterfly effect", a term used in Chaos theory to explain how a minor change may cause drastic and unexpected results. Each Meluhan who seems to be so stable in relation to his/her environment on deeper inspection seems to contain seeds of

chaos and suppress the unstable in him. The forced orderliness of Meluhans is seen in their Maika and vikarma system.

On the other hand Swadeepans' life appears to be chaotic at the surface but there exists some kind of order within their inner self, as reflected to Shiva, when he meets a beggar at the temple. Swadeepans carry the motto of 'Passion. Beauty. Freedom' (IM,371). On temple steps of Ayodhya, Shiva meets a beggar in torn clothes who offers a share of his food on a banana leaf. As Shiva is coaxed into eating with him:

Shiva could not find the heart to look up anymore. As his heart sank deeper and his tears rose, he ate the portion the old man gave him quickly. The food was over in no time.

Freedom. Freedom for the wretched to also have dignity. Something impossible in Meluha's system of governance. (IM,386).

Meluhan life is limited to a single culture and locality. The rest of the world is known dimly, if at all, and only then through the distorting filter of their own local society. Models of one-directional change assume that change in a certain direction induces further change in the same direction; models of curvilinear or cyclical change, on the other hand, assume that change in a certain direction creates the conditions for change in another direction. More specifically, it is often assumed that growth has its limits and that in approaching these limits the change curve will inevitably be bent, but the human race, as a whole, is a true dynamical system that follows the principles of chaos theory. Swadweep is 'a confederacy of aligned kings' (SN,15), where each king pays tribute to the Swadeepan Emperor and rules independently. In a debate with Dilipa, the Swadeepan Emperor concerning rights to subjects, Daksha states, "Then there will be chaos," (SN,15). Kashi has given refuge to Brangas. This is the place open to all kinds of social, cultural and commercial transactions. Many Meluhans have fled to this city. Brangaridai has Nagas as their allies. 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/ 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.

IV

In Indian mythology, while Sati or Parvati represents marriage and motherhood, Kali stands for destruction. She is also the one who protects and sacrifices for her children (devotees). Shiva's destruction opens the path for the new creation. In the selected texts, before meeting Shiva, Sati has no identity of her own. Her identity, nature and actions are defined and acted out vis-a-vis her father, Daksha. Much doting father but equally manipulative, king Daksha keeps Sati ignorant of the

truth that she has given birth to deformed son and misinforms her of still born birth. Shiva succeeds in luring her into remarriage and thus into the wider circle of worldly life. In, Book two, however, it is Sati who introduces Shiva to Kali and thus extends his circle of activity. At this point, Shiva involves in the act of destruction/ creation which is actually an act of arranging and producing order from chaos. While Sati provides a traditional model for women in their relationship with men by being calm, approachable and docile, Kali's wrath and retribution presents her as aggressive and fiercely independent goddess. In the novel, Sati is brought up in civilized, orderly and refined Meluhan Kingdom while Kali's abode is wild raw and chaotic forest of Dandak. Sati in the novel is described as beautiful, but it is her devotion and asceticism that attracts Shiva to her. Anandmayi, on the other hand is portrayed as a seductive princess of Ayodhya. Anandmayi is embodiment of female beauty and the instigator of desire. She not only sexually attracts celibate General Parvateshwar but also impresses him with her intelligence and warrior skills. She capably breaks the order (vow and Suryavanshi Laws) and creates chaos in life of Parvateshwar. To Parvateshwar, Suryavanshi way had 'been the bedrock of life' and he had found this 'predictability quite (added) comforting' (SN,256). Anandmayi as a 'strange attractor' turned his, 'world upside down'. She represents the rhythm of physical world who impels creation.

In Chapter 16 of Book 2 *The Opposites Attract*, Shiva embraces Parashuram, Sati unites with Kali and upright Meluhan General Parvateshwar accepts chandravanshi, Anandmayi. This union of opposites leads them to the state of chaos that self-organises and thus becomes the ideal basis for creativity. Such "attractors" of disorder, in the theory of chaos are equations that predict the long-term behaviour of complex systems. Just as butterfly flapping its wings causes a hurricane in another part of the world so are the lives of Shiva, Sati and Parvateshwar affected by the entry of these 'strange attractors' also termed as 'the butterfly effect'. Kali, who as Naga Queen seemed quite angry and erratic earlier, finally succeeds in bringing Shiva to the wilds of Dandaka Forests. Sati, the most obedient daughter, produces Kali before Daksha and in this way exposes the king's conspiracy. Parashuram, as an strange attractor leads Shiva to Brihaspati in Panchvati. Ganesh in Indian mythology is the son of Shiva and Parvati. He is known to remove obstacles from the path of devotees. In the novel, Ganesh is Lord of the people. He strongly draws Shiva towards himself in an attempt to abduct Sati and thus is the most important 'strange attractor'. The entire plot in the novel is the outcome of Ganesh's actions. The Lord of the People and the turbulent conditions that create him, draws ordered complex systems into disorder. The state of non-equilibrium of the system is exposed by Ganesh and this non-equilibrium sets out in turn to reveal hidden potential concealed by equilibrium.

V

In chaos theory, in a system, multiple agents interact to generate strange attractors. Complexity approach to chaos believes in a tight relation between chaos and order. This interaction leads one to another in a

dynamic process. Chaos, in this approach, is not avoided but utilized to organise the system, through an "attractor". Shiva's uncle tells him, *My child, your destiny is much larger than these mountains. But in order to realise it, you will have to cross these very same massive mountains*, (SN,145). The application of chaos theory to the study of these novels discusses the existence of multiple variables in a society that prevents predictability. A real world system is complex and thus, the study in its pattern, would be more desirable, rather than studying it in parts. Just as a weather pattern is drastically affected by slight changes, changes in society due to minor variations also creates a chaotic pattern. Societies as a complex system are an *open* and *dissipative* structures. "Dissipative structures" are offered as relatively stable societal structures that remain sensitive and responsive to their environment. This concept implies both relative stability as well as continuous change. Contrary to modernist Meluhans, Swadeepans as postmodernists consider ongoing flux and continuous change as desirable. In society, clashes may occur, resulting in fall from equilibrium, but, the dynamics can bring the society towards a new emergent structure. Besides this, this research work more importantly exposes and explores the patterns within a social system, which, in turn, may give a greater understanding of the system. The novels seem to suggest a need to perceive, the interactions occurring within a structure, on the basis of which, reframing and consequently, progress may take place. Society is a living entity and thus it is also realized that it self-creates and self-constructs itself.

While the conversation with the mundane characters remains at the expressed level of speech, the discourse with Vasudevs is carried out at subtle and Transcendental level of pure consciousness, without sounds. Their minds send radiowaves to each other and thus eliminating the possibility of gap between sound and meaning. Vasudev of Ayodhya temple urges Shiva to let his thoughts flow freely in order to discover the truth. Vasudev of Magadh Temple explains:

Everything needs balance, Neelkanth. The masculine needs the feminine. The energy requires the mass. (SN,113)

At Kashi Vishwanath Temple Shiva gains insight into:

There is a god in every single one of us. And there is evil in every single of us. The true battle between good and evil is fought within.

And the great evil connects itself to the evil within us. (SN,114)

Vasudev Pandit, Gopal discusses with Shiva:

Lord Manu had said it's not people who are evil. True Evil exists beyond them. It attracts people. It causes confusion amongst its enemies. But Evil in itself is too big to be confined to just a few.

Shiva frowned. You make it sound like Evil is a power as strong as Good. That it doesn't work by itself, but uses people as its medium. (SN,276)

So why does Evil exist? Why can't it be destroyed once and for all?...but Evil does rise and will keep rising again and again Why?...Because Evil serves a purpose...That is what Lord Manu believed. And the institution of Mahadev acts as the balance, the control for that purpose. To take Evil out of the equation at the correct time (SN: 277)

Plurality of truths contained in scriptures formed by blend of history,

folklore and empirical knowledge is limited by finiteness of human mind as well as culture of the time. Amish Tripathi delves deep into this great Shiva myth of India and employs it as vehicle of a new vision and interpretation. There is order in creation, and system in nature. Shiva gains Knowledge of Supreme Creativity, that can hold universe in one wholeness. The initial order of the world that gets derailed in course of time, creating chaos is restructured and aligned with the cosmic structure by Shiva, bringing a new evolved order into existence. Thus the cyclity continues. For the non-dualists philosophers the pure-consciousness exists below the surface of all the micro-entities of the phenomenal world. It is this Reality that Shiva, the man strives to achieve through his *karma* and perseverance. The paper may be concluded after the study of the two novels and with some presumptions regarding the second sequel of Trilogy, *The Oath of Vayuputras*, yet to be released, with the words of Carl Jung on the subject of cognizance:

All science however is a function of the soul, in which all knowledge is rooted. The soul is the greatest of all cosmic miracles, it is the *conditio sine qua non* of the world as an object... The flood of external objects of cognizance has made the subject of all cognizance withdraw to the background, often to apparent non-existence.

(Qtd. Schrödinger, 129)

References :

- McHale, Brian. *Postmodernist Fiction*. 1987. New York: Methuen, 1987. Print .
- Lorenz, E. *The Essence of Chaos*. Seattle WA.: University of Washington Press, 1993. Print.
- Nicolis G., Prigogine, I. *Exploring Complexity: An Introduction*. 1989. New York: W.H. Freeman and Co., 1989. Print.
- Kellert, S.H. *In the Wake of Chaos: Unpredictable Order in Dynamical Systems*. 1993. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1993. Print.
- Tripathi, Amish. *The Immortals of Meluha*. 2010. Chennai: Westland ltd. 2010. Print. (Abv. as IM)
- -----, *The Secret of Nagas*. 2011 Chennai: Westland ltd. 2011. Print. (Abv. as SN)
- Hornby, Turnbull ed. *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary*, OUP, 1996. Print.
- *Oxford English Dictionary*. USA; Oxford University Press. 1989. Print.
- Soanes, Spooner, Hawker, ed. *The Oxford Thesaurus of English* Delhi: OUP, N. Delhi. 2009. Print.
- Schrödinger, Erwin .What Is Life?: with *Mind and Matter*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1992. Print

